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the European Union LEADER programme: Case study
of Croatia**

Marija Roglić

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THÈSE POUR OBTENIR LE GRADE DE DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTPELLIER

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Insight into participative processes within multi-stakeholder settings

Analysing public MSIs within the European Union LEADER
programme:

Case study of Croatia

Presented by Marija ROGLIC
27th October 2022

Under the supervision of: Florence PALPACUER

Before the jury composed of

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UNIVERSITÉ
DE MONTPELLIER

The University of Montpellier does not intend to give any approval or disapproval to the opinions expressed in this thesis. These opinions should be considered the author's own.

[J]ustice [is] a form of active participation in social life, while injustice is... a kind of exclusion from the human community (Hollenbach, 1988)

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I devote my work to the world. I hope it will serve to do good.

ABSTRACT

Participation across fields and disciplines is necessary to tackle today's grand challenges effectively – as they demand substantive participation of numerous actors with diverging interests. Furthermore, the issue of participation is a concern of politicians, civil society actors, of managers who, daily, enact different forms of participation with their collaborators seeking to reach their objectives. As a manager of a public multi-stakeholder initiative, I also faced the challenge of fostering participation to contribute to the objective of sustainable economic development of the south Croatian Islands through the European Union LEADER programme. LEADER Standing for *Lien Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*. This dissertation stems from my managerial doubts and asks *about how participation is constructed, defended, and practised*. By answering these questions, I conclude that participation is a politically constructed process through time and across spatial scales.

Chapter 1 analyses the political dynamics of the broader socio-political contexts in which Multi-Stakeholder Initiatives (MSIs) are embedded, taking a macro-level, processual perspective on how participation is constructed around the LEADER programme in Croatia (1999-2019). We demonstrate that participation was deployed in the country through two distinct *regimes of participation*, each featuring a particular mechanism of governance that privileges certain economic forms of production and exchange, as well as normative and cultural values that shape the type of participation occurring within the MSIs embedded in the regime.

Chapter 2 examines how local actors organised around an MSI against a new, state-imposed, and EU-framed regulation that threatened local forms of livelihood on the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac, adopting a meso perspective on how the participation of local actors is defended. The study finds that appropriating dominant organisational logics from the national and European scales allowed the local actors to *play the scales*, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of participation at their local scale through time. They did so by constructing a (1) translocal alliance that grabbed different elements from varied local scales to build a (2) trans-scalar strategy which became central to the evolution of spatial scales. The findings suggest that local actors protect their political scale from broader hegemonic diffusion by appropriating dominant organisational logic to their advantage, thereby defending their interests and participation within their MSI.

Lastly, chapter 3 builds a convergent mixed method research design to investigate the work of Local Action Groups – i.e., the publicly funded multi-stakeholder initiatives implementing LEADER - in Croatia, focusing on the micro perspective of how participation is used within an MSI. Analysis results in constructing a model for the practice of participation, identifying key variables around which the enactment of participation unfolds. These include the activation of territorial capital, the formation of a specific mode of governance, and particular deliberation practices. The model identifies the actions allowing to enact a substantive, as opposed to a simple procedural, form of participation. It provides an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes.

THESIS-RELATED RESEARCH OUTCOMES

Papers under revision:

Roglic, M and Palpacuer F. (2022). Strategic action across spatial scales. How institutional entrepreneurs engage in counterhegemonic rescaling to protect public value. Submitted on the 31st January 2022 to the special issue of the Journal **Organization** *Re-organising for public value: Opportunities and possibilities* (impact factor 5.122, CNRS 1, FNEGE 2) (Chapter2)

Communications:

Marija Roglič, Florence Palpacuer. Playing the Scales: The Story of the Pelješac LEADER initiative. 38th EGOS Colloquium' Organising: The Beauty of Imperfection", July 2022, Vienna, Austria (Chapter 2)

Marija Roglič. What makes participation participative? Investigation into inclusive practices of multistakeholder organizations. 16e Congres du réseau international de recherche sur les organisations et le développement durable, Oct. 2021, Montpellier, France. [hal-03514947](#) (Chapter 3)

Marija Roglič. Fostering participation to push for development. In the case of "LAG 5",. Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE). PS 1.2. Skill supply for remote but resilient innovation ecosystems (online), Nov 2020, Split, Croatia. [hal-03145657](#) (Chapter 3)

Marija Roglič. The antenarrative of sensemaking: building participation via LEADER. The Participative Village. Governing Rural Everyday Worlds in Times of the New Rural Paradigm, Oct 2020, Bonn, Germany. [hal-03141126](#) (Chapter 3)

Marija Roglič. Multi-stakeholder initiatives and grassroots participation. 1st International conference on practical and theoretical implications of LEADER/CLLD approach in South-East Europe, Nov 2019, Opatija, Croatia. [hal-03145665](#) (Chapter 1)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

Agency for Payments in Agriculture and Rural Development	APPRR
Civil Society Organizations	CSO
Common Agricultural Policy	CAP
Community-Driven Local Development	CLLD
Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in Dalmatia	COAST Program
Croatian Democratic Party (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica)	HDZ
Croatian Network for Rural Development (Hrvatska mreza za ruralni razvoj)	HMRR
European LEADER Association	ELARD
European Network for Regional Development	ENRD
European Union	EU
Facebook	FB
Local Fisheries Action Groups	FLAGs
Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	FAO
High Nature Value	HNV
Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance	IPARD
Istrian Democratic Assembly (Istarska demokratska stranka)	IDS
LEADER Network Croatia (LEADER mreza Hrvatske)	LMH
Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale	LEADER
Local Action Groups	LAGs
Local Economic Development Agencies	LEDAs
Managing Authority responsible for the implementation of the EU program within the state	MA
Multi-stakeholder initiatives	MSIs

Non-governmental organizations	NGO
Rural Development Program	RDP
Small and Medium Enterprises	SME
Social Democratic Party (Socijal-demokratska partija)	SDP
United Nations Development Programme	UNDP
United Nations Office for Project Services	UNOPS
United States Agency for International Development	USAID

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Participation in multi-stakeholder settings: how it is constructed, defended, and practised

The creation of multi-stakeholder initiatives that will facilitate participation has been seen as a solution for a range of complex problems starting from public policies (Fiorino, 1988; Randell, 200; Rowe & Frewer, 2005) and development (Chambers, 1983; 1994; Garcia, 2018; Cejudo & Navarro, 2020) to corporate social responsibility (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; Moog, Spicer & Böhm 2015; Maher, Valenzuela & Böhm, 2019) and workforce performance (Tavella, 2020).

In the field of public policies, multi-stakeholder partnerships ensure the inclusion of citizens in budget formation and programme development (Simonsen & Robbins, 2000). It is a way to ensure the democratisation of the decision-making process (Buele, Vidueira, Luis Yage & Cuesta 2020). In the field of development, participation was seen as a way of empowering the local actors to take an active role in planning, implementing, and monitoring projects that affect their development (Rogers, Jalal & Boyd, 2012, p. 60). For corporations, it was seen as a vital part of the organisational landscape for corporate social responsibility, fostering the democratisation of the corporation through civic engagement (Moog, Spicer & Böhm, 2015). Lastly, in the workplace, the exclusion of lower-level actors from strategic decision-making was seen as hampering the implementation of strategy by the organisation (Tavella, 2020). The phenomenon of participation within multi-stakeholder settings seems to be a solution for a panopticon of challenges, seeking the inclusion of various actors.

Nonetheless, critics have argued that such participation was de facto used to ensure that the organisation initiating the partnership would reach its objectives. As such, this participation is imposed on the citizens, the local actors or the workforce. Imposing participation can occur through legislation when the Constitution institutionalises "participation rights" (Buele et

al.,2020). It can occur at the initiative of a development agent acting on behalf of a donor organisation to invite the local actors to participate in the planning and implementation of a development project within their local territory (Ponte & Cheyns, 2013). When participation is at the core of corporate social responsibility, a corporation is moulding governance programmes and expectations about these programmes to increase external support for the corporation's interests (Fransen, 2012). Likewise, participation in the context of management meetings where actors are invited to be involved in the broader strategising process of the organisation is enacted by managers assigning responsibility for project tasks to different actors in predefined, specific ways (Tavella, 2020).

One of the central problems here is how participation, imposed as a top-down process rather than enacted as a bottom-up initiative, is appropriated by the actors who are to be involved in it. What is in it for them? Moreover, what kind of participation can we enact when the focus is on the organisational objectives rather than on an inclusion process where participation would bring different voices together (Cheyns, 2014) towards defining and achieving common objectives?

The failure of the last COP 26 (Haley & Mackey, 2021) to reach common objectives that will keep our planet from heating up above two °C is the latest and the most extreme example of what inclusion can 'deliver' when practising participation is only a smokescreen for reaching individual, organisational objectives of the actors that dominate the economic reality of our planet.

So, in this general introduction of my dissertation, I first start (I) by laying out the general features of the research issue, framing, field, and outline. The second section (II) of this general introduction presents my theoretical framework and major contributions, followed by (III) the methodological perspective adopted throughout the three following chapters and (IV) a brief outline of the following chapters.

SECTION I: Introduction

1.1. Brief statement of the general research problem

In the case of internationally funded development projects, the elites that are better educated and have fewer opportunity costs on their time tend to have a dominant voice in the process (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 26), as the deliberations and development actions to be taken are unfamiliar to other local actors.

In the field of corporate social responsibility, private MSIs set up in the name of enabling equal participation of stakeholder groups are seldom achieving their goal of equal participation of various stakeholders in practice (Cheyins, 2014; De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019). Furthermore, research has shown that participation practices around private MSIs support the corporate logic and silence the voices of local actors when their participation in MSIs does not respect this logic (Banerjee, 2018).

Likewise, workplace studies that have regarded participation as 'an activity comprising structures, practices, and processes that help lower-level organisational actors (i.e. middle managers and operating employees) to take part in strategy work' (Tavella, 2020, p. 1) have pointed out that discourse is used to construct subject positions. Specifically, Tavella identified discursive mechanisms of participation in strategy work that could hamper or foster participation. Such as "giving and taking responsibility" and "formulating justifications". When used in different combinations, these two mechanisms trigger two different patterns of participation: one where everyone except top management is included and another where top managers, middle managers and researchers are included and excluded at particular moments.

She showed how managers engage in 'persuasive talk to convince each other to include and exclude others and seek to maintain reputation and respect when they express preferences for a participation that is more open" (Tavella, 2020, p. 3). So based on the managerial interests, they combine discursive mechanisms to hamper or foster participation.

However, moving beyond discursive mechanisms of participation, we still know little about the strategy and agency of participation in multi-stakeholder settings. Specifically: (1) how the broader sociopolitical context MSIs are embedded in influences the enactment of participation within an individual MSI (Moog, Spicer & Böhm, 2015); (2) how local actors can engage in participation within multi-stakeholder settings to reappropriate it in their favour (Banerjee 2018); (3) how is participation enacted as an everyday practice of a multi-stakeholder initiative and with what outcome (Tavella, 2020)?

1.2. Research framing, identified research gaps and contributions

This dissertation, therefore, focuses on the problem of instrumentalisation of participation in multi-stakeholder initiatives, developing its contribution around three core puzzles respectively framed as a macro, a meso and a micro perspective on participation which are introduced in the following paragraphs by drawing from the gaps I have identified in the literature. Such an approach allows me to theorise how participation is constructed, defended, and practised within public multi-stakeholder settings in the three main chapters of this dissertation.

A macro perspective on the regimes of participation (Chapter 1)

From a macro perspective, MSIs are part of larger governance systems in which state and non-state actors interact in numerous ways, but we know little about how these interactions influence the actual workings of MSIs (De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019). The work of Levy, Reinecke and Manning (2016) on the emergence of the sustainable coffee regime provides a glimpse of the broader socio-political context participation within which MSIs are embedded. This work shows that change led by private MSIs results from power struggles over a prolonged period. 'Through time, NGO actors manage to incorporate their voices and worldviews into the dominant coffee sector regime at the price of accepting to transform their vision of sustainability from a more radical environmental and social vision to a set of management processes aligned with corporate goals' (Levy et al., 2016, p. 27). The change process resulting from these power struggles resembles what Gramsci conceptualises as a 'war of position', a 'dynamic long-term strategy to gain legitimacy, secure resources, develop organisational capacity, and win new allies' (Levy, Szejnwald Brown & de Jong, 2010, p. 99). The change resulting from this 'war of position' arises when the weaker actors appropriate the dominant organisational logic of the regime and manage to incorporate elements of their logic within it. However, the features of the value regime that the organisational logic is embedded in and how these features impact the capacity for the agency of local actors – in our case, to enact genuine participation – remain a puzzle. Chapter 1, therefore, adopts a macro perspective on the field MSIs are embedded in to explore how the value regimes that constitute this field shape the unequal participation occurring within the MSIs, through the emergence, deployment, and constant renegotiation of different *regimes of participation*.

A meso perspective on the struggles in defence of participation (Chapter 2)

A meso perspective allows investigating the conditions that make possible such a reappropriation of dominant organisational logic by the weaker actors. Research on LEADER – the MSI-based European program for rural development is the empirical focus of this research and will be properly presented in the subsection devoted to the research field below – allows us to enrich the process model of change, which has been characterised at the macro level of the value regimes (Levy et al., 2016) by offering empirical insight into the meso-level strategic actions deployed by actors *through* publicly-funded MSIs. From current research on the participation of local actors in the Local Action Groups (LAGs, i.e. the MSIs formed under the LEADER program) (Kováč, 2000; Augustyn & Nemes, 2014; Shortall, 2008; Lukic & Obad, 2016), we know that participation tends to be monopolised by consultancy offices, development agencies (Maurel, 2008) or LAG managers who neglect the local perplexities and endorse changes without paying attention to the local (Koutsouris, 2008). Furthermore, research revealed that participation and engagement of local actors took place only in 'invited spaces of rural governance, defined and conceptualised by the State and into which communities are invited' (Shucksmith, 2010, p. 15). As such, the participation of local actors is framed by the hegemonic discourse of Europeanization and State regulation, particularly in Eastern European countries recently incorporated into the EU, which makes the participation of local actors in the work of the LAGs quite challenging (Dargan & Shucksmith, 2008). This brings about our second puzzle, which is studied in Chapter 2 of this dissertation, to explore the ways in which the local actors of a particular LAG managed to build a *translocal* and *trans-scalar* strategy to overcome the threat imposed upon them by the broader hegemonic scales and to defend the access to development resources that was granted to them through participation in the MSI.

A micro-perspective on the practice participation (Chapter 3)

Lastly, the micro perspective adopted in the third chapter of this dissertation focuses on the problem that having different actors make part of a multi-stakeholder setting does not necessarily mean that they actively participate in the work of an MSI (Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014). Research of global multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative, the Forest Stewardship Council, or the Ethical Trading Initiative has predominantly focused on inclusion as criteria to ensure the legitimacy of the MSI, with the participation process being at the heart of deliberative governance. However, actors' actions to enact this participation and to generate actual inclusion remain under-researched. Research focusing on inclusion and participation within this field predominantly looked into formal management initiatives and programmes (Ortlieb, Glauning and Weiss, 2020), neglecting the enactment of participation via the actual actions that actors take *within* the MSI – what I call the *practice of participation*. So participation, how to stimulate it and sustain it towards accomplishing the genuine goals of MSI to take into account the interests of the weaker actors (Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014; Banerjee, 2018), is a crucial question to which we still do not have a good answer. How is participation practised within the MSIs is, therefore, the puzzle Chapter 3 of this dissertation aims to answer. It does so by characterising what constitutes a *substantive* practice of participation as opposed to a *procedural* practice of participation.

In summary, this dissertation answers how participation is constructed (chapter 1), how it is defended (Chapter 2) and how it is practised (Chapter 3) by discussing three gaps identified in the literature and making three types of contributions:

1. Insight into the political dynamics that shape the environment MSIs operate, i.e. the broader *regimes of participation* (Levy, 2008; Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016).

2. Insight into the agency behind the translocal framework (Banerjee, 2018; Leglise, 2021) and the *translocal and trans-scalar strategies* that local actors may build to defend their participation.
3. Insights into the practices of participation that local actors engage in (Mantere & Vaara, 2008, Tavella, 2020, Brielmaier & Friesl, 2021) to enact a *substantive vs a procedural practice of participation*.

I argue these insights are crucial if we want to tackle today's grand challenges effectively – as they demand the substantive participation of numerous actors with diverging interests, a grounding of participation into the local scale and translocal alliances, and the articulation of a broader macrolevel regime of participation.

1.3. The research field: LEADER in Croatia

In order to contribute to the three gaps mentioned above, I have chosen to study public multi-stakeholder initiatives established as part of the European Union program named LEADER – an acronym for Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy, which was launched on the 19 March 1991 by the European Union as part of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), to foster local participation in rural development policies.

While LEADER is deployed through all European countries, this dissertation focuses on its implementation in the context of the so-called "Europeanization process" of new member states in Eastern Europe and the Balkans, where EU funding, rules, policies and programmes are being "downloaded" by the national States (Augustyn & Nemes, 2014).

LEADER is a model of rural development based on partnership, programming and local participation aiming at the realisation of integrated rural development to achieve more democratic use of resources and reduce regional and social inequalities (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019, p. 13). As a new model of territorial governance in areas once administered by collective agrarian structures in the New Member States, LEADER was perceived in these States as a western institutional model based on political democracy and local autonomy (Csurgó et al., 2008; Maurel, 2008). It promoted a new form of territorial governance based on 'an arena with institutions and networks, processes of coordination and interdependence, and horizontal forms of interaction between stakeholders' (Maurel, 2008, p. 517). Framed by the European Union and regulated by the national state as part of its broader Rural Development Programme, it is designed to unfold within the local territories through the work of Local Action Groups (LAGs). LAGs' constituents include, by rule, representatives of public, private and civil society organisations who jointly decide what development projects will be granted the European LEADER funding in the territory. These decisions follow the procedures established within the LEADER program, defined by the European Union and the rules defined by the national state. The LAGs are the MSIs that will be the object of study in this dissertation. In the context of Croatia, the emergence and development of multi-stakeholder initiatives have been steered by two major sets of events. The first is the Homeland War of the 1990s, which started along with Croatia's political and economic transition. The second is Croatia's accession to the European Union, which was completed in 2014, the year the LEADER program was thus launched in the country.

The war times have strengthened the state's role, putting the fight for sovereignty first and focusing on creating national unity to face the war's social, economic and political consequences. The forging of the state was exclusively in the hands of the elected government. Since its independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, Croatia underwent a constitutional redesign in the 1990s. One of the changes was the redirection of funds from the regional to the central

government. Almost 90% of the overall national budget funds were put under the management of the central government (Institut za razvoj i međunarodne odnose," n.d.). As Petak and colleagues (2019, p.3) state, there was, and to a certain degree, there still is a predominant role of the executive over legislative power in the policy-making processes.

Nonetheless, the transformation to a democratic society and the chaos of war have also created space and a need for civic engagement. Civic engagement was incarnated in civil society. It manifested in relieving the humanitarian and refugee crisis. Civic engagement, as well as the development of civil society, was organised around the distribution of humanitarian aid, social work with the war victims and denunciation of war crimes through international and national NGOs. NGOs assisted in overcoming crises related to refugees and displaced persons and were helping people that lost their job and/or livelihoods during the process of privatisation of the economy (Bežovan,2003, p. 124) and transition from socialism to capitalism. Later on, they played a key role in the development of civil society and promoted ideas of pluralism in the public sphere (Cohen & Arato, 1992 in Bežovan,2003, p. 125). Regardless of the importance of NGOs in the democratic life of Croatia, the first two decades following Croatian independence in 1991 have been characterised by the reluctance and, at times, straightforward refusal of the state to develop a legal and financial framework supportive of civil society organisations (Petak et al., 2019). These struggles are important to mention here since they will play out, as will be seen in Chapter 1, in the way in which LEADER was deployed in Croatia through what we characterise as two regimes of participation, one of which we qualify as "State-led", and the other, as "NGO-led", effectively sharing the field constituted by the LEADER program at the national level.

Indeed, the balance of power and the nature of the relationship between NGOs and the State evolved as Croatia started its negotiations to become a member of the European Union in 2003.

The perspective of EU membership gave new momentum to civil society organisations that were already working on rural development and democratisation in Croatia. The perspective of European funding and an established place in the policy-making process, such as being members of the Supervisory Board for the implementation of the Rural Development Programme and members of the Board for programming the Rural Development programme 2014-2020, provided both the opportunity for the professionalisation of the civil society and opportunity for more engagement with the local community.

It is in this research context that my dissertation follows the unfolding of the LEADER programme in Croatia, focusing on (1) The process of construction of the LEADER field in Croatia at the national level and the distinct *regimes of participation* in which the local MSIs are embedded, that emerged as either State-led or NGO-led during this time; (2) The strategic action of the local actors of one of the Local Action Groups (LAGs, the LEADER-based MSIs) to fight for their interests *through* the multiple local, national and international scales of this emerging field, and lastly (3) how participation is practised *within* the LAGs.

1.4. The dissertation approaches

This dissertation investigates how participation is constructed, defended, and practised through its three articles. It draws from the lived experience and managerial doubts I faced as a manager of a public multi-stakeholder organisation working on sustainable development in the south Croatian islands. As already pointed out, I adopt a macro, meso, and micro perspective on the deployment of LEADER and the work of Local Action Groups in Croatia to shed light on the embeddedness of participation in broader regimes, on the defence of participation through multiple scales and regimes of the LEADER field, and the enactment of the practice of

participation in multi-stakeholder settings, being constantly attentive to how power relations shape participation.

In Chapter 1, Levy's notion of value regimes (Levy, 2008; Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy Reinecke & Manning, 2016) is used to investigate the political dynamics that frame the enactment of participation concerning the economic, normative and cultural dimensions of a field. The field emerging as the publicly-funded LEADER-based MSIs are established, actors take on roles to manage and enact them, and rivalry unfolds between competing regimes in which LEADER is to be embedded. The findings suggest that participation is a politically constructed process. Distinct actors with their bases of power established in the state or civil society attempt to impose their own economic and normative values and their preferred mode of governance in the deployment of LEADER in Croatia. They aim to establish legitimacy in the evolving field formed by LEADER and to shift the hegemonic logic in their favour. Such dynamics result in the emergence of two different regimes of participation. We observe that the capacity of MSIs to be inclusive and to construct participation will vary depending on the regime of participation in which individual MSIs are embedded.

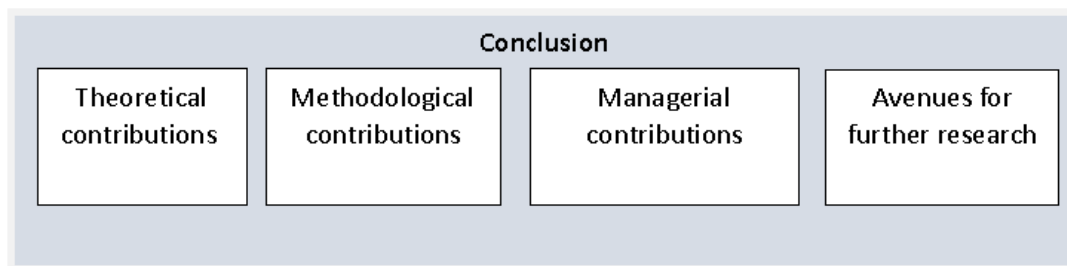
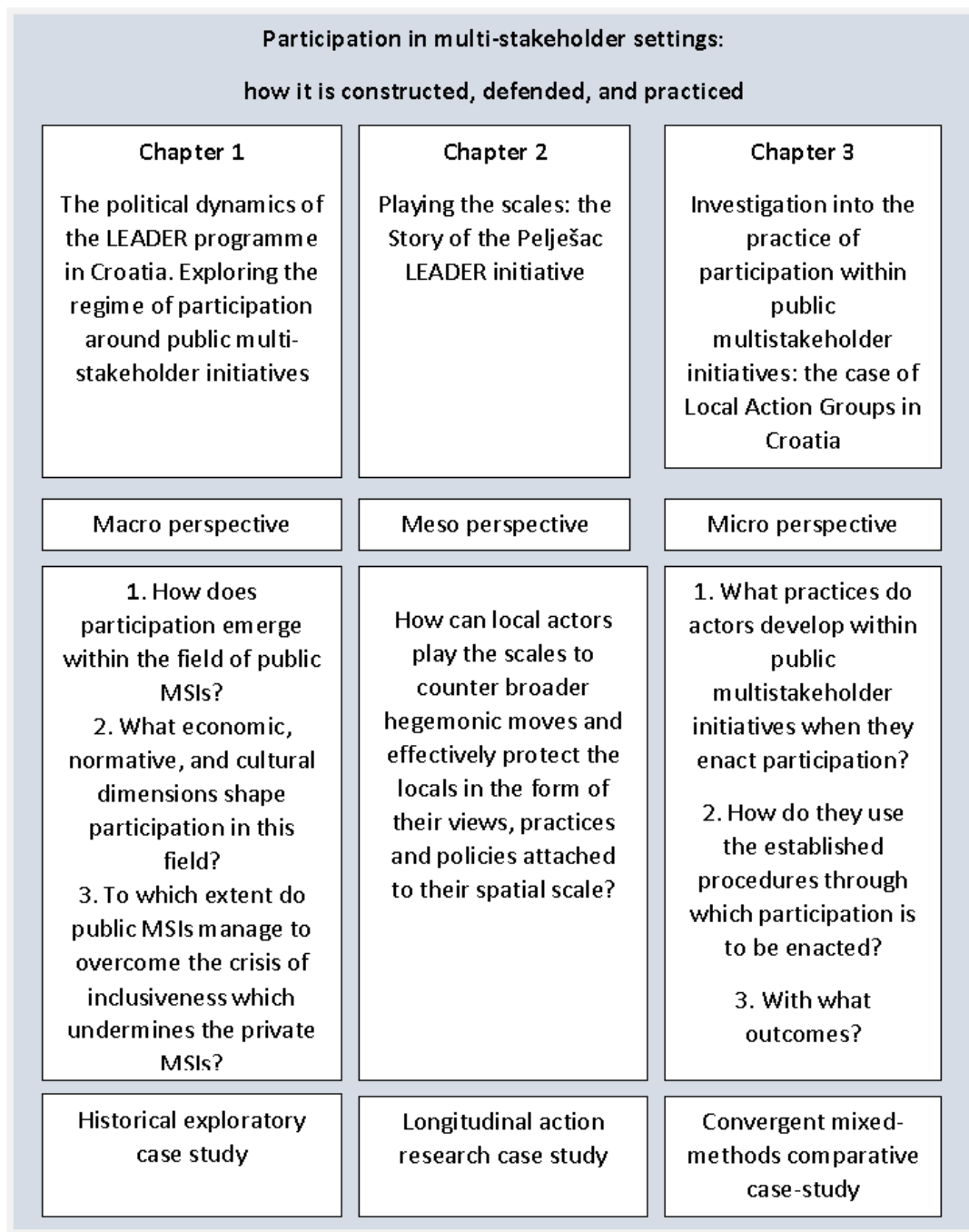
In Chapter 2, Spicer's concept of rescaling (2006), through which regimes are produced on different spatial scales, provides an analytical framework to investigate the strategic actions that local actors engage in to defend their participative regime and, thereby their ways of using the public multi-stakeholder partnership. The findings suggest that the local actors play the scales, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of their local scale over time, by appropriating the dominant organisational logic of the national scale and by federating alternative, local scale forces. The capacity of local actors to defend their participative regime across multiple scales depends on their capacity to 'play the scales.' That is: (1) the capacity of a local publicly funded MSI to build a translocal alliance that will provide the knowledge necessary to the local actors to reappropriate the organisational logic of the broader hegemonic regimes and (2) the capacity to deploy a trans-scalar strategy that will exert pressure on the

hegemonic blocs of the larger scales in order to achieve hegemonic transformation and safeguard their local interests in the broader regimes.

Chapter 3 extends the value regimes framework, drawing from the methodology of Chevalier (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016; Chevalier, Mačiulyté, Razafimahefa & Dedeire, 2017) that investigates the forms of coordination of collective action that favour socio-economic development at the local level, to investigate how participation is practised. To do so, we introduce the concept of territorial capital. Findings are presented as a model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings, demonstrating how actors use (or not) participation through (non)activation of territorial capital, an open (or closed) mode of governance and bottom-up (or top-down) deliberation practices. This model delineates the actions that support the enactment of *substantive* vs *procedural* participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fritz & Binder, 2018).

Figure 1 presents the overall structure of the dissertation.

Figure 1 Overview of the general dissertation structure



SECTION II – THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

With participation in public multi-stakeholder settings as its research object, this research posits its theoretical framing at the crossroads of critical management literature on multi-stakeholder initiatives and the development studies literature on participative rural development. In this section, I develop the rationale for such theoretical framing.

II.1. The ideal of multi-stakeholder initiatives: participation to foster inclusion

Through a complex network of actors with rules that define the scope and nature of participation (Maher, Valenzuela, and Böhm, 2019), MSIs create spaces for dialogue and new forms of civic or cross-sectoral "soft regulation" (Moog et al., 2015, p. 2) which help to "democratise the corporation" and fill regulatory gaps in the global economy (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). They provide 'open' participation/negotiation mechanisms bringing on a global scale; national and multinational producers, buyers, wholesalers, banks, and distributors, and with the local scale, are represented by international social and environmental NGOs and the local actors (Fransen & Kolk, 2007; Cheyns, 2015). Enacted through multi-stakeholder alliances, partnerships, standards, and round tables, they follow different procedural approaches resulting in a „dialogue platform or an independent organisation with its governance structure“ (Martens, Gansemans, Orbie and D'Haese, 2018, p. 3). Such as power-sharing rules that allow for equal participation (Luttrell, 2008), the establishment of working groups (Schouten, Leroy and Glasbergen, 2012) or public consultation (Cheyns and Riisgaard 2014).

The practice of participation within multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as the multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) within the corporate world, emerged with globalisation

(Soundararajan, Brown & Wicks, 2019;). The underlying premise was that globalisation has led to a diminished capacity of the state to regulate corporations (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007), thereby creating a 'regulatory vacuum' (Matten & Crane, 2005, p.172). This regulatory vacuum in the face of a weak state resulted in the need for new global governance in the form of multi-stakeholder initiatives. Multi-stakeholder governance, including NGOs and corporations, works together to fill the governance gap left by the weakened state (Matten & Crane, 2005.; Scherer, 2018; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). Stakeholder participation within multi-stakeholder initiatives, therefore, facilitates 'the inclusion of those affected by political and economic decisions, increases trust, and empowers stakeholders to become active co-creators and contribute with their knowledge (Scherer & Voegtlin, 2018, p. 39).

These multi-stakeholder initiatives take different forms and sizes (Cheyns, 2014; Fransen, 2011) and operate at different scales (Martens et al., 2018). They tackle issues ranging from conflict diamonds (Kimberley process) to project financing (Equator Principles), from general business principles (United Nations Global Compact) to reporting business sustainability performance (Global Reporting Initiative), or from sustainable resource management (Forest Stewardship Council) to transparency standards needed to create accountability in resource-rich countries (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) (Zeyen, Beckmann & Wolters, 2014). They are set to close the governance gap State has failed to do and ensure more participation of the local actors, thereby allowing them to live better.

However, such positivist approaches to the political role of corporations taking a front seat in the issues of multi-stakeholder governance have been fiercely disputed. Accordingly, local actors' place and participation within these MSIs have been the subject of numerous criticisms. Cheyns (2015, p. 2) has pointed out that 'understanding participation involves examining its mechanisms and their capacity to provide several elements enabling participants to make themselves heard and to operate not only within a plurality of stakeholders (the founding

authority of the MSIs) but also within a plurality of principles of justice. Justice is understood as 'social arrangements that permit all (adult) members of society to interact with one another as peers' (Fraser 2013, p. 164 as quoted in Blue, Rasol & Fast, 2019). Utting (2002) demonstrated this is not the case, as MSIs formed to regulate corporate conduct have failed to include marginalised workers, trade unions and local actors.

Such failure of participation to include the interests and the marginalised stakeholders as peers unfolds in various ways. The first wave of exclusion is inviting' stakeholders to participate, making participation open to some and closed to others (Cheyns, 2014). Secondly, expert knowledge of the corporations and international standards is valued over local forms of knowledge (Banerjee 20,08, Cheyns, 2014). Such exclusion of the local forms of knowledge results in silencing actors' voices who counter the corporate logic (Banerjee, 2018). In order to participate, actors are required to take up a subject position made available by a given discourse (Mayes, Pini & Macdonald 2013, p. 844). As this discourse is framed by 'international institutions like the United Nations and the World Bank, categories are inimical to many groups negatively impacted by corporations' (Spivak 1999 as quoted in Banerjee, 2008, p. 36-37). Putting forward the interests of the corporations and excluding the interests of the marginalised stakeholders from the MSIs. Along the same vein, research demonstrated that asymmetries of resources translate into asymmetries in the capacity to participate. Specifically, the resources of the farmers or the local NGOs are limited concerning the corporations (Fuchs et al., 2011; Nelson & Tallontire, 2014, Kohne; 2014, as quoted in Cheyns & Riisgaard 2014)., Lastly, as MSIs and their standards interact with the local political and economic contexts, they are often seized by powerful actors embedded in hierarchical local power relations (Cheyns & Riisgaard 2014,.

The major sources of critique on participation within MSIs have focused on power relations at work (Utting, 2002; Fransen & Kolk, 2007; Banerjee, 2008; Ponte & Cheyns, 2013; Cheyns, 2014; Martens et al., 2018; Soundararajan, Brown & Wicks 2019) revealing that such

participatory arrangements did not change the power structures of governance or affected the outcome of participation processes beyond rhetorical practices (Paloniemi et al., 2015, p. 339). As pointed out by Banerjee (2018, p. 810), 'in virtually all cases of consultations with local communities' the main concern of market and state actors was to identify the conditions under which their activity could proceed rather than addressing the concerns of the local communities, such as the social, economic and environmental impacts, and what other economic development opportunities are available.

Therefore, a formation of translocal governance networks that operate locally but have influences across multiple regional and national levels is needed (Banerjee, 2018, p. 813). Such a territorial approach to participation within multi-stakeholder settings resonates with the work done in the field of development studies, specifically on the subject of participatory development.

II.2. Participation as a new development paradigm

Participation within participatory development refers to the 'involvement of a significant number of persons in situations or actions that enhance their well-being such as their income, security, self-esteem etc.' (Nawaz, 2013, p. 27). It is expected to lead to better design of development projects, better target the beneficiaries of these projects and be more cost-effective and timelier in delivering project inputs (Mansuri & Rao 2004, p.6). It focuses on the local approaches to development and sensitises people to participate in development programmes (Cooke & Kotari, 2001). Such participation is achieved through 'involvement in decision-making processes, implementing programmes, their sharing in the benefits of development programmes, and their involvement in the efforts to evaluate such programmes (Adebo 2000

quoted in Nawaz 2013). As such, it constitutes a 'new paradigm' of development (Chambers, 1994) where participation is a crucial means for ensuring inclusion that allows the poor to have control over decisions (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Participatory development, therefore, refers to community involvement in development. It is an alternative policy approach that aims to transform pre-established top-down power relations. It means 'people who have both the right and duty to participate in solving their problems, have greater responsibilities in assessing their own needs, mobilising local resources and suggesting new solutions, as well as creating and maintaining local organisations' Nawaz (2013, p. 27). Such an approach emerged as a recognition of error and the inadequacy of top-down approaches to development in the 1970s (Nawaz, 2013), specifically in agriculture (Chambers, 1994). One where development is not just about economic growth but 'the promotion of redistribution and the reduction of inequalities' (Chambers, 1994, p. 965). In 1970, western NGOs emerged to address poverty in the Global South by fostering participative development, as they are said to be more honest and effective than the State (Van Rooy, 2014). They developed techniques that 'recognised local knowledge and "put the last first", such as farming systems research and rapid and participatory rural appraisal in the 1980s (Chambers, 1983); increasing the use of participation as a norm in the sustainable development agenda of the 1990s (e.g. UNCED, 1992)' (Reed, 2008 p. 2418). Nevertheless, despite its wide adoption, several practitioners and researchers have judged such an approach as an 'act of faith in development' (Cleaver, 2001) with little empirical evidence behind it.

Cleaver (2001, p. 53) pointed out that 'participation' in development activities was translated into a managerial exercise based on 'toolboxes' of procedures and techniques, turning away from its radical roots that were the participation of local actors in framing development activities, and problematisation of development. Mainstreaming participation made it an instrument for promoting pragmatic policy interests and focusing on the efficiency of projects (Mansuri & Rao;004, Cleaver 2001). Furthermore, rather than 'local knowledge' to build

development projects, the local actors acquire 'new forms of planning knowledge' (Moose, 2001, p. 32). The concept of participation legitimises the previously established project priorities established by the donors outside the territory to be developed (Moose 2001, as quoted in Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Therefore, participatory development approaches have failed to empower the local actors in the Global South, as the focus was on implementing the project and achieving project results, as framed by the donor organisation, rather than answering the demands of local actors (Cleaver, 2004; Moose, 2004). Furthermore, project focus and the quest for efficiency enacted participation as a scapegoat to ensure the adoption of the project by the local communities rather than the construction of the project by considering the local knowledge and needs (Moose, 2000 ;Uma & Kothari, 2001). Lastly, participation in development projects overlooked numerous communal activities which occurred through daily interactions and socially embedded arrangements, focusing on highly visible and formal local institutions (Cleaver,2004, p. 53). As such, it failed to consider the local forms of cultural and social capital that would reduce transaction costs and enable participants to reap the benefits of participation (See Ray, 2002).

Building on the lessons learned in the Global South, the third approach to development emerged in the 1990s, the neoendogenous or territorial approach (Ray 2000, 2001, 2002). The territorial approach to development was inscribed in the larger debate on how to resurrect the rural economy and, more importantly, its relationships to the broader society and, therefore, 'the nature of public interventions in the rural social economy' (Ray, 20,02 p. 225). It suggested that development is best animated by focusing on the needs of the overall territory rather than a specific sector of the rural economy (Ray 2000,2002). Such development is to be achieved by reorienting development activities, the economic one included, to exploit the physical and human resources of the territory to retain a maximum of the resultant benefits within the territory. Therefore, territories must have a dynamic relationship with the state and the supra-

state, in line with the contemporary decentralisation and the modus operandi of the "managerial state" (Ray, 2002, p. 229). Lastly, the territorial approach to development was focused on the needs, capacities, and perspectives of the local people assuming an important ethical dimension by emphasising the principle and the process of local participation in the design and implementation of development actions. Local participation was manifested through 'adopting cultural, environmental and community values within development intervention' (Ray 2002, p. 228).

Such an approach comes in response to globalisation, whose global inter-relatedness has inflicted severe ecological, economic, and social vulnerabilities to the territories (Horlings & Marsden, 2014). The territorial approach 'becomes more important in the view of EU members states (EU, 20007), in European policies for territorial cohesion (EC, 2010a), in the development strategies and practices for the EU programming period after 2013, and in the Green Paper on Research and innovation funding (EC, 2010b)' (Horlings & Marsden, 2014, p. 5). Therefore, the European Union LEADER initiative emerges as a demonstration of the strengthening politico-economic relationships between the territory and the regional, national and transnational levels, with the territory representing the new dimension of economic organisation and system regulation (Ra,y 2002).

LEADER, standing for *Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*, was part of the New Rural Paradigm (Ray 199; OECD, 2006; Horlings & Marsden, 2014, Navarro et al., 2016) 'which is a model of rural development, based on partnership, programming and local participation aiming at the realisation of integrated rural development, in order to achieve more efficient use of resources and a reduction in regional and social inequalities (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019, p. 13). It was established within the first reform of the EU structural funds in 1991(Lošťák & & Hudečková, 2008), representing a move towards broader-based rural development programmes structured around local resources (Moseley, 1997) by joining together 'local aspirations with assets within and beyond the territory', such as funds from the

EU – in the process of mobilisation of place, space, and democratic decision-making (Shucksmith, 2012, p. 12). Enshrined in the Cork Declaration of 1997 was the participation and bottom-up approach to development that harnesses rural communities' creativity and solidarity (Navarro et al., 2016, p. 271).

Power unfolding around the development was therefore reconceptualised as 'being a matter of social production (groups capacity to act) rather than of social control (by government or elites) that is with 'power to' rather than 'power over' (Shucksmith, 2012, p. 15). LEADER redistributed political power by giving preference to local actors and partially discriminating in favour of the LAGs and against state bureaucracy, at the same time restricting its function by supporting capacity building and the creation of LAGs as the institutions that are to implement this territorial approach to development (Kovach, 2000). LAG is there to connect and coordinate actions to improve the results of the development programme. LAGs are there to improve social relationships (Hoffman & Hoffman, 2018) based on collaboration, co-partnerships and stakeholder consultation (Secco et al., 2011). Such coordination of the local action is intrinsically dependent on the relational dimensions between the local actors (Torre & Filippi, 2005, as quoted in Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020). Specifically, it is established via the proximity between the stakeholders and the production and exchange of knowledge among them (see Esparcia et al., 2016). As such, it reinforces the capacity of local actors and 'helps implement the territorial project' (Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020, p. 66).

To capture these multiple dimensions of the LAG, researchers have developed the notion of territorial capital (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016; Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020), which is based on the development of both human and social capital (Navarro & Cejudo, 2020). Social capital is 'defined as networks working towards a common good, and human capital is seen as a collection of traits used to work towards a common goal' (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019, p. 13). Firstly it focuses on how the local economy and production are integrated within

the broader system, such as the territory. Secondly, it refers to the proximity of the relations that form the social capital. Lastly, this 'territorial system works according to a system of rules and norms, creating a model for local governance through partnership structures and cooperation networks (Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020, p. 83). Combining these three dimensions, LAGs manage to mobilise localised assets to 'form the basis for the potential economic competitiveness of the area' (Lacquement, Chevalier & Cejudo, 2020, p. 67)

Such an approach delineates that the capacity of the local actors organised around LAG to defend their capacity of decision-making on their development depends on the combination of 'hybrid approaches and negotiation between top-down and bottom-up dynamics and between local and external influences' (Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020 p. 84). Furthermore, whilst this approach delineates the dynamics within the territory that will lead to participatory development, such as the one promoted by LEADER, we still lack insight into the strategic action actors behind these hybrid approaches, negotiations and external influences. That is why we investigate the strategic action that mobilises territorial capital.

So, participation and how it is constructed, defended, and practised will depend on the strategy adopted by the actors within the LAG. This questions the capacity of actors to build strategies that will allow them to reconfigure interests, coalitions, and alliances within hegemonic structures (Wittneben, Okereke, Banerjee & Levy, 2012) and thereby reposition the power relations in their favour.

Drawing from my posture as a manager, I shed light on the capacity of agency that goes beyond the determinism of the territory and other forms of determinism. Such as the one of the state. From the literature in management and organisation studies that have focused on MSIs that aim to govern corporate conduct to the literature on development studies that focused on participation to mobilise the territorial capital to foster economic and social development, we can see that participation is not simply embedded in a specific history but is a process of co-

construction. Furthermore, it is a governed process, and as such, it has a political, social, and economic dimension (Levy & Spicer, 2013). Furthermore, the hegemonic structures partially restrain this process through which participation is constructed. Nonetheless, actors within these structures have the agential capacity to transform the structures they are inscribed into (see (Levy & Egan, 2003; Spicer & Sewel, 2010; Levy et al., 2016; Palpacuer & Seignour, 2019).

II.3. Participation as a politically constructed process: value regimes & hegemonic power

Participation 'means different things to those who govern and those who are governed' (Chatterjee, 2004, as quoted in Ehrnström-Fuentes 2016, p. 435). In as much, employing a strategy through strategic action whereby social actors create and maintain stable social worlds represents a form of power (Levy & Scully, 2007). Such power depends on the ability of actors to influence tactics, agenda-setting, and the power embedded in social and technical systems (Maguire, 2004). Political actors not only analyse but also seeks to transform organisational fields through a combination of discursive, organisational, and economic strategies (Levy et al., 2010, p. 90). The organisational field is a community of organisations that share a common meaning system and whose participants interact more frequently and exclusively with one another than with other actors in the field (Levy & Scully, 2008), pointing to the nature of the interaction between actors and structures. Therefore, actors with fewer resources can outmanoeuvre their rivals if 'doted with a clever strategy, good timing, and some luck (Levy & Egan, 2003, p. 813).

Such strategic theory of power draws from Gramsci's concept of *hegemony* as an "opinion - moulding activity' based on dialectical relations among social forces through which particularistic worldviews are naturalised and made to appear universally valid and advantageous to everyone (Cox, 1980; Morton 2007 as quoted in Girei 2016, p. 197). Laclau & Mouffe (2014) applied this concept of hegemony to a broader form of social relation. They point out that 'hegemony has the very precise conditions of possibility, both from the point of view of what a relation requires to be conceived as hegemonic and from the perspective of the construction of a hegemonic subject' (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014 p. xii). In organisation and management studies, this understanding of hegemony has been further transposed to a bottom-up understanding of the mosaic of political, economic and discursive struggles in governance (Newell & Levy, 2002), focusing on the process of coalition building, conflict and accommodation that drive social change (Levy & Egan, 2003) focusing on the role of NGOs and corporation (Bo, Böhm & Reynolds, 2019). Levy (Levy 2008; Levy & Spicer 2013; Levy Reinecke & Manning 2016)

Constructing and using participation: the regimes of participation

Levy (2008, Levy & Spicer 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning 2016) has developed the concept of value regimes to investigate such dynamics. Value regimes entail a network of actors and organisations who stabilise 'two inter-related dimensions of value, economic processes of production and exchange, as well as the normative and cultural values' (Levy & Spicer, 2013, p. 673) operating as a mechanism of governance that refers to 'norms that channel and constrain activity and its impact' (Levy, 2008, p. 946).

This concept is appropriate to investigate the political process through which participation is constructed. In the first chapter, the analytical framework of value regimes is used to describe

the state and the NGO participation regime as mechanisms of governance that privilege a certain economic process of production and exchange and the normative and cultural values that define the level of participation within a given MSI. The analytical framework of value regimes allows us to investigate the multiple dimensions of the LEADER field that is constituted as a multi-governance context (see Berriet-Sollicec, Laidin, Lepicier et al., 2016) of State institutions and publicly funded networks where the state and its stakeholders interact through the process of coordination and interdependence (Maurel, 2008). Second, a value regime operates as a mechanism of governance, referring to 'the rules, institutions, and norms that channel and constrain economic activity and its impacts' (Levy, 2008, p. 946). Within the LEADER field, this is manifested through the design of the LEADER measure and the setting of funding conditions or demands on institutional setting at the local level (Berriet-Sollicec & al, 2016, p. 30). As such, it allows us to investigate the strategic action actors engage in through participation. Lastly, Levy and colleagues (2015) point out that the outcomes of power struggles are embedded in multi-dimensional value regimes. A systematic perspective on the complex and dynamic process of constructing a value regime reveals the strategic agency of challengers, such as the NGOs, over the longer term (Levy et al., 2015, p. 33). Such an approach allows investigation of the inclusiveness capacity of the State and NGO regimes within the field of public MSIs, such as the LEADER field.

Furthermore, in order to investigate the enactments of participation in the form of participation practices within the MSIs, the neo-Gramscian framework is complemented with the notion of territorial capital.

In order to understand how participation is practised, chapter 3 focuses on the actions actors take when they enact participation. Expanding the neo-Gramscian framework developed in chapter 1 with the notion of territorial capital (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016; Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020) allows us to investigate the enactments of participation, giving the regime of participation it is embedded. Such a perspective is critical for understanding the

strategic actions that will define agency capacity and, therefore, the possibility of inclusiveness within MSIs. Secondly, as Moog and colleagues have pointed out (2015, p. 485), to understand what kind of political space MSIs provide, we need to understand MSIs concerning shifting opportunities and power dynamics within their broader political terrain. Such would be LEADER within the European Union and LEADER as a State measure. Investigation of LEADER, therefore, allows us to take account of the broader field of governance of institutions within the field of MSIs and understand the fundamental compromises and tensions that participation in such arenas brings (Moog et al., 2015; Levy et al., 2016).

The findings suggest that participation represents a process that resembles the 'war on position' through which multiple bases of power shift their economic and normative values as well as their system of governance to gain legitimacy resulting in the emergence of two value regimes, the state and the NGO. Therefore, the capacity of MSIs to be inclusive will depend on the characteristics of the economic, normative and governance dimensions of the value regime that will impose itself within the field of public MSIs. So now the question is, how can actors defend their vision of the world?

Defending participation: the capacity of 'actors to play the scales'

The characteristics of the participation regime described in chapters one and chapter 3 do not apply when we descend to the micro-scale of local actors. Nonetheless, understanding agency as a form of strategic action local actors engage in to resist hegemony deriving from other scales is critical to understanding how the participation of local actors is sustained and deployed, allowing resistance movements to achieve their objectives.

Understanding how and in what contexts locals engage in strategic action to play the hegemonic processes deriving from other scales in their favour is crucial if we are to understand how the participation of local actors is defended through time and space within larger governance systems; and, as such,, ensures inclusive environments.

Chapter 2, therefore, suggests that appropriation of dominant discourses and knowledge allows the local actors to play the scales, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time. They do so by constructing a (1) translocal alliance that will grab different elements from different scales to build a (2) trans-scalar strategy which becomes central to the evolution of spatial scales through time as it exerts pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various actors operating on various scales, which form the translocal alliance.

Specifically, rescaling is a form of strategic action that relates to the organisational mechanism pushing for the historical bloc's adjustment by appropriating discursive and political processes (Mollona & Pareschi, 2020) that exist on other scales involved in the construction of a trans-local alliance of actors located in diverse territories in Europe. The translocal alliance provides the local actors with the necessary knowledge to counter the hegemonic bloc. This knowledge is then deployed as a trans-scalar strategy across the scales by exerting pressure on the hegemonic bloc at various national and European scales, triggering a re-examination of hegemonic knowledge. Chapter 2 defines this as playing the scales. Playing the scales implies that local actors protect their political scale from broader hegemonic diffusion by appropriating hegemonic knowledge to their advantage.

The substantial and procedural practice of participation

We know participation can be either procedural or substantive (Martens et al., 2018; Paloniemi et al., 2015). Depending on the context, which can be an organisation (Adamson et al., 2020;

Tavella, 2020), a multi-stakeholder initiative (Banerjee, 2018; de Bakker et al., 2018; Martens et al.; 2018), or a process of governance (Lee & Romano, 2013; Paloniemi et al., 2015; Grosser, 2016; Schleifer, 2019), unequal power relations, knowledge and economic resources might influence the quality of participation. However, how these power relations, knowledge, and economic resources are enacted through the practice of participation within a multi-stakeholder initiative remains unclear.

Without this knowledge, participation risks continuing 'reproducing inequalities and creating false promises' (Paloniemi et al., 2018), leading to more social inequality and land abandonment in rural areas. Such trends will only contribute to climate change by fostering a decline in agrobiodiversity, forest fires and the decline of agricultural surfaces. Beyond rural development, knowing how to practice participation is crucial for tackling today's grand challenges – as they demand the active engagement of numerous actors with diverging interests. Therefore, chapter 3 of my thesis points out that we need to move beyond investigations into discursive practices and adopt a holistic approach toward investigating practices that enact participation; without this knowledge, participation risks 'reproducing inequalities and creating false promises' (Paloniemi et al., 2018). To address this issue in chapter 3, I build a model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings to demonstrate how actors practice participation through activation of territorial capital, mode of governance, and deliberation practices. It delineates the actions that lead to the enactment of substantive or procedural participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fritz & Binder, 2018).

SECTION III - Methodological perspective

Suppose we are to tackle the grand challenges of today justly. In that case, I argue it is necessary to have more insight into the nature and practice of participation within multi-stakeholder settings, and even more so within public multi-stakeholder settings established to work towards the common good – as they demand the substantive participation of numerous actors with diverging interests, using public funds.

Drawing from these puzzles and inspired by the challenges I faced as a manager of such an organisation, I have framed the present dissertation around three questions; how is participation constructed, how is it defended, and how is it practised? Firstly, how do we construct participation within a multi-stakeholder setting when this participation is imposed by external funding (the EU) and external regulation (the state). Secondly, how can such participation, imposed on the local actors, be defended in the face of hegemonic pressures so that it serves the interests of the local actors? Lastly, how is participation practised as an everyday practice, what type of participation does it enact, and to what end?

The present dissertation aims to provide an insight into the political dynamics that shape the environment MSIs are embedded (Levy, 2008; Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016), (2) the strategic action of local actors behind it (Banerjee 2018) and the practices local actors engage in (Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Tavella, 2020; Brielmaier & Friesl, 2021) to sustain it. It does so by building on the above-mentioned managerial questioning. As such, it is situated within the critical stream of literature in organisation and management studies that aims to reveal the socially constructed character of what is presented as natural and given, thereby exposing power relations and the phenomenon of domination (Leglise, 2021, p. 196). Specifically, I intend to demonstrate that participation is a politically constructed process through time and across spatial scales.

In what follows, I present my research's ontological and epistemological assumptions and the type of methodological perspective stemming from it.

III.1. Ontological and epistemological considerations

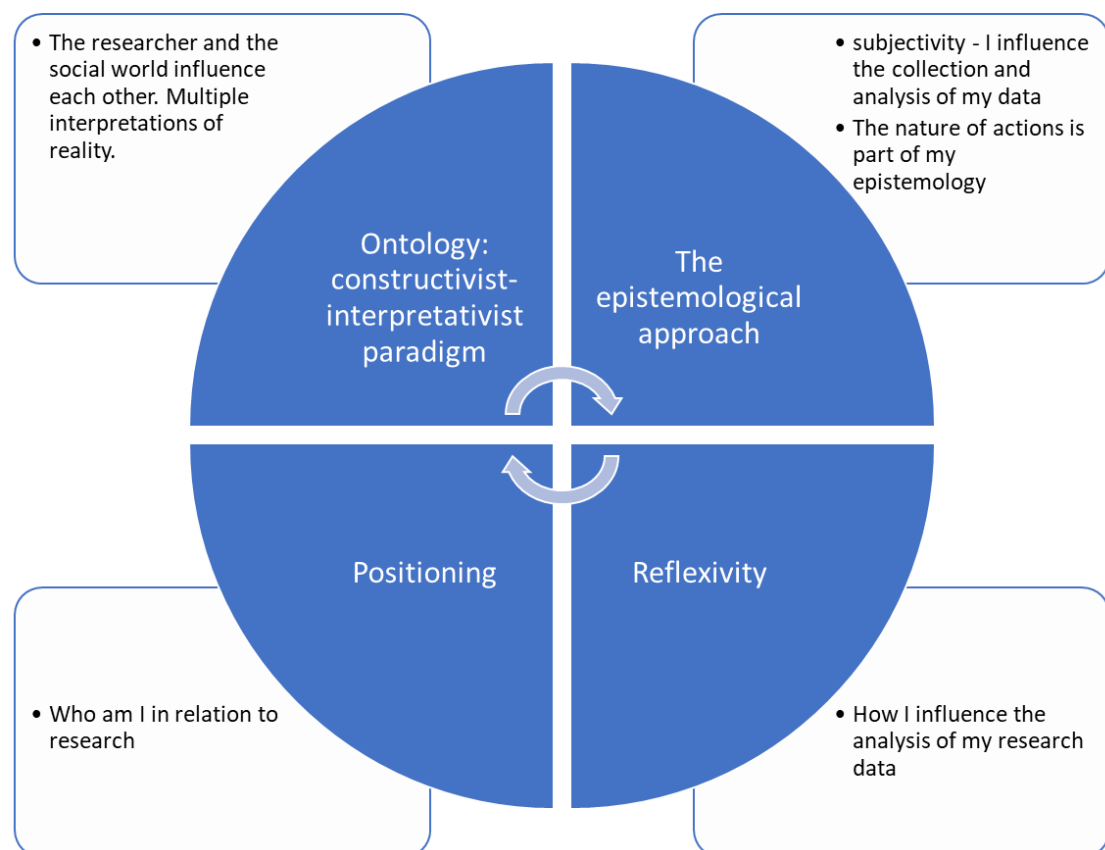
According to Pitard (2017, p. 2), the relation of a researcher to his or her data is based upon philosophical beliefs and assumptions accumulated throughout a lifetime which inhibit the unknowing mind of the researcher. Therefore, the managerial questioning that underlines this dissertation dictates that the ontological assumption of my research stems from Harvey's (1973, p. 289-290) understanding that research has to be directed to discovering the transformation rules whereby society is constantly being restructured rather to finding causes in the isolated sense. Specifically, I regard reality as socially constructed, 'thus questioning the objectivity of knowledge and reality, and rejecting the possibility of the neutrality of a researcher' (Lacerda, 2016, p. 80).

This means that this dissertation frames the narrative of one social representation of reality, reflecting my choices on what was significant in answering my research questions. However, it is also materialist, given that individuals are regarded as the product of specific historical and social forces. Like Lacerda (2016, p. 80), I argue that the behaviour of individuals is conditioned by social norms and material artefacts, which support the historical context in which they are included. Therefore, for me, the reality is socially constructed, and the structure resulting from these social processes conditions the behaviour of individuals.

In line with the assumptions above, the epistemology that underlines my research is based on the interpretative/constructivist research paradigm that assumes that the researcher and the social world impact each other and that the findings are inevitably influenced by the researcher's

perspective and values (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). It posits that researchers' values are intrinsic in all phases of the research process and that the research findings emerge through the dialogue between the researcher and the researched (Pitard, 2017). Meaning that the researcher and the research participant are interactively connected and are shaping the data as the research proceeds. When a given action is completed, the researcher's lens is turned back, starting the reflexive process. The circle through which my epistemological stance develops is presented in figure 2.

Figure 2 The epistemological stance of this dissertation



Source: adapted from Pitard (2017).

III.2. Presentation of the articles and key results

In chapter 1, I observed the political dynamics of the broader socio-political contexts MSI are embedded, asking: how does participation emerge within the field of public MSIs? What are the economic normative and cultural dimensions that define participation in the field of public MSIs? Does public MSI manage to overcome the critiques of inclusiveness private MSIs are faced with? To answer the research question, we have built a historical explanatory case study (Yin, 2003) of the LEADER programme in Croatia (2014-2019) that draws on the concept of value regimes developed by Levy (Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016). Value regimes provide an analytical framework that allows us to articulate three dimensions of the broader socio-political context in which participation in MSIs is embedded: 1. The network of actors and organisations interacting around economic and semiotic elements in public MSIs; 2. Mechanism of governance in the form of rules, institutions, and norms that channel and constrain participation in the field of public MSIs ; 3. Normative and cultural values of participation in the field of public MSIs from the perspective of the actors.

Our initial proposition is that the value regime an individual MSI is embedded in will shape the nature of participation within that MSI. Our findings suggest that participation is constructed through a regime of participation: a mechanism of governance as well as a set of normative and cultural values that privilege certain forms of economic production and exchange, as well as unequal levels of participation within a given MSI.

In Chapter 2, I am at the centre of the strategic action, asking *how can local actors play the scales to counter broader hegemonic moves* and effectively protect their views, practices and policies attached to their spatial scales. To answer the research question, we explored the strategy of the national state and the local actors around the Rulebook for areas with natural or specific constraints employing a longitudinal participatory approach (Gioia et al., 2013) to build

a narrative of the case from the perspective of the local actors. We adopt the theoretical lens of the spatial scales as spaces that are socially produced through the process of rescaling, that is, the changes in patterns of capital accumulation, regulation, and mobilisation of discourse (Spicer, 2006), to investigate the agency of local actors when faced with hegemonic threats (Banerjee, 2011).

The analysis suggests that the appropriation of dominant discourses and knowledge allows the local actors to play the scales, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time. They do so by constructing a (1) translocal alliance that will grab different elements from different scales to build a (2) trans-scalar strategy deployed to exert pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various scales and via different actors of the translocal alliance.

In chapter 3, I draw from my lived experience to build comparisons asking what actions do actors take within public multi-stakeholder initiatives when they enact participation? How do they use participation? I built a convergent mixed-method research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that draws on the concept of territorial capital as used by Lacquement and Chevalier (2016).

Territorial capital provides an analytical framework that links three dimensions of the local territory crucial for its development: 1. material resources within the territory, 2. nonmaterial resources of the territory, 3. interpersonal capital developed between the individuals engaged in local development and the local governance (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016, p. 2). In their case study of a Hungarian LAG, Lacquement and Chevalier (2016) looked into the forms of collective action that favoured economic development and mobilisation of territorial capital within a LAG. I expand on their framework as it allows me to investigate the conditions under which local actors cooperate and how.

Drawing from the insights offered by the literature, the starting proposition from which I developed my methodological framework is that the very activities implemented by the actors

are instrumental in shaping the nature of participation within individual Local Action Groups. I define this as the practice of participation. The emergent model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings describes the actions actors take to enact participation. It shows how actors construct participation by activating territorial capital, inclusive governance, and deliberation. It delineates the actions that lead to the enactment of substantive or procedural participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fritz & Binder, 2018).

SECTION IV: Outline of the thesis

This dissertation investigates the strategy and agency of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings, focusing on the implementation of the LEADER programme for participative rural development of the European Union in Croatia. To do so, I first analyse the political dynamics of the broader socio-political context MSIs are embedded in, in Chapter 1, to investigate how is participation constructed. I then zoom in to the local scale, examining in Chapter 2 how local actors organised around an MSI against a new, state-imposed, and EU-framed regulation that threatened local forms of livelihood on the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac to examine how local actors defend their interests, thereby defending their participation within the hegemonic regime of participation. Lastly, in Chapter 3, I investigate the practice of participation through a mixed research method combining the statistical analysis of the 54 LAGs in Croatia with the comparative analysis of seven of these Local Action Groups' work to investigate how participation is practised. Figure 3 presents the overview of my thesis results and contributions.

Figure 3 Overview of the results and theoretical contributions

Investigation into participative processes within multi-stakeholder settings

Research questions:	How is participation constructed?	How is participation defended?	How is participation practised?
Chapter	1. The Political Dynamics of the LEADER programme in Croatia: Exploring the regime of participation around public multi-stakeholder initiatives	2. Playing the scales: The story of the Pelješac LEADER initiative	3. Investigation into the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder initiatives: The case of Local Action Groups in Croatia
Analytical framework	Value regimes (Levy, 2008)	Spatial scales (Spicer, 2006)	Territorial capital (Chevalier et al., 2010)
Context	Power struggles between the NGO and State regime around the unfolding of the LEADER programme in Croatia (1999-2019)	Agency of local actors when faced with hegemonic processes that threatened local forms of livelihood on the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac	Investigation into the work of Local Action Groups in Croatia (2016-2021)
Contribution	Participation is constructed through a regime of participation: a mechanism of governance that privilege certain economic processes of production and exchange, as well as the normative and cultural values that define the	Local actors defend their interests and participation within an MSI by appropriating dominant organisational logic to their advantage. They play the scales by constructing a (1) translocal alliance and deploying a (2) trans-	<i>Model for the practice of participation</i> demonstrates how actors use participation through activation of territorial capital, model of governance and deliberation practices. It delineates the action that leads to the

CHAPTER I

The Political Dynamics of the LEADER programme in Croatia. Exploring the regime of participation around public multi-stakeholder initiatives

Abstract: This study contributes to the literature on political dynamics in multi-stakeholder initiatives by exploring the broader socio-political context MSIs are embedded, which provides the framework for the construction of participation within individual MSIs. It does so by following the emergence of two regimes of participation in the implementation of a European programme for rural development in Croatia, respectively led by the State and by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), that operate based on distinct mechanisms of governance, privilege different economic forms of production and exchange and promote different normative and cultural values. These three dimensions effectively shape the unequal participation within the individual MSIs embedded in one of these two regimes. We conducted a historical analysis of the emergence of publicly-funded MSIs in Croatia via the implementation of the European policy programme LEADER (an acronym of *Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpement de l'Economie Rurale*) from 1999 to 2019.

We ask: *how does participation emerge within the field of public MSIs? What economic, normative, and cultural dimensions shape participation in this field? To which extent do public MSIs manage to overcome the crisis of inclusiveness which undermines the private MSIs?* Based on lived experience and multiple data sources, the study conceptualises three phases through which the NGO and the State regimes of participation emerge, compete, and later converge: Disruption, Re-alignment, and Accommodation. The findings suggest that participation is shaped by a process that resembles a ‘war of position’ through which multiple bases of power shift their economic and normative values as well as their system of governance to gain legitimacy in the new field in construction, resulting in the emergence of two regimes of participation. Therefore, the capacity of MSIs to be participative will depend on the characteristics of the economic, normative and governance dimensions of the regime of participation established within the broader field in which they are embedded.

Keywords: MSIs, participation, regimes, power struggles, war of position, LEADER, Croatia

I. INTRODUCTION

Ongoing debates on private multi-stakeholder initiatives (MSIs) underline a key challenge to ensure a ‘capacity to incorporate the plurality of voices based on recognising a plurality of values, world visions or principles of justice among the participants’ (Cheyns, 2010, p. 8). Inclusiveness has been shown to be limited in MSIs built around a company's value chains and excludes the actors outside the corporation's scope of interest, particularly the weak stakeholders (Moog, Spicer & Böhm, 2015).

MSIs are understood as networks of actors with rules that define the scope and nature of participation (see Fransen, 2012; Maher, Valenzuela & Böhm, 2019; MacDonald, Clarke & Huang, 2019), designed to achieve a specific societal or economic objective. As such, they are characterised by a complex web of power relations (Banerjee, 2008; Mayes, Pini & Macdonald, 2013; Banerjee, 2018), knowledge and economic resources that influence the unequal participation within them (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; Moog, Spicer & Böhm, 2014). Power relations, however, do not exist in a vacuum surrounding individual MSIs; they are embedded in broader governance systems (Wittneben, Okereke & Banerjee, 2012; De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019). It is therefore important to investigate these larger governance systems MSIs are embedded in if we are to understand the key dimensions that shape the unequal participation within individual MSIs. Such an approach, we argue, can provide insight into whether the capacity of MSIs to incorporate a plurality of voices (Cheyns, 2014) would be different when MSIs are not built around the company's value chain.

Research in organisation studies that focused on participation in MSIs which are organised around a corporate value chain has identified several gaps in terms of their capacity to enact effective participation: firstly, the governance structures that are set up within individual MSIs to enable the equal participation of stakeholder groups are seldom enacted in practice (De

Bakker et al., 2019); secondly, even though most research sees private MSIs as opportunities to democratise the corporation (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011), there is growing criticism pointing out that these MSIs could have actually hampered the development of a broader public debate and adoption of more effective public regulations (Banerjee, 2008, 2018); thirdly, it has been pointed out that MSIs are embedded in broader governance systems in which State and non-state actors interact in numerous ways which have been largely understudied, so that we actually know little about how these broader interactions might influence the internal working of individual MSIs (De Bakker et al.2019). We see this last limitation as an important lacuna in ensuring the capacity of societal debates and policies to incorporate the plurality of voices necessary to tackle the grand challenges our world is facing today, particularly given the prominence of multi-stakeholder initiatives in contemporary political arenas (De Bakker et al., 2019). Furthermore, we propose to investigate the process of deployment of a particular type of MSIs, which are public, and not privately funded, to explore how the broader power relations they are embedded in might shape their capacity for equal participation. We focus on the European Union programme for rural development named LEADER, an acronym for *Liaisons Entre Actions de Developpement de l'Economie Rurale* – links between actions for the development of the rural economy (Pollerman, Aubert, Berriet-Sollicec et al., 2020). LEADER is deployed as a national policy that fosters the creation of local MSIs, which include, by rule, not just private but also public and civil society actors, to participatively select, and fund local projects for rural development. As such, LEADER can be conceived of as a *field of public MSIs*, which allows us to investigate how individual MSIs are embedded into a larger governance system that frames their participation within them.

Neo-Gramscian scholars who have investigated power relations in multi-stakeholder settings (Levy, 2008; Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016) have provided us with the analytical framework of value regimes to do so. A *value regime* entails a network of actors and organisations who stabilise 'two inter-related dimensions of value, economic processes of

production and exchange, as well as the normative and cultural values' (Levy & Spicer, 2013, p. 673). Such a network operates via mechanisms of governance, supports, and develops particular economic forms, and conveys specific 'norms that channel and constrain economic activity and its impacts' (Levy, 2008, p. 946). Levy, Brown, and de Jong (2010) have theorised the development of an MSI as a dynamic process reflecting the outcome of strategic interaction between NGOs and firms in a particular economic, social, and political context. Moog, Spicer and Böhm (2015) further pointed out that strategic efforts within a particular MSI are limited by broader hegemonic institutions 'which impose discursive, material and organisational limitations upon particular MSI' (Moog et al., 2015, p.3). Levy and colleagues (2016) used the concept of *value regimes* to theorise the transformation of global coffee sectors towards more sustainable practices as a process of challenging and defending an established regime within which viable configurations of economic models, normative-cultural values and governance structures are aligned and stabilised. However, despite the underlying political nature of the challenges MSIs are to tackle through participation, little research has looked at the political dynamics that frame the actual enactment of participation in a *field of public MSIs*, i.e., in publicly funded and ruled multi-stakeholder initiatives.

We argue that applying the process model of Levy and colleagues (2016), which illuminates how change, in the form of passive revolution, emerges from sequences of interactions and accommodations between dominant actors and challengers, here characterised as *strategic concessions* and *stabilising re-alignments*, could provide a relevant frame for understanding how a regime of participation emerges through time in such public, non-corporate-led, field of MSIs.

Therefore, this study provides a processual account on the strategies of the State and NGO actors to characterise the shaping of the broader socio-political context of participation in which public MSIs are embedded. We use the notion of value regimes to describe the State and the NGO *regimes of participation* as mechanisms of governance that privilege particular patterns

of economic production and exchange, as well as particular normative and cultural values that shape unequal participation within the individual MSIs. We ask: *How does participation emerge within a field of public MSIs? What are the economic, normative, and cultural dimensions that define such participation in a field of public MSIs? To which extent do public MSIs overcome the critiques of inclusiveness faced by private MSIs?* To answer these questions, we investigate the processes of implementation of the European Union LEADER program of rural development in Croatia from 1999 until 2019, drawing from lived experience and a wealth of primary and secondary data.

Our research contributes twofold to the literature on multi-stakeholder organisations in business ethics and organisation studies. First, we contribute to the multi-stakeholder literature in business ethics (Mena and Palazzo, 2012, De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019) by acknowledging the importance of a broader socio-political context in which MSIs are embedded and by providing a processual account of the emergence of distinct *regimes of participation* within a larger public governance system. Second, we expand the neo-Gramscian literature in the field of organisation studies by applying the analytical framework of the value regimes to understand how the larger governance systems that public MSIs are embedded in are shaping participation in these very MSIs, and with what outcome. We characterise a participation regime as governance inclusive of small local actors, a set of norms favouring support to small business holders, and a preference for funding small projects in the local MSIs. Conversely, non-participative regimes tend to have non-inclusive governance, value established, politically connected large business holders, and allocate economic resources in their favour. As such, our research represents a theoretical contribution to understanding participation in local MSIs as shaped by the dynamic and inherently political regime of participation in which it is embedded. We demonstrate that Levy, Reinecke and Manning's (2016) neo-Gramscian process model of change could be applied to understand participation

as a politically constructed process whose nature will depend on the value regime it is embedded in.

To make our case, we proceed as follows. We describe the research on participation in the field of global governance and cross it with the literature on public MSIs in the LEADER field of governance. We then introduce the analytical framework of value regimes by Levy, Reinecke and Manning (2016) we use to characterise the unequal participation occurring within the embedded MSIs, before presenting our methodology and findings. We conclude by discussing our contributions and avenues for further research.

II. THEORETICAL SECTION: Participation in the field of MSIs

In this section, we present what we know about participation in the field of corporate-led and public-led MSIs, identifying the need to investigate the political dynamics that frame the enactment of participation concerning the economic, normative, and cultural dimensions of the field MSIs are embedded in, and especially the field of public MSIs. We then introduce the concept of value regimes as an analytical framework to understand participation.

II.1 Private MSIs within the field of global governance

Defined as private governance mechanisms involving corporations, civil society organisations, and sometimes other actors such as academia or unions, to cope with social and environmental challenges, private MSIs are said to create spaces for dialogue and new forms of civic or cross-sectoral "soft regulation" (Moog et al., 2015, p. 2). They have historically been used to regulate the behaviours of supply chain participants as a corporate response to pressures from non-governmental organisations (NGOs), trade unions and the media. They have hosted the development of corporate codes of conduct and corporate pledges to ensure the responsible operation of supply chains (Soundararajan, Brown & Wicks 2019). Research on private MSIs has tended to focus on examining their functioning and legitimacy, with only a few studies assessing in a fine-grained manner their participatory aspects. Those that had done so have concluded that the voices of less powerful actors are often not heard in MSIs (Martens, Gansemans and D'Haese, 2018).

Furthermore, it has been pointed out that the governance structures private MSIs set up to enable equal participation of stakeholder groups are seldom enacted in practice (Mena &

Palazzo, 2012; Cheyns, 2014; De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019). Such private MSIs are led by managers who have no accountability either to actors participating in these MSIs or to society (Matten & Crane, 2005; Djelic & Etchanchu, 2017). The voices of less powerful actors are often not heard (Martens et al., 2018) due to language barriers, financial resources, or lack of expert knowledge (Schouten, 2012; Cheyns, 2014). Moreover, as some groups have privileged access, the asymmetries of power result in the colonisation of arrangements by market actors (Schouten, 2012). In such circumstances, the result is an outcome that does not reflect the interests and needs of the weak actors, who, in the end, have nothing to gain from such participation (Brouwer, Hiemstra, van Vugt & Walters, 2013; Ehrnström-Fuentes, 2016). Furthermore, it has been pointed out that celebrating MSIs as a solution to social and environmental problems could limit meaningful public debate and regulation (Moog et al., 2015). Authors argue (Banerjee, 2008; 2018; Moog et al., 2015) that the prominence of private-led MSIs undermines the local actors' capacity to effectively politicise underlying conflicts and marginalises the enforcement mechanisms of the State. Furthermore, although the lack of effectiveness of private MSIs has been acknowledged to result from broader power asymmetries existing among participant stakeholders beyond the MSI, the forms of embeddedness of the MSIs in such a broader context have been little studied and remain under-theorised.

The work of Levy, Reinecke and Manning (2016) on the emergence of the sustainable coffee regime provides a glimpse of the broader socio-political context of participation within which the MSIs are embedded and shows that the features of private MSIs result from political struggles unfolding over a prolonged period. Through time, NGO actors manage to incorporate their voices and worldviews into the dominant coffee sector regime at the price of accepting to transform their vision of sustainability from a more radical environmental and social vision to a set of management processes aligned with corporate goals' (Levy et al., 2016, p. 27). More interestingly, the authors point out that the hegemonic transformation entailed by these power

struggles resembles what Gramsci defines as a 'war of position', a 'dynamic long-term strategy to gain legitimacy, secure resources, develop organisational capacity, and win new allies' (Levy, Szejnwald Brown & de Jong, 2010, p. 99). We can thus conclude that the capacity of MSIs to 'incorporate the plurality of voices based on recognising a plurality of values, world visions or principles of justice among the participants' (Cheyns, 2010, p. 8) remains limited and distorted.

It makes us question whether publicly funded MSIs would be more inclusive and better consider the interests of all the actors gathered around MSIs if we compare such a long-term process with trade agreements through which governments set the context in which economic activity is embedded or legislative treaties that prompt the creation of new governance mechanisms, including self-regulation by industry or its MSIs (Schrempf-Stirling, 2014).

II.2. Public MSIs within the LEADER field of governance

LEADER can be considered a typical case of what we call *public MSIs* in this paper to the extent that it promotes the development of publicly funded and governed local MSIs. Specifically, LEADER is a measure inside the European Union Rural Development programme and an acronym for *Liaisons entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*, which means links between actions for the development of the rural economy. The programme is embodied in over 2200 Local Action Groups (LAGs). LAGs are publicly funded multi-stakeholder initiatives established around the European Union – that are in charge of allocating European funding to local development projects in their rural areas based on participative, collective decision-making among their constituents which include, by rule, representatives of public, private and civil society organisations (ENRD, n.d.). LEADER assumes that a development process, based on local resources and community participation, is stimulated by interactions between (a) local actors, (b) outside actors such as national governments, and (c) mid-level actors such as local non-governmental organisations supported by various external entities (Ray, 2000). It is, by rule, to include private, public and civil society representatives and can be seen as a new form of territorial governance that comprises 'an arena with institutions and networks, processes of coordination and interdependence, and horizontal forms of interaction between stakeholders' (Maurel, 2008, p. 517).

The local interactions within the LAGs can therefore be seen as being embedded in the broader governance of supra-national and national entities such as the EU, the State and also the national networks of LAGs which came to be constituted as the LEADER field emerged and took shape in Croatia (see Zajda, Kołomycew, Sykała & Janas, 2017). We approach the Croatian LAGs and their multi-scaled governance as forming *the field of public MSIs – the LEADER field*. At its core is extensive population participation and respect for the values that

people express locally (Bosworth et al., 2015), assuming that local practitioners can interpret the European programme according to their ideological beliefs and local circumstances (Ray, 1999). LEADER has been pointed out as a successful experience for boosting innovation and diversifying the rural economy (Esparcia et al., 2000; High & Nemes, 2007; Dargan & Shucksmith, 2008; Dax et al., 2016; Lacquement et al., 2020). Participation around LEADER is considered to help to identify better local needs and potential solutions (Bosworth et al., 2016) and to foster resilience within the LAG territories.

However, there are three main critiques concerning participation in these publicly funded MSIs. First, the high degree of top-down control imposed by national and regional administrations and authorities and excessive bureaucracy restricting the decision-making freedom of the local stakeholders (Lacquement et al., 2020; Buller, 2000; Ray, 2000). Second, LEADER has been dominated by local political and economic lobbies, which have converted it into an instrument of political, economic, and social power (Esparcia et al., 2000). Third, relatively few local actors participate and benefit from the LAGs (Maurel, 2008; Lacquement et al., 2020). However, research has also pointed out that LEADER varies according to the particular geographical context and depends on the local actors' capacity to learn the 'rules of the game' (Lacquement, Chevalier, Navarro & Cejudo 2020). These variations in LEADER implementation, we argue, support the argument put forward in the case of private MSIs, stating that MSIs are part of larger governance systems and that it is, therefore, critical to acknowledge the broader socio-political context in which deliberation happens (De Bakker et al., 2019).

To sum up, what we know about MSIs is that they have been seen as a solution for many complex problems due to their capacity to stir participation and facilitate learning, relationship building, and resilience which are likely to allow the MSIs to successfully implement their goals and therefore achieve social impact (MacDonald, Clark & Huang, 2019). However, despite the underlying political nature of the challenges MSIs are to tackle through participation, little research has looked at the political dynamics that frame the enactment of

participation concerning the economic, normative, and cultural dimensions of the field MSIs are embedded and especially the field of public MSIs. We argue it is important to address this lacuna for two reasons. Firstly, research has pointed out that MSIs are part of larger governance systems in which State and non-state actors interact in various ways (De Bakker et al., 2019), making it crucial to investigate these larger governance systems – such as LEADER. Second, even though research sees MSIs as a way of democratising the corporation (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007, 2011) and development (Bosworth et al., 2016), there is growing criticism pointing out that MSIs could limit meaningful public debate when corporate-led (Banerjee, 2008, 2017) or that they have been captured by the political elite when state-led (Koutsouris, 2008; Kovach & Kucherova, 2009). In both cases, participation within an MSI depends on the larger governance system that extends beyond the governance of the individual MSIs.

We, therefore, argue it is necessary to investigate the broader socio-political context MSIs are embedded in – the field of MSIs to theorise participation within larger governance systems that are said to enact 'the deliberative democratic aspects of multi-stakeholder regulatory forums themselves' (Moog et al., 2015, p. 472). We adopt the notion of 'value regimes' as it allows us to develop a rigorous analytical framework to describe the broader socio-political context participation in public MSIs is embedded.

II.3. Value regimes as an analytical framework to understand participation

A value regime entails a network of actors and organisations who stabilise 'two inter-related dimensions of value, economic processes of production and exchange, as well as the normative and cultural values' (Levy & Spicer, 2013, p. 673) and that operate via a mechanism of governance itself shaped by 'norms that channel and constrain economic activity and its impacts' (Levy, 2008, p. 946).

We find this concept appropriate to investigate the LEADER program and the question of participation in its constitutive MSIs for several reasons pertaining to the programme's economic, normative and governance features. First, concerning the governance dimension of the value regime, the LEADER field is constituted on the basis of a multi-level governance scheme (see Berriet-Sollicec, Laidin, Lepicier et al., 2016) of State institutions and publicly funded networks wherein the State and its stakeholders effectively operate via complex decision-making mechanisms (Maurel, 2008). Second, concerning the economic activity that frames the value regime within the field of LEADER, the setting of funding conditions or demands for local development projects is orchestrated via complex institutional rules within the LAGs (Berriet-Sollicec & al, 2016, p. 30). Third, concerning the normative dimension of the value regimes, the choices made for resource allocation within the LAGs can be hypothesised to be guided by normative assumptions pertaining to desirable forms of economic development in the local rural areas. Finally, Levy and colleagues (2015) point out the strategic agency of challengers, such as the NGOs, in the complex and dynamic process of constructing a value regime over the longer term (Levy et al., 2015, p. 33), while the LEADER programme was established, contested and re-established over a period of about a decade in Croatia.

Through a fine-grained characterisation of the three dimensions of a value regime, we further aim to characterise the unequal participation occurring within the embedded MSIs. LEADER

allows us to take account of the broader field of governance of institutions within the field of MSIs and understand the fundamental compromises and tensions that participation involves in such arenas (Moog et al., 2015; Levy et al., 2016). Hence, we characterise how the State and the NGO regimes of participation come to privilege distinct economic forms of production and exchange, grounded in distinct normative and cultural values and yielding what we define as unequal participation within individual MSIs. This approach allows us to characterise: how participation emerges within the LEADER field of public MSIs (i.e. through disruption, re-alignment and accommodation of two competing regimes); what are the economic, normative, and cultural dimensions that define participation in the field (i.e., governance, economic resources, and values are – or are not – supportive and inclusive of local marginalised actors in the regimes under study); to which extent do public MSIs overcome the critiques of inclusiveness private MSIs face (i.e., the NGO-led regime is more participative than the State-led regime).

III. METHODS AND DATA

To answer the research questions, we have built a historical explanatory case study (Yin, 2003) that draws on the concept of value regimes developed by Levy (Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016). Value regimes provide an analytical framework that allows us to link the three dimensions – economic, governance, and values – of the broader socio-political context in which participation in MSIs is embedded: (i) The model of economic development which is favoured by the network of actors and organisations involved in the public MSIs; (ii) the rules, institutions, and norms that channel and constrain participation in the process of funding attribution implemented in public MSIs ; (iii) the normative and cultural values that underpin participation in these public MSIs. Our initial proposition is that the value regime an individual MSI is embedded in will define the nature of participation within that MSI. Therefore, participation is constructed through a *regime* involving a mechanism of governance that privileges certain economic forms of production and exchange, as well as the normative and cultural values that shape unequal participation within an MSI.

III.1. Historical case study of the LEADER programme in Croatia

We investigate the evolution of the NGOs and the State regimes through time from the actors' perspective (Tsing, 2011). To do this, we provide a processual account of the LEADER programme of Rural Development in Croatia from the perspective of the State and NGO actors engaged in the LEADER field. We aim to describe the broader socio-political context in which participation in public MSIs is embedded.

We have chosen to study this for several reasons: First, the LEADER programme aims to 'address rural development through a multifunctional and more strategic approach, to broaden partnerships (civil society, NGOs, environmental organisations, economic and social partners, etc.) and to set priorities for action and clear objectives to reach' (Chevalier & Vollet, 2018, p. 2) – this represented an opportunity to investigate the three dimensions of the regimes of participation through time and in the field of public MSIs. Second, the emergence of LEADER in Croatia as a measure of the Rural Development Programme, where participation of local actors in local decision-making is at the heart of the rural development strategy (Bosworth et al., 2020, p. 23), was in stark contradiction with the tradition of top-down governance captured by the political elite (Jelic-Muck & Pavic-Rogosic, 2013; Petak et al., 2019). LEADER, therefore, presented an opportunity to investigate the construction of participation through power struggles between the old regime of the State and the NGO regime that emerged in Croatia during the post-war period with the support of international organisations such as UNDP USAID and the EU. Finally, the embeddedness of the first author has allowed us to identify the key actors within the LEADER field in Croatia. This knowledge and access to abundant secondary data allowed us to build a dense case study.

III.2. Data collection

Data was collected from biographical and autobiographical accounts, interviews, and extensive secondary data. The duration of interviews varied from 3.5 hours to 45 minutes, with an average of 1.5 hours. Autobiographical accounts in notes and diaries were collected from 2016 to 2018. Secondary data collection evolved around two axes. First, we have done an extensive literature review on LEADER that combined research articles and documents produced by the European

public and civil society actors. Second, we collected literature regarding the national implementation of LEADER in Croatia that combined public, NGO and media documentation that framed and reported on LAGs and LEADER in Croatia. Table 1 summarises the data we chose to summarise, categorise, and code. For the names of the interviewees, we have used codes to protect their anonymity. Names cited as sources in the study's findings refer to reports, published opinions and evaluations presented in table 2 as 'documents'. The exception is the work of Sanja Malekovic, which I refer to in the first part of the findings to provide elements of the context of the State and NGO regime. Specifically, her paper from 2002 presents an overview of the development of local economic development agencies (LEDAs) in Croatia prior to the implementation of LEADER in the 2000s. Second is the paper from 2011, co-authored with Jakša Puljiz and Will Bartlet, presenting an overview and historical evolution of the regional policy in Croatia.

Table 1 Overview of the data sources

Category	Data Source	CODE	Number
Interview	European public actor	EP	2
	European civil actor	EC	1
	National public actor	NP	2
	National civil actor	NC	3
	Regional public actor	RP	1
	LAG actor	LA	3
Document	European Commission/Parliament/ Court of Auditors	EC-DOC	13
	EU Associations (ENRD, ELARD)	EN-DOC	21
	State document (Regulation, Rulebook, Evaluation, Report, Guidance, Strategy, Opinion, Official Memo, Presentation, E-mail)	S-DOC	32
	NGO document (Strategy, Report, Evaluation, Memo, Guidance, Opinion)	N-DOC	73

	paper, Presentation, E-mail correspondence)		
	Media document	M-DOC	7

Table 2 Guiding questions to operationalise the value regime concept.

Value regime dimension	Guiding questions
The economic model of value creation	Where does the money for projects come from? How do we use the money?
Normative-Cultural values	What type of projects are supported through LEADER, big or small projects? How are projects constructed and implemented? How many LAGs each national network gathers? What is their aim?
Governance	With whom do you collaborate? What is the result of this collaboration? How do you communicate what you do? How many actors do you collaborate with?

III.3. Data analysis

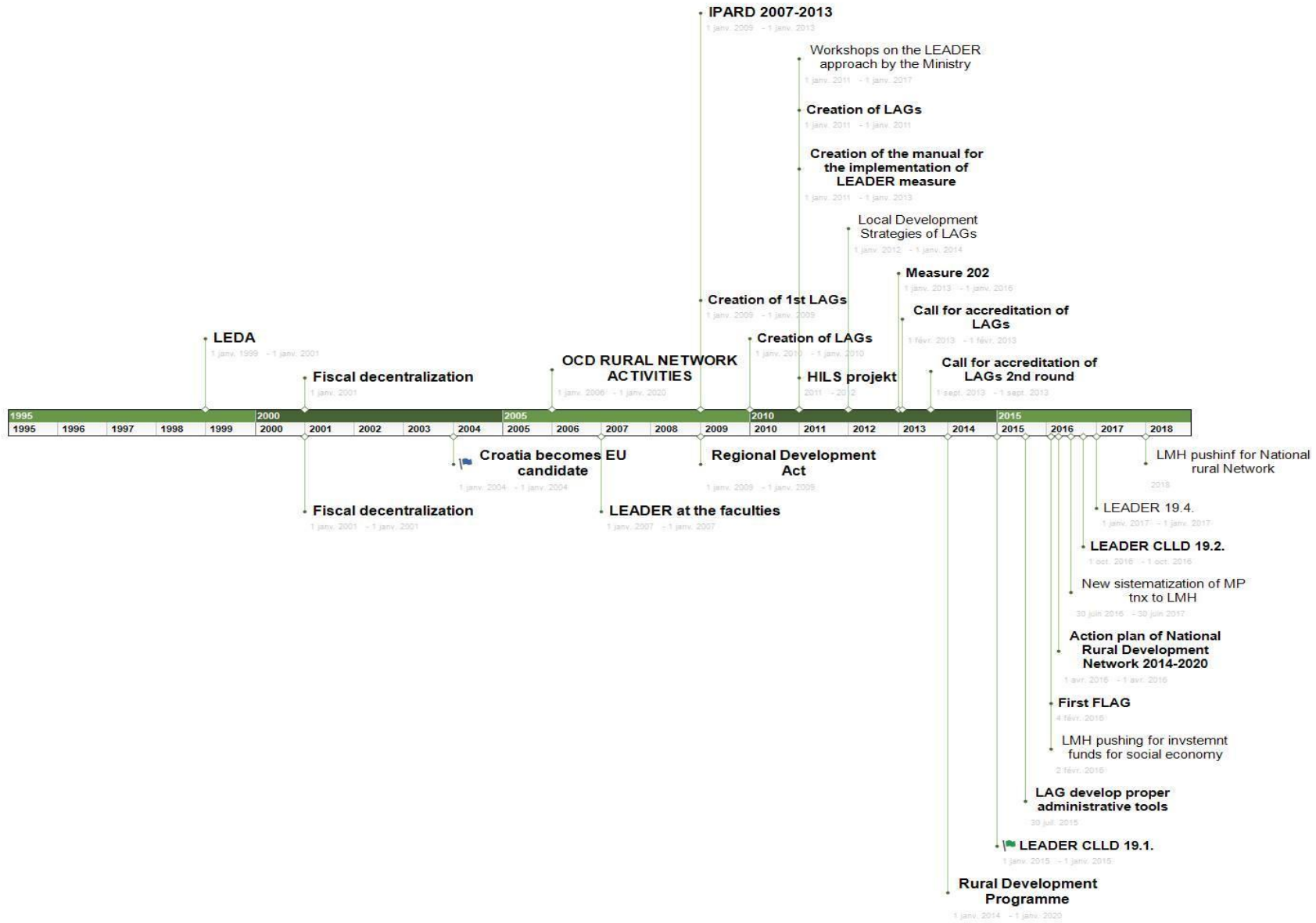
Overall strategy. Drawing inspiration from Levy and colleagues (2016), we drew on the concepts of *value regimes* and *accommodation* as ‘sensitising devices’ to explore the unfolding of the LEADER field in Croatia. Firstly, we have built a timeline of events by triangulating lived experience, interviews, and secondary data. Second, we used manual coding of the transcribed verbatims and documentary data to specify activities and decisions Levy and colleagues (2016) defined as ‘disruptive’ or ‘accommodative’ moves of the State and the NGO regime. Third, we engaged with temporal bracketing to identify the key phases in the evolution of the State and the NGO regime. Fourth, we used axial coding to inter-relate various disruptive and accommodative moves of the State and the NGOs with the three phases to identify the economic, normative, and cultural dimensions participation is inscribed in the case of the State and the case of the NGO regime.

The actors. The actors of the State regime refer to the public officials from the state Ministry of Agriculture, Agency for Payments in Agriculture and Rural Development (APPRRR). The term also refers to political actors working as elected officials within the national and regional government organised around the National Network for Sustainable Development of Croatia and the businesses supporting them (i.e. private consultants that have previously worked as state officials). The actors of the NGO regime refer to members of the LAGs and members of NGOs that form the National LEADER Network (LMH) and the Croatian Network for Rural Development (HMRR). These actors have historically cooperated with international NGOs such as International Labour Organization and have been supported by international funding such as UNDP and USAID.

Timeline of events. After data triangulation, we listed changes grouped by actor type and ordered them chronologically (Figure 1). For each dimension, like Levy and colleagues (2016),

we defined a list of guiding questions that would facilitate the categorisation of the properties and the evolution of the value regime of participation (see table 2). We then mapped our value regime's key economic, normative and governance dimensions to characterise the State and the NGO regime of participation (see Table 3).

Figure 1 Timeline of the implementation of the LEADER programme in Croatia 1999-2019



Temporal bracketing. After finalising the coding of ‘disruptive’ and ‘accommodative’ moves, we used temporal bracketing to present the historical evolution of the regime of participation. We have identified three phases: Disruption, Re-alignment, and Accommodation (see table 4). We identified key events and dynamics that indicated discontinuity with the previous one for each phase. Such was the creation of national LEADER networks. These are the Croatian National Network for Rural Development, the LEADER Network Croatia (LMH) and the Croatian Network for Sustainable Development. As in the work of Levy and colleagues (2016), transitions between phases are cumulative as the interaction between the NGO and the State-led regime co-evolves over time. Each phase represents a shift in the meaning and practice of LEADER, but the elements of the prior phases remain.

The regimes of participation. We used verbatim and secondary data to build the narrative of the three phases of the emergence of the regimes of participation presented in table 4. Our findings, therefore, unfold in the form of a narrative that starts by describing the three dimensions of the State and the NGO regime of participation – governance, economic and values. We continue by narrating the key moves within the three phases of the emergence of the regimes of participation.

Table 3 State regime and NGO regime of participation within the “LEADER” field

	State regime	Civil society regime (NGO regime)
Main actors	Public administration, National rural networks run by politicians, and LAGs predominantly financed by municipalities and regions (ex: LAG Lika, LAG Laura, LAG Zrinska Gora-Turopolje)	National NGOs working in the field of rural development and social entrepreneurship, LAGs financed through different programmes (ex: LAG Vallis Collapis, LAG 5, LAG Terra Liburna)
The economic model of value creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects funded through the LEADER measure • Projects focused on investments in infrastructure that favour big businesses in the public procurement processes. • LEADER-funded projects are the ones that follow strict guidelines of the State and are adapted to the national Rural Development programme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projects funded from different EU programmes or different donor foundations, social entrepreneurship projects • Projects focused on social capital and capacity building • LEADER funded projects as diverse small-scale initiatives adapted to the needs of the territory
Normative values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big projects that require the participation of big business for their implementation • A small number of projects with big budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller projects with flexible budgets that engage local businesses for their implementation • A significant number of projects with smaller budgets

Governance

- Collaboration among members of their political parties or interest groups
 - Development is framed by the demands of the local elite and the political establishment. Political actors significantly impact what type of projects LAGs/Networks will support or do.
 - Participation is a process reserved for the informed few that share the views of the State and its political establishment.
- Collaboration with various actors from the academia and the consultants
 - Development framed based on continuous participative deliberations among actors in the LEADER territory and LAG professionals
 - Participation is a process that requires a large number of actors. Those that act as members of the LAGs and a large number of LAGs that act as active members of national networks

IV. FINDINGS

Our findings present the emergence of two regimes of participation in the implementation of the LEADER programme in Croatia, respectively led by the State and by the NGOs, that operate based on distinct mechanisms of governance, privilege different forms of production and exchange and promote different normative and cultural values.

We open the narrative of our findings with the elements of context regarding the NGO and State regimes of participation, narrating its governance, economic and normative cultural dimensions. We then develop the narrative of the three phases through which the NGO and the State regimes of participation emerge, compete, and later converge: Disruption, Re-Alignment and Accommodation.

IV.1. Elements of context

Croatia's national context was marked by a transition from socialism to capitalism amid a violent secession from Yugoslavia and later recovery after the Croatian War of Independence (1991–1995). In this period, the former socialist system of local self-management was replaced by strong central control. The focus of the regional and rural development reforms was to reduce the power of local actors due to the post-war situation with disputed control on the part of the country.¹(Malekovic, Puljiz & Bartlett, 2011).

¹ During the war for independence, the Serbs occupied 25% of today's Croatian territory. For a comprehensive overview of the war and postwar events in Croatia, see Salzano's (2002) case study of Croatia, p. 3-6

[The State had the practice of] ‘deciding for you, somebody in the Ministry who does not know your problems or does not care, making policies that are not relevant to the needs on the ground’ (Verbatim, NC3).

The State focused on revitalising war-affected areas, and all subsidies, agricultural ones included, prioritised this goal (National Gazette, NN 18/15). Furthermore, the redistribution of public funds through grants was reserved for the adherents of the dominant political party, their coalition and the concentrated large-scale business sector surrounding them. As two-thirds of the municipalities were heavily dependent on the State grants, the political relations with the central government were of critical importance since:

‘In many cases, grants and investments are allocated based on discretionary decisions from the centre [the State]’ (Malekovic et al., 2011, p. 13).

International development agencies, such as the International Labour organisation, promoted bottom-up local development strategies where development is fostered through local participation and social dialogue. However, the State viewed these initiatives with scepticism (Malekovic, 2002). Despite the USAID and the EU pushing for more participation of the local actors and decentralisation of governance, ‘none of these projects resulted in the official adoption’[i.e. none of the projects that would include civil society actors in local and regional development planning] (Malekovic et al., 2011, p. 16). Civil society actors were highly critical of such a situation:

We attempted to prepare Rural Development Strategy. It was in the summer of 2002. FAO started this initiative. It was their money. [...] We were quite active, working hard on it, drafting the strategy, and then it was stopped. Never adopted, never accepted [...] (Verbatim, NC1).

No comprehensive, strategically determined, and operative system would enable civil society organisations to participate as equal partners and contribute to developing their local environments and regions. This equally applies to the system of financing and decision-making and development management. (Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate for rural development, 2013, p. 27)

By contrast, international organisations such as the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and the United Nations Development Programme have been working to ‘support the process of economic development at the local level in Croatia’ from 1999 onwards (Salzano, 2002, p. 15). They worked with the local actors on a ‘comprehensive programme of support’ (Salzano, 2002, p. 15) which consisted in assisting the local actors in forming Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDAs), which would later become the LEADER’s Local Action Groups (LAGs). They gathered actors representing the interests of local businesses, economic institutions, and the public authorities (Salzano, 2002, p. 20) with the scope of kick-starting a ‘participatory development process that encourages partnership arrangements between the private and public stakeholders of a defined territory’ (Salzano, 2012, p. 26).

These international organisations provided training and financial support to national civil society organisations (CSO) to continue in this line. Croatians with an academic background that previously worked in these international organisations or participated in their programmes founded CSOs (Verbatim, NC1, Verbatim, NC2, Verbatim, NC3) that work with small-scale farmers and entrepreneurs, distributing grants and loans that promote their environmentally and economically sustainable business practices (Verbatim, NC1).

Projects such as ‘Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity in the Dalmatian’ - COAST programme aimed to distribute small grants and loans to farmers interested in transferring from traditional to organic agriculture.

Beyond funding, this support taught the CSOs how to run groups, approach groups, have projects, different management tools and participatory methods [based on British, American and Dutch methodologies of development] (Verbatim, NC1). The CSO then applied these methods to build a project with local actors:

‘With the help of Canadian technical assistance, LEDA Krka organised the first specialised programmes for entrepreneurs in April 2002. The programmes were designed to acquire skills needed to obtain credit from the newly established guarantee fund for business (Malekovic, 2002, p. 168). ‘Through these projects, the local actors first learn about participative development, plan their business and frame it. They learn the value of working together (Verbatim, NC3).’

Over time, the actors working in these international organisations evolved to become key players in the Croatian Rural development policies, answering the European Union's demand to include civil society actors in policy planning and execution of local and regional development. The following narrative presents the three phases through which this unfolds. Figure 2 summarises this process.

In the first phase, NGOs disrupt the hegemonic stability of the dominant State regime using the emergence of the EU in rural development with LEADER. The benefit of international funding is to kick-start pilot projects of the Local Action Groups and organise a national NGO-led LEADER Network to pressure the State to set the LEADER measure of the Rural Development Programme in motion.

In the second phase, State appropriates the LEADER field as the bureaucracy that frames the rules and decides how, when and to whom LEADER funding from the Rural Development

Programme will be distributed. A state-led national LEADER network emerges, supporting the State-led vision of LEADER. Following State bureaucracy incitement, new LAGs are formed by the local and regional politicians. The aim is to cover the maximum of the Croatian territory with LAGs to get the maximum possible money through the LEADER measure.

In the third phase, when Croatia becomes a full member State of the European Union NGO-led rural network, the LAGs organised around it use multiple EU funding sources to extend the LEADER field beyond one measure within the Rural Development Programme. They work together to prepare and deliver projects funded from various EU funds with various partners from civil, public, and even private sector organisations. They also engage in bottom-up institutionalisation drafting procedures LAGs should follow to ensure they align with national and EU legislation. The State, crushing under the ever-stronger burden of EU legislation and political pressures to distribute EU money as soon as possible, engages in deliberations with NGO-led networks. In this phase, the State bureaucracy, the LEADER national networks and the LAGs work closely together to implement the EU-financed LEADER measure in the delays defined by the State government and the European Union. Part of the LEADER field remains centralised, with institutional mechanisms developed and steered by the State bureaucracy. Part of the LEADER field develops beyond LEADER as a measure of the Rural Development Programme.

Figure 2 The process of powers struggles through which two regimes of participation frame the field of LEADER

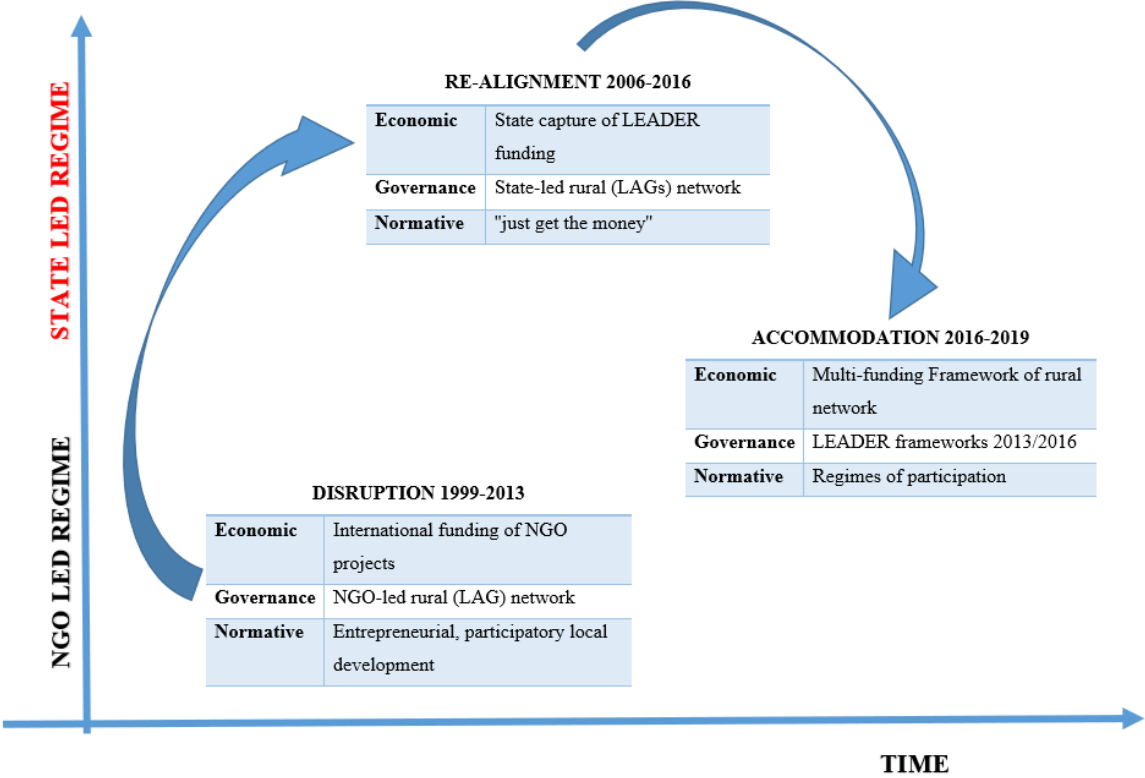


Table 4 summarises the three interrelated and overlapping phases in this process, presenting key moves grouped by actor type (State or NGO actors) and along the three dimensions: governance, economic, and normative cultural.

Table 4 Value regime dimensions of the three phases in the evolution of the LEADER field

Actors	State regime	NGO regime
Disruption 1999-2013: civil society in the field of rural development		
<i>The economic model of value creation</i>	Accommodation #2: Responding to the EU pressure, the State adopts LEADER as part of its Rural Development programme [strategic concession]	
<i>Normative values</i>	Accommodation #1: Responding to the EU pressure, the State adopts partnership principles as part of its public policy process [strategic concession]	
<i>Governance</i>		Accommodation #3: Formation of the Croatian Network for Rural Development (HMRR) and LEADER Network Croatia (LMH) [stabilising re-alignment]
Re-alignment 2006-2016: the State and the NGO actors push for their visions of LEADER		
<i>The economic model of value creation</i>	Accommodation #4: the State kick-starts funding for LEADER with rules that make LAGs can't use this money [stabilising re-alignment]	Accommodation #5: LMH establishes an interim economic model so that LAGs can use State LEADER funding [stabilising re-alignment]
<i>Normative values</i>	Accommodation #8 State actors push for a creation of a third national network, the National Network for Sustainable	Accommodation #6: LAGs, HMRR and LMH become an actor shaping the field of LEADER [stabilising re-alignment]

	Development of Croatia, to have an ally during public deliberations on LEADER [stabilising re-alignment]	
<i>Governance</i>		Accommodation #7 National networks pressure the State to secure a LEADER framework in line with the NGO values and engage with other NGOs to build a participative framework of LEADER [stabilising re-alignment]
Accommodation 2016-2019: state and NGOs co-constructing LEADER		
<i>The economic model of value creation</i>	Accommodation #9 The State imposes the LEADER measure as a top-down measure of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. There are no community projects to be done with the local actors. Local Actors can apply to LAGs call to obtain funding in line with the rules defined by the State. [strategic concession]	Accommodation #11 LAGs are applying to other EU programmes to finance their community projects [stabilising re-alignment]
<i>Normative values</i>		
<i>Governance</i>		Accommodation #10 The State allows for LEADER measures within the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture to finance LAGs in fisheries (FLAGs) to plan and implement projects with local actors [strategic concession]

IV.2. Three phases in the evolution of the LEADER field

In this section, we present the narrative of the three phases through which two regimes of participation stabilize within the field of LEADER, as summarized in table 4.

PHASE 1. Disruption of the State regime and the emergence of the NGO regime

As Croatia, and more specifically its government, engage in the negotiations with the European Union to become a new Member State, we follow 'accommodation 1' of the State adopts the partnership principle as part of its public policy process and 'accommodation 2' in which funding is provided for such activities. This, in turn, leads to 'accommodation 3' that manifests in the formation of national NGOs who work with the local actors to include them in the public policy process of planning and doing local development.

Accommodation 1 – *Strategic concession (normative) – Responding to international pressures from the EU and civil society, the State and, more specifically, its Ministries eventually adopted the partnership principle when planning development and acknowledged the importance of civil society.* The first major concession of the State was the introduction of the partnership principle in its public policy preparatory documents. It is part of the State's preparation to receive funding from the European Union to adjust its national policy and administration to that of the European Union (Malenkovic et al., 2011).

Along the same lines, in July 2006, the State adopted 'The National Strategy for Creation of Enabling Environment for Civil Society Development 2006-2011', which provides a 'legal, financial and institutional system of support to civil society development (Ministry of

Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management, Directorate for Sustainable Development of Rural Areas, 2007 p. 27)

Accommodation 2- *Strategic concession (economic) - The State adopts the LEADER measure as one of the measures of the Rural Development programme 2007-2013*

With the aim of quality preparation for full membership [in the EU], one of the selected measures of the IPARD program [...] is the preparation and implementation of local development strategies (LEADER) [...]. In the first three-year period. The funds are reserved for the sub-measure "Acquisition of skills, animating the inhabitants of the LAG territory [...] However, the actual implementation of this measure 'depends on the range of organisational factors and decisions [...] whose harmonisation is in progress (Kraljevic, 2008).

Croatia must adopt the measures and programmes that already exist in the EU to become a member state of the European Union. As the strategy of the State is to 'just get the money' (Verbatim, NP2), a 'participative approach to development' (Verbatim, EP1) is inscribed into the State strategy due to the pressure from the European Commission:

Why we wanted to have LEADER in Croatia: First, because [...] LEADER is one of the most successful measures in member states. In the process of pre-accession other countries should lend as much as possible to be ready to operate as member states. [...] So, we insisted on including the LEADER measure in the program, and we insisted on implementation. [...] the whole idea of LEADER is to mobilise the energy and resources of local people and make them work with local administration. (Verbatim, EP1)

Accommodation 3 – *Stabilising re-alignment (governance) – formation of national non-governmental associations of LAGs and civil society organisations working in rural development.* After establishing the institutional framework for civil society organisations, we followed the foundation of the Croatian Network for Rural Development, HMRR, in 2008. It is an ‘association of associations and networks of associations ‘which connects a joint effort focused on improving the conditions for overall development and quality of life in rural areas’ (HMRR, 2008).

They organise ‘training for local development’ focusing on ‘rural territories and enriched with the European concept of rural development ‘LEADER’ (HMRR, 2008, p. 2). The programme and work of these organisations are financed through ‘the technical assistance within the framework of German, Canadian, American, Dutch and other bilateral state cooperation (Malekovic, 2002). That is how by 2011, HMRR and its members support the creation of additional 7 LAGs (Muck & Koprivnjak, 2011).

In 2012²The importance of the LEADER approach for developing local communities and overall rural development in Croatia has been recognised by experts who deal with issues of local democracy and rural development (Tolić & Markotić, 2013, p. 42). UNDP Croatia, Regional Development and Education Center "Primus Fortissimus", Centre for Civil Initiatives, Faculty of Agriculture in Osijek, Croatian Institute for Local Government, Institute for Development and International Relations, and NGO "Odras" decide to establish a network that will focus on supporting the local actors in the implementation of LEADER, LEADER Network Croatia. In 2012 there were 19 LAGs in Croatia, and by 2014 this number mounted to 46 (Markotic, 2014).

The Ministry did not want to launch LEADER during IPARD [...], but we pushed them actually from the field because [of the] UNDP [project that supported LAG formation] (Verbatim, NC2)

With two national networks gathering the LAGs and being funded by international organisations to organise projects, study trips, workshops, and small-scale finance projects, many actors are engaged in rural development through LEADER. However, the State is not ready for such a change.

' The main challenge was that that approach [LEADER] was generally new [...]. We have in Croatia long history of cooperatives, long history of some associations, but generally, that approach of partnership agreements, some kind of official partnership agreements, to be in a position to have some allocation for some activities [independently from the State] was not so much developed because, in the past communist system, the system of making decisions, the decisions were made more or less from the top' (Verbatim, NP1)

PHASE 2 Re-alignment of the State and the NGO regimes: framing the field of LEADER

With the NGO actors creating a critical mass of local actors engaged with LEADER and the pressure from the European Union to kick-start LEADER, the State ' accommodation 4' is characterised by the call to LAGs to apply for funding their activities through measure 202 of the IPARD Programme. It was a signal to the NGO actors who use this economic impetus to organise around national networks in the ' accommodation 5'. Organised around the *Croatian Network for Rural Development (HMRR)* and *Leader Network Croatia (LMH)*, facilitate the LEADER institutionalisation described in ' accommodation 6' and exert pressure on the State to respect the principle of partnership in its development policies. This act exerts pressure on the State we have named ' accommodation 7'.

In response to this pressure, the state actors 'accommodation 8' is characterised by their actions toward supporting the creation of a third national network of LAGs, the *National Network for Sustainable Development of Croatia*. Specifically, public officials working in the Ministries in communication with regional and local political actors, such as parliament members, mayors or regional development agencies, organise participation around their pre-established networks of political patronage.

Accommodation 4 – *Stabilising re-alignment (economic): the State kick-starts funding for LEADER with rules that make LAGs cannot use this money*. It was not before the end of 2013 that the State Ministry of Agriculture, Department for rural development provided a governance framework for LEADER as a Measure 202 'Preparation and implementation of local strategies for rural development (Jelic-Muck & Bakker, 2013).

To use the allocation of 900 000kn for the animation of local actors to engage in development – the precondition was that LAGs beforehand spend this sum. Moreover, to spend it on the activities that the State actors will later evaluate. If the state actors judge the activities are 'non-eligible, - the LAG will not have the LEADER funding (Verbatim, NC1; Verbatim, NP3). As LAGs were organisations founded on the premise that their work will be founded by the EU money coming from LEADER, they have no economic resources on their own to first spend such an amount of money. In the eyes of the NGO actors, the state actors have framed this in a way to

To block any money from arriving [to the LAGs]. You blocked the money by blocking measure 202 and the finalisation of the Ordinance [economic framework to use the measure]. If you block the money, there are no LAGs. There are no networks [...]
(Verbatim, NC2)

Accommodation 5- *Stabilising re-alignment (economic): The LEADER Network Croatia (LMH) establishes an interim economic model so that LAGs can use State LEADER funding.*

LMH, drawing from the lived experience of LAG managers, is aware that LEADER will fail if there is no funding for LAG managers as they are 'the ones responsible for launching numerous activities and help with the withdrawal of funds of the European Union for the development of Croatian rural areas' (Verbatim, NC2).

So, they reach out to other civil society actors from Croatia to ensure interim financing of the activities of the LAGs through an interest-free loan from the National Foundation for Civil Society Development. Such an arrangement allows the LAGs to use the money allocated through LEADER for engaging with the local community. With prefinancing in place, LAGs can hire professionals who use LEADER to map the territory's human, social and cultural capital. More importantly, they engage with the local actors in planning projects that would foster the sustainable development of these rural territories.

Accommodation 6 – *Stabilising re-alignment (normative) LAGs, HMRR and LMH become an actor shaping the field of LEADER.* Once the State provides the economic and governance framework for the LAGs, the NGO actors:

[...] are disseminating information on implementing the new rural development measures and helping the broader community prepare to withdraw these generous support packages. (Verbatim, NC2)

Furthermore, the two national networks, HMRR and LMH, are participating in developing the Ordinance and tender launches for LEADER measure and organising national capacity-building workshops for the LAGs (HMRR, 2013; 2014; 2015, LMH 2015, 20016). LMH reports working with LAGs and the State (Ministry of Agriculture and the Agency for Payments in Agriculture and Rural Development, APPRRR) daily from 2012 onwards on implementing

the LEADER Measure (Markotić-Krstinić, n.d.). To strengthen the links between their members and connect with LAGs from other countries, HMRR participates in various cross-border projects (HMRR 2016, 2017, 2018).

These activities bring new dynamics to the field of LEADER, with ever more local actors participating in rural development through the work of these two networks.

Accommodation 7 – *Stabilising re-alignment (governance) National networks pressure the State to secure the LEADER framework in line with the NGO values and engage with other NGOs to build a participative framework of LEADER*

As the IPARD measure 202 secured funding for LEADER only until 2013, for the LAGs to continue to do their work, they need the State to continue their funding of LEADER through the new measure that is part of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. As the State is working slowly, LMH, through its advisory services for LAGs, connects different actors in different fields to speed up this process and ensure that LAGs can continue working on the community projects they envisioned with their actors:

LMH kindly asks the Ministry and the APPRRR to conclude the contracts with the users of sub-measure 19.1. [with the LAGs under the new LEADER measure within the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020] no later than 1 October 2015, and if possible, earlier. Namely, as you know, prefinancing costs 19.1. will be through interest-free loans from the National Foundation for Civil Society Development under the Europe Plus program. The tender for the Europa Plus program is open until 27 October 2015, and after that deadline, LAGs will no longer be able to apply for prefinancing for this tender (Official memo LMH, 6 August 2015)

So, the LMH is, on the one hand pushing the State and, on the other hand working with other national networks to ensure the continuation of the work of the LAG. Furthermore, they exert

the EU regulation to put an additional strain on the State to frame LEADER according to the values of the NGO actors.

Benefiting from the European regulation that is since 2013 applied to Croatia, LMH sends an ‘urgent notice on the infringement of the European code of conduct for partnership within the framework of European Cohesion and Structural funds and Delegated regulation of the commission (EU) 240/2014 when launching the initiative for the amendments of the [LEADER] ordonnance [...]’ to the Minister of agriculture in person. They point out to a state official who has sent official invitations to a meeting by appointing on his own the number of possible representatives from the State, the LAGs and the LAG networks, as well as whom they should be by name, to ensure that all the propositions presented by the Ministry on that meeting get accepted by the present majority. They underline how this contradicts the principle of inclusion of all interested parties in planning rural development, as pointed out in the Rural Development programme itself. (LMH official memo, 21 October 2016).

In the face of these pressures, the State becomes aware that the EU funding demands creating alliances with the local actors. Therefore, if the State is to put forward its agenda of a top-down approach to LEADER, it will need a network of local actors supporting them in this endeavour.

Accommodation 8 – *Stabilising re-arrangement (normative) -State actors push for a creation of a third national network of LAGs and Counties to have an ally during public deliberations.*

In 2015 the third national network of LAGs emerged. It is a group led by former State officials - a National Network for Sustainable Development of Croatia. This national network was, since its founding, an ally of the State, supporting and defending the views of the State actors in the deliberations among actors of the LEADER field – until these actors became State officials themselves.

This third network provided arguments for the State on the deficiencies in the LEADER approach to Rural Development and why it should be steered top-down by the state actors:

‘they [LAGs] cannot even decide among themselves who represents them. It will be very complicated for them to decide how to distribute EU funding’ (Verbatim, NP1).

Nonetheless, despite stemming discord among LAGs with their views and propositions that regularly aligned with those of the State (Verbatim, NC2), this national network had little to no, actions organised towards achieving their objectives – that is, representing the LAGs and doing projects that would facilitate cooperation between local actors in the field of rural development. Nonetheless, the first president of this network soon after its establishment became (again) a government member (Nađ, 2016).

PHASE 3 Accommodation of the State and the NGO regimes: finding common ground for participation

Through continued mutual accommodation, participation is established between the State and the NGO regimes. The field of LEADER is shared, which stabilises the regimes; this occurs in three moves: first, as will be shown in 'accommodation **9**', the State regime appropriates the Leader Measure of the Rural Development Programme that finances the work of 56 LAGs as a top-down measure of development. Then, through accommodation **10**, the NGO regime appropriates the LEADER measure within the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture that finances the work of 14 fisheries LAGs – FLAGS, a community-led local development. Finally, in accommodation **11**, LAGs being non-profit organisations, can apply their project to other funding sources, and several LAGs, such as LAG Vallis Collapis and LAG Zapadna Slavonija and LAG Zagor, a benefit from this possibility and apply community projects.

Accommodation 9 – *Strategic concession (economic/normative) -The State imposes LEADER measure as a top-down steered measure of the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. There are no community projects to be done with the local actors. Local Actors can apply to LAGs call to obtain funding in line with the rules defined by the State.*

Despite the strong engagement from the NGO actors in mainstreaming LEADER as a participatory approach to rural development, the State regulation manages to capture LEADER as a top-down measure of the Rural Development Programme. LAGs will have money to implement their Local Development Strategy. However, the State defines the rules. Despite protests from the LAGs that:

LAGs must not be seen as the last local link in the long run for implementing policies decided elsewhere. They are not just places where all the services related to holding calls and collecting applications for grants or training programs can be found in one place. The true value of a partnership stems from their role in bringing together local people to encourage the flow of ideas and co-create projects that would not have happened or would have been much more difficult to develop without the partnership. (Cvjetković, 2014)

The State decides that LAGs do not have the sufficient capacity to build their Local Development Strategies on their own and that it is on the State bodies in communication with the EU to envision a straightforward procedure that would leave little space for administrative errors (Smjernice za provedbu postupka odabira projekata, 31 January 2018).

They [the State] do not understand LEADER and do not want to listen to anybody, LAGs and the local people included, how they should implement LEADER' (Verbatim NC2).

Accommodation 10- *Strategic concession (governance) – The State allows for LEADER measures within the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture to finance LAGs in fisheries (FLAGs) to plan and implement projects with local actors.*

Moreover, LAGs have been seen as incompetent to build and support community projects working with the local actor. Reducing the role of the LAGs to administrators who are to are to:

Announce tenders for an operation from the Local Development Strategy - consistent with the Rural Development Programme RDP 2014-2020 measures (in all eligibility)
[...]

And where:

Paying agency [the State] delivers a complete tender package, including a control mechanism; LAGs select projects and verify beneficiaries' acceptability criteria. afterwards, the Paying Agency approves the projects. (Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate for rural development 2015, p. 106)

Within the Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture programme, fisheries LAGs have been seen as the coordinators of local development. Who can use the funds allocated to LEADER within the Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture programme to:

- Prepare and publish calls for proposals, or an actual procedure for submitting a project, including defined selection criteria
- Prepare and evaluate the request for support
- Monitor implementation of the Local-Led Development Strategy and operations that have received subventions and perform unique evaluations linked to the Local-Led Development Strategy managed by the local community

- Choose operations and determine the level of support, and if needed, submit a proposal to the Managing Authority for final verification of eligibility, including selection criteria (Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate for fisheries, 2015)

Furthermore, in this case, the State puts forward the need for cooperation with LAGs:

Rural local action groups have more experience, which will be considered during the planning of preparatory support, communication and spreading of information to the fisheries community. MA [the State] plans to push future FLAG to use resources and logistics from the existing rural LAGs where possible [...] (Ministry of Agriculture, Directorate for Fisheries, 2015 p. 87)

FLAGs, together with local actors, decide what projects enter in the Local Development Strategy of the FLAG, how much money is to be allocated to the projects and when this project will be implemented. This is a great victory for the LAGs engaged in the programme who founded FLAGs (fisheries LAGs) as well as the LMH that supported them:

(...) Leader Network Croatia, in cooperation with FLAGs, has managed to develop an administrative base with all necessary documentation for the execution of calls for proposals and co-financing of multi-sectoral partnerships, which makes it the first implementation of the LEADER/CLLD approach in the Republic of Croatia in the last ten years of its planning and execution (Markotić-Krstinić, 2019)

Moreover, while LAGs in the rural development programme are to 'blindly follow the work of the Directorate for Rural Development and the Paying Agency in Agriculture and Rural Development (Verbatim, NC3), a handful of LAGs along the Adriatic coast have managed to establish fisheries LAGs. There the State, represented by the Directorate for Fisheries, supports the local actors in fisheries to collaborate, learn, and build projects together (FLAG mreza, 2018).

Accommodation 11 – *Stabilising re-alignment (economic) – LAGs are applying to other EU programmes to finance their community projects.* As a LAG manager, I struggled to include local actors in implementing the LEADER measure, framed by the Rural Development Programme 2014-2020. As a single LAG, we were awarded under 1 million euros (LAG, 2015) that will be distributed to the local actors through 64 projects. The project proposals of half of the municipalities that were LAG members since the beginning and already paid over 20 000 euros in membership fees were over 2 million euros. For the actors engaged in the LAG, this signalled that their projects have no chance of being funded, regardless of the discourse reassurance of us as LAG managers. In addition, compared to the annual cost of our office, which was, on average 150 000 euros (LAG 5 Financial report, 2019), it was hard to explain and convince the local population that we are there for them. People were increasingly disinterested in attending our Board meetings and Annual Assemblies. As another LAG manager put it:

The members of the LAG seek some benefit from the partnership [...] The public sector is looking at whether it will have some infrastructure or employment in its area. The private sector determines whether farmers will have subsidies to improve their business. The association benefits greatly because we write to them for free projects. They then implement millions of projects [...] It is a partnership based on individual interests' (Verbatim, NC3)

So, in collaboration with other LAGs, through the LEADER Network Croatia we started building projects that would really 'change the image of our society' (Slejko, 2022 in Juzni.hr), one of them was the 'I want to help' project. We built it with the local municipalities, the Croatian Unemployment Office and the Center for Social Welfare of the county. It provided 42 new jobs for long-term unemployed people and care for over 300 older adults on the island of Korčula and the Pelješac peninsula. The European Social Fund financed it and, as such, provided an opportunity to implement a community-led local development project.

In summary, we observe in the accommodation phase sharing the LEADER field between a State and the NGO regimes of participation. The State regime of participation is characterised by a top-down approach where the State decides what projects can be done and how. The NGO regime of participation encompasses the work of FLAGs, who cooperate with State actors from the Directorate for Fisheries to build community projects and the NGO entrepreneurial work of the LAGs, who seek sources of funding outside the Rural Development Programme to build community projects.

V. DISCUSSION

This study contributes to the literature on political dynamics in multi-stakeholder initiatives (Levy & Spicer, 2013; Moog et al., 2015; Levy et al., 2016).

First, we identify and describe the regimes that constitute the field of public MSIs; the State and the NGO regimes (see table IV in the results section). Second, we explore the contested political process of emergence and stabilisation of two regimes of participation within the studied field of public MSIs (see figure 2). Our research revolves around two core puzzles: How does a regime of participation emerge within the field of MSIs? How do the power struggles within the field of MSI shape the capacity of individual MSIs to be inclusive?

Our findings suggest that the stabilisation of the regimes of participation occurs through a process that resembles a Gramscian 'war of position' through which multiple bases of power shift their economic and normative values as well as their system of governance to gain legitimacy resulting in the emergence of two regimes of participation, the State and the NGO regimes. Therefore, the capacity of MSIs to be inclusive both in their deliberative process and in their outcome by funding small marginal projects will be inherent to the characteristics of the economic, normative and governance dimensions of the regime of participation that will impose itself within the field. First, depending on the economic resources, knowledge of the norms and the capacity to appropriate and develop its governance mechanisms, one regime will impose its vision of participation on the field of MSIs at a certain time. In return, this will define each MSI's capacity to incorporate the plurality of voices (Cheyns, 2010). Second, as these two regimes are in a constant power struggle, the regimes of participation that will emerge from this undetermined change process is in constant transformation. We can observe this throughout the three phases of disruption, re-alignment, and accommodation in Croatia's emergence and stabilisation of the LEADER field. The unequal participation within the regime will depend on

(i) the allocation of economic resources, (ii) the normative framework shaping decision-making and outcomes of participative decisions, and (iii) the inclusiveness of the governance processes put in place to achieve the objectives of the MSI.

V.1. The field of public MSIs is shared between the State and the NGO regimes.

MSIs are a complex network of actors with rules that define the scope and nature of participation (Maher et al., 2019) to achieve a specific societal or corporate objective. They are inscribed in a larger governance system in which State and non-state actors interact in various ways (De Bakker et al., 2019). We argue that these interactions will depend on the economic, normative and governance dimensions of the value regime led by the dominant actors, in our case, the State or the NGOs. While in the work of Levy and Spicer (2013, p. 672-3), the concept of value regimes refers to 'a broader political-economic settlement linking an imaginary with a specific set of technologies, production methods and market structures' where the capacity of the value regime to achieve hegemonic status depend on the dominants actors capacity to become 'embedded in the institutions of civil society and the culture and practices of everyday life (ibid., p 674); in our case, we observe the evolution of twofold value regimes each with their own set of economic, cultural and governance and practices. Moreover, rather than aiming to achieve a hegemonic status and dominate the field, these two regimes develop almost separately as two alternative realities. In the long run, it is due to the issue of legitimacy and accountability to the actors they are to represent that they enter into deliberation. As observed in the case of the emergence of the coffee sector regime (Levy et al.,2016), this process resembles the 'war of position' through which multiple bases of power shift their economic and normative values as well as their system of governance to dominate the field.

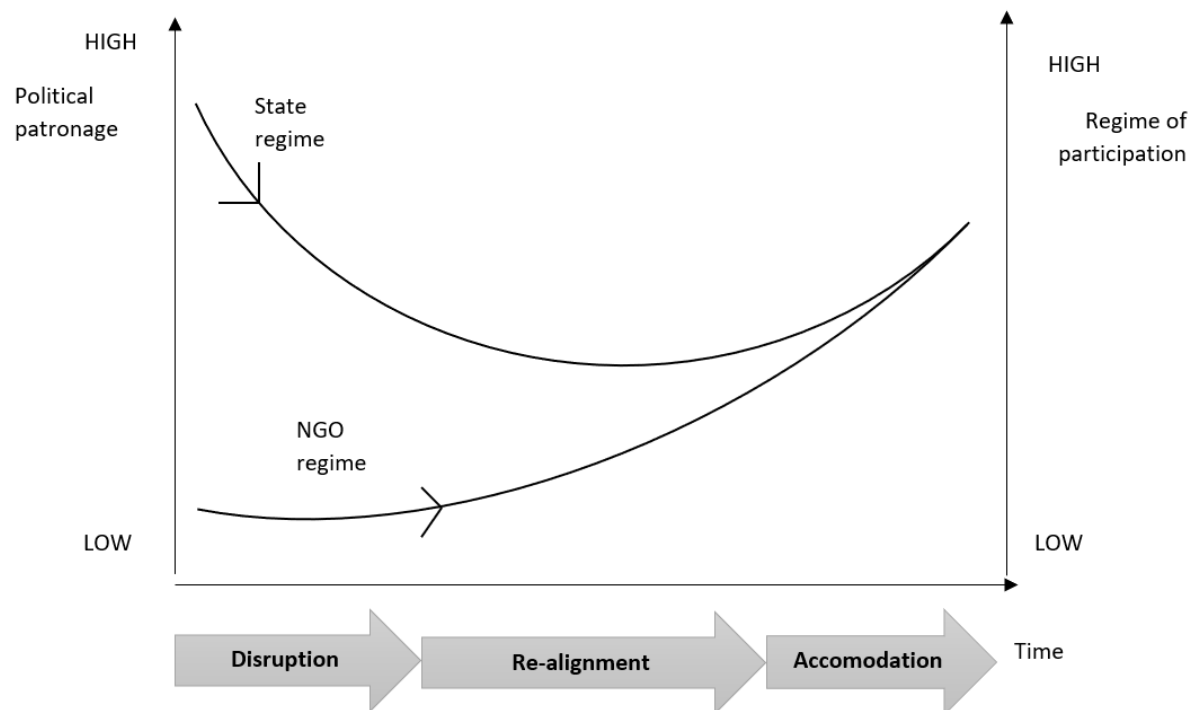
Furthermore, while in the field of private MSIs, it is on each MSI to set up its meaning system and a governance structure, in the field of public MSI, such is LEADER, the stakes are higher as the value regime results from a long process of deliberation among actors who are accountable both to the actors that will, later on, participate within the MSIs and the society at large.

V.2. Participation as a politically constructed process

Participation emerges out of the process of accommodation between the State-led and the NGO-led regimes that constitutes the field of public MSIs. As identified by Levy and colleagues (2016), ‘accommodative dynamics are driven by a co-evolutionary process of mutual accommodation in which both parties make “strategic concessions” to each other (...)’. In our case, this results in sharing the field between the State and the NGOs. As demonstrated in figure 3, participation is an *evolutionary process*. In the case of public MSIs, this process is characterised by continuous power struggles influenced by exogenous and endogenous processes.

In our case, the exogenous pressure from the European Union and the international organisations pushes the State regime from the networks of political patronage towards the inclusion of a larger number of actors. The creation of a third network that will support the State's interests represents the evolutionary process where the State relies upon its networks of political patronage to move towards what is, in their understanding, a participative public policy process. This phenomenon leads to our understanding of participation within MSIs as being shaped by the broader socio-political context it is embedded in.

Figure 3 Emergence of the regimes of participation within the field of public MSIs



In the case of public MSIs, the nature of each MSI results from a long process of deliberation among actors who are accountable both to the actors that will, later on, participate within the MSIs and the society at large, unlike in the case of private MSIs where it is on each MSI to set up its meaning system and governance structure. That is why in the case of LAGs in Croatia, we can observe that despite the common governance principles of LEADER, such as territorial approach, bottom-up, public-private partnership, integrated and multi-sectoral approach, innovation, cooperation with other regions, and networking (Pollerman, 2016) the nature of participation and the enactment of inclusiveness will not be the same. We argue that participation is a hegemonic process whose enactment relies on the capacity for accommodation and reappropriation of the value regime's economic, normative, and governance dimensions by the dominant alliance, what Gramsci (1971) termed *the historical bloc*.

Furthermore, it is precisely for this reason that the capacity of public MSIs to construct locally embedded economic alternatives that support, as Ehrnström -Fuentes (2016) put it, ‘different forms of life that the public MSIs can include and engage with more actors than the private MSI. However, the nature of this participation will be defined by the dominant field MSIs are embedded in. We read from figure 2 that the emergence of participation as an accommodation between the State and the NGO regimes will not necessarily break the pre-existing political patronage networks. This means that the wider inclusion of a larger number of actors and their participation in the work of MSIs might be accommodations of the dominant regime. Further research is necessary to understand how participation is used within an individual MSI concerning the regime of participation it is embedded.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study provides the first theoretical contribution to the multi-stakeholder literature in business ethics (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019)) by acknowledging the importance of a broader socio-political context in which MSIs are embedded and by providing a processual account of the emergence of distinct *regimes of participation* within a larger public governance system.

It also provides a second theoretical contribution to the literature on political dynamics in multi-stakeholder initiatives (Levy & Spicer, 2013; Moog Spicer & Böhm, 2015; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016). We expand the neo-Gramscian literature in the field of organisation studies by applying the analytical framework of the value regimes to understand how the larger governance systems that public MSIs are embedded in are shaping participation in these very MSIs, and with what outcome. We characterise a participation regime as governance inclusive of small local actors, a set of norms favouring support to small business holders, and a preference for funding small projects in the local MSIs. Conversely, non-participative regimes tend to have non-inclusive governance, to value established, politically-connected large business holders, and allocate economic resources in their favour. As such, our research represents a theoretical contribution to the understanding of participation in local MSIs as shaped by the dynamic and inherently political regime of participation in which it is embedded in. We demonstrate that Levy, Reinecke and Manning's (2016) neo-Gramscian process model of change could be applied to understand participation as a politically constructed process whose nature will depend on the value regime it is embedded in.

Future research on public MSIs drawing on our findings could focus on the role of the supra-state in framing inclusive MSI environments. Such research would provide a beneficial impact not only for the local MSIs in rural development but also for the MSIs working within the

global arenas such as the United Nations. The complex challenges of the 21st-century demand construction of inclusive environments where participation will be enacted beyond deliberation. It is, therefore, important to understand participation as a hegemonic system encompassing economic, normative and governance mechanisms that provide an inclusive framework for MSIs to inscribe their objectives.

CHAPTER II

Playing the scales: The story of the Pelješac LEADER initiative

Abstract: This study contributes to the literature on resistance movements by describing the strategic action local actors engage in across spatial scales when faced with hegemonic processes. Through an innovative longitudinal approach, this study examines how local actors organised against a new, state-imposed, and EU-framed regulation that threatened local forms of livelihood on the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac. Based on lived experience and multiple data sources, the study finds that appropriation of dominant organisational logics allows the local actors to *play the scales*, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time.

They do so by constructing a (1) translocal alliance that will grab different elements from different scales to build a (2) trans-scalar strategy which becomes central to the evolution of spatial scales. The trans-scalar strategy exerts pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various scales and via different actors of the translocal alliance. The findings suggest that the capacity to *play the scales* derives from how the dominant organisational logic is *repurposed*. Playing the scales implies that local actors protect their political scale from broader hegemonic diffusion by appropriating dominant organisational logic to their advantage, thanks to the knowledge they acquired through the translocal alliance.

Keywords: spatial scales, rescaling, playing the scales, organisational logic, trans-scalar MSI

I. INTRODUCTION

It has been three years since Ana has been preparing to apply to Measure 6 of the European Union Rural Development Programme. She wants to apply for EU subsidies that permit her to buy the neighbouring parcel where she would plant olive trees and medicinal herbs and put some beehives. Such an investment should allow her to be economically viable in the face of ever more whimsical yields and eliminate the threat of forest fires from the abandoned agricultural land bordering her property. However, all in vain since the State has just changed the rules. Furious, she calls all the politicians she can think of, demanding an explanation of how they could, again, discriminate against the Pelješac peninsula. They unanimously respond that there is nothing to be done this time, as it is the European Union rules and the EU science behind it – not politics. She feels furious, powerless, and broke. She turns to a Local Action Group (LAG) as her last resort.

Local Action Groups (LAGs) are public multistakeholder organisations regulated by the State, funded by the European Union LEADER programme – an acronym *for Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy* - and repurposed by the local actors. Their formation is part of the wider Europeanization process throughout the EU that refers to the integration of European economies and societies (Meunier, 2004). As such, it has been seen as EU policy ‘downloading’ by Member States (Augustyn & Nemes, 2014), and as LAG is an EU organisation 'downloaded' locally, it seems to Ana that they should be able to do something.

Such a view resonates with the literature on resistance movements that highlighted the importance of trans-local coalitions for local actors (Vittel et al., 2015; Banerjee, 2018; Leglise, 2021). While these coalitions operate locally, they influence multiple regional and national levels (see Banerjee, 2018). As such, they seek a translocal mode of governance to create new

sources of agency for communities that ‘choose not to accept the hegemonic model at international and national levels’ (Banerjee, 2018; p. 813). From current research, we know that these coalitions allow the local actors to reposition their claims within the dominant discourse (Leglise, 2021) and provide them with the knowledge and funding necessary to re-appropriate the development of their territory (Vittel, Leroy & Fearnside, 2015). This agency is further explained by Spicer & Fleming (2007), who points out that tactical resistance uses a dominant space by occupying it in unanticipated and often subversive ways using tactics such as discursive contestation. As Fairclough and Thomas (2004, p. 392) pointed out, here, the hegemonic discourse, such would be the one of Europeanization, is ‘appropriated and drawn down into local spaces by actors who may treat the discourse as a resource’. The translocal movement thereby appropriates the dominant hegemonic discourse for alternative purposes (Banerjee & Linstead, 2002) and defends the local.

Moving to the literature on LEADER that has investigated the participation of local actors in LAGs, we learn that they have been seen as ‘redistributing political power by giving preference to rural/local actors, and partially discriminating in favour of actor networks and against state bureaucracy (Kovach, 2000). However, research has mostly unfolded around the critique of participation in LAGs where the action of the local actors is monopolised by consultancy offices and development agencies (Maurel, 2008) shouting out the local actors. LAGs have been seen as tools of hegemony where experts and managers neglect local perplexities and endorse changes without paying attention to the effects on the local structures (Koutsouris, 2008). We know less about the manager's capacity to defend the participation of the local actors and their interests within the LAG and in which cases. Specifically, how do they employ these new sources of agency that emerge from translocal coalitions, such as a LAG framed by the EU, regulated by the State and re-appropriated by the local actors, to defend the participation? The literature on resistance movements have pointed that such agency is possible (Banerjee, 2018; Vittel et al., 2015, Cheyns & Risgaard, 2015).

Understanding agency as a form of strategic action local actors engage in to resist hegemony imposed from other scales is critical for our understanding of why some resistance movements achieve their objectives and others do not. Furthermore, we argue it is critical to understand how and in what contexts local actors engage in strategic action to play the hegemonic processes deriving from other scales in their favour. We feel this is crucial if we are to understand how the participation of local actors is defended through time and space within larger governance systems; and, as such, ensures inclusive environments where actors from different scales work together towards common objectives, such as ensuring our planet is a viable environment for the future generations.

Spicer's understanding of spatial scales as different levels of space that are socially produced through the process of rescaling, that is, the changes in patterns of capital accumulation, regulation, and mobilisation of discourses (2006) provides us with the analytical framework to investigate into the agency of local actors when faced with hegemonic processes (Banerjee, 2011). Spicer (2006) argues that 'rescaling occurs through articulating an organisational logic - as a sensemaking frame that provides an understanding of what is legitimate, reasonable, and effective in a given context - with shifting patterns of accumulation, linking a logic into different regimes of regulation and mobilising new spatial discourses (Spicer, 2006, p. 1476). We expand on his concept of rescaling by investigating the agency behind it. Specifically, we theorise the strategic action local actors engage in to defend the local across spatial scales. To do so, we propose to benefit from the lived experience of the first author to investigate how local actors play the scales to put forward their interests when they have re-appropriated the dominant organisational logic through the LAG. We ask: *how can local actors play the scales to counter broader hegemonic moves and effectively protect the local scale in the form of the views, practices and policies attached to this spatial scale?*

This paper advances our understanding of how resistance movements operate through scales via a longitudinal participatory approach that looks into the type of strategic action local actors engage in to defend their scale. Our findings suggest that appropriation of dominant organisational logic allows the local actors to *play the scales*, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time. They do so by constructing a translocal alliance that will grab different elements from different scales to build a trans-scalar strategy that becomes central to spatial scales.

To make our case, we proceed as follows. We describe the research on local resistance movements and cross it with research on the participation of local actors in LAGs. We then introduce the analytical framework of rescaling by Spicer (2006) used to investigate the strategic action local actors engage in to defend participation within their MSIs in the face of hegemonic pressures before presenting our methodology and findings. We conclude by discussing our contributions and avenues for further research.

II. THEORETICAL SECTION: defending participation of local actors

In this section, we present what we know about the strategies of local actors within resistance movements, identifying the need to explore the strategic action behind the theoretical concept of translocal governance frameworks (Banerjee, 2018). We expand this stream of literature with what we know from the literature on LEADER that has investigated the participation of local actors in LAGs; lacking, however, to investigate the agency of LAG managers and their capacity to defend the participation of local actors and their interests in the face of hegemonic pressures. In order to investigate into this gap, we introduce the concept of rescaling as an analytical framework to understand the strategic action of local actors in the face of hegemonic pressures.

II.1. Local actors defend their scale through participation in trans-scalar MSIs

From the current literature on resistance movements, we know that translocal coalitions allow local actors to reposition their claims within the dominant discourses (Banerjee, 2018; Leglise, 2021) by engaging in tactical resistance (Spicer & Fleming, 2007), which consists of occupying dominant spaces using tactics of discursive contestation. Translocal coalition allows appropriating the dominant discourse for alternative purposes (Banerjee & Linstead, 2002), such as for the local actors' claims. Spicer and Fleming (2007) argued that this is achieved through tactical resistance that allows for the change in organisational logic.

Organisational logic is a sensemaking frame that explains what is legitimate, reasonable, and effective in a given context (Spicer, 2006, p. 1476). It represents a meso-level concept that enables us to 'link ideational developments in the field (the macro perspective) with spatially

and temporally localised activities' (Spicer&d Sewel, 2010, p. 936). Specifically, how the change of the dominant organisational logic of the State with the introduction of new governance structures, such as LAGs, impacted the local actors' position and possibility for action. For Spicer (2006), rescaling occurs through articulating organisational logic into different regimes of regulation and mobilising new spatial discourses that put forward the interests of the local actors. However, we know less about the strategic action behind rescaling. Specifically, less is known about the form of trans-scalar strategy local actors engage in to resist hegemony deriving from other scales.

LAGs are seen here as trans-scalar MSIs insofar as they are framed by the EU, regulated by the State, and appropriated by local actors. As such, they are considered central to understanding a trans-scalar strategic action. LAGs are primarily set up as local partnerships gathering local actors from the public, private and the sector of civil society organisations (Bosworth, 2011). They aim to create networks and develop strategies based on collaboration, co-partnerships and stakeholder consultation with actors positioned on their local scale (Secco et al., 2011). However, they interact also with the national state bureaucrats in charge of their regulation and the larger European framework consisting of national and EU associations of LAGs (Zajda et al., 2017).

From current research on the participation of local actors in LAGs (Kovach, 2000; Augustyn & Nemes, 2014; Shortall, 2008; Lukic &Obad, 2016), we know that participation tends to be monopolised by consultancy offices, development agencies (Maurel, 2008) or LAG managers who neglect the local perplexities and endorse changes without paying attention to the local (Koutsouris, 2008). Furthermore, research revealed that participation and engagement of local actors took place only in 'invited spaces of rural governance, defined and conceptualised by the State and into which communities are invited' (Shucksmith, 2012, p. 15). As such, the participation of local actors is framed by the hegemonic discourse of Europeanization and State

regulation, which makes the participation of local actors in their work challenging (Dargan & Shucksmith, 2008). The work of LAGs was critiqued twofold. On the one hand that the formation of LAGs corresponded with the formation of a new political elite that was not given a political mandate, and that shifted the preestablished power relations between the State and the individuals (Kovach & Kucherova, 2006; Chrobot, 2012; Lukic & Obad, 2016). On the other hand, LAGs have been critiqued as finding it ever more difficult to identify regional needs and opportunities (Marquardt et al., 2010). So how can the local actors make use of such a trans-scalar MSI?

II.2. Rescaling: an analytical framework to understand the agency behind trans-scalar MSIs

Spicer argued (2006) that rescaling results from changes in patterns of capital accumulation, regulation, and the mobilisation of discourse, which are imposed by one scale onto another one. In the context of Europeanization, the State appropriation of EU subsidies for regional and agricultural development involves some imposition of the EU logic onto the State scale. In this process, the European Union frames the conditions for access to subsidies by demanding the integration of EU policies into State regulations (Reinhard, 2012). Consequently, this changes the national discourse that becomes Europeanised (Malekovic et al., 2011). The rescaling of organisational logic further cascades down through implementing EU policies and EU rules from the State to the local actors. In that context, LAGs act as new territorial organisations of rural development that use EU funding and are set up according to EU regulations. They can be considered to embody the rescaling of the hegemonic organisational logic on the local scale.

Such a situation sets the stage for the emergence of local resistance movements and could provide avenues for how local actors will, in turn, defend their participation within the LAGs.

Firstly, forming alliances and trans-scalar coalitions is crucial for local actors to defend their interests (Vittel et al., 2015; Banerjee, 2018; Palpacuer & Seignour, 2019; Leglise, 2021). Leglise (2021) underlines the importance of creating alliances for local actors to reposition their claims within the dominant discourse. Likewise, Vittel and colleagues (2015) show that creating a translocal alliance provides the local actors with the knowledge needed to finance their projects.

Secondly, the formation of translocal governance can be used to gain legitimacy. Banerjee (2011, 2018) and Ehrnström-Fuentes (2021) stressed the importance of a translocal governance of local alliances if local actors are to strengthen the legitimacy of their concerns and defend their shared vision of the world against global hegemonic processes. Banerjee (2011, 2018) proposes a translocal governance framework to respond to the hegemonic processes of the global extractive industries. He puts forward "trans-locality" as the "multiplicity of local spaces and actors and their interrelationships in a global world" (Banerjee, 2018, p. 811), arguing for local alliances that can help strengthen the legitimacy of local concerns beyond a simple "tokenistic presence in deliberations" (Banerjee, 2018, p. 813).

However, we still know little about the strategic action behind rescaling. Spicer (2006) pointed out that rescaling involves ongoing political conflicts and 'articulating struggles with an existing scale, linking struggles with a larger scale, and connecting struggles with lower scales' (2006, p. 1477). We also know that through various forms of discursive agency, local actors manage to transform the dominant organisational logic (Spicer & Fleming, 2007; Spicer & Sewel, 2010). However, we lack insight into the strategic action that builds and uses these discourses by focusing solemnly on the discursive analysis and the narratives therein.

Levy and Egan (2003) pointed out that the weaker actors can outmanoeuvre the more powerful actors with a combination of a clever strategy, good timing, and some luck. We propose to use the concept of rescaling to investigate the agency that would be behind such a clever strategy that is well-timed and has the luck to succeed. Moreover, we argue it is critical to understand how, why and in what contexts local actors engage in strategic action to play the hegemonic processes deriving from other scales in their favour. We feel this is crucial if we are to understand how the participation of local actors is defended through time and space within larger governance systems and how this ensures inclusive environments where actors from different scales work together towards common objectives. We, therefore, ask: *how can local actors play the scales to counter broader hegemonic moves and effectively protect the local scale in the form of the views, practices and policies attached to this spatial scale?*

III. METHODS AND DATA

To answer our research question, we have built a case study stemming from the lived experience of the author (Yin, 2003; Pitard, 2017) that draws on the concept of rescaling (Spicer, 2006) to investigate the strategic action local actors engaged in to defend the local in the face of hegemonic pressures.

III.1. Case selection: The LEADER initiative on the Pelješac peninsula

Our study on the strategic action local actors engage in across spatial scales to defend their interests focuses on an initiative that unfolded around a Local Action Group established on the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac (named LAG 5). LAG 5 aimed to ‘build a community with a competitive economy, high quality of life and preserved natural and cultural heritage that directs its development towards a sustainable future’ (LAG 5, 2016). It was mobilised by local actors to resist a hegemonic initiative driven by the national State as part of the broader process of Croatia’s so-called Europeanization. The initiative to be resisted involved Croatia’s adoption of a new EU methodology in the national *Rulebook on Areas with Natural and Specific Constraints*, which excluded small farming areas such as Pelješac from access to EU agricultural subsidies. We have chosen to study this case for several reasons. First, LAGs are the smallest territorial development organisations throughout the Member States of the European Union that are framed according to the EU regulation and therefore represent the rescaling of the EU organisational logic to the local. Second, the implementation of the European Union laws, rules, and regulations has been in Croatia, a closed deliberation process

that unfolded between the national State and the European Union characterised by what we call a "policy downloading", as was the case in much of the former communist countries of the European Union. As such, it allowed us to investigate the conditions of rescaling in the face of a State-captured Europeanization. Finally, one of the authors of this paper has worked in the LAG 5 and coordinated this local initiative. Author embeddedness provided a unique opportunity to gain insights into rescaling Europeanization's organisational logic as a top-down and bottom-up policy process.

III.2. Socio-political context

Ana's problem of losing points to Measure 6 of the Rural Development Programme and her subsequent failure to receive subsidies is illustrative of a broader pattern of State capture of the Europeanization process, which has occurred in Eastern European countries recently joining the European Union, such as Croatia. With Croatia becoming a Member State, it no longer sufficed to 'do politics' to access public financial support.

Now, territories such as Pelješac first had to be classified as areas with specific or natural constraints. Secondly, the area had to be further identified as an area with biophysical constraints, where, according to an EU 'fine-tuning methodology,' state subsidies did not allow to overcome the loss in agricultural production (Matthews, 2017).

Furthermore, in Croatia, where such a methodology was to be applied for the first time in 2014 in the face of insufficient data (Husnjak et al., 2015), there was a substantial space for interpretation of the existing data and the EU methodology by the State officials (Verbatim, NAA1, LAA1).

In our case, these interpretations resulted in Pelješac being excluded despite having important biophysical constraints, such as being a karst territory with agricultural activities completed on high slopes and at risk of abandonment (Husnjak et al., 2015). Therefore, when applying for investment measure operation 6.1.1. (Support for starting a business for young farmers) in 2016, one of the criteria for which farmers would become eligible – i.e., receive “additional points” – was having at least 50% of their agricultural holdings in areas with natural or specific constraints and having had all the activities for which the subsidy is to be distributed executed on such parcels (National Gazette 120/2016). The subsidy in question would amount to 50,000 euros. These additional points were extremely important for Pelješac farmers as they would compensate for the points lost due to small agricultural holdings, resulting from the karst agricultural terrain situated on high slopes with 70% inclination.

Excluding the Pelješac peninsula from less favoured areas deprived local farmers of additional points that would allow them to compete for EU funding under the same conditions as more extensive agricultural holdings in areas with more favourable agricultural conditions. Land abandonment was thus to be increased, though it was already significant since only 30% of the agricultural land was being used when the new regulatory constraints were established (Abdessater et al., 2017).

III.3. Research design

To investigate the strategic action of local actors when faced with hegemonic processes, we explored the strategy of the national State and the local actors around the *Rulebook of Areas with natural or specific constraints*. We have employed a longitudinal participatory approach (Cooke & Cox, 2005; Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007; Gioia et al., 2013) to build a narrative of the case from the perspective of the local actors. To offset the first author's potential bias, which was at the heart of the events, two years after the initiative, we interviewed actors that we identified as crucial for understanding our case on the European, national, and local scale. These interviews confirmed and expanded the initial narrative from the first author's lived experience. To ensure the just representation of the public discourse produced by the stakeholders involved (Boltanski & Thévenot 2006), we have complemented the interviews with official memos produced by the actors representing the European scale and national state scale and the scale of the local actors. Lastly, as 'the written press offers appropriate source material with which to study the negotiation of social reality' (Patriota et al., 2011, p. 1813), we have also analysed the discourse adopted by the local and national media on the success of the initiative. The analysis of multiple data sources has allowed us to take the distance in identifying power relations in the context of Europeanization that local actors engage in when *playing the scales*.

III.4. Data collection

Data was collected from personal correspondence, field notes and interviews between 2016 and 2021 before triangulation with a range of documentary data (Bo et al., 2019) that consisted of EU and State regulations on agricultural subsidies for less favoured areas, as well as the EU

and national scientific studies that designed these areas. One author was at the centre of the initiative coordinating the activities, which allowed the case to be backed with lived experience of doing a trans-scalar strategy. It was the manager of the LAG that Ana solicited.

Semi-structured interviews with key actors at the European, national, and local levels were conducted in person, on the telephone and via Zoom one to three years after the initiative ended, depending on the actors' availability. The temporal distance between the initiative and the interview's time was intentional. It ensured that all the interviewees gave their vision of the initiative and were not influenced by the main author's role in the events. The interview outline was sent in advance at the request of certain interviewees. With the European and local actors, interviews were completed by telephone and in person with one national state actor. As this national state actor was a high-ranking national state official, the interview was held with a ministry PR person and was limited to 15 minutes. Additional interviews with national, state and local actors were completed in 2021 to verify the results.

The interviews lasted between 15 minutes and three hours. They began with a series of fixed questions about the interviewee's knowledge of the EU and national regulation, the initiative, the actors involved, their view of how the initiative went, and the overall process of the national state adoption of EU regulation. Based on the interviewee's responses, the fixed questions were followed up with open questions about their view on the initiative and their perception of the challenges in offsetting the national state regulation. All interviews were conducted in Croatian, recorded, and transcribed – except for interviews with one resident and one mayor who agreed to answer our questions but refused to be recorded. The transcripts were emailed to the individual interviewees for eventual correction and confirmation. We wrote notes based on our memory for the interviews with no transcripts. The transcripts were then coded, and the verbatim texts were translated to English.

To complement the interviews and the memos, we collected a wide range of relevant documentary data that focuses on implementing EU Regulation 1305/2013 Art. 32 on Areas with Natural and Specific constraints and the CAP payments in the EU, especially in Croatia. The collected data included over 150 publicly available documents. We chose to summarise, categorise, and code the data presented in Table 1.

Table 1 Overview of the data sources.

Category	Data Source	CODE	Number
Interview	European Public Actor	EPA	1
	State Public Actor	SPA	2
	National Academic Actor	NAA	2
	Local Public Actor	LPA	2
	Local Civil Actor	LCA	6
	Local Academic Actor	LAA	2
Document	EU document	E-DOC	29
	State document	S-DOC	14
	Local document	L-DOC	4
	NGO document	N-DOC	1
	Media document	M-DOC	7
Correspondence	State Official Memo	S-MEMO	2
	Locals Official Memos	L-MEMO	2
	Unofficial email correspondence	E-MEMO	103

III.5. Data analysis

Overall strategy. We used a stepwise approach to make sense of the longitudinal process of unfolding spatial scales in the context of Europeanization. First, we built a timeline of events delineating the main actors operating at each scale. Secondly, we engaged with temporal bracketing to identify the key phases of the playing of the scales, which led us to manual coding of the transcribed verbatims, which gave flesh to our phases. In an ongoing process, we have integrated and articulated the rich first-hand knowledge developed by the first author through ongoing interaction within the research team, fostering analytical pattern-building and the identification of processual and causal schemes whereby the spatial scales were being articulated.

Timeline of events. Primary and secondary data were summarised and organised chronologically to delineate the main actors operating at each scale. These actors included the EU, the national State, and the locals. The actors were classified according to their institutional affiliation. For example, a person working within the state bureaucracy in the capital of Croatia was classified as a state actor, although she might have worked and lived previously in a village.

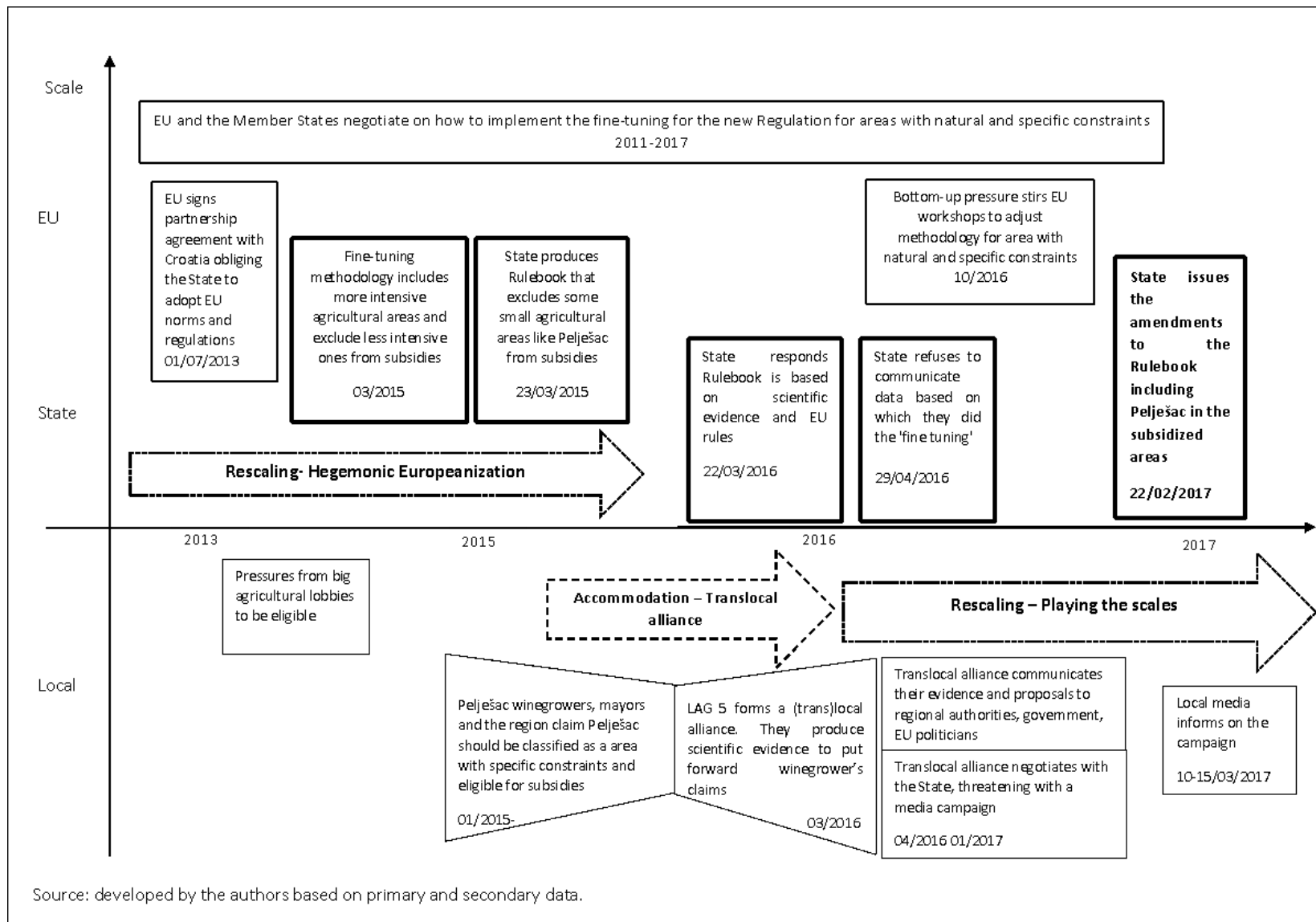
Temporal bracketing. We used 'temporal bracketing' (Langley, 2012; Levy et al., 2016) to structure the main phases of playing the scales, as presented in Figure 1, where each action is positioned concerning a leading actor. Scales demarcate the actors. When action happened was placed on the x-axis, and the scale in which it occurred was noted on the y-axis.

The EU actors such as the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, the European Parliament, and the EU member states, who have negotiated the methodology under study, and who have implemented this *Rulebook on Areas with Natural or Specific Constraints* in their own countries, are located in the EU scale. The Croatian State represents the State scale and the subcontractors hired through public procurement to prepare and implement the Rulebook. On the local scale, we have placed visually the big businesses that have successfully

included their areas in the Rulebook. Local actors organised around the LAG in the translocal alliance are also represented on this scale.

The playing of the scales unfolds in three phases. The first phase of *top-down rescaling* in the form of *hegemonic Europeanization* involves a form of ‘policy downloading’ by the national State and incorporating European policies into the State's political discourse. It represented the phase when the EU impacted the national state process of public policy construction and the national state reaction to this, capturing Europeanization. The second phase of *Accommodation* is a reaction to the first one. Local actors mobilise in order to influence the process of public policy construction. They mobilise to (1) form a translocal alliance that gathers actors from different fields with different pieces of knowledge relative to their cause and to (2) use this knowledge to envision and employ a trans-scalar strategy that will impact actors from the upper scales. In the third phase of *bottom-up rescaling*, we follow the effects of the trans-scalar strategy that manages to adjust public policies *by playing the EU and the State scales*. We symbolise visually in this Figure how public policy was reconstructed on all three scales due to the trans-scalar strategy employed by the translocal alliance among local actors in Croatia and the other Member States that demanded a revision of the Rulebook methodology. These actors played the scales to push for: (1) the EU's adaptation of the methodology proposed to the Member States and (2) the readjustment of national state regulation, while they further stirred (3) media coverage of the initiative to showcase how it was possible to shift the hegemonic Europeanization in their favour (See figure 1).

Figure 1 Processual account of playing the scales



IV. FINDINGS

Our findings show how the local actors manage to accomplish the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time by playing the scales. We delineate first the disruption in the form of a hegemonic Europeanization that changes how national subsidies are distributed. Second, we follow the local reaction of forming a translocal alliance to re-appropriate the dominant organisational logic in their favour. Third, we show how local actors rescaled this logic upwards via a translocal strategy to defend the locals, thereby *playing the scales* in their favour.

IV.1. PHASE 1 Disruption: hegemonic Europeanization 2013-2015

In phase 1 we follow the two-step process of rescaling down organizational logic of Europeanization. Firstly, from the European to the national context. Secondly, the reappropriation of the EU organizational logic by the State and rescaling it to the local level.

Top-down rescaling step one: Centralised Europeanization of the State policies and practices

By signing the partnership agreement with the EU in 2013, Croatia not only had access to the Common Agricultural Policy's subsidies, but it also had to progressively adopt and implement EU regulations, which meant more rules of law & democracy according to the EU standards (Kotarski & Petak, 2021).

This process of Europeanization had a twofold outcome. First, the Europeanization of territoriality (Havlik, 2020) allowed the emergence of new territories. Such are the territories of the Local Action Groups (LAGs) where ‘the state is no longer fully sovereign’ (Havlik, 2020, p. 1293) since the local actors can manage the allocation of small European budgets for local development. In a sense, local actors no longer depend exclusively on the discretionary decisions of the State for subsidies and planning for their development (Malekovic, Puljiz & Bartlett, 2011). Local Action Groups emerged as trans-scalar public MSI schemes since they are funded by the EU, regulated by the State, and re-appropriated by the local actors. Local participation is at the core of integrated rural development (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019). Secondly, the State was obliged to follow EU procedures in distributing subsidies which meant ‘the process of ensuring financial rents for well-connected corporate agents, whereby elected politicians serve as a linchpin between state institutions and corporate agents’ (Kotarski & Petak, 2021 p. 4) was disrupted. Whilst before the implementation of EU regulations and procedures, the practice of obtaining subsidies resembled the following description:

[My] father and I went to the agency [the State] countless times. In the end, we managed to get what we wanted. (Verbatim LCA6-BB)

By becoming a Member State of the EU, Croatia had to adopt the EU methodology on biophysical indicators and a fine-tuning procedure for determining which areas did not overcome its biophysical constraints and were, as such, both eligible for additional payments under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Measure 13). They were prioritised for other EU funding via the Rural Development Programme (Measure 6) (Verbatim NAA1, Verbatim NAA2).

Each member state could identify 10% of their territory as areas with specific constraints (Commission Regulation 1305/2013, Art 32, annexe III). So, in the study approved by the EC in January 2015, Croatia defined areas with specific constraints as territories with:

Constraints such as strong winds, frequent floods, a position in space – i.e., islands and the Pelješac peninsula, karst, vegetation fires, soil erosion, and hail are proposed. According to Regulation (EU) 1305/2013, these territories can account for 10% of the overall State. (Kusan, Husnjak, Salajpal, Mihulja & Berta, 2015)

The Croatian government had hired a team of experts that had the necessary scientific credentials accepted by the European Commission to develop a study which would serve as the basis for the *Rulebook on Areas with natural or specific constraints* (Ministarstvo poljoprivrede ev. nabave 17/2012/VV, May 2012). According to this source:

These EU payments can be given only to farmers that work in an area with some constraints that would make them abandon their agricultural production because it would be too expensive compared to a farmer in an area that does not have these constraints (Verbatim, SPA 3).

The EU methodology had to be applied if Croatia was to have access to these CAP subsidies, though it did not consider all the limitations farmers working in certain territories faced (Verbatim SPA 3, NAA1, NAA2). The EU methodology to be followed was divided into two parts. First, national experts were to designate areas ‘facing natural constraints, namely low soil productivity and poor climate conditions affecting agricultural activity’ (Orshoven et al., 2013, p. 11). National scientists have done this by ‘(1) identifying mountain areas, (2) areas with biophysical constraints that referred to the soil, climate and relief and specific areas such as islands, karst and similar’ according to the manual provided by the European Joint Research Center (Verbatim, NAA1).

After the European Commission had accepted the study on the biophysical indicators, the Croatian government signed the contract with the national scientists so they could proceed to do fine-tuning. Fine-tuning calculations aimed to exclude territories where the calculated

income was high enough to offset the biophysical constraints of agricultural production in a given territory (Husnjak, 2015).

Data for fine-tuning should be appropriate to determine whether the constraint in a given area still affects agricultural production. (*Fine-tuning in areas facing significant natural and specific constraints*, July 2016, p 4)

At this stage, national scientists face difficulties as they do not have enough data to do such calculations. However:

Member States may also carry out standard calculations to identify the region's output and costs of agricultural production to be fine-tuned and compare them to normal situations [...] The correctness and accuracy of such assumptions and calculations have to be confirmed and ensured by a body that is functionally independent of the authorities responsible for the programme implementation (*Fine-tuning in areas facing significant natural and specific constraints*, July 2016, p 5)

So, the Croatian scientists use standard calculations to identify agricultural production output and costs. They cross the data provided by the authority responsible for the programme implementation and the National Bureau of Statistics. However, as the data from the National Bureau of Statistics is deemed less reliable final calculations are done using the data from the authorities responsible for the programme implementation (Njavro, 2015, Appendix 5). The point we want to emphasise here is that such intricate, complex calculations and the data they mobilise remain hardly accessible to the public, despite being part of a publicly available document in principle (Husnjak, 2015; Njavro, 2015), so the full implementation of the EU rule for subsidies attribution remains an opaque process performed within the national scale of the State.

Top-down rescaling step two: the State capture of Europeanization in favour of national elites

After the State adopted the first study, the process of deciding which area had managed to overcome its biophysical constraints and was therefore eligible for subsidies and additional points became less transparent:

After this study, which was done correctly and professionally, was approved, it fell into the hands of NAA2 [national academic actor], and then he started attributing points [doing fine-tuning]. Furthermore, this is when they started sharing the cake. Some municipalities are under HDZ, SDP, IDS [political parties] rule (...), and that is when lobbying and clientelism, something that has nothing to do with rural development, starts. Moreover, that is when it all starts falling apart. (Verbatim, LAA2)

These inconsistencies in State regulation are manifested in the rulebook changes only two months after being put into force (National Gazette, NN 65/2015) and the allocation of subsidies to a municipality where the majority of the available agricultural land was possessed by a large-scale corporate agent (Verbatim, LCA6-BB), one who regularly declared profits in his annual financial reports (Fininfo, n.d.).

In contrast, three municipalities on the Pelješac peninsula, consisting mainly of small agricultural holdings and marked by depopulation and a low economic development index (Perišić & Wagner, 2015), were excluded from the Rulebook despite numerous requests from local wine growers' associations (Personal correspondence, April 05, 2016).

From the moment the final study on the Designation of Areas with Specific and Natural Constraints was published, we [the State] received several remarks

regarding the non-inclusion of certain municipalities (Ministry of Agriculture, March 22, 2016).

We are the scale that cannot influence many changes to the Rulebook. It is politics – the party ties that decide for us (Verbatim LP2).

IV.2. PHASE 2 Accommodation: mobilising into a translocal alliance 2015-2016

Pelješac winegrowers protested with the local mayors and the county's local government representatives. The county officials went as far as to request a public consultation on the Rulebook (Borovac & Segedin, 2016). They requested official meetings with the State, and during official and non-official visits to Pelješac, they pointed out the 'evidence of the situation' (Verbatim LCA3). Interactions with local mayors, winegrowers' associations, and county officials all resulted in the same response from the State. This response highlighted that the Rulebook was based on a study completed in line with EU methodology and that not all areas could be defined as areas with specific constraints (Ministry of Agriculture, March 22 2016): 'It was science and not politics so that nothing could be done' (Verbatim, SPA2).

In parallel, the local multistakeholder, EU-funded organisation LAG 5, engaged with the issue to defend the interests of the local actors. The manager of LAG 5 was approached by a local state administrator and drew attention to the problems with the new Rulebook. She further mobilised local scientists and collective organisations of local winegrowers who were among the LAG's members to develop expertise on the topic and reached out to the LAG's national partners who were operating on the national state scale, with whom working relationships were

already established via the channelling of European LEADER fundings. Expertise was further mobilised about how the *Rulebook for areas with natural or specific constraints* had been established in other European member states. LAG 5 reached out for this to its European partners, i.e., Croatian political representatives in the European Parliament, university professors, and researchers working in different European universities that specialised in this topic. As all Member States were distributing subsidies for areas with natural or specific constraints in the European Union, the exercise was to learn how this was done in other countries. Furthermore, to learn if the procedures for designating areas with natural or specific constraints could be applied in Croatia to favour Pelješac farmers.

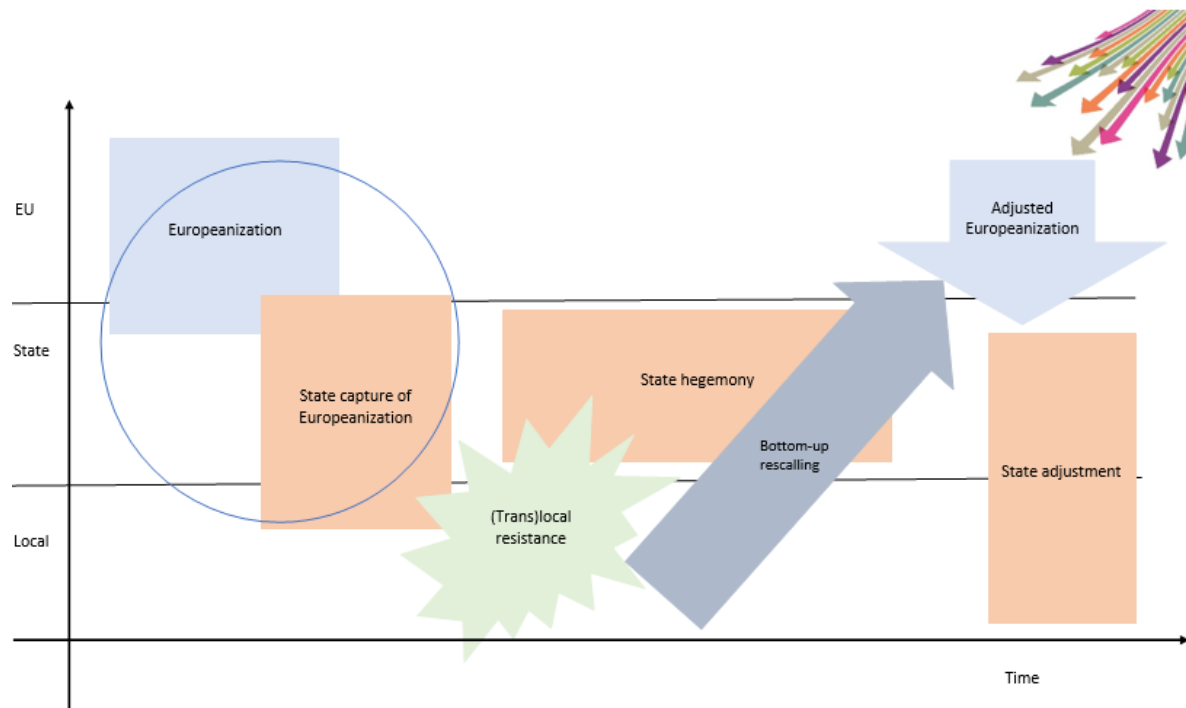
A translocal alliance was subsequently created. This alliance was not a formal initiative but an informal network of actors operating on different spatial scales that provided the knowledge necessary for the local actors to appropriate the discourse of Europeanization in their favour and to devise the strategy that would allow them to impose their view in the hegemonic national state scale.

The creation of this translocal alliance had a twofold purpose: (1) to provide knowledge and skills necessary to reframe the claims of the local actors within the dominant discourse of Europeanization and (2) to constitute a network of actors that would ensure that actions could be taken across scales, by exerting pressures on the hegemonic bloc from various scales simultaneously.

IV.3. Phase 3: Playing the scales 2016-2017

In this section, we follow the local actors in a two-step process of bottom-up rescaling. First, they develop a trans-scalar strategy that will allow them to exert pressure on the State from various scales. In the second time, we follow the effects of the reappropriation of the dominant organizational line in favour of the local actors. This is manifested by the changes in the Rulebook that once again includes Pelješac agricultural surfaces as areas with specific constraints.

Figure 2 A scalar perspective delineating the strategic action of actors who play the scales



Bottom-up rescaling step one: framing and employing a trans-scalar strategy

Through the translocal alliance, the knowledge gap between the local and upper hegemonic scales was closed - it was time to envision a strategy. The local farmers initially knew very little about the technicalities of why they were cut out of the agricultural subsidies for areas with specific constraints. They knew that doing agriculture became harder, ‘as if it was not hard enough’ (Verbatim, LCA 4). They felt frustrated and discouraged:

Our problem is that these rulebooks are brought by people who do not get us.

(Verbatim, LCA2)

We try to point out our problems, but we are not important enough. Our electorate does not have sufficient weight. (Verbatim, LPA2)

The LAG 5 aimed to find a way of inscribing the interests of the Pelješac winegrowers into the dominant discourses established on the topic on the European and State scales. Working with local actors that were scientists to analyse national studies and regulations, comparing them with the EU texts and guidelines. The aim was to frame the local actors’ advocacy work into a formal discourse that could be incorporated into EU practices and regulations. The framing was done by referring to the research results of an EU project HNV Link (Lerin, 2018; HNV-Link, 2019), in which LAG 5 had participated. This project emphasised the environmental importance of Pelješac agricultural land and demonstrated the need for it to be subsidised under CAP measures. The HNV-Link project, therefore, provided the building block of the bottom-up rescaling strategy. The methodological calculations for defining the areas eligible for subsidies were researched and compared across various areas of Croatia. It became apparent that they were realised differently in different places to create eligibility in an unstable and opaque process:

Furthermore, we could mathematically prove that this [fine-tuning] is garbage.

That somebody had written the numbers manually [i.e., without doing any calculations]. (Verbatim, LAA1)

LAG 5 and allies reached out internationally to NGOs dealing with advocacy in rural development to obtain more information on how this was done in other member states. Relevant EU legislation and regulations were analysed, and examples of best practices were identified as possible EU-acceptable solutions. Lastly, they drafted a five-page scientific analysis that technically demonstrated how Pelješac was an area with specific constraints eligible for subsidies by following the given EU methodology and regulations. A memo stated explicitly what actions were needed on behalf of the State to help Pelješac winegrowers, all in line with the EU regulation and methodology (Borovac & Segedin, 2016, LAG5, April 22, 2016).

A strategic discourse was framed in a manner that aimed to be ‘lethal but acceptable’ (Verbatim, LAA2). The point was to frame it so that ‘you bring a person to say “yes, there really is a problem”’ (Verbatim, LAA2), in other words, to make it difficult to be dismissed by the national state representatives in charge of dealing with the agricultural subsidies policy. As a state official pointed out:

I especially remember the analytics, Excel tables and the serious approach to which a local action group with insufficient capacity devoted itself to this problem (Verbatim, SPA1).

Given that ‘90% of things work at the informal level of agreement in our country (Verbatim, LAA2), the memo and the analysis were informally channelled via a network of local, regional, and national actors up to the elected politicians within the State throughout April and May 2016. This informal pattern of distribution of the memo to and through actors across spatial scales opened a window of opportunity to dialogue with the national State:

Thanks to some connections, [Local Civil society Actor- the winegrower] met with the Minister. He asked me [another Local Civil society Actor – the winegrower] if I would join. I came with a sealed document from LAA [Local Academic Actor 1] and stated that we have this problem and that this is something I would like him and his associates to investigate. (Verbatim, LCA4)

Furthermore, another Local Civil Society Actor (LCA), a winegrower from Pelješac, seized an opportunity to participate in a meeting with the EU minister of agriculture, to deliver the memo and analysis of the Pelješac case to the European Commission (Personal correspondence, March 21, 2016). Using national-level NGO connections, LAG5 also reached Croatian members of the European Parliament (Personal correspondence, March 24, 2016). The news began to spread informally, and other municipalities affected by this regulation contacted LAG5 and asked for advice on supporting this initiative (Personal correspondence, April 13, 2016).

However, there was initially little success:

I talked to the Minister, and we tried everything – but he [the Minister] would lower it to the level of bureaucrats, as he was unaware of all the details and the regulations. However, it became hard to change anything when this was handed over to the bureaucrats. (Verbatim, LPA2)

Despite the urgency over changing the Rulebook so that local actors could apply their projects to the Rural Development Programme and benefit from the subsidies that were part of their planned income, the situation was deadlocked. For over a month, nothing happened. A plan B was necessary. Another memo was drafted in plain language along with an infographic of the state-captured process of Europeanization that threatened the fate of Pelješac farmers. Some municipalities could obtain subsidies while others could not – with no evidence-based

explanation from the State. A media campaign was designed as a threat and an option of last resort:

After LCA4 delivered [the memo and the analysis] to the State, we started threatening to contact the media. It was one of those crucial moments because we had a true media story. Anyone could publish it as it was well argued. It was not a pure fabrication, e.g., 'the politicians did this to us', which made it dangerous. That is how we negotiated with them in the final stage. (Verbatim, LAA1)

In the meantime, there was a snap parliamentary election in Croatia in September 2016. They were preceded by a motion of no confidence against Prime Minister Tihomir Oreskovic and his cabinet on June 16, 2016. The majority HDZ government [Croatian Democratic Party], came to power. In this government, a former regional politician from the HDZ became a State Secretary and was familiar with the problem. The national discourse changed.

We did not go to the media because SPA1[regional politician now part of the national government] said that they [the Ministry of Agriculture] should not mess around. She said to stop giving stupid answers because their blank explanations seemed even more stupid. (Verbatim, LAA1)

Things started moving, and LAG 5 requests were considered:

there was no media drama from the Local Action Group, only substantive analytical work aiming to prove Pelješac was an area with natural and specific constraints. That is what I remember. (Verbatim, SPA1)

Bottom-up rescaling step two: re-appropriating the dominant organisational logic

The State scale was not the only one being reshuffled. In a cascading effect, the EU adjusted its methodology based on pressures from other member states, and Croatia served as an example of what could be changed for the better; this was obtained through the new Croatian government, which engaged with the requests of the local actors and involved the national state bureaucracy in a new set of negotiations with the EU to incorporate the Pelješac municipalities into the Rulebook. Finally, the initiative's success was celebrated in the local media. For some as a victory against the national State. For some, as a victory of the national State.

Indeed, the national State was enrolled on pushing for a change in the European ruling for the subsidy's attribution:

In agreement with the Minister of regional development and EU funds, we conveyed specific initiatives about what I dare say was the evident need to include Pelješac in areas with natural or specific constraints (...). This initiative was finally implemented when he [Tomislav Tolusic] became the Minister of agriculture, and I [former regional politician elected into the government in 2016] became his secretary of State. (Verbatim, SPA1)

Finally, somebody “sat down, read this serious document we prepared and said, ‘ok, let us change it’” (Verbatim LCA4).

At the same time, academics that the State hired to designate the areas with natural and specific constraints have participated in the workshops organised by the European Commission with representatives of the Member States on the implementation of the new methodology of designation of areas with specific or natural constraints. Having presented the challenges they

faced in implementing the methodology, the European Commission partly considered this and postponed the implementation of this new methodology until further consultations with the other Member States had been made (Verbatim, NAA1). National state bureaucrats seized this opportunity to answer to the needs of the local actors from Pelješac, as their demands were from October 2016 delivered by high-ranking state officials to relaunch the complex technical renegotiations at the EU level:

Subsequently, in the negotiations, I noticed that the regulations say that agricultural surfaces should not exceed 10% of the territory. So not 10% of the overall territory but 10% of the agricultural territory. The EU always used to tell us that it could be a maximum of 10% of the overall territory. So, then we gripped on to that catch in the regulations (...) We found an opportunity to remove non-agricultural areas from Pelješac, and that is how we managed to get Pelješac agricultural land back into the Rulebook. (Verbatim SPA2)

In March 2017, the Ministry published changes to the Rulebook and included Pelješac in its ‘areas with specific constraints. As one interlocutor put it, ‘the negotiations lasted a long time, and they were always about finding nuances in the regulations you could use to get something through’ (Verbatim, SPA2).

This initiative was not like bringing water to the Sahara Desert, but for the first time, somebody from Pelješac presented them with something serious that contradicted them [the national State], which was 100% supported by facts. (Verbatim LCA4)

Local winegrowers congratulated the local scientists and LAG 5 on the success of the initiative:

Today, I was pleasantly surprised with the new *Rulebook on the Amendments to the Rulebook on Areas with Natural or Other Specific Constraints*, where they finally corrected the Pelješac injustice.

I know this was preceded by much work. Therefore, congratulations to all of you whose cleverness and persistence have forced the ones responsible for making this happen! (E-MEMO102)

The local media predominantly reported on how ‘Farmers from Pelješac were once again acknowledging the difficult management conditions’, with only one media outlet communicating the LAG 5 press releases stating that the ‘Ministry of Agriculture finally corrects its injustice towards Pelješac’.

Most media outlets presented the news as a factual event wherein the national State did manage to offset the EU regulations. From how the event was reported, we could read the reluctance of the local media to report farmers struggling with the national State via EU regulations. Hence, the rescaling effort was discursively reabsorbed into the national scale, in a framing where the EU appeared as the outside hegemony while the national State was seen to embody ‘our people’ in Croatia (Verbatim, LCA4, LCA 5).

V. DISCUSSION

This paper advances our understanding of how resistance movements operate through scales via a longitudinal participatory approach that looks into the types of strategic action local actors engage in to defend their scale. Our findings suggest that appropriation of dominant organisational logic allows the local actors to *play the scales*, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time. They do so by constructing a translocal alliance that will grab different elements from different scales to build a trans-scalar strategy that becomes central to spatial scales' evolution through time.

V.1. The role of a translocal alliance in playing the scales

We argue that the role of the translocal alliance is to pull knowledge existing on other local scales to allow the focal local actor's group to appropriate the dominant organisational logic and to use it as a resource (Fairclough & Thomas, 2004) that will become central for the deployment of a trans-scalar strategy. In our case, we can follow the rescaling of the dominant organisational logic from the dominant scale towards the local scale through the work of local scientists, who have knowledge that allows them to use the organisational logic of the European Union, its rules, and regulations to renegotiate the state capture of Europeanization in favour of the local actors. Previous research has pointed out the importance of translocal coalitions (2018) to appropriate knowledge from the dominant scale (Vittel, Leroy & Fearnside, 2015) for the local actors to inscribe their interests within the hegemonic bloc. We explain that this happens through the process of rescaling, through which local actors re-appropriate the organisational logic existing on other scales in their favour.

Furthermore, to be able to use rescaling to re-appropriate the knowledge existing on the other scales and re-appropriate organisational logic as a tool around which to build a trans-scalar strategy, it is critical to be able to include actors from various scales around the common interest, which is that of the local actors. In our case, a scientist living on the Pelješac peninsula and doing agriculture was instrumental in allowing the local action group to bridge with other local scales and build such translocal knowledge. As seen in other cases (Leglise, 2021), for an alliance to be formed, local actors' interests and values must be shared with the ones of other local actors operating within the alliance on different spatial scales.

Finally, we can conclude that globalisation and Europeanization processes impose a discourse that is, in most cases, incomprehensive to or contradictory to those of local actors. Building a translocal alliance with a twofold role is necessary for the local resistance to succeed: first, the alliance allows to transpose the interests of local actors to a higher-level scale; second, it ensures that actions are taken across scales with the engagement of actors that operate on the national and the European scale. However, the literature has shown us also that alliance itself is not enough.

V.2. The role of a transcalar strategy in playing the scales

Levy and Egan (2003) argue that groups with fewer material resources can outmanoeuvre their rivals if they combine a clever strategy and good timing with some luck when the local actors manage to re-appropriate the dominant organisational logic in their favour that they have the tools necessary to put forward their claims. Once this is established, the local actors need to envision a strategy that will allow them to influence the dominant organisational logic in their favour. For this, they engage in a transcalar strategy that simultaneously influences key actors' operations at various scales. When local actors protested individually and argued that the Rulebook needed to change, there was no shift in the hegemonic bloc. Individual actors' efforts on a single scale, with a discursive strategy adapted to their scale, could not pierce the coercive and bureaucratic authority of the national State that operated on higher-level scales (Levy & Scully, 2007). Such a strategy was only possible when different actors inside and outside the region came together (Rosen & Olsen, 2013).

Building on the work of Spicer & Sewel (2010) on the forms of discursive agency, which allowed the powerful coalition of actors to transform the dominant organisational top-down with a bottom-up perspective, it is necessary to: (1) mobilise a translocal alliance that (2) allows for building a counter-hegemonic discourse, which (3) will then be used to 'play the scales' in order to create a disruption in the hegemonic bloc and inscribe the interest of the local actors therein.

V.3. Why do we 'play' the scales

Given that spatial scales are socially produced and exist alongside other geographic levels (Spicer, 2006), countering broader hegemonic moves consists of the capacity of the local actors to develop a trans-scalar strategy that is: (1) open for inclusion of actors operating at different spatial scales, with different knowledge; (2) able to appropriate the dominant organisational logic in their favour (3) can exert pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various local scales and via different actors in their translocal alliance. The local NGOs' advocacy work is initially directed at the national State. Then, the national state politicians question the new Rulebook at the European Parliament. Next, the Pelješac case is argued for at workshops at which EU experts and representatives from different member states discuss the topic with the European Commission. Then there is a threat of a media campaign just before unexpected national state elections.

However, what we see as critical is the capacity to adapt the strategic action to the organisational logic that is dominant on the spatial scales we aim to influence. In our case, this was achieved using various tools and tactics, which allowed us to align the counter-hegemonic discourse with the dominant organisational logic, particularly via a political actor who moved from the regional to the State scale by becoming a member of the national government. We call this playing the scales, as it involves a capacity to innovate, adapt and coordinate people and knowledge across scales in a strategic action in constant movement.

In summary, once LAG 5 had created a translocal alliance that allowed the local group to develop a trans-scalar strategy, it could exert pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various scale points and via actors operating on different scales simultaneously. LAG 5 was playing the scales as a trans-scalar strategy that needed to be constantly realigned with the interests of the various actors forming its translocal alliance and those of actors operating on other scales.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study provides a theoretical contribution to the literature on resistance movements (Banerjee, 2011; Banerjee, 2018; Leglise, 2021) by describing the strategic action local actors engage in across spatial scales when faced with threatening hegemonic processes. It also contributes to the literature on spatial scales (Spicer, 2006; Spicer & Fleming, 2007; Spicer & Sewe, 2010; Lacerda, 2021) by describing the strategic action behind the processes of rescaling.

Our analysis suggests that appropriation of dominant discourses and knowledge allows the local actors to *play the scales*, i.e., accomplish the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time. This is achieved (i) by constructing a translocal alliance that will grab different elements from different scales and (ii) by building a trans-scalar strategy which becomes central to the evolution of spatial scales through time.

First, rescaling involved the construction of a translocal alliance of actors located in diverse European territories. Rescaling allowed the actors to pool knowledge and frame a counterproposal. Second, the trans-scalar alliance exerted pressure on the hegemonic bloc at various national and European scales, triggering a re-examination of the methodological proposal. During the re-examination process, the dominant actors revised their positions to better accommodate local actors' needs. As has already been noted in the literature, the combination of constructive propositions and the threat of a media campaign was instrumental in triggering a change in the national state position (Meyer & Hoellerer, 2010).

We, therefore, argue that rescaling can be seen as a form of strategic action that relates to the organisational mechanism pushing for the historical bloc's adjustment by appropriating discursive and political processes (Mollona & Pareschi, 2020) that exist on other scales. We argue that knowledge lies at the core of this mechanism and that the capacity to *play the scales*

derives from how the knowledge they gain is employed. This use of knowledge that re-appropriates the dominant organisational logic implies that local actors protect their political scale from broader hegemonic diffusion by appropriating hegemonic knowledge to their advantage.

CHAPTER III

Investigation into the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder initiatives: the case of Local Action Groups in Croatia

Abstract: This study contributes to the literature on participation in public multi-stakeholder initiatives that address how participation is enacted in these settings. Using a convergent mixed methods research design, I investigate the work of seven Local Action Groups in Croatia - public multi-stakeholder initiatives implementing the European Union programme for rural development named the LEADER measure. I ask: *what practices do actors develop within public multi-stakeholder initiatives when they enact participation? How do they use the established procedures through which participation is to be enacted? And with what outcomes?* Based on multiple data sources, I develop a model for the practice of participation and identify three key variables around which the enactment of participation unfolds: activation of territorial capital, mode of governance, and deliberation practices. The model identifies the actions through which participation is made to be either simply procedural or substantive. It provides an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes and answers the calls for management and organisation research to reveal the underlying practices of participation.

Keywords: LEADER, development, participation, inclusion, MSIs, mixed methods, the territorial capital

I. INTRODUCTION

As a manager of a public multi-stakeholder initiative, I faced strong criticism from various actors on what doing participative development is. Working in a public multi-stakeholder initiative called Local Action Group (LAG) to implement the European programme for rural development named LEADER (*Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Économie Rurale*) made me question my actions daily. For the Direction of the LAG, participation meant the involvement of a broad range of local actors with the aim of ensuring the legitimacy of the LAG within the territory. However, such a view entailed a burden on the LAG professionals as they were continuously solicited by the local actors for project and investment ideas. For the State, participation meant doing detailed reports of activities implemented with the local actors and developing procedures to ensure all the local actors were treated equally. However, such an approach meant less inclusion of the local actors in practice, as administrative work took up most of the available working hours. Participation thus meant different things to different actors (Ehrnström-Fuentes, 2016) that seemed difficult to reconcile.

In organisation studies, research has shown that excluding lower-level actors in strategic decision-making can hamper implementation (Tavella, 2020). Studies that investigated participation within multi-stakeholder settings put forward its lack of inclusiveness as it is the corporation that defines who is to be invited, whose knowledge counts and around which topic it is possible to come together and deliberate (Cheyns, 2015; Banerjee, 2018). Research on participatory development programmes (Kothari, 2001; Fritz & Binder, 2018) has further pointed out that the focus on deliberation practices of participation did not guarantee inclusion and a more 'substantive' participation (Martens et al., 2018), arguing that such processes ended up simply reinforcing the position of the elites (Nawaz, 2013). 'In most cases, participation has

been interpreted as stakeholder engagement, whereas wider public participation remains limited' (Paloniemi et al.; 015, p. 338).

Moving to the literature on LEADER and the Local Action Groups (LAGs), we learn that diverse groups experience a different quality of participation within the LAG as some voices have greater weight than others (Shortall, 2004; Shortall, 2008). Concerning the place of managers in enacting participation, several studies have questioned the emergence of the project class within community-led local initiatives of the European Union LEADER programme (Kovach & Kucherova, 2006; Lukic & Obad, 2016). They argued that these new participative modes of governance create or reinforce the elites, not necessarily including all the local stakeholders in developing the local territory. Lacquement and Chevalier (2016) pointed out that the LAG cohesion depended on the active engagement of the LAG managers, while those may tend to work more with the local politicians that they see as key actors than with other actors in the LAG's territory. Menconi et al. (2018) further identified that a shared sense of belonging could be a performance indicator of the participatory processes in rural territories. They argue that a practice of participation that emerges out of a sense of belonging to a certain territory can facilitate the engagement of the local community not only to implement the LEADER programme but also to try to manage their territory better – together. Still, we do not know what this practice of participation entails concretely in public multi-stakeholder initiatives.

We know participation can be either procedural or substantive (Martens et al., 2018; Paloniemi et al., 2015). Depending on the context, which can be an organisation (Adamson et al., 2020; Tavella, 2020), a multi-stakeholder initiative (Banerjee, 2018; de Bakker et al., 2018; Martens et al.; 2018), or a process of governance (Lee & Romano, 2013; Paloniemi et al., 2015; Grosser, 2016; Schleifer, 2019), unequal power relations, knowledge and economic resources might influence the quality of participation. However, how these power relations, knowledge, and

economic resources are enacted through the practice of participation within a multi-stakeholder initiative remains unclear.

Without this knowledge, participation risks continuing 'reproducing inequalities and creating false promises' (Paloniemi et al., 2018), leading to more social inequality and land abandonment in rural areas. Such trends will only contribute to climate change by fostering a decline in agrobiodiversity, forest fires and decline of agricultural surfaces. Beyond rural development, knowing how to practice participation is crucial for tackling today's grand challenges – as they demand the active engagement of numerous actors with diverging interests.

Therefore, this study aims to shed light on the participation practices within public multi-stakeholder partnerships and to provide a model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder initiatives. To do so, I adapt the analytical framework of Chevalier and his colleagues (Chevalier et al. 2010; Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016; Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020). These authors build on the concept of territorial capital that encompasses (i) material and nonmaterial resources within the territory, (ii) interpersonal capital developed between the individuals engaged in local development, and (iii) the local forms of governance to characterise the forms of coordination of collective action that favour sustainable economic development and the development of social capital (see Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019) at the local level. I continue in this line of work and ask: *What actions do actors take within public multi-stakeholder initiatives when they enact participation? How do they construct participation, and with what outcome?*

I built a convergent mixed method approach to analyse the work of seven Croatian LAGs from 2016-to 2021. I engage in participant observation, principal component analysis, multivariate analysis of questionnaires and triangulation of secondary data with semi-structured interviews and the literature producing threefold results: (i) the delineation of two LAG clusters, (ii) the identification of three key variables for the practice of participation, and (iii) the development

of a 'diagram of participation' that allows me to theorise the model for the practice of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings.

This study answer calls for research regarding the underlying practices of participation by proposing a model for the practice of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings (Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Tavella, 2020). First, I contribute to the literature on the role of actors in multi-stakeholder settings by identifying the practice of participation. Second, I provide a methodological contribution to the research on participation in multi-stakeholder settings by designing a convergent mixed method approach to identify actions shared among various multi-stakeholder initiatives. Such a methodological framework offers a holistic approach to the practice of participation. It focuses on the *how* and *what* of participative practices. Third, I build a model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings to demonstrate how actors practice participation through activation of territorial capital, mode of governance, and deliberation practices. It delineates the actions that lead to the enactment of substantive or procedural participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fritz and Anderson, 2018).

To make its case, this study is structured as follows. The theoretical section describes the research on participation in public multi-stakeholder initiatives delineating the major critiques of participation in multi-stakeholder settings. It is followed by an overview of the existing typologies of participation in multi-stakeholder settings before presenting the methodology and findings. The paper is concluded by proposing the model for the practice of participation and discussing its limitation and application in multiple contexts.

II. THEORETICAL SECTION: Participation within public MSIs

This section opens with an overview of participation in multi-stakeholder settings across multiple fields before focusing on its critiques and delineating what is known from research on participation within public MSIs, and Local Action Groups (LAGs). The third and closing section summarises what we know from the existing typologies on participation and identifies gaps in the literature the paper aims to answer.

II.1. The role of participation in multi-stakeholder settings

Participation within MSIs has been at the heart of research across multiple fields. Management studies research defines participation as an activity comprising structures, practices and processes that help lower-level organisational actors participate in strategy work (Laine & Vaara, 2007; Mantere & Vaara, 2008). Participation ensures more democracy (Bakker & Simmons, 2000) and justice (Garcia, 2018) in public policy processes. Participation empowers local actors to take their development into their own hands (Nawaz, 2013; Ray, 2000, Schucksmith 2008, Esparcia et al., 2015). Participation ensures the legitimacy of MSIs within global value chains when corporate interests, the environment's interests, and the local actor's interests seem to diverge (Vogel, 2008, Mina & Palazzo, 2012).

Multi-stakeholder alliances, partnerships, standards, and roundtables follow a variety of procedural approaches such as a dialogue platform (Martens et al. 1., 2018, p. 3), power-sharing rules that allow for equal participation (Luttrell et al. 1. 2018), and/or the establishment of working groups (Schouten et al. 1., 2012) or public consultation (Cheyins & Risgaard, 2014)

that are centred our discourse and discursive practices. In these contexts, participation refers to the involvement of actors in the affairs and decisions of the partnership (Rowe & Frewer, 2005) through a process of deliberation. It is the cornerstone of deliberative governance and the source of legitimacy of the MSI, conditioning any development that these forms of organisation may produce (Martens et al., 2018).

Within the field of community development (Chamber, 1994; Ray, 2000; Randel, 2004), participation is investigated as a form of deliberation. Such participation is said to be practised through the involvement of stakeholders in decision-making processes, in implementing programs, in sharing the benefits of development programs, or in becoming involved in evaluating such programs (Nawaz, 2013, p. 27). Likewise, the recent history of European policies is marked by a growing degree of importance given to the involvement of local communities in decision-making (Menconi et al., 2015). Specifically, the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union (CAP) has set up the LEADER program to promote a community-led local development strategy, supporting development projects initiated at the local level (Ray, 2000; Shucksmith, 2008). LEADER stands for *Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale* (French: European Union initiative for rural development).

The main tool of the LEADER program in the territories is the Local Action Group (LAG), i.e., a multi-stakeholder initiative in the form of a non-profit association which is to include representatives of the local community (business, associations, municipalities, and farmers), and is to ensure that the entire community is involved in the local development policy (Menconi et al., 2015). LAGs are local partnerships of private, public, and civil society actors responsible for coordinating the local development actions, i.e., allocating European funding to selected local development projects (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016, p. 16). Participation in these – here called – public multi-stakeholder initiatives is identified as a *condition sine qua non* for development as 'the involvement of local communities in Local Development Strategies plays

a crucial role in the development of the territory' (Esparcia et al., 2015, Menconi et al., 2018).

However, the critique of participation in multi-stakeholder settings has raised several questions.

II.2. The critique of participation in multi-stakeholder settings

Research has highlighted the failure of many corporate social responsibility initiatives (CSR) to incorporate the voices and concerns of poorer and traditionally marginalised groups and stakeholders (Banerjee, 2011; Grosser, 2016). Deliberation at the core of participation within MSIs has been critiqued for silencing those actors' voices that counter the corporate logic (Banerjee, 2018). MSIs and their standards are shaped by their political and economic contexts and are often “seized” by powerful actors embedded in hierarchical power structures. As pointed out by previous research, this often reinforces existing power inequalities between various actors within MSIs (Cheyns & Risgaard, 2014, p. 7).

Researchers in public policy and development studies disputed the redistribution of power in participation processes (Kothari, 2001; Fritz & Binder, 2018), arguing that it simply reinforces the local elites (Nawaz, 2013). They pointed out that the elites always dominate local participation in internationally funded development projects as they tend to be better educated and to have fewer opportunity costs on their time (Mansuri and ao, 2004). These authors have argued that participation in such multi-stakeholder initiatives lacked consideration of local knowledge and framed the deliberation and actions in a language unfamiliar to the local actors.

Research on community-based development within the European Union LEADER programme has encountered similar critiques. Although it has been acknowledged to redistribute political power by giving preference to rural/local actors and to partially discriminate in favour of local actor-networks and against the state bureaucracy (Kovach, 2000), Maurel (2008) has observed a low level of citizen participation and the formation of interest groups monopolising access to grants within the Hungarian, Czech and Polish LAGs. Koutsouris (2008, p. 252) goes as far as to define LEADER as a ‘tool of hegemony where experts and managers, on the one hand, neglect local knowledge and local issues and particularities and, on the other (...) endorse

changes without paying due attention to their systemic effects as challenges to local structures'. Kovach and Kucherova (2009) question LAG professionals' participative approaches, arguing that participation is a formality, not a practice. Thuesen (2010) looked into the structure of the governing boards of LAGs, discussing the issue of representative democracy and the participation of mostly well-educated, rich, older men in the governing boards of Danish LAGs. Lukic and Obad (2016) analysed the emergence of LAGs in Croatia, indicating a new project class that either manages participation or is absorbed by local politics. Hubbard and Gorton (2011) refer to the Austrian case that suggests adopting the practice of participation required several years of learning by local actors.

Finally, observing participatory practices within LAG territories, Mueller et al. (2020) deduced that participation as a social practice is constantly renegotiated in specific physical-spatial settings defined in a performative way. If participation is such a constantly renegotiated social practice, then being a member of an MSI, such as a local action group (LAG), does not necessarily guarantee participation.

Success is predicated on the fact that a participative initiative would manage to combine and assemble multiple interests of various actors within the territory. The ideology behind community-led local developments stresses that development must be embedded in local resources. Resources should be activated and harnessed through targeted bottom-up, participatory development programmes (Mueller et al., 2020, p. 224). By tapping into multiple sources of knowledge and expertise of various actors, i.e., the territorial capital (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016), better solutions should be found to the challenge of participation in local development.

The main problem here is that having different actors involved in a multi-stakeholder setting does not necessarily mean that they participate actively in the collective decision-making, even if they are included in the deliberation (Cheyns & Risgaard, 2014). Stakeholders may dedicate

time, energy, and resources to advance the goals of the MSI - if they are allowed and enabled to participate (Esparcia et al., 2015). Research of global multi-stakeholder initiatives such as the Global Reporting Initiative, the Forest Stewardship Council, or the Ethical Trading Initiative has predominantly focused on inclusion to ensure the legitimacy of the MSI, with the participation process being at the heart of deliberative governance. However, actors' actions to enact this participation and generate inclusion in decision-making remain under-researched. Research focusing on inclusion and participation within this field predominantly looked into the formal devices of management initiatives and programmes (Ortlieb, Glauning and Weiss, 2020), neglecting the actual enactment of these devices within the MSIs – the practice of participation.

So, participation, how to stimulate it and sustain it towards accomplishing the goals of MSIs while considering the interests of the weaker actors is a crucial question to which we still do not have a good answer.

II.3. What we know about how participation works

Regarding broader generalisation on the types of participation, Arnstein (1969) was among the first to develop a ladder of participation, drawing on the experience of U.S. community programmes. She situates various levels of participation through an eight-level ladder corresponding to the extent of citizens' capacity to intervene in determining the end product of the consultation.

Multiple studies have identified two types of participation: one that aims at achieving better outcomes and one where the participation is an end in itself (Fiorino, 1989; Martens et al., 2018;

Schleifer, 2019). Paloniemi et al. (2015) pointed out that participation in the governance of biodiversity programmes could be enacted through project participation, participation of various interest groups and participation across various scales towards a common objective. Linking them to the research on LEADER as a participatory bottom-up development programme, Esparcia et al. (2015, p. 33) put forward three views: (i) LEADER as an instrument of power in the hands of power groups and their clientelist networks; (ii) LEADER as an instrument of local economic development; (iii) LEADER as a tool for social networking, capacity building, local empowerment and local democracy. This delineation can be read as (i) exclusive participation of the elite, (ii) participation as an objective in itself and (iii) participation as a tool to reach a specific objective.

We know that specific procedures, such as the presence of an impartial facilitator, precise goal setting and rules, access to information or working in small groups with materials adapted to the education level and background of the participants' work (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; Martens et al., 2018) are ways to facilitate participation. Nonetheless, important aspects of this phenomenon are still not well understood.

Firstly, we remain blind to the practice of participation in terms of those participations practices to enact participation within multi-stakeholder initiatives. We talk about legitimation and deliberation within multi-stakeholder settings, but we know little about how participation is constructed through this (Mena and Palazzo, 2012. Schleifer, 2019; Sundararajan et al., 2019). Being included in a group and participating in the actions of this group are not equivalent to each other (Lee & Romano, 2013). As Fritz and Binder noted (2018), analytical approaches that scrutinise participation processes in their complexity seem ever more important due to the growing number of research funding programmes and policies requiring participation. Therefore, I answer the calls for research regarding the underlying practices of participation by proposing a model for the practice of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings (Mantere and Aara, 2008; Tavella, 2020).

Secondly, little research on participation in multi-stakeholder settings uses a mixed method approach to identify actions shared among a greater range of MSIs. Research that would aim to close this gap has been done partly by McDonald and colleagues (2019), who have investigated the collaborative activities among multi-stakeholder partnerships. Their large-scale quantitative study of local multi-stakeholder partnerships found that collaborative decision-making has an indirect and positive impact on partnership capacity through systems that keep partners informed, coordinate partner interactions, and facilitate ongoing learning. Once again, we focus on discursive practices.

I aim to point out that we need to move beyond investigations into discursive practices and adopt a holistic approach toward investigating practices that enact participation; without this knowledge, participation risks 'reproducing inequalities and creating false promises' (Paloniemi et al., 2018). One roundtable workshop, for instance, can enact either *substantive* or *procedural* participation. These two concepts will be further elaborated based on my empirical research in the following sections of this paper, thanks to the mixed method, which allows me to adopt a holistic approach to the enactment of the practice of participation.

Therefore, I ask: what practices do actors develop within public multi-stakeholder initiatives when they enact participation? How do they use the established procedures through which participation is to be enacted? And with what outcomes?

III. METHODS AND DATA

To answer the research questions, I built a convergent mixed-method research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that draws on the concept of *territorial capital* used by Chevalier (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016; Chevalier, Mačiulyté, Razafimahefa & Dedeire 2017).

Territorial capital provides an analytical framework that links three dimensions of the local territory crucial for its development: (i) material resources within the territory, (ii) nonmaterial resources of the territory, (iii) interpersonal capital developed between the individuals engaged in local development and the local political

governance (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016, p. 2). In their case study of a Hungarian LAG, they looked into the forms of collective action that favoured economic development and mobilisation of territorial capital within a LAG. I expand on this framework as it allows me to investigate the conditions under which local actors cooperate and how they do so. My objective is to analyse the actions of actors within the tripartite partnership of the LAGs: private sector (such as farmers and enterprises), public sector (such as elected local representatives), and civil sector (such as private persons and NGOs). The aim is to investigate the practice of participation as the actions actors take within the LAG when they enact participation by characterising the configuration of the LAG partnership and its relationships.

Drawing from the insights offered by the literature, the starting proposition from which I developed my methodological framework is that the very activities implemented by the actors are instrumental in shaping the nature of participation within individual Local Action Groups. I define this as the *practice of participation*.

In the following sections, I explain my methodological choices, the research design, the procedures of data collection, and the five-phase approach to the data analysis.

III.1. Within-case study of seven LAGs

First, participation has been identified as the core mission of the LAGs manifesting as ‘a genuine dialogue with and between local citizens’ (European Commission, 2018, p.34) – this represented an opportunity to investigate an enactment of participation in a group of MSIs that share the same governance framework. Second, extensive research on LEADER has already provided an analytical framework for investigating actor relations within LAGs that we could build on (Chevalier et al., 2013; Lacquement et Chevalier, 2016). Finally, the author of this paper, a former LAG manager, provided insights into her and her colleagues' participation practices. This knowledge and a large network of LAGs provided an opportunity for a comparative within-case study.

III.2. Research design

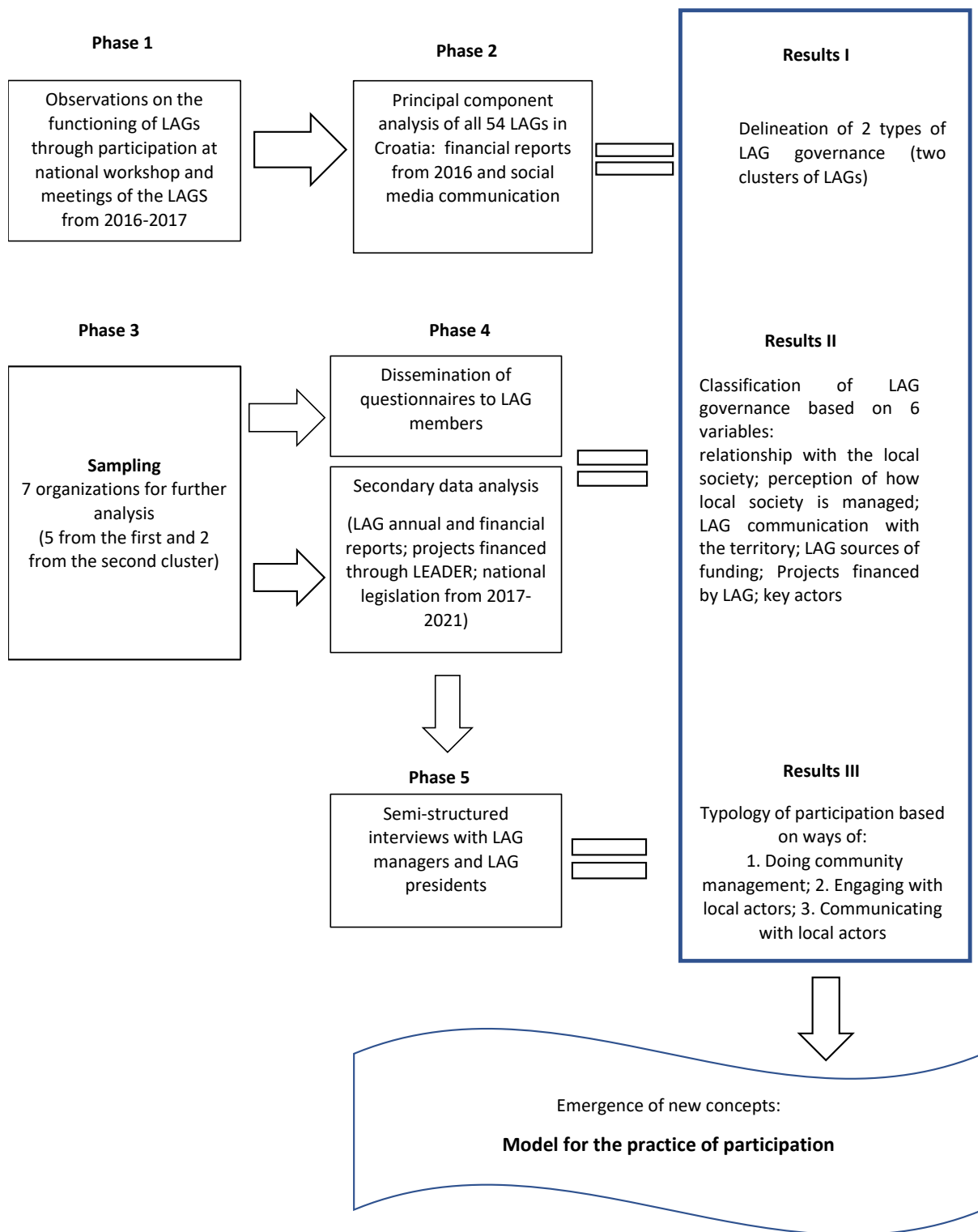
I developed a convergent mixed method research design to shed light on the practice of participation in different MSIs that share the same governance framework. Convergent mixed methods refer to ‘converging qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem’ (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Figure 1 summarises the adopted mixed-methods design. I develop a step-wise approach through which my results emerge in three phases: (i) principal component analysis of 54 LAGs to flesh out two broad clusters or types of governance; (ii) triangulation of qualitative data to identify seven variables that characterise the LAG governance and (iii) elaboration of a diagram of participation through qualitative analytical integration, triangulation of semi-structured

interviews, and abductive incorporation of the literature on participation in multi-stakeholder settings.

I chose to focus the qualitative analysis on seven LAGs for the 2016-2021 periods for reasons explained in the following methodological subsections.

Figure 1 Convergent mixed methods research design of the study



Source: the author

III.3. Data collection

Following the mixed-methods research design, data is collected from lived experiences, observations, in-depth interviewees, questionnaires, and secondary data analysis from 2016 to 2021.

First, I collected financial reports and Local Development Strategies from 2016 for all 54 LAGs in Croatia. This data was complemented with the number of likes on the five social posts the audience most interacted with within 30 days, as social media are critical for reaching out to the masses of an organisation (Arora et al. 2019). I chose 2016 as it was a “gap year” between two programming periods of LEADER - this allowed me to investigate what LAGs do to implement participatory bottom-up development when there is no secured funding behind it.

Second, I adopted the interview grid conducted by Lacquement and Chevalier (2016) to identify systems of actors and their capacity for action. Questions were structured around: (1) profile of the LAG professional; (2) profile of the LAG as an organisation; (3) profile of the LAG members, and a closing question that aimed at evaluating to what extent LAG managers or LAG professionals enact 'bottom-up participatory approach' of LEADER.

Third, I distributed over one hundred questionnaires in collaboration with 7 LAG offices, from which we received back 78 fully answered. I adapted the questionnaire developed by Chevalier (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016; Chevalier, Mačiulyté, Razafimahefa & Dedeire, 2017) to (1) identify the relationship of the LAG members with the local society (their social capital); (2) perception of how society is managed (inclusiveness of governance; which group of actors (public, private, civil or the professionals) is most respected (has the most social capital)

Lastly, I collected media articles, financial and annual reports, evaluations, and the Local Development Strategies for 2017-2021 for the seven LAGs (see table 1).

Table 1 Overview of the data sources used

Type of data	Specification	Description
Interviews	12	Interview with LAG professionals was, on average, 1h20min, with LAG members 30min
Questionnaires	78	The questionnaires were distributed to members of 4 LAGs during the Annual Assembly. And online via Wooclap at their convenience for the other 3
Media articles	59	Web articles from local and national media that reported on the activities of the LAGs in question
Annual and financial reports of LAGs	86	Annual and financial reports of LAGs in question from 2017 until 2021 and financial reports of all 54 LAGs from 2016

III.4. Data analysis

Overall strategy. The analysis unfolded in five phases. First, as a LAG manager who has visited colleagues in other LAGs, participated in LAG workshops, and regularly followed their social media posts, I observed what actors did within LAGs from 2016 to 2017. Second, I did a principal component analysis of all 54 LAGs in Croatia to identify dominant financial practices and social-media impact. From the financial reports of the LAGs for 2016, I extracted the structure of income based on revenue from (1) public and (2) private donations. (3) Based on five random posts from the official FB page of the LAG, I have calculated an average number of likes on posts with a common topic. (4) I took into account the page's FB review note based on the users' evaluations. Lastly (5), I used the number of likes each LAG's official FB page had in 2017. Principal component analysis has allowed me to delineate two clusters of LAGs. In the third phase, I further analysed annual and financial reports of the LAGs for 2017 to

confirm the clusters, and I studied in more detail 5 LAGs from the first and 2 LAGs from the second clusters based on the willingness of the LAGs to participate in the research. In phase 4, I disseminated questionnaires to LAG members and complemented them with additional secondary data analysis of LAG annual reports in 2017-2021. Thereby I arrived at my second set of results: the six variables that describe the enactment of participation within multi-stakeholder settings. In phase 5, I conducted semi-structured interviews with LAG managers and presidents to cross-check and deepen my understanding of how these six variables affected participation. Interviews have been the last piece of the puzzle that allowed me to build a diagram of participation around three broader, synthetic variables: (1) creating a local partnership; (2, governing the LAG; (3, deliberating within the LAG.

Phase 1: Longitudinal participatory observation

I was a LAG manager from January 2014 until March 2019. During that period, I exchanged daily with colleagues from other LAGs, the State officials working on LEADER, and the local actors who were LAG presidents, members, or volunteers. This insider perspective allowed me to engage in longitudinal participant observation in 2017 and 2018 to identify the dominant participation practices among LAGs in Croatia. I engaged in data analysis and writing three years after the observation to ensure the overall validity procedure, as time has allowed me to build a reflexive approach to the object of my empirical inquiry.

Phase 2: Principal component analysis

In 2017 I did a principal component analysis of all 54 LAGs in Croatia by analysing their financial reports from 2016 and average social media interaction via their FB pages that emerged as key variables during our participative observations and member checking.

The variables I chose to use for the analysis emerged from deliberations with other LAG managers during meetings of the LAG professionals in 2017 and 2018 and conversations with the State actors in charge of the LEADER measure. Firstly, LAG managers underlined the importance of membership. Specifically, in the eyes of local mayors and the regional government, the number of members represented the ‘political power of the LAG’ (Verbatim, PRO 12). This power was reflected in the collective understanding that the more people are organised around certain local organisations, the more this organisation will be able to influence the local people in the upcoming elections. Following this logic, the more members the LAG has, the more it is important to the local actors and will influence future elections. In that case, the local mayors and the regional government will be more willing to support the work of LAGs financially. Secondly, the amount of public, EU, and private subsidies in their financial reports from 2016, when the LEADER funding was scarce ‘demonstrated the competencies of LAGs to implement their Local Development Strategy drawing on their skills and competencies. ‘ Those [LAGs] who lived from public subsidies of the local and regional politics and the LEADER measure from the Ministry were under the prism of the local politics’ (Verbatim, SOC 11). Lastly, FB reviews of their official LAG pages and FB likes of their daily posts (2016-2017) between LAG professionals at the national level were considered a source of legitimacy for LAGs in their territory (Author observation). In 2016 and 2017, when LAGs were organisations with professionals, there was a widespread practice of publishing the activities of the LAG on social media. When LAG would publish a post that related to the changes in regulation and calls for EU or State financed project proposals, there was a small number of likes, from none to five. However, when LAG would publish having contracted a new project, hired new staff, or organised a workshop, they were from 10 to 50 likes of the post.

Phase 3: Sampling

In 2019 I added the additional criteria of spatial distribution and analysed what LAGs had multiple funding sources in 2018 when LEADER was mainstreamed in Croatia. Spatial distribution confirmed the existence of two governance clusters. I, therefore, contacted 50% of the LAGs from each category. Out of the ten organisations that responded orally or in writing that they would participate in the research, seven participated (4 had multiple, and three had only LEADER funding sources). Based on the responses and geographical spatial distribution of the LAGs, I chose seven LAGs, five from the first and two from the second category.

Phase 4 Building a classification: questionnaires and additional secondary data analysis

With the identified seven LAGs, I filled out questionnaires following the research design of Lacquement and Chevalier (2016) that mobilises the concept of territorial capital to investigate the key actors and actions within the LAG territory. Questionnaires results were triangulated with the analysis of the financial and annual reports of the LAGs in the period 2019-and to 2021 and media articles and social media posts to identify the key variables that drive the action of the key actors within the LAG. In table 2, I classify the LAGs based on these variables to find correlations between the identified LAG clusters and the practice of participation concerning the extrapolated variables.

Phase 5: Building a typology of participation: interviews and coding

To flesh out a typology of participation among selected LAGs, I first did semi-structured interviews with key actors, LAG managers, and the president. Secondly, I employed open and provisional coding to capture the emerging conceptualisations of participation (Ortlieb et al., 2020). The codes emerged from the verbatims. I searched for similarities and differences based on the identified six variables.

Lastly, I translated interview excerpts from Croatian to English. I stuck to the original languages of the interviewees as much as possible but corrected occasional grammar lapses.

Table 2 Classification of LAGs based on the questionnaires, financial and annual reports analysis and the analysis of their social media and web page content

Relationship with the local society	Perception of how local society is managed	LAG enactment of participation	Sources of funding	Type of projects LAG finances primarily	Key actors in the LAG
Contacts with the local community are primarily through participation in the activities of the community (associations, festivities, charity)	Local government bodies take all the most critical decisions. Citizens have nothing to say	Workshops and publications dedicated to LEADER funding via their web page. No social media.	MONO	Public infrastructure	Public
Contacts with the local community are primarily through interaction with family members and participation in the community's activities.	Local government bodies take all the most critical decisions. Citizens have nothing to say	Workshops and publications dedicated to LEADER funding via their web page. Social media is dedicated to the dissemination of information.	MONO	Small farmers	NGO/Public
Contacts with the local community are mostly through interaction related to professional life.	Administrative bodies take all the most critical decisions in the spirit of consulting citizens.	Various project activities with the local actors. Active web page and social media channels with up-to-date information on LAG activities, activities in the territory and available sources of funding	MULTI	Small farmers	Professional

Contacts with the local community are mostly through interaction related to professional life.	Administrative bodies take all the most critical decisions in the spirit of consulting citizens.	Various project activities with the local actors. Active web page and social media channels with up-to-date information on LAG activities, activities in the territory and available sources of funding	MULTI	Small farmers	Professional
Contacts with the local community are primarily through interaction with family members and participation in the community's activities.	Local government bodies take all the most critical decisions. Citizens have nothing to say	Workshops and publications dedicated to LEADER funding via their web page. Social media is dedicated to the dissemination of information.	MULTI	Small farmers	Professional/ Public
Contacts with the local community are primarily through participation in the community's activities.	Local government bodies take all the most critical decisions. Citizens have nothing to say	Workshops and publications dedicated to LEADER funding via their web page. Social media is dedicated to the dissemination of information.	MONO	Public infrastructure	Business
Contacts with the local community are primarily through participation in the activities of the community (associations, festivities, charity)	Here all the decisions are made by a narrow group of people who do not hold an official position. The citizens have nothing to say	Workshops and publications dedicated to LEADER funding via their web page. Social media is dedicated to the dissemination of information.	MULTI	Public infrastructure	Public

IV. RESULTS

The results are presented in the form of a narrative which identifies the actions that build participation via various actors' contributions to public MSIs – herein, LAGs. I present first results pertaining to the clusters of 54 LAGs, second, the variables that characterise LAG governance of the participant's practice within 7 LAGs, and third, the diagram of participation that sheds light on the actions that constitute what procedural or substantive participation.

IV.1. Results I: Two types of participative multi-stakeholder governance: doing projects or making promises

Before LEADER was formally established with the official entry of Croatia into the EU in 2014, LAGs did not exist formally. However, some multi-stakeholder initiatives pre-existed that had emerged in the rural territories of Croatia (Tolic & Markotic-Krstinić, 2013) under the impulse and thanks to the funding of Dutch, Norwegian, and American or French agencies for international development (Jelic-Muck & Bakker, 2013). In some cases, these were pilot projects of the Croatian government supported by the European Commission (Verbatim PRO22). Local politicians had taken the initiative to set up what would become a LAG (Jelic-Muck & Koprivnjak, 2011) to secure additional financial sources for their local development projects. They all held great promises of development made to the local population when the LAGs were forming and little to no financial resources to fulfil them (see Directorate for sustainable development of rural areas, 2007). In such circumstances, when I started working in one of the LAGs freshly established in 2014, it was on the LAG members and the LAG professionals to find ways to make all these promises held in the Local Development Strategy

of the LAGs come true (see LAG 5, 2016; *Vanjska (midterm) evaluation provedbe Lokalne razvojne strategije LAG-a 5 u razdoblju 2017. – 2020.* Godine, 2022).

The key issue was money. Until 2014, the local MSIs had little to no financial resources that would allow them to use the LEADER measure of the Rural Development Programme as the pre-condition was first to have money to spend and then be reimbursed through LEADER (LAG 5, 2015). So, some LAGs turned to their municipalities with promises of repayment based on EU money that would be made available by the EU to the LAGs in the future to finance their local development projects. Other LAGs preached LEADER and the promise of EU money to expand their membership and ‘earn’ membership fees. Still, others turned to available international and EU programmes and engaged in project proposal writing. The later LAGs did cross-border projects, youth exchange projects and any other project they could get funding for. They would engage the local population in workshops, study trips, and training activities on various subjects underlined as important in the Local Development Strategy. Some LAGs adopted all, some few, some only one of the strategies mentioned above. As a LAG manager, I adopted all the abovementioned strategies as mutually complementary. Municipal membership fees were money that could be used to pre-finance LEADER project activities and invest in building other projects, despite being insufficient to finance the organisation's work. LEADER money provided an opportunity for networking and hiring LAG professionals, though it could not fund the development projects local actors wanted. However, other funds, such as European Horizon 2020, Interreg or European Social Funds, could help us finance development projects but require project management and financial reporting skills. Making money from diverse sources worked for us and allowed us to make local actors work together and engage with us.

From 2014 until the end of 2018, during numerous workshops, training, and capacity-building activities with other LAGs on the national level, I could observe a significant difference in how LAGs approached their engagement with the local actors. LAGs that relied mostly on local

municipalities' funding and the LEADER measure were focused on deliberation practices with the local actors. They would organise presentations, study trips, and fairs (LAG Vuka-Dunav, 2015; LAG Frankopan, n.d.), where local actors would participate passively by listening to lectures or attending conferences. LAGs doing projects beyond the scope of LEADER would organise training, support the establishment of social enterprises or work with the local actors on their project proposals (LAG Vallis Collapis, 2014, 2015, 2016; LAG Brac, n.d.). Specifically, LAG Brac and LAG Skoji created a local value chain on their islands, connecting local producers with restaurants and other actors willing to buy island products (O-kupi otok, n.d.). LAG Posavina designed a project to be funded through European Social Fund, creating 74 jobs for long-term unemployed women and providing elderly care for 554 people from the LAG Posavina territory (LAG Posavina, n.d.)

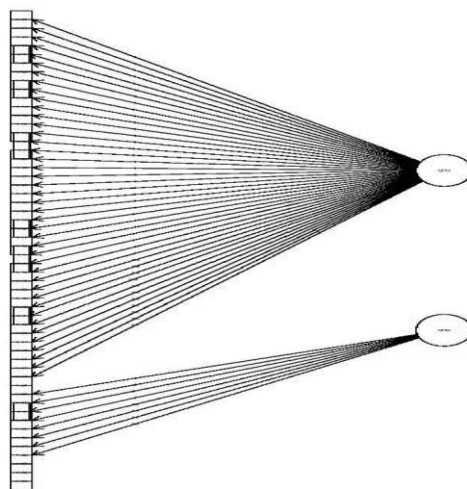


Table 3 The variables of the practice of participation in (A) substantially participative and (B) procedurally participative

Variable	Actions and Actors
1. Relationship with the local society	A. Local actors communicate mostly with the members of their community.

	B. Local Actors communicate mostly through professional activity within the community
2. Perception of local governance;	A. I prefer to participate in governance and decision-making. Local government bodies take all the most important decisions. Citizens have nothing to say.
	B. Administrative bodies take all the most important decisions in the spirit of consulting citizens I prefer to be well-governed. Here all the decisions are made by a narrow group of people who do not hold an official position, and the citizens have nothing to say
3. LAG communication with the territory	B. Workshops on LAG calls and the LEADER measure, general assembly meetings, presentation of the CAP
	A. Education workshops, training, community projects and workshops on LAG call and the LEADER measure, general assembly meetings, presentation of the CAP
4. LAGs sources of funding	A. Membership fees and the LEADER measure funding
	B. Various EU and national subsidies, membership fees and the LEADER measure funding
5. Projects financed by LAG	A. Investment in public infrastructure
	B. Subsidies to small farmers
6. Key actors in the LAG	B. Public actors within the LAG
	A. NGOs within the LAG
	A/B Professionals within the LAG
	B. Businesspeople within the LAG

The principal component analysis of the 54 LAGs in Croatia confirmed my initial perception of the existence of two types of LAGs. However, further research was needed to identify the variables that would steer the enactment of participation in the LAGs belonging to one of these two clusters.

IV.2. Results II: Framing the practice of participation: the six variables that delineate the nature of participation

Complementing the cluster analysis with additional qualitative data allowed me to identify six variables that helped me to characterise better the nature of participation in the two LAG clusters (see Table 3)

Forms of participation in A-type LAGs

The cluster that included a majority of 46 LAGs revolved around LEADER programme implementation within the Rural Development Programme of the Republic of Croatia in a fairly bureaucratic way. It was characterised as follows:

Relationship with local society (1) & perception of local governance (2). Actors focus on their family circle and see local governance as something distant. The local politicians are seen as the elite by the local actors who have little contact with them. Accordingly, when invited to participate, they ‘do as they are told’ (Verbatim STA21) by the representatives of the elite – as it is the established local practice. They participate in governance and decision-making by supporting, without prior deliberation, the decisions of the local government bodies (Verbatim, PRO12).

LAG communication within the territory (3). Participation is staged around workshops and assemblies where local actors participate through a predefined and obligatory set of activities defined by the State framework (National Gazette NN 96/2017; National Gazette NN 53/2018). Deliberation is characterised by LAG managers communicating information to the local actors. It is, in most cases, one-sided communication where Lag managers have little to no feedback from the local actors (Verbatim, PRO 32). The objective of the LAG is to implement its Local Development Strategy, which in these cases unfolds around Measure 19.2. *Implementing operations within the CLLD (community-led local development) strategy where LAGs have funding to publish calls for projects that correspond to one of the pre-existing measures* of the Rural Development programme. The role of the local actors is to confirm the strategy that consultants have developed in communication with LAG professionals and following detailed guidelines from the State (APPRRR, 2018, 2019).

LAG sources of funding (4). There is no funding available for projects outside the LEADER measure, and the governance model of the LAG does not seek to do projects outside the

LEADER measure. (see LAG Viroviticki prsten, 2021). The administrative burden on LAG professionals puts time and financial constraints, and they transform into an “extended state bureaucracy” (Verbatim, SOC12).

Projects financed by the LAG (5). As the municipalities are key actors within the LAG, they also obtain most of the LAG funding. These LAGs focus on investing LEADER funding in public infrastructure. The LAG public sector captures up to 75% of the overall allocation, as identified in our analysis of LAG financial reports. It is a small number of projects with large budgets.

Key actors in the LAG (6). Being highly dependent on the municipalities' membership fees for financing the organisation's function, the mayors or the elected public representatives play a key role in the partnership. LAG professionals even organise specific meetings to get all the mayors to work together (Verbatim, PRO32). In some but not all cases, LAGs have one to two professionals and are less recognised within the territory as territorial decision-makers.

Forms of participation in B-type LAGs

The minority governance cluster that has grouped 8 LAGs has been characterised by implementing many projects and activities alongside the LEADER measure of the Rural Development Programme.

Relationship with the local society (1)& (2) perception of local governance. Actors interact with their community mainly through professional activities. They are active in the business and social life of the community. As such, they deliberate with the local government bodies and submit propositions. They prefer to be well governed rather than participate in the governance as the governance results from prior deliberation with a narrow group of interested citizens.

LAG communication with the territory (3). Participation is staged around numerous activities LAGs propose as part of their projects. Furthermore, these projects create jobs, whereby the LAG also engages with the local actor as an employer. This communication is two-sided as for the project implementation. LAG needs not only the presence of the local actors but also their willingness to engage in deliberations and activities proposed, thereby contributing to the project that aims to develop the territory.

LAG sources of funding (4). LEADER measure represents only a small part concerning other funding sources they use to implement their Local Development Strategies. These LAGs implement projects financed from other European programmes such as European Social Fund, Erasmus +, Interreg or Horizon 2020, where they participate as a partner with other colleagues from Croatia or the European Union with whom they share a specific interest or a development challenge they wish to overcome together (see Vallis Collapis, 2019, 2020).

Projects financed by the LAG (5). As the key actors in the LAGs are LAG professionals and businesspeople, LAGs are more likely to distribute their LEADER funding through small-scale farming subsidies as the LAG professionals as the key actors within the LAG. In addition, these LAGs seek other funding sources beyond the LEADER measure to build community projects and answer to and engage with the needs of the local actors.

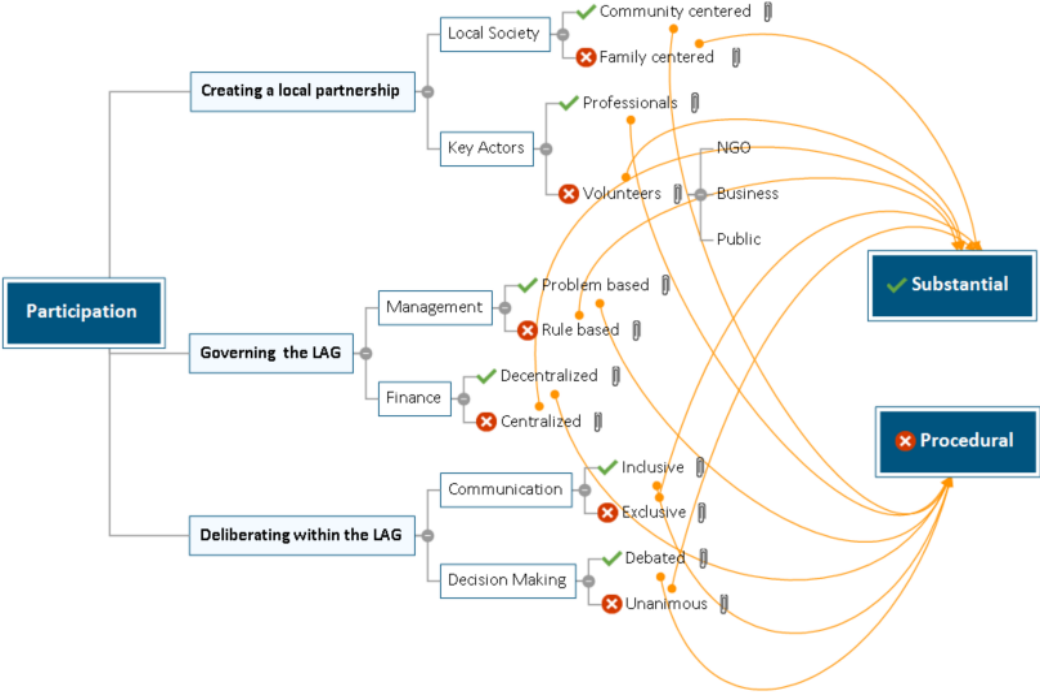
Key actors in the LAG (6). Depending on the capacities of LAG managers and NGOs around the LAG to build and implement projects, LAG professionals and NGOs are identified as the key actors. Their role of coordinating funding opportunities on the one hand and the interests of all the partnership members on the other instil them in this place.

IV.3. Results III: What actions do actors do when they enact participation within an MSI

In order to present the actions that enact what I identify as procedural or substantive participation, I have developed a diagram of participation (see figure 3), which presents visually the alternative options identified along the six variables that allow distinguishing between A-type and B-type LAGs in the previous section. Reading the diagram from left to right, we can see the actions *key actors*, such as the LAG's president and LAG managers, *do* to enact participative bottom-up development, renamed community-led local development in the European Commission Programming Framework 2014-2020.

I characterise the enactment of participation via (i) the creation of a local partnership, *i.e.*, activation of territorial capital, (ii) LAG governance and (iii) the deliberation practices actors engage in when they aim to reach their objective through participation.

Figure 3 The diagram of participation: territorial capital, governance, and deliberation



Source: the author

Creating a local partnership; the activation of territorial capital

The activation of territorial capital that is manifested in the creation of local partnerships to do development projects is strongly influenced by two factors.

First is the previous experience of local actors in interacting with their broader community. Depending on the actor's preference to remain within her family circle or step out into the community – it will result in A or B-type practice of participation. Where we find actors who practice social interaction outside their family circle, we find a type A practice of participation.

LAG was a platform where the mayors would finally start working together. Where they would sit down together and work together. To define together, in the name of the public sector, their development strategy and what is important to them. And then, they would call the private and the civil sectors and try to tie them together. (Verbatim, PRO11)

Conversely, when the actors do not have the practice of interaction with other members of their community, they tend to support those who are perceived as leading the partnership dynamics, resulting in type B practice of participation:

It is on LAG members [the local actors] to support LAG professionals who present the needs and demands of the territory (Verbatim PRO21)

Secondly, who is perceived as the key actor within the local partnership will influence the enactment of the practice of participation. Specifically, if the key actor is a professional versed in engaging with the community, the participation will be substantial.

Today I work as a project manager. I deal with strategic planning for LAG development and participation in deliberations on national politics for LAG development. In the beginning, I did everything. From managing small-scale projects, applying to all possible funding sources, and educating new LAG professionals, I am proud to say that

people who worked and were trained in our LAG today work in the European Commission. (Verbatim, ENT11)

Conversely, when the key actor who is steering the dynamic of the partnership comes from the public sector, type B participation will tend to dominate:

I represent the biggest town that has the biggest authority. It is on us to make sure that this LAG is active. They show this by engaging with mayors and public officials that participate and influence funding distribution. It is on us as the ones with the biggest authority to bring others to the LAG, and that is our greatest role (Verbatim, SOC11)

Governing of the LAG

The mode of governance within the LAG is mirrored in the management practices, and the mobilisation of one or several financial (re)sources will influence the practice of participation adopted.

Firstly, participation will largely depend on the management strategies key actors within the LAG adopt to implement the Local Development Strategy. Certain LAGs are perceived as a 'one-stop shop' (Verbatim PRO12) where local actors come up with their problems and their ideas, which LAG professionals then frame into projects or propose strategic guidance for:

We worked with the municipalities to coordinate the system of subsidies for agricultural and entrepreneurial activities in our territory. So all the LAG municipalities had the same system of subsidies. In that case, we ensure that subsidies are distributed to make a difference. Before, we had cases where people got self-employment support from the town but would close their businesses when the subsidy ran out. (Verbatim, ENT11)

For us, the most important thing is to be recognised as being there to help them. One example, a lady came into our office one day to ask if we could help her prepare and

apply for a scholarship for the vocational education of her son. And we prepared and submitted that application, the first year and all the following years until her son finished his studies' (Verbatim, PRO 32)

LAG helped form 3-4 NGOs. We established the Cabbage festival. (Verbatim, STA21)

These management practices will support the type A practice of participation.

Conversely, with management that is focused on distributing LEADER funding and organises their work around satisfying all the rules imposed on them by the State and the EU, type B will be dominant:

Yesterday we had an Assembly. We voted 70 000kn for the animation of the local actors and 400 000kn for the salaries. 80% was for salaries and office expenses. Our only option to work with local actors is through a cooperation project. Otherwise, we mostly do LAG administration and LAG calls. We became administrative staff that can only look outside the window [instead of engaging in working with the local actors] (Verbatim, SOC 12)

A second factor that frames the mode of governance within the LAG, and the choices between type A or B of the practice of participation, are the financial resources that will be mobilised. 'As much money, so many projects' (Verbatim, PRO22):

In 2018 we got a project worth 10 million kn. We hired additional people to manage the project, and in total, 83 people from the LAG territory were employed by the project. Eighty-three people got jobs, and 330 older people from the territory got personal assistance. (Verbatim, PRO 32)

People participated as they got something out of it (Verbatim, PRO 22).

That is why LAGs who did projects and had multiple funding sources outside the LEADER measure had more freedom in how they would engage with the local actors. Furthermore, local

actors could more easily find something that *is in it for them* by participating in the work of the LAG. Such an approach would then facilitate type A practice of participation.

Deliberating within the LAG

Deliberation practices, as one of the variables that influence the practice of participation, are influenced by two factors in my research. First are the communication practices with the LAG that can be either exclusive, with the role of the local actors being to validate the decisions prepared somewhere else by someone else:

One LAG manager prepares decisions to be adopted by the Steering Committee in advance. ‘It saves time and prevents discussions from going in the wrong direction’ (Verbatim, PRO12).

Consequently, the process of decision-making will be characterised by unanimity, with little to no debate on what the partnership should do to answer the development challenges of its territory:

When there is only a LEADER that has predefined everything, participation is all about ‘raising hands’ (Verbatim, PRO32) as the local actors have little interest in making decisions and deliberating on something they cannot identify interest (Verbatim, PRO12).

Such an approach to communication and decision-making will, in turn, result in the type B practice of participation.

Conversely, when LAGs engage in the intensive promotion of their activities through workshops, study trips, round tables, and debates as part of their project activities, there is more opportunity to include a set of various actors in various enactments of deliberation. Likewise,

when there are many projects to discuss, local actors are more engaged in the steering committees and assemblies of the LAG. This results in type A practice of participation.

V. DISCUSSION

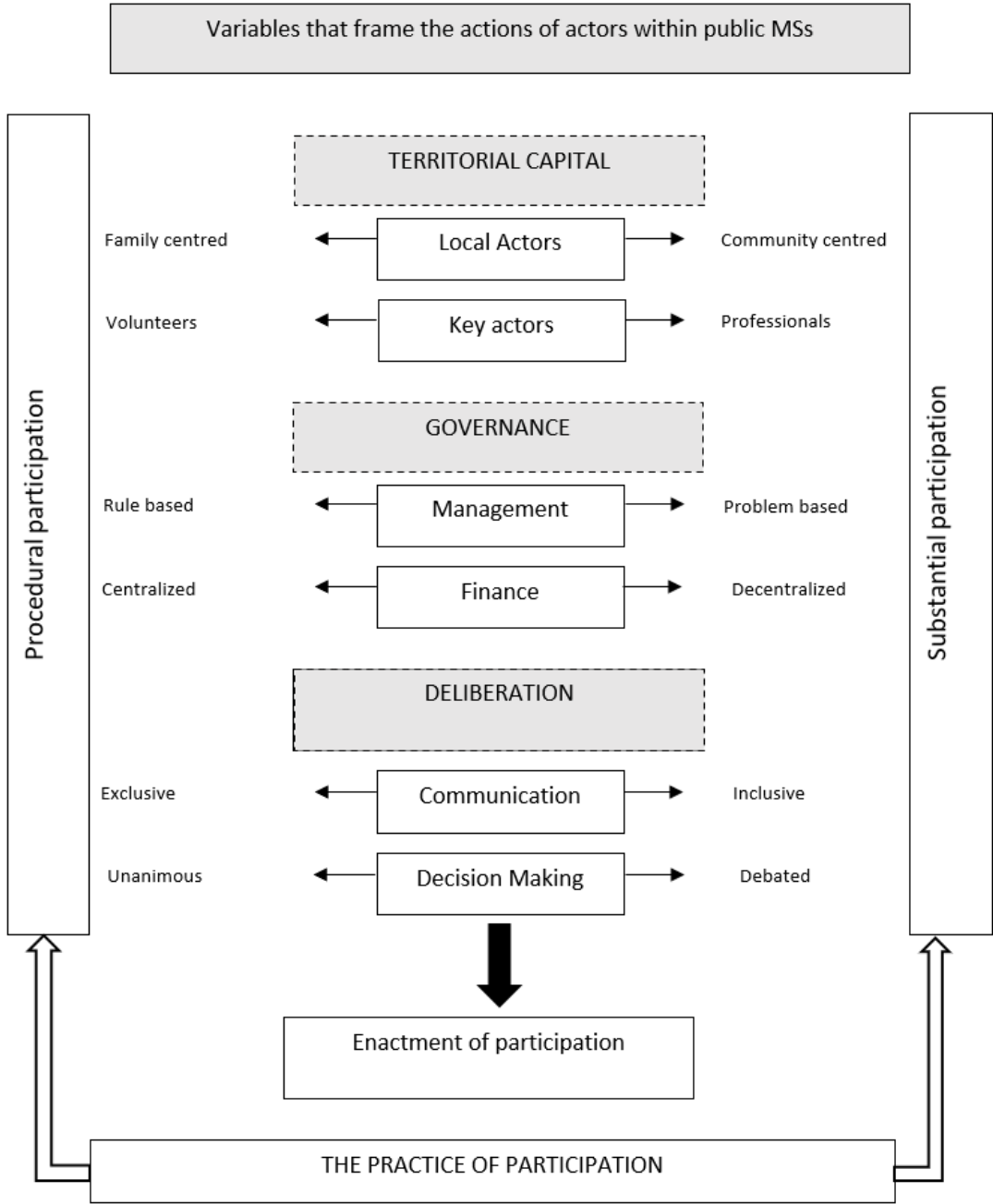
This paper contributes to the literature on the role of actors in public multi-stakeholder initiatives via a longitudinal mixed-methods approach that identifies participations practices within public multi-stakeholder partnerships when asked to enact participation. The literature on participation has identified that the presence of impartial presence of an impartial facilitator, precise goal setting and rules, access to information or working in small groups with materials adapted to the education level and background of the participant's work (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; Martens et al., 2018) fosters participation. Besides that, the numerous typologies (Arnstein 1,969; Fiorino, 1989; Martens et al., 2018,;Schleifer, 2019) and critiques (Kothari, 2001; Nawaz, 2013; Cheyns & Risgaard, 2014; Fritz & Binder, 2018) lacked a description of the actions that enact the practice of participation. So, participation, how to stimulate it and sustain it towards accomplishing the goals of MSI, remains a crucial question to which we still have no good answers.

Starting from a managerial doubt on enacting inclusive, participatory development within public MSIs, I asked: what actions do actors take in public multi-stakeholder initiatives when they enact participation? How do they construct participation? Answers emerged in the form of a model for the practice of participation presented in figure 4.

The model for the practice of participation in figure 4 demonstrates that enacting participation within public multi-stakeholder partnerships is either procedural or substantive (Martens et al., 2018; Paloniemi et al., 2015) depending on the participation practices around three sets of variables: (1) the territorial capital, (2) governance practice, and (3) deliberation practices. Based on the central figure within the local partnership and the preestablished social practices of actors that may be community or family-centred, participation will be enacted differently. If the local actors are community-centred and the LAG professionals are the key actors, then the

partnership will focus on mapping problems into projects they will finance from various sources. The finances will be decentralised and depend on various sources requiring different transparency levels. Consequently, partnerships that engage in such substantive participation will have more communication activities that ask for the active engagement of actors in specific activities. As the local actors in these cases are at the heart of the projects of the partnerships, they actively contribute to decision-making – such an inclusive process will often manifest through debates around different worldviews.

Figure 4 Model for the practice of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings



Source: the author

Territorial capital has been at the heart of the inquiry of Lacquement and Chevalier (2016) as a determinant of the capacity of local actors to organise cooperation networks, plan their development, and put in place projects that will valorise their territory. These authors mobilised the term territorial capital to investigate forms of collective action that favour socio-economic development at a local level. According to them, the cohesion of the partnership will depend

on the prestige and reputation of the LAG president, the LAG manager's engagement and the influence of certain local personalities well known within the territory. These actors should organise and mobilise the partnership to create development projects. In line with Lacquement and Chevalier (2016), our findings delineate two elements that will influence the mobilisation of territorial capital and the enactment of participation. Firstly, how do the local actors interact within their territory? Do these actors practice interaction and engagement with the community beyond their family circle, or not? Secondly, who are perceived to be the key actors within the MSI? If the professionals employed by the MSIs are perceived as the key actors, the local actors are more likely to engage with them. In the cases where the key actors are volunteers in the form of local politicians or established businesspeople who are respected due to the preestablished clientelist practice of the Local Government (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016, p. 23), we see that local actors will not engage in deliberation in the MSI.

Governance. Previous research has identified the importance of including lower-level actors in strategic decision-making (Tavella, 2020) and pointed out the lack of inclusiveness of participation practices in corporate-led MSIs (Cheyns, 2015) where local knowledge and local interests are not considered (Banerjee, 2018). I point out that the way to enact substantive participation that will foster the inclusion of the local actors relies on participative problem management instead of drafting rules and procedures to manage the stakeholders (Rose & Frewer, 2005). Focusing on problems around which the local actors build projects results in many activities that include diverse groups of local actors and reinforce the sense of belonging to a certain territory that will emancipate the local actors to manage their territory better (Menconi, 2018). Decentralised financing demands from the multi-stakeholder partnerships more transparency and administrative flexibility. Such partnerships answer many financing bodies in project management, making their administration more flexible to answer to the *demand of the day* of the local actors. Lastly, decentralised financing means various reporting

bodies and ensures the transparency of the partnership activities and finances as the evaluation is not centred around a single auditing and evaluation body.

Deliberation as the core of multi-stakeholder partnerships has often been seized by powerful actors embedded in hierarchical local power structures (Cheyns & Risgaard, 2014). In the case of development projects, this is said to be because the local elites have fewer opportunity costs on their time (Mansuri *et al.*, 2004), and it is something that has been identified with the Hungarian, Czech and Polish LAGs (Maurel, 2008) as specific interest groups monopolise access to grants. We contribute to this research by presenting the cases of LAGs with decentralised financing and many project activities requiring them to engage in various activities with local actors. Such an approach results in the engagement of local actors in training, study trips, and fairs where their participation answers their individual needs and strengthens the legitimacy of the LAG. Conversely, in the case where LEADER is centralised and represents a tool of hegemony (Koutsouris, 2008), we can observe the exclusive participation of the local elites that participate at the general assemblies, meetings or LEADER workshops framed according to the formal rules defined by the State (Lacquement and Valier, 2016). In such cases of exclusive communication (Tavella, 2020), we see no deliberation or debate regarding decision-making. The unanimity of decision-making goes so far that the LAG manager even prepares the decisions of the LAG assembly in advance (Verbatim, PRO12).

Model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings describes the actions actors take to enact participation. It shows how actors construct participation by activating territorial capital, inclusive governance, and deliberation. It delineates the actions that lead to the enactment of substantive or procedural participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fritz & Binder, 2018).

VI. CONCLUSION

The model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings answers calls for research regarding the underlying practices of participation (Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Tavella, 2020).

First, I contribute to the literature on the role of actors in multi-stakeholder settings by identifying the participations practices when they enact participation. Previous research that measured the activation of territorial capital to characterise collective action (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016) pointed out the dominant power structures that hamper participative governance (Paloniemi et al., 2015) and delineated different participative communication practices (Rowe andrewer, 2005). I expand on this work by delineating the variables around which the individual and collective action will be enacted.

Second, I provide a methodological contribution to the research on participation in multi-stakeholder settings by designing a convergent mixed-methods approach to identify actions shared among various multi-stakeholder initiatives. This methodological framework allows us to adopt a holistic approach to the practice and enactment of participation, holistically focusing on the how and what of participative practices.

Third, I build a model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings to demonstrate how actors construct participation through the activation of territorial capital, inclusive governance, and deliberation. It delineates the actions that lead to the enactment of substantive or procedural participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fr& and Binder, 2018). This model for the practice of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings has broader implications for scholars interested in the enactment and impact of participation within multi-stakeholder settings. I expect that the variable of *territorial capital* in other sectors adapts depending on the

environment of an MSI that will define who the key actors are and what is the preestablished dynamics of actors of the MSI.

Insight into the actions that shape the practice of participation within multi-stakeholder settings is critical for tackling today's grand challenges – as they demand an active engagement of actors with diverging interests who share the same planet.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Participation as a politically constructed process: through time and across spatial scales

This dissertation investigates the strategy and agency of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings, focusing on the implementation of the LEADER programme for participative rural development of the European Union in Croatia. To do so, I first analyse the political dynamics of the broader socio-political context MSIs are embedded in, in Chapter 1 to investigate how participation is constructed. I then zoom in to the local scale, examining in Chapter 2 how local actors organised around an MSI against a new, state-imposed, and EU-framed regulation that threatened local forms of livelihood on the Croatian peninsula of Pelješac, to examine how local actors defended their own scale, thereby defending their participation within the hegemonic regime of the national scale. Lastly, in Chapter 3, I investigate the practice of participation through a mixed research method combining the statistical analysis of the 54 LAGs in Croatia with the qualitative analysis of seven of these Local Action Groups' work to investigate how participation is practised.

The key contribution of this dissertation is a processual account of participation in public multi-stakeholder settings and the development of theoretical concepts and a methodological framework to analyse it as such. Furthermore, it provides a practical contribution to managing participatory practices within multi-stakeholder settings such as the Local Action Groups. In what follows, I first offer a synthesis of the main results of the thesis (1) before highlighting its theoretical (2), methodological (3) and managerial (4) contributions, followed by suggestions of avenues for future research (5).

SECTION I: Synthesis of the main results

In chapter 1, I observed the political dynamics of the broader socio-political contexts MSI are embedded, asking: *how does participation emerge within the field of public MSIs? What are the economic, normative and cultural dimensions that define participation in the field of public MSIs?* Does public MSI manage to overcome the critiques of inclusiveness private MSIs are faced with? To answer these research questions, we have built a historical explanatory case study (Yin, 2003) of the LEADER programme in Croatia (2014-2019) that draws on the concept of the value regime developed by Levy and colleagues (Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016). Value regimes provide an analytical framework that allows us to articulate three dimensions of the broader socio-political context in which participation in MSIs is embedded: 1. The network of actors and organisations interacting around economic and semiotic elements in public MSIs; 2. Mechanism of governance in the form of rules, institutions, and norms that channel and constrain participation in the field of public MSIs ; 3. Normative and cultural values of participation in the field of public MSIs from the perspective of the actors.

Our initial proposition is that the value regime an individual MSI is embedded in will shape the nature of participation within that MSI. Our findings suggest that participation is constructed through a *regime of participation*: a mechanism of governance, a set of normative and cultural values that privilege certain forms of economic production and exchange, and unequal levels of participation within the embedded MSIs.

In Chapter 2, I am at the centre of the strategic action, asking *how can local actors play the scales to counter broader hegemonic moves* and effectively protect the views, practices and policies attached to their spatial scale. To answer this research question, we explored the

strategy of the national State and the local actors around the “Rulebook for areas with natural or specific constraints” in Croatia, employing a longitudinal participatory approach (Gioia et al., 2013) to build a narrative of the case from the perspective of the local actors. We adopt the theoretical lens of the spatial scales as spaces that are socially produced through the process of rescaling. That is the changes in patterns of capital accumulation, regulation, and normative discourses imposed from one scale on another (Spicer, 2006) to investigate the agency of local actors when faced with hegemonic threats (Banerjee, 2011).

The analysis suggests that the appropriation of dominant discourses and knowledge allows the local actors to *play the scales*, i.e., to accomplish the trans-scalar protection of their local scale through time. They do so by (1) constructing a translocal alliance that will grab different elements from different scales and (2) building a trans-scalar strategy deployed to exert pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various scales and via different actors of the translocal alliance.

In chapter 3, I draw from my lived experience and from systematic data collection to build comparisons among the Local Action Groups of the LEADER program in Croatia, asking *what actions actors take within public multi-stakeholder initiatives when they enact participation? How do they enact participation?* I built a convergent mixed-method research design (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) that draws on the concept of territorial capital as used by Lacquement and Chevalier (2016) to investigate this question.

Territorial capital provides an analytical framework that links three dimensions of the local territory which are crucial for its development: 1. material resources within the territory, 2. nonmaterial resources of the territory, 3. interpersonal capital developed between the individuals engaged in local development and the local governance of the territory (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016, p. 2). In their case study of a Hungarian LAG, Lacquement and Chevalier (2016) looked into the forms of collective action that favoured economic development and the mobilisation of territorial capital within a LAG. I expand on their

framework as it allows me to investigate the conditions under which local actors cooperate and how they do so.

Drawing from the insights offered by the literature, the starting proposition from which I developed my methodological framework is that the very activities implemented by the actors are instrumental in shaping the nature of participation within individual Local Action Groups. I define this as the *practice of participation*. The emergent model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings describes the actions actors take to enact participation. It shows how actors construct participation by activating territorial capital, inclusive governance and deliberation processes. It delineates the actions that lead to the enactment of *substantive or procedural* participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fritz & Binder, 2018).

SECTION II: Theoretical contributions

The major contribution of this study is in the domain of critical management studies. Understanding participation as a politically constructed process that unfolds through time and across spatial scales contributes to an organisational analysis by highlighting the importance of strategic action within and across organisations in this realm. Firstly, how participation is constructed concerns the political dynamics that frame the environment in which participation is enacted. Secondly, participation is shaped, enhanced, or restricted, within and across the different spatial scales. This research has shown how it is defended in relation to the reappropriation and deployment of organisational logic across spatial scales. Thirdly, participation is enacted in substantive or simply procedural ways through the activation of territorial capital, mode of governance and deliberation practices. As such, this research answers three gaps identified in the literature by offering:

- Insights into the political dynamics that shape the environment MSIs operate in, i.e. the broader *regimes of participation* (Levy, 2008; Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016).
- Insights into the agency behind the translocal framework (Banerjee 2018; Leglise, 2021) and the *translocal and trans-scalar strategies* that local actors may build to *play the scales* to defend their participation.
- Insights into the processes and activities that local actors engage in (Mantere & Vaara, 2008; Tavella, 2020, Brielmaier & Friesl, 2021) to enact a *substantive* vs a *procedural practice of participation*.

II.1. The regimes of participation

The regime of participation is embedded in a neo-Gramscian understanding of power as a form of strategic action whereby social actors create and maintain stable social worlds (Levy & Scully, 2007). Such power depends on the ability of actors to influence tactics, agenda-setting, and the power embedded in broader social and technical systems (Maguire, 2004). Actors with fewer resources can therefore outmanoeuvre their rivals if they have a clever strategy, good timing and some luck (Levy & Egan, 2003). The critical stream of research in management and organisations studies (specifically: Levy & Egan 2003; Levy & Newel, 2005; Levy, 2008; Levy & Scully, 2008; Levy & Spicer 2013; Moog, Spicer & Böhm; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016; Girei, 2016; Bo, Böhm & Reynolds 2011; Palpacuer & Seignour 2019; Mollona & Pareschi 2020) has applied the concept of hegemony to describe this mosaic of political, economic and discursive struggles in governance settings, through research that has focused on the shifting of the power dynamics, from the dominant bloc towards the broader society and more specifically the marginalised actors.

In this dissertation, my focus is geared towards the marginalised actors who are the object of development projects, akin to the local actors who are the object of corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. The *regime of participation* perspective allows us to understand the political dynamics behind the process through which the participation of these marginalised actors is constructed.

Thereby, this thesis provides a first theoretical contribution to the multi-stakeholder literature in business ethics (Mena & Palazzo, 2012; De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019) by providing a processual account of the emergence of regimes of participation within larger public systems governed by the State.

The regime of participation is defined as a mechanism of governance that privileges certain economic processes of production and exchange, as well as the normative and cultural values that frame the nature of participation within a given MSI. The regime of participation provides another theoretical contribution to the literature on political dynamics in multi-stakeholder initiatives (Levy & Spicer, 2013; Moog Spicer & Böhm, 2015; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016). It shows how Levy Reinecke & Manning's (2016) process model of change can be applied to understand participation as a politically constructed process whose nature will depend on the value regime it is embedded in.

II.2. Playing the scales

Playing the scales implies that local actors protect their political scale from broader hegemonic diffusion by appropriating dominant organisational logic from other scales to their advantage, thanks to the knowledge they acquire through translocal alliances.

Given that spatial scales are socially produced and exist along multiple geographical levels (Spicer, 2006), countering broader hegemonic moves consists of the capacity for the local actors to develop a trans-scalar strategy that: (1) is open to the inclusion of actors operating at different spatial scales, who hold different pieces of knowledge; (2) allows them to appropriate the dominant organisational logic in their favour, (3) exerts pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various local scales and via different actors in their translocal alliance. The local advocacy strategy is initially directed at the national State. The use of multiple pressure points pushes the national state politicians to question the new Rulebook at the European Parliament. The Pelješac case is then argued for at the EU level in workshops of experts and representatives

from different Member States who bring up the topic to the European Commission. On the national scale, the threat of a media campaign is made by the counterhegemonic movement just before unexpected national state elections.

However, what we see as critical is the capacity to adapt the strategic action to the organisational logic that is dominant on the spatial scales we aim to influence. In our case, this was achieved using various tools and tactics, which allowed us to align the counter-hegemonic discourse with the dominant organisational logic, particularly via a political actor who moved from the regional to the State scale by becoming a member of the newly formed national government. We call this *playing the scales*, as it involves a capacity to innovate, adapt and coordinate people and knowledge across spatial scales in a strategic action which is collective and in constant movement.

This study provides a theoretical contribution to the literature on resistance movements (Banerjee, 2011; Banerjee, 2018, Leglise, 2021) by describing the strategic action local actors engage in across spatial scales when faced with hegemonic threats. It also contributes to the literature on spatial scales (Spicer, 2006; Spicer & Fleming, 2007; Spicer & Sewe, 2010; Lacerda, 2021) by describing the strategic action behind the processes of rescaling.

II.3. The practice of participation

This research offers a model for the practice of participation within public multi-stakeholder settings that characterises the activities or practices that enact participation. It shows how actors construct participation by activating territorial capital, inclusive governance, and open deliberation. It delineates the actions that lead to the enactment of substantive vs procedural

forms of participation, providing an analytical approach that critically scrutinises participation processes (Fritz & Binder, 2018).

This model builds on the work of Chevalier and colleagues (2012; Chevalier & Dedeire, 2014; Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016; Chevalier et al., 2017). They have focused on the concept of territorial capital to investigate the forms of coordination of collective action that favour socio-economic development at the local level, within the territorial framework of the LEADER Programme and the working of Local Action Groups. As local development is said to embody economic, cultural, and social dynamics that are coordinated by local actors within the territory (Chevalier & Dedeire, 2014, p. 11), I argue that it pertains to a regime of participation which is enacted through the ways in which the local development MSI addresses these economic, cultural and social dynamics. The enactment of participation within an individual MSI, therefore, depends on the following:

Activation of territorial capital. I argue that the enactment of participation within an MSI will firstly depend on the openness of the MSI to a wide variety of the local actors that constitute the local territory; hence it involves the capacity of actors to work together towards a common goal (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019).

Choice of the governance model. Drawing from previous research on the problem of the lack of inclusiveness of MSIs (Cheyins, 2015; Banerjee, 2018) or the inclusion of lower-lever actors in strategic decision-making (Tavella, 2020), I underline two management approaches to the use of participation: a first management approach relies on rules and procedures, i.e., it focuses more on the formal requirements of participation than on its spirit, or what I call ‘substance’. By contrast, substantive management of participation focuses on organising solutions around the problems encountered by local actors, particularly the weaker or marginal ones. A key element linked to these two types of management is finance. If MSIs are financed from various

sources, they will be prone to develop more inclusive and flexible practices to answer the problems encountered in the territory. In contrast, single-source funding favours a more vertical, top-down approach to allocating resources among local projects that seek financing.

Deliberation practices As pointed out by previous research (Mansuri & Rao, 2004; Maurel, 2008; Cheyns & Risgaard, 2014), powerful actors often seize deliberation in MSIs. Drawing from research across multiple fields regarding deliberation as a key dimension of participation within MSIs, I developed two propositions confirmed by this study. First, deliberation is enacted through open, horizontal communication (Randell, 2004; Rose & Frewer, 2005; Fung, 2006), and second, the enactment of open communication depends, in turn, on the decision-making style adopted by lead actors in the MSI (Martens et al., 2018; Garcia, 2018; Buele et al., 2020). Specifically, I assume that communication can be either or not inclusive. I argue that exclusive communication (Tavella, 2020) leads to procedural participation (Martens et al., 2018), whereby actors only participate within invited spaces (Cornwall, 2002) in the context of a strong power structure (Randell, 2004). Such power structure is enacted through a one-way communication (Rose & Fewer 2005), wherein actors are passive subjects who only serve to legitimate the objectives pre-established by the elite on account of the MSI (see Arnstein 1969). The participating local actors are treated as homogenous (Chambers, 2006), and different worldviews and values are not considered (Fritz & Binder). The decision-making process through which the appearances of deliberation are to be performed to exhibit seemingly multistakeholder-driven policy results in unanimous decision-making that essentially confirms the decisions made beforehand by the power elite. As subalterns in the broader social-political context of the territory, the local actors have little actual voice in such a process.

This substantive vs procedural model based on three key variables for enacting participation represents the third major contribution of this thesis. It contributes to the literature on the role of actors in multi-stakeholder settings by identifying the actions actors take when they enact

participation. Previous research that measured the activation of territorial capital to characterise collective action (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016) pointed out the dominant power structures that hamper participative governance (Paloniemi et al., 2015). It delineated different participative communication practices (Rowe andrewer, 2005). I expand on this work by delineating the variables around which individual and collective actions may be enacted in favour of participation.

SECTION III: Methodological contributions

This thesis contributes to management and organisation studies research along two major axes from a methodological standpoint. The first contribution is based on the advantages of lived experience research from the perspective of critical management studies. The second is based on the convergent mixed-methods research used to theorise the practice of participation.

III.1. Lived experience research

Whilst lived experience research (Honey et al., 2020; Roennfeldt & Byrne, 2020) is commonly used in psychology, I have found few organisation and management studies publications that built their research on the lived experience of their authors. However, such a methodological approach may provide unique insights into the strategic actions. Specifically, by underlying broader concepts such as the value regime (Levy et al., 2016), spatial scales (Spicer, 2006) or translocal governance (Banerjee, 2018), and it could also provide relevant insights for managerial practices.

As pointed out by Honey et al. (2020, p. 1) in their review of lived experience research in psychology, lived experience research has been used to illuminate the perspectives and experiences of people with mental health issues. As such, it has been recognised to yield three benefits:

1. Including people who are the research's object in research, production has been seen as a contribution to social justice.

2. The contribution of practitioners offers methodological sensitivity, data accuracy, validity, and relevance.
3. People with lived experience who contributed to the research reported feeling empowered and having developed new skills.

Moving back to critical management research studies (CMS) that aim to reveal the socially constructed character of what is presented as natural and given, thereby exposing power relations and the phenomenon of domination in management policies and practices (Leglise, 2021), we see that lived experience research has much to contribute to CMS. Specifically, it allows us to investigate the mechanisms behind change processes (Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016). It allows us to build a dense narrative that unveils the strategic action of actors as they move through time and across spatial scales (Spicer, 2006; Spicer & Fleming, 2007; Spicer & Sewel, 2010). In empirical terms, it provides first-hand insights into constructing, defending, and using participation in a multi-stakeholder setting.

Drawing from the managerial doubts I faced as a manager of a public multi-stakeholder organisation working on sustainable development in the South Croatian islands, this thesis adopts multiple perspectives. It does so to deal with both practical and theoretical questions of how participation is constructed, defended, and practised in public multi-stakeholder settings. It uses lived experience as a building block of its methodological framework, allowing us to make more informed methodological choices. Firstly, when we are in the data collection phase, having an insider perspective of the research phenomena allows better access to the data and greater field access to other participants in the study. Secondly, in data analysis, lived experience, ever more so than long-term observation, provides us with the insights necessary to develop first and second-order coding. Lastly, lived experience research is positively correlated with qualitative validity as it allows the researcher to develop stepwise validity strategies in the form of data triangulation, member checking and especially the possibility of

using detailed descriptions to convey the findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). As such, it inscribes itself into the interpretivist/constructivist research paradigm of social sciences (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Pitard, 2017,) that assumes that the researcher and the social world impact each other and that the researcher's perspectives and values inevitably influence the findings.

III.2. Convergent mixed-methods research design

Few studies have used convergent mixed methods research design in critical management and organisation studies. Convergent mixed-methods research design 'converges quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive analysis of the research problem' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 15). It is best suited when the researcher wants to 'both generalise the findings to a population as well as develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 19). For example, this approach can be relevant when understanding how participation is used within individual MSIs while accounting for the regime of participation in which it is embedded.

I have built a convergent mixed-methods approach to identify the actions adopted across multi-stakeholder initiatives. I developed such an approach from Chevalier's methodology (Chevalier, Mačiulyté, Razafimahefa & Dedeire, 2017) for studying local action systems, which hypothesises that 'LAGs originate and organise themselves in a complex, unstable and potentially conflicting universe that is of the social interaction' (Lacquement et al., 2017, p. 321). This methodological framework allowed me to adopt a holistic approach to the practice and enactment of participation. Holistically embracing the how and what of participative

practices. Specifically, the research has used principal component analysis to identify population clusters and then combined it with the sociological methodology of structural analysis (Merckle, 2011), focusing on the inter-knowledge ties, interdependency ties and the prestige of actors within the MSIs. These results were articulated in secondary data analysis pertaining to the annual activity and financial reports of the MSIs, in order to identify key variables that defined how participation was used within an MSI

more conceptually.

I argue that such an approach provides a useful methodological framework for CMS scholars who seek to investigate the mechanisms and actions underlying the social constructs of what is presented as natural and given in today's regimes of participation. It would, for example, apply to the study of parliamentary democracy.

SECTION IV: Managerial contributions

As a manager who worked in a public multi-stakeholder initiative for local development, I wish to defend the argument that "participative development" is a form of dominant organisational logic. One that comes with a cultural and historical legacy is not necessarily adapted to the historical, cultural and sometimes even geographical context of the territory it seeks to develop. Managers in charge of such participative development proactively impose this organisational logic on the local actors in counterpart to the allocation of financial resources. In relation to this understanding, I propose two contributions. One is aiming at the political actors in charge of framing regimes of participation. The second is aimed at managers whose skills and willingness to *play the scales* will allow or not for the interest of the local actors to be taken into account in the face of hegemonic pressures.

IV.1. For political actors to foster inclusive environments

As pointed out in chapter 1, the nature of participation and the nature of the inclusiveness of the development goals that MSIs are to enact first and foremost depend on the macro level of the regime in which individual MSIs are embedded.

The state-led and the NGO-led regimes of participation have been defined as mechanisms of governance that privilege distinct modes of economic production and exchange and a distinct set of normative and cultural values that are more or less conducive to participation within a given MSI. This means it is obsolete to expect managers to enact participative approaches in a purely agentic, undetermined manner when operating an MSI is largely obsolete.

Indeed, more attention is needed to the architecture of the participation regimes. For instance, when the economic model follows the logic of ‘big is beautiful’, the participation of weaker actors, or in our case, small-scale farmers, is likely to remain purely procedural. Meaning that MSIs are likely to maintain only the appearances, or formal aspects, of participation. Paying more attention to the architecture of the broader participation regime is thus necessary to develop a structure wherein the economic model, the governance model, and the normative values may answer the need for the plurality of voices to be included.

Therefore, I argue that for participative development to take place, we need to build inclusive environments in terms of different economic models, modes of governance and values.

In the global South or the European Union, the current dominant participation regime imposes high transaction costs in the form of managers who transfer the donors' development paradigm to the field of their choice that is to be developed. As such, it generates projects wherein the transaction costs are more important than the development project itself. The case of Local Action Groups that spend more than 50% of their overall budget on project management and administrative costs supports this claim. The questions of who benefits from such development and what is being developed in the territory remain open.

The economic models privileged in the regimes of participation may translate into produce situations in villages where several farmers may have each their equipment for working on an agricultural surface where only one piece of equipment shared among them would have been sufficient. People are building pools in Croatian islands with no or scarce autonomous water resources. Hundreds of years old, biodiversity-friendly olive plantations have been destroyed so that more extensive and more productive olive plantations could replace them. Profitable holiday homes are built in the place of fertile agricultural soil. Luxury tourism provides more

income and requires less labour than traditional mosaic agriculture coupled with a job in a community cooperative.

Therefore, an important implication of this thesis is that political actors should form regimes of participation in which organisations are to practice truly participative development, and greater attention should be paid to the regime's architecture. Paying attention to the regime's architecture means that territorial embedded economic models, modes of governance and values are variables to be considered when framing participative development programmes such as LEADER.

IV.2. For managers to 'play the scales'

We are only as strong as the weakest among us. Furthermore, in the development field, development projects are only as impactful as will be allowed by the managerial capacity to mobilise the territorial capital and translate it into economic resources available elsewhere in the territory.

The case of the Grameen Bank for microfinancing (Yunus, 2008) shows us that resource mobilisation via investing in social capital already within the territory produces measurable results in improving people's lives and empowering them (Zapalka, Brozik & Rudd, 2007). It does so by investing in their entrepreneurial endeavours and judging the feasibility of their business plans, as is the case in countries like Bangladesh. Some publicly funded managers are not managing development through large-scale projects or programmes for territorial and rural

development but have a role in providing affordable loans based on simplified business plans, thereby supporting the activation of territorial capital.

Therefore, I argue that future managers in the development field need to move away from the growth-centred development paradigm towards a territorially embedded resource management that focuses on substantive participation practices within publicly funded participation regimes.

Achieving this might depend on local actors' capacity to *play the scales* in rural development and, more importantly, in a broader frame in favour of substantial climate change action. In Croatia, in particular, the stake is for political and managerial action to move away from a development paradigm embedded in consumerism towards a participative and sustainable resource management culture that considers our planet's limitations and answers the population's needs at large.

SECTION V: Limitations and avenues for further research

My thesis aims to provide a direct contribution on how to foster the substantive participation of actors with diverging interests to tackle today's grand challenges. In previous chapters, I have aimed to provide empirical evidence and develop theoretical concepts to understand better how participation is constructed, defended and used in multi-stakeholder settings. In this final section, I present a handful of specific limitations of the theoretical concepts of *the regime of participation*, *playing off the scales*, and *the model for the practice of participation*, which I hope will provide fruitful avenues for future research.

The concept of the *regime of participation* aims to put into the spotlight 'the system of power which redefines and limits' (Laclau & Mouffe, xv 2014) the environment in which participation is enacted. Unlike most neo-Gramscian writings in Organization Studies, which view local actors and civil society movements as autonomous groups challenging the power of the State (Levy and Egan, 2003; Levy and Scully, 2007), this thesis shows that public MSI's capacity for inclusiveness depends on the outcome of a war of position between the State and the NGO regimes. After an initial disruption within the field, both State and NGO actors were forced to justify their legitimacy and deliver results in line with the project-oriented approach imposed by the European Union. However, the focus of this research was largely limited to the national level in this struggle among regimes. Future research on public MSIs drawing on our findings could thus shed greater light on the role of the supra-state in framing inclusive MSI environments.

Such research would benefit the local MSIs in rural development but also the MSIs working within global arenas such as the United Nations. The complex challenges of the 21st century demand the construction of inclusive environments where participation should be enacted

through inclusive deliberation. To do so, it is important to understand participation as a hegemonic system encompassing economic, normative and governance mechanisms that provide an inclusive framework where MSIs are to inscribe their objectives.

The playing of the scales concept focuses on the scale of the actors, pointing out that the creation of translocal alliances allows the local actors to gather the knowledge needed to appropriate the dominant organisational logic in their favour. Such appropriation allows them, in turn, to envision and deploy a trans-scalar strategy that exerts pressure on the hegemonic bloc from various scales and via different actors in the translocal alliance. Playing the scales thereby accomplishes the trans-scalar protection of the local scale through time. However, this concept is embedded in the author's lived experience and could not be easy to replicate. Further research using the convergent mixed-methods proposed in chapter 3 could further test this model to circumscribe its scope of application better.

Lastly, the argument behind this concept, which is that countering broader hegemonic processes by reappropriating hegemonic knowledge results in the protection of the local scale, could and should be transposed to the issues underlying broader challenges, such as the mobilisation of truly sustainable sources of energy. Moreover, the model for the practice of participation proposed in chapter 3 could be adapted to critically examine what such playing of the scales may produce in relation to, as pointed out by Laclau and Mouffe (2014), a broader *ontology of the social*.

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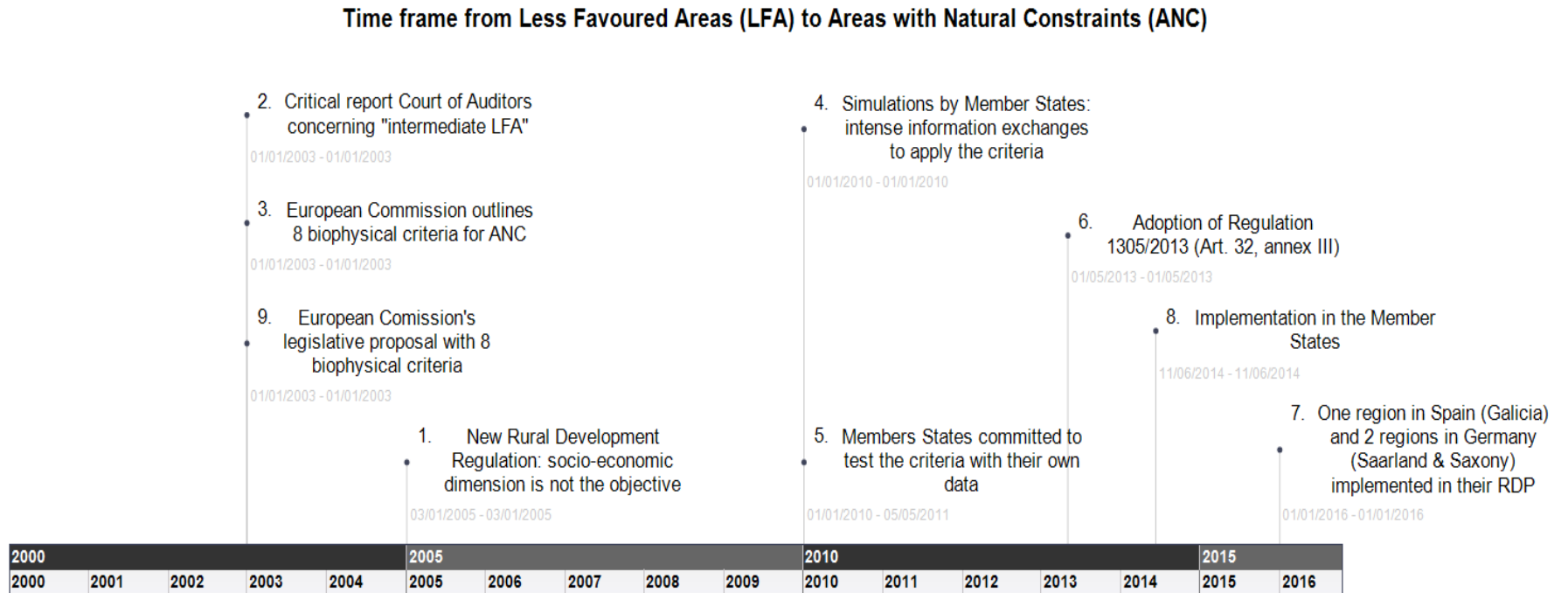


Figure 4 Timeline of the Pelješac LEADER initiative

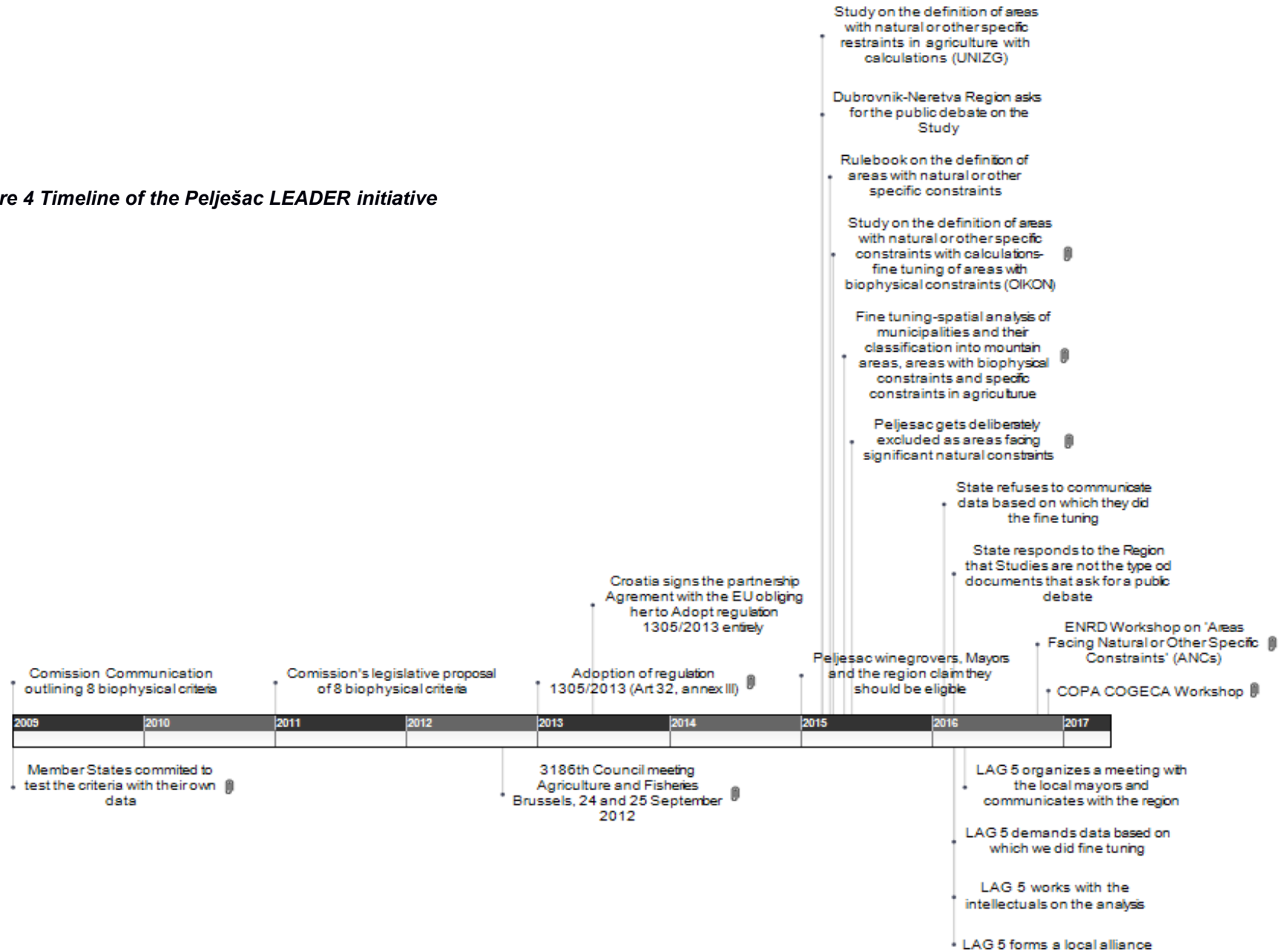


Figure 5 Organizational structure of LAG 5 in 2017.

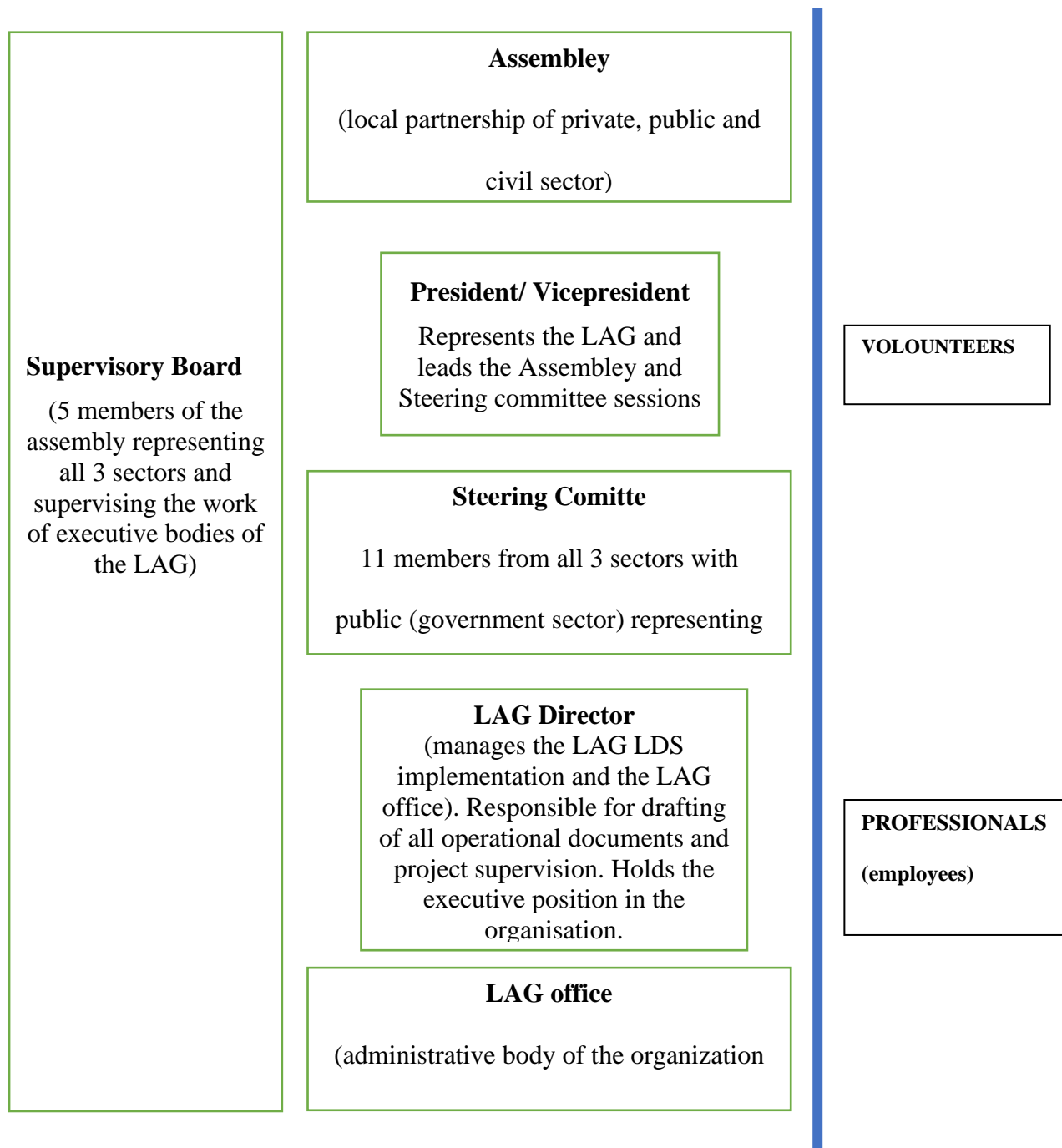


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Table 4 Excerpt from the questionnaire through which we measured who is the key actor within the multi-stakeholder organisation (adopted from Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016)

LAG professionals and members of the LAG Steering Committee (Board of Directors) (In alphabetical order)	3 people I know best	3 people with whom I would like to work	The 3 most active people	The person I respect the most
Steering Committee Member 1				
Steering Committee Member 2				
(...)				

Table 5 Extrapolated data from 54 LAGs in 2017 (financial reports from 2016 and FB median likes and reviews in 2017)

	Membership	Public subsidies	EU projects	Private subsidies	FB reviews	FB likes
LAG1						
LAG2						

Figure 5 Territorial distribution of the analysed LAGs. Author compilation

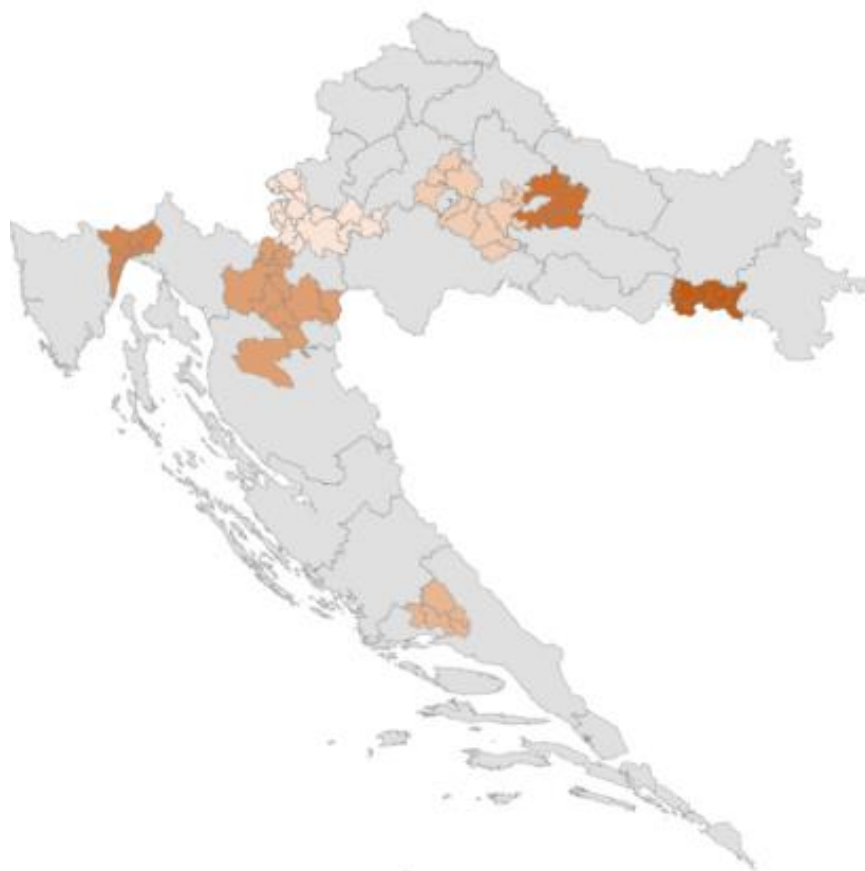


Table 6 Excerpt from the questionnaire through which I measured who is the key actor within the multi-stakeholder organisation (adopted from Chevalier)

LAG professionals and members of the LAG Steering Committee (Board of Directors) (in alphabetical order)	3 people, I know best	3 people with whom I would like to work	3 most active people	The person I respect the most
Steering Committee Member 1				
Steering Committee Member 2				
...				

Organisation type	LAG CODE	No. of interviews	Dates	Codes
Professional-led	PRO	5	2019,2020,2021	PRO11 PRO12 PRO21 PRO22 PRO32
Public-led	STA	2	2019	STA11 STA12
Private-led	ENT	2	2019,2020	ENT11 ENT12
NGO-led	SOC	2	2019, 2020	SOC11 SOC12

Table 7 Coding grid. List of interviewees

Extended resume of the dissertation in
French

THÈSE POUR OBTENIR LE GRADE DE DOCTEUR DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTPELLIER

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Perspective sur les processus participatifs dans des contextes multipartites.

Analyse des MSI publiques dans le cadre du programme LEADER de
l'Union européenne :

Étude de cas de la Croatie

Présentée par Marija ROGLIC

Le 27 octobre 2022

Sous la direction de Florence PALPACUER

Devant le jury composé de

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L'Université de Montpellier n'entend donner aucune approbation ni improbation aux opinions émises dans cette thèse. Ces opinions doivent être considérées comme propres à leur auteur.

[J]ustice [est] une forme de participation active à la vie sociale, tandis que l'injustice est... une sorte d'exclusion de la communauté humaine (Hollenbach 1988)

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Je dédie mon œuvre à la société. J'espère qu'elle contribuera à faire du bien.

RÉSUMÉ

La participation à travers les domaines et les disciplines est nécessaire pour relever efficacement les grands défis d'aujourd'hui - car ils exigent la participation substantielle de nombreux acteurs aux intérêts divergents. En outre, la question de la participation préoccupe les politiciens, les acteurs de la société civile, les gestionnaires qui, quotidiennement, mettent en œuvre différentes formes de participation avec leurs collaborateurs en vue d'atteindre leurs objectifs. En tant que manager d'une initiative publique multi-acteurs, j'ai également été confronté au défi de favoriser la participation pour contribuer à l'objectif de développement économique durable des îles du sud de la Croatie à travers le programme LEADER de l'Union européenne. LEADER signifie *Lien Entre Action de Développement de l'Economie Rurale*. Cette thèse découle de mes doutes managériaux et s'interroge sur la manière dont la participation est construite, défendue et pratiquée. En répondant à ces questions, je conclus que la participation est un processus politiquement construit à travers le temps et les échelles spatiales.

Le chapitre 1 analyse la dynamique politique des contextes sociopolitiques plus larges dans lesquels s'inscrivent les initiatives multipartites (MSI), en adoptant une perspective macro et processuelle sur la façon dont la participation est construite autour du programme LEADER en Croatie (1999-2019). Nous démontrons que la participation a été déployée dans le pays par le biais de deux régimes de participation distincts, chacun présentant un mécanisme de gouvernance particulier qui privilégie certaines formes économiques de production et d'échange, ainsi que des valeurs normatives et culturelles qui façonnent le type de participation survenant au sein des MSI intégrées dans le régime.

Le chapitre 2 examine comment les acteurs locaux se sont organisés autour d'une MSI contre une nouvelle réglementation, imposée par l'État et encadrée par l'UE, qui menaçait les formes locales de subsistance sur la péninsule croate de Pelješac, en adoptant une perspective méso sur la manière dont la participation des acteurs locaux est défendue. L'étude constate que l'appropriation des logiques organisationnelles dominantes des échelles nationale et européenne a permis aux acteurs locaux de jouer les échelles, c'est-à-dire d'accomplir la protection trans-scalaire de la participation à leur échelle locale à travers le temps. Ils l'ont fait en construisant une (1) alliance translocale qui a saisi différents éléments de diverses échelles locales pour construire une (2) stratégie trans-scalaire qui est devenue centrale dans l'évolution des échelles spatiales. Les résultats suggèrent que les acteurs locaux protègent leur échelle politique d'une diffusion hégémonique plus large en s'appropriant la logique organisationnelle dominante à leur avantage, défendant ainsi leurs intérêts et leur participation au sein de leur MSI.

Enfin, le chapitre 3 construit une méthode de recherche mixte convergente pour étudier le travail des groupes d'action locale - c'est-à-dire les initiatives multipartites financées par des fonds publics qui mettent en œuvre LEADER - en Croatie, en se concentrant sur la micro perspective de la façon dont la participation est utilisée au sein d'une MSI. L'analyse aboutit à la construction d'un modèle de pratique de la participation, identifiant les variables clés autour desquelles se déroule la mise en œuvre de la participation. Celles-ci incluent l'activation du capital territorial, la formation d'un mode de gouvernance spécifique et des pratiques de

délibération spécifiques. Le modèle identifie les actions permettant de mettre en œuvre une forme substantielle, par opposition à une simple forme procédurale, de participation. Il fournit une approche analytique qui examine de manière critique les processus de participation.

DES RÉSULTATS DE RECHERCHE LIÉS À LA THÈSE

Articles en cours de révision :

Roglic, M and Palpacuer F. (2022). Strategic action across spatial scales. How institutional entrepreneurs engage in counterhegemonic rescaling to protect public value. Soumis le 31 janvier 2022 au numéro spécial du Journal **Organization** *Re-organising for public value: Opportunities and possibilities* (facteur d'impact 5.122, CNRS 1, FNEGE 2) (Chapitre2)

Les communications :

Marija Roglič, Florence Palpacuer. Playing the Scales: The Story of the Pelješac LEADER initiative. 38th EGOS Colloquium' Organising: The Beauty of Imperfection", July 2022, Vienna, Autriche (Chapitre2)

Marija Roglič. What makes participation participative? Investigation into inclusive practices of multistakeholder organizations. 16e Congres du réseau international de recherche sur les organisations et le développement durable, Oct. 2021, Montpellier, France. [\(hal-03514947\)](#) (Chapitre 3)

Marija Roglič. Fostering participation to push for development. In the case of "LAG 5",. Week of Innovative Regions in Europe (WIRE). PS 1.2. Skill supply for remote but resilient innovation ecosystems (online), Nov 2020, Split, Croatie. [\(hal-03145657\)](#) (Chapitre 3)

Marija Roglič. The antenarrative of sensemaking: building participation via LEADER. The Participative Village. Governing Rural Everyday Worlds in Times of the New Rural Paradigm, Oct 2020, Bonn, Allemagne. [\(hal-03141126\)](#) (Chapitre 3)

Marija Roglič. Multi-stakeholder initiatives and grassroots participation. 1st International conference on practical and theoretical implications of LEADER/CLLD approach in South-East Europe, Nov 2019, Opatija, Croatie. [\(hal-03145665\)](#) (Chapitre 1)

Marija Roglić, Florence Palpacuer. New regimes for new times. Power struggles through the LEADER programme in Croatia. 34th EGOS Colloquium' Surprise in and around organisations: Journeys to the Unexpected", Jun 2018, Tallinn, Estonie. [\(hal-03145682\)](#)
(Chapitre 1)

LISTE DES ABREVIATIONS EMPLOYEES

Agence pour les paiements dans l'agriculture et le développement rural	APPRRR
Organisations de la société civile	OSC
Politique agricole commune	PAC
Développement local piloté par la communauté	CLLD
Conservation et utilisation durable de la diversité biologique en Dalmatie	Programme COAST
Parti démocratique croate (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica)	HDZ
Réseau croate pour le développement rural	HMRR
Association européenne LEADER	ELARD
Réseau européen pour le développement régional	ENRD
Union européenne	UE
Facebook	FB
Groupes d'action locale pour la pêche	FLAGs
Organisation des Nations Unies pour l'alimentation et l'agriculture	FAO
Haute Valeur Naturelle	HNV
Instrument d'aide de préadhésion	IPARD
Assemblée démocratique d'Istrie (Istarska demokratska stranka)	IDS
Réseau LEADER Croatie (LEADER mreza Hrvatske)	LMH
Liasion Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale	LEADER
Groupes d'action locale	GAL
Agences de développement économique local	LEDAs
Autorité de gestion responsable de la mise en œuvre du programme de l'UE au sein de l'État	MA
Initiatives multipartites	MSIs
Organisations non gouvernementales	ONG
Programme de développement rural	RDP
Petites et moyennes entreprises	PME
Parti social-démocrate (Socijal-demokratska partija)	SDP
Programme des Nations Unies pour le développement	PNUD
Bureau des Nations Unies pour les services d'appui aux projets	UNOPS
Agence des États-Unis pour le développement international	USAID

INTRODUCTION GÉNÉRALE

La participation dans les contextes multipartites: comment elle est construite, défendue et pratiquée

La création d'initiatives multipartites qui faciliteront la participation a été considérée comme une solution à une série de problèmes complexes allant des politiques publiques (Fiorino 1988, Randell, 2004, Rowe & Frewer 2005) et du développement (Chambers 1983 ; 1994 ; Garcia 2018, Cejudo & Navarro 2020) à la responsabilité sociale des entreprises (Mena et Palazzo, 2012 ; Moog, Spicer & Böhm 2015 ; Maher, Valenzuela & Böhm,2019) et aux performances de la main-d'œuvre (Tavella, 2020).

Dans le domaine des politiques publiques, les partenariats multi-acteurs assurent l'inclusion des citoyens dans la formation du budget et le développement des programmes (Simonsen & Robbins, 2000). C'est un moyen d'assurer la démocratisation du processus décisionnel (Buele, Vidueira, Luis Yage & Cuesta 2020). Dans le domaine du développement, la participation est considérée comme un moyen d'habiliter les acteurs locaux à jouer un rôle actif dans la planification, la mise en œuvre et le suivi des projets qui affectent leur développement (Rogers, Jalal & Boyd, 2012, p. 60). Pour les entreprises, elle était considérée comme un élément essentiel du paysage organisationnel de la responsabilité sociale des entreprises, favorisant la démocratisation de l'entreprise par l'engagement civique (Moog, Spicer & Böhm, 2015). Enfin, sur le lieu de travail, l'exclusion des acteurs de niveau inférieur de la prise de décision stratégique a été considérée comme une entrave à la mise en œuvre de la stratégie par l'organisation (Tavella, 2020). Le phénomène de la participation au sein de contextes multi-acteurs semble être une solution pour un panoptique de défis, en cherchant l'inclusion de divers acteurs.

Néanmoins, les critiques ont fait valoir que cette participation était utilisée de facto pour garantir que l'organisation à l'origine du partenariat atteigne ses objectifs. En tant que telle,

cette participation est imposée aux citoyens, aux acteurs locaux ou à la main-d'œuvre. La participation peut être imposée par la législation, lorsque la Constitution institutionnalise les "droits de participation" (Buele et al., 2020). Elle peut se produire à l'initiative d'un agent de développement agissant au nom d'une organisation donatrice pour inviter les acteurs locaux à participer à la planification et à la mise en œuvre d'un projet de développement sur leur territoire local (Ponte & Cheyns 2013). Lorsque la participation est au cœur de la responsabilité sociale de l'entreprise, celle-ci façonne les programmes de gouvernance et les attentes à l'égard de ces programmes afin d'accroître le soutien externe aux intérêts de l'entreprise (Fransen, 2012). De même, la participation dans le contexte des réunions de gestion où les acteurs sont invités à s'impliquer dans le processus stratégique plus large de l'organisation est mise en œuvre par les gestionnaires qui attribuent la responsabilité des tâches du projet à différents acteurs de manière prédéfinie et spécifique (Tavella, 2020).

L'un des problèmes centraux ici est de savoir comment la participation, imposée comme un processus descendant plutôt qu'une initiative ascendante, est appropriée par les acteurs qui doivent y être impliqués. Qu'est-ce qu'ils y gagnent ? En outre, quel type de participation pouvons-nous mettre en œuvre lorsque l'accent est mis sur les objectifs organisationnels plutôt que sur un processus d'inclusion où la participation permettrait de rassembler différentes voix (Cheyns, 2014) en vue de définir et d'atteindre des objectifs communs ?

L'échec de la dernière COP 26 (Haley & Mackey, 2021) à atteindre des objectifs communs qui empêcheront notre planète de se réchauffer de plus de 2 °C est le dernier exemple, et le plus extrême, de ce que l'inclusion peut "donner" lorsque la pratique de la participation n'est qu'un écran de fumée pour atteindre les objectifs individuels et organisationnels des acteurs qui dominent la réalité économique de notre planète.

Ainsi, dans cette introduction générale de mon mémoire, je commence d'abord (I) par exposer les caractéristiques générales de la problématique de recherche, le cadrage, le terrain et le plan.

La deuxième section (II) de cette introduction générale présente mon cadre théorique et mes principales contributions, puis (III) la perspective méthodologique adoptée tout au long des trois chapitres suivants, et (IV) un bref aperçu des chapitres suivants.

SECTION I: Introduction

1.1. Brève présentation du problème général de la recherche

Dans le cas des projets de développement financés par la communauté internationale, les élites les plus éduquées et qui ont moins de coûts d'opportunité sur leur temps ont tendance à avoir une voix dominante dans le processus (Mansuri & Rao, 2004, p. 26), car les délibérations et les actions de développement à prendre ne sont pas familières aux autres acteurs locaux.

Dans le domaine de la responsabilité sociale des entreprises, les MSI privées créées au nom de la possibilité de permettre une participation égale des groupes de parties prenantes atteignent rarement leur objectif de participation égale des différentes parties prenantes dans la pratique (Cheyns, 2014 ; De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019). En outre, des recherches ont montré que les pratiques de participation autour des MSI privées soutiennent la logique d'entreprise et réduisent au silence les voix des acteurs locaux lorsque leur participation aux MSI ne respecte pas cette logique (Banerjee, 2018).

De même, les études sur le lieu de travail qui ont considéré la participation comme "une activité comprenant des structures, des pratiques et des processus qui aident les acteurs organisationnels de niveau inférieur (c'est-à-dire les cadres moyens et les employés opérationnels) à prendre part au travail stratégique" (Tavella, 2020, p. 1) ont souligné que le discours est utilisé pour construire les positions des sujets. Plus précisément, Tavella a identifié des mécanismes discursifs de participation au travail de stratégie qui pourraient entraver ou favoriser la participation. Tels que "donner et prendre des responsabilités" et "formuler des justifications". Lorsqu'ils sont utilisés dans des combinaisons différentes, ces deux mécanismes déclenchent

deux modèles de participation différents : l'un où tout le monde, sauf les cadres supérieurs, est inclus, et l'autre où les cadres supérieurs, les cadres moyens et les chercheurs sont inclus et exclus à des moments particuliers. Elle a montré comment les cadres s'engagent dans un "discours persuasif pour se convaincre mutuellement d'inclure et d'exclure les autres et cherchent à préserver leur réputation et leur respect lorsqu'ils expriment des préférences pour une participation plus ouverte" (Tavella, 2020, p. 3). Ainsi, sur la base des intérêts managériaux, ils combinent des mécanismes discursifs pour entraver ou favoriser la participation.

Cependant, au-delà des mécanismes discursifs de la participation, nous en savons encore peu sur la stratégie et l'agence de la participation dans les contextes multipartites. Plus précisément : (1) comment le contexte sociopolitique plus large dans lequel s'inscrivent les initiatives multipartites influence la mise en œuvre de la participation au sein d'une initiative multipartite individuelle (Moog, Spicer & Böhm, 2015) ; (2) comment les acteurs locaux peuvent s'engager dans la participation dans des contextes multipartites pour se la réapproprier en leur faveur (Banerjee 2018) ; (3) comment la participation est mise en œuvre en tant que pratique quotidienne d'une initiative multipartite et avec quels résultats (Tavella, 2020) ?

1.2. Cadrage de la recherche, lacunes identifiées dans la recherche et contributions

Cette thèse, par conséquent, se concentre sur le problème de l'instrumentalisation de la participation dans les initiatives multipartites, en développant sa contribution autour de trois énigmes centrales respectivement encadrées comme une macro, une méso et une micro perspective sur la participation qui sont introduites dans les paragraphes suivants en s'appuyant sur les lacunes que j'ai identifiées dans la littérature. Une telle approche me permet de théoriser la manière dont la participation est construite, défendue et pratiquée dans des contextes publics multipartites dans les trois principaux chapitres de cette thèse.

Une perspective macro sur les régimes de participation (chapitre 1)

D'un point de vue macro, les MSI font partie de systèmes de gouvernance plus larges dans lesquels les acteurs étatiques et non étatiques interagissent de nombreuses façons, mais nous savons peu de choses sur la façon dont ces interactions influencent le fonctionnement réel des MSI (De Bakker, Rasche & Ponte, 2019). Les travaux de Levy, Reinecke et Manning (2016) sur l'émergence du régime du café durable donnent un aperçu de la participation au contexte sociopolitique plus large dans lequel s'inscrivent les MSI. Ce travail montre que le changement mené par les MSI privées résulte de luttes de pouvoir sur une période prolongée. " Au fil du temps, les acteurs des ONG parviennent à intégrer leurs voix et leurs visions du monde dans le régime dominant du secteur du café au prix d'accepter de transformer leur vision de la durabilité, d'une vision environnementale et sociale plus radicale à un ensemble de processus de gestion alignés sur les objectifs de l'entreprise " (Levy et al., 2016, p. 27). Le processus de changement résultant de ces luttes de pouvoir ressemble à ce que Gramsci conceptualise comme une " guerre de position ", une " stratégie dynamique à long terme pour gagner en légitimité, obtenir des ressources, développer la capacité organisationnelle et gagner de nouveaux alliés " (Levy, Szejnwald Brown & de Jong, 2010, p. 99). Le changement résultant de cette " guerre de position " survient lorsque les acteurs les plus faibles s'approprient la logique organisationnelle dominante du régime et parviennent à y intégrer des éléments de leur logique. Cependant, les caractéristiques du régime de valeurs dans lequel s'inscrit la logique organisationnelle et la manière dont ces caractéristiques influencent la capacité d'action des acteurs locaux - dans notre cas, pour mettre en œuvre une véritable participation - restent une énigme. Le chapitre 1 adopte donc une macro perspective sur le champ dans lequel s'inscrivent les MSI afin d'explorer comment les régimes de valeurs qui constituent ce champ façonnent la participation inégale qui se produit au sein des MSI, à travers l'émergence, le déploiement et la renégociation constante de différents *régimes de participation*.

Une perspective méso sur les luttes pour la défense de la participation (chapitre 2)

Une perspective méso permet d'étudier les conditions qui rendent possible une telle réappropriation de la logique organisationnelle dominante par les acteurs les plus faibles. La recherche sur LEADER - le programme européen de développement rural basé sur les MSI constitue l'objet empirique de cette recherche et sera correctement présenté dans la sous-section consacrée au champ de recherche ci-dessous - nous permet d'enrichir le modèle de processus de changement, qui a été caractérisé au niveau macro des régimes de valeurs (Levy et al., 2016) en offrant un aperçu empirique des actions stratégiques de niveau méso déployées par les acteurs à travers les MSI financés par des fonds publics. D'après les recherches actuelles sur la participation des acteurs locaux dans les groupes d'action locale (GAL, c'est-à-dire les MSI formées dans le cadre du programme LEADER) (Kováč, 2000, Augustyn & Nemes, 2014 ; Shortall, 2008, Lukic & Obad, 2016), nous savons que la participation tend à être monopolisée par les bureaux de conseil, les agences de développement (Maurel, 2008) ou les gestionnaires des GAL qui négligent les perplexités locales et approuvent les changements sans prêter attention au local (Koutsouris, 2008). En outre, la recherche a révélé que la participation et l'engagement des acteurs locaux n'avaient lieu que dans les "espaces invités de la gouvernance rurale, définis et conceptualisés par l'État et dans lesquels les communautés sont invitées" (Shucksmith, 2010, p. 15). En tant que telle, la participation des acteurs locaux est encadrée par le discours hégémonique de l'eupéanisation et de la réglementation de l'État, en particulier dans les pays d'Europe de l'Est récemment intégrés à l'UE, ce qui rend la participation des acteurs locaux au travail des GAL assez difficile (Dargan & Shucksmith, 2008). Cela nous amène à notre seconde énigme, étudiée dans le chapitre 2 de cette thèse, qui consiste à explorer les façons dont les acteurs locaux d'un GAL particulier ont réussi à construire une stratégie *translocale* et *trans-scalaire* pour surmonter la menace que leur imposaient les échelles

hégémoniques plus larges et pour défendre l'accès aux ressources de développement qui leur était accordé par la participation au MSI.

Une micro-perspective sur la participation (chapitre 3)

Enfin, la micro perspective adoptée dans le troisième chapitre de cette thèse se concentre sur le problème suivant : le fait que différents acteurs fassent partie d'un cadre multipartite ne signifie pas nécessairement qu'ils participent activement au travail d'une MSI (Cheyins et Risgaard, 2014). La recherche sur les initiatives multipartites mondiales telles que la Global Reporting Initiative, le Forest Stewardship Council ou l'Ethical Trading Initiative s'est principalement concentrée sur l'inclusion comme critère pour assurer la légitimité de la MSI, le processus de participation étant au cœur de la gouvernance délibérative. Cependant, les actions des acteurs visant à mettre en œuvre cette participation et à générer une inclusion réelle restent peu étudiées. La recherche axée sur l'inclusion et la participation dans ce domaine s'est principalement intéressée aux initiatives et aux programmes de gestion formels (Ortlieb, Glauning et Weiss, 2020), négligeant la mise en œuvre de la participation par le biais des actions réelles que les acteurs entreprennent *au sein* de la MSI - ce que j'appelle la *pratique de la participation*. Ainsi, la participation, la façon de la stimuler et de la maintenir en vue d'accomplir les véritables objectifs de la MSI pour prendre en compte les intérêts des acteurs les plus faibles (Cheyins & Riisgaard, 2014 ; Banerjee, 2018), est une question cruciale à laquelle nous n'avons toujours pas de bonne réponse. Comment la participation est-elle pratiquée au sein des MSI est donc l'énigme à laquelle le chapitre 3 de cette thèse vise à répondre. Il le fait en caractérisant ce qui constitue une pratique *substantielle* de la participation par opposition à une pratique *procédurale* de la participation.

En résumé, cette thèse répond à la question de savoir comment la participation est construite (chapitre 1), comment elle est défendue (chapitre 2) et comment elle est pratiquée (chapitre 3) en discutant trois lacunes identifiées dans la littérature et en apportant trois types de contributions :

4. Un aperçu des dynamiques politiques qui façonnent l'environnement dans lequel opèrent les ISM, c'est-à-dire les *régimes de participation* plus larges (Levy, 2008, Levy & Spicer, 2013 ; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016).
5. Un aperçu de l'agence derrière le cadre translocal (Banerjee 2018, Leglise, 2021) et les *stratégies translocale et trans-scalaires* que les acteurs locaux peuvent construire pour défendre leur participation.
6. Un aperçu des pratiques de participation dans lesquelles les acteurs locaux s'engagent (Mantere & Vaara, 2008, Tavella, 2020, Brielmaier & Friesl, 2021) pour mettre en œuvre une *pratique substantielle ou procédurale de la participation*.

Je soutiens que ces idées sont cruciales si nous voulons relever efficacement les grands défis d'aujourd'hui - car ils exigent la participation substantielle de nombreux acteurs aux intérêts divergents, un ancrage de la participation à l'échelle locale et des alliances translocales, et l'articulation d'un régime de participation plus large au niveau macro.

1.3. Le domaine de recherche : LEADER en Croatie

Afin de contribuer à combler les trois lacunes mentionnées ci-dessus, j'ai choisi d'étudier les initiatives publiques multi-acteurs mises en place dans le cadre du programme de l'Union européenne LEADER, acronyme de *Links Between Actions for the Development of the Rural Economy*, a été lancé le 19 mars 1991 par l'Union européenne dans le cadre de la politique agricole commune (PAC), afin d'encourager la participation locale aux politiques de développement rural.

Alors que LEADER est déployé à travers tous les pays européens, cette thèse se concentre sur sa mise en œuvre dans le contexte de ce que l'on appelle le " processus d'eupéanisation " des nouveaux États membres en Europe de l'Est et dans les Balkans, où les financements, règles, politiques et programmes de l'UE sont " téléchargés " par les États nationaux (Augustyn & Nemes, 2014).

LEADER est un modèle de développement rural basé sur le partenariat, la programmation et la participation locale visant la réalisation d'un développement rural intégré pour parvenir à une utilisation plus démocratique des ressources et réduire les inégalités régionales et sociales (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019, p. 13). En tant que nouveau modèle de gouvernance territoriale dans des zones autrefois administrées par des structures agraires collectives dans les nouveaux États membres, LEADER a été perçu dans ces États comme un modèle institutionnel occidental fondé sur la démocratie politique et l'autonomie locale (Csurgó et al., 2008 : Maurel, 2008). Il a promu une nouvelle forme de gouvernance territoriale basée sur " une arène avec des institutions et des réseaux, des processus de coordination et d'interdépendance, et des formes horizontales d'interaction entre les acteurs " (Maurel, 2008, p. 517). Encadrée par l'Union européenne et réglementée par l'État national dans le cadre de son programme de

développement rural plus large, elle est conçue pour se déployer au sein des territoires locaux grâce au travail des groupes d'action locale (GAL). Les membres des GAL comprennent, en règle générale, des représentants d'organisations publiques, privées et de la société civile qui décident conjointement des projets de développement qui bénéficieront du financement européen LEADER sur le territoire. Ces décisions suivent les procédures établies dans le cadre du programme LEADER, défini par l'Union européenne et les règles définies par l'État national. Les GAL sont les MSI qui seront l'objet d'étude dans cette thèse.

Dans le contexte de la Croatie, l'émergence et le développement d'initiatives multipartites ont été orientés par deux séries d'événements majeurs. Le premier est la guerre de la patrie des années 1990, qui a débuté en même temps que la transition politique et économique de la Croatie. Le second est l'adhésion de la Croatie à l'Union européenne qui s'est achevée en 2014, année où le programme LEADER a donc été lancé dans le pays.

Les temps de guerre ont renforcé le rôle de l'État, en mettant en avant la lutte pour la souveraineté et en se concentrant sur la création d'une unité nationale pour faire face aux conséquences sociales, économiques et politiques de la guerre. La création de l'État était exclusivement entre les mains du gouvernement élu. Depuis son indépendance de la Yougoslavie en 1991, la Croatie a subi une refonte constitutionnelle dans les années 1990. L'un des changements a été la réorientation des fonds du gouvernement régional vers le gouvernement central. Près de 90% des fonds du budget national global ont été placés sous la gestion du gouvernement central (Institut za razvoj i međunarodne odnose," n.d.). Comme l'indiquent Petak et al. (2019, p.3), il y avait, et dans une certaine mesure, il y a toujours un rôle prédominant de l'exécutif sur le pouvoir législatif dans les processus d'élaboration des politiques.

Néanmoins, la transformation en société démocratique et le chaos de la guerre ont également créé un espace et un besoin d'engagement civique. L'engagement civique s'est incarné dans la société civile. Il s'est manifesté en soulageant la crise humanitaire et la crise des réfugiés.

L'engagement civique, ainsi que le développement de la société civile, se sont organisés autour de la distribution de l'aide humanitaire, du travail social avec les victimes de la guerre et de la dénonciation des crimes de guerre par le biais des ONG internationales et nationales. Les ONG ont aidé à surmonter les crises liées aux réfugiés et aux personnes déplacées et ont aidé les personnes qui ont perdu leur emploi et/ou leurs moyens de subsistance pendant le processus de privatisation de l'économie (Bežovan, 2003, p. 124) et la transition du socialisme au capitalisme. Plus tard, elles ont joué un rôle clé dans le développement de la société civile et ont promu les idées de pluralisme dans la sphère publique (Cohen & Arato, 1992 in Bežovan, 2003, p. 125). Indépendamment de l'importance des ONG dans la vie démocratique de la Croatie, les deux premières décennies qui ont suivi l'indépendance croate en 1991 ont été caractérisées par la réticence et, parfois, le refus pur et simple de l'État de développer un cadre juridique et financier favorable aux organisations de la société civile (Petak et al., 2019). Ces luttes sont importantes à mentionner ici car elles vont jouer, comme nous le verrons dans le chapitre 1, dans la manière dont LEADER a été déployé en Croatie à travers ce que nous caractérisons comme deux régimes de participation, l'un que nous qualifions de " dirigé par l'État ", et l'autre, de " dirigé par les ONG ", partageant effectivement le champ constitué par le programme LEADER au niveau national.

En effet, l'équilibre des pouvoirs et la nature des relations entre les ONG et l'État ont évolué lorsque la Croatie a entamé ses négociations pour devenir membre de l'Union européenne en 2003.

La perspective de l'adhésion à l'UE a donné un nouvel élan aux organisations de la société civile qui travaillaient déjà sur le développement rural et la démocratisation en Croatie. La perspective d'un financement européen et d'une place établie dans le processus d'élaboration des politiques, comme le fait d'être membre du conseil de surveillance pour la mise en œuvre du programme de développement rural et membre du conseil de programmation du programme de

développement rural 2014-2020, a permis à la fois de professionnaliser la société civile et de s'engager davantage auprès de la communauté locale.

C'est dans ce contexte de recherche que ma thèse suit le déroulement du programme LEADER en Croatie, en se concentrant sur (1) le processus de construction du champ LEADER en Croatie au niveau national et les *régimes de participation* distincts dans lesquels les MSI locales sont intégrées, qui ont émergé comme étant dirigées par l'État ou par les ONG au cours de cette période ; (2) L'action stratégique des acteurs locaux de l'un des groupes d'action locale (GAL, les MSI basées sur LEADER) pour lutter pour leurs intérêts à *travers* les multiples échelles locales, nationales et internationales de ce domaine émergent, et enfin (3) comment la participation est pratiquée au *sein* des GAL.

1.4. L'approche de la thèse

Cette thèse examine comment la participation est construite, défendue et pratiquée à travers ses trois articles. Elle s'inspire de l'expérience vécue et des doutes managériaux auxquels j'ai été confrontée en tant que responsable d'une organisation publique multipartite travaillant sur le développement durable dans les îles du sud de la Croatie. Comme je l'ai déjà souligné, j'adopte une perspective macro, méso et micro sur le déploiement de LEADER et le travail des groupes d'action locale en Croatie afin de mettre en lumière l'encastrement de la participation dans des régimes plus larges, la défense de la participation à travers les multiples échelles et régimes du champ LEADER, et la mise en œuvre de la pratique de la participation dans des contextes multi-acteurs, en étant constamment attentif à la manière dont les relations de pouvoir façonnent la participation.

Dans le chapitre 1, la notion de régimes de valeurs de Levy (Levy 2008 ; Levy & Spicer, 2013; Levy Reinecke & Manning, 2016) est utilisée pour étudier les dynamiques politiques qui encadrent la promulgation de la participation concernant les dimensions économiques, normatives et culturelles d'un champ. Le champ émerge au fur et à mesure que les MSI basées sur LEADER et financées par des fonds publics sont établies, les acteurs assument des rôles pour les gérer et les mettre en œuvre, et la rivalité se déploie entre les régimes concurrents dans lesquels LEADER doit être intégré. Les résultats suggèrent que la participation est un processus politiquement construit. Des acteurs distincts, dont les bases du pouvoir sont établies dans l'État ou la société civile, tentent d'imposer leurs propres valeurs économiques et normatives et leur mode de gouvernance préféré dans le déploiement de LEADER en Croatie. Ils visent à établir leur légitimité dans le champ en évolution formé par LEADER et à faire pencher la logique hégémonique en leur faveur. Cette dynamique se traduit par l'émergence de deux régimes de participation différents. Nous observons que la capacité des MSI à être inclusives et à construire la participation varie en fonction du régime de participation dans lequel les MSI individuelles sont intégrées.

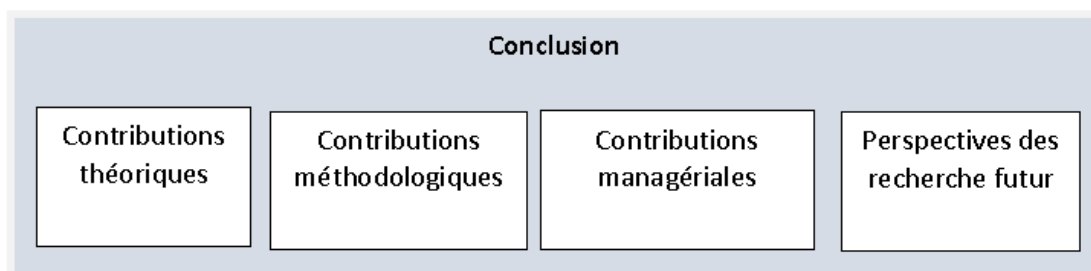
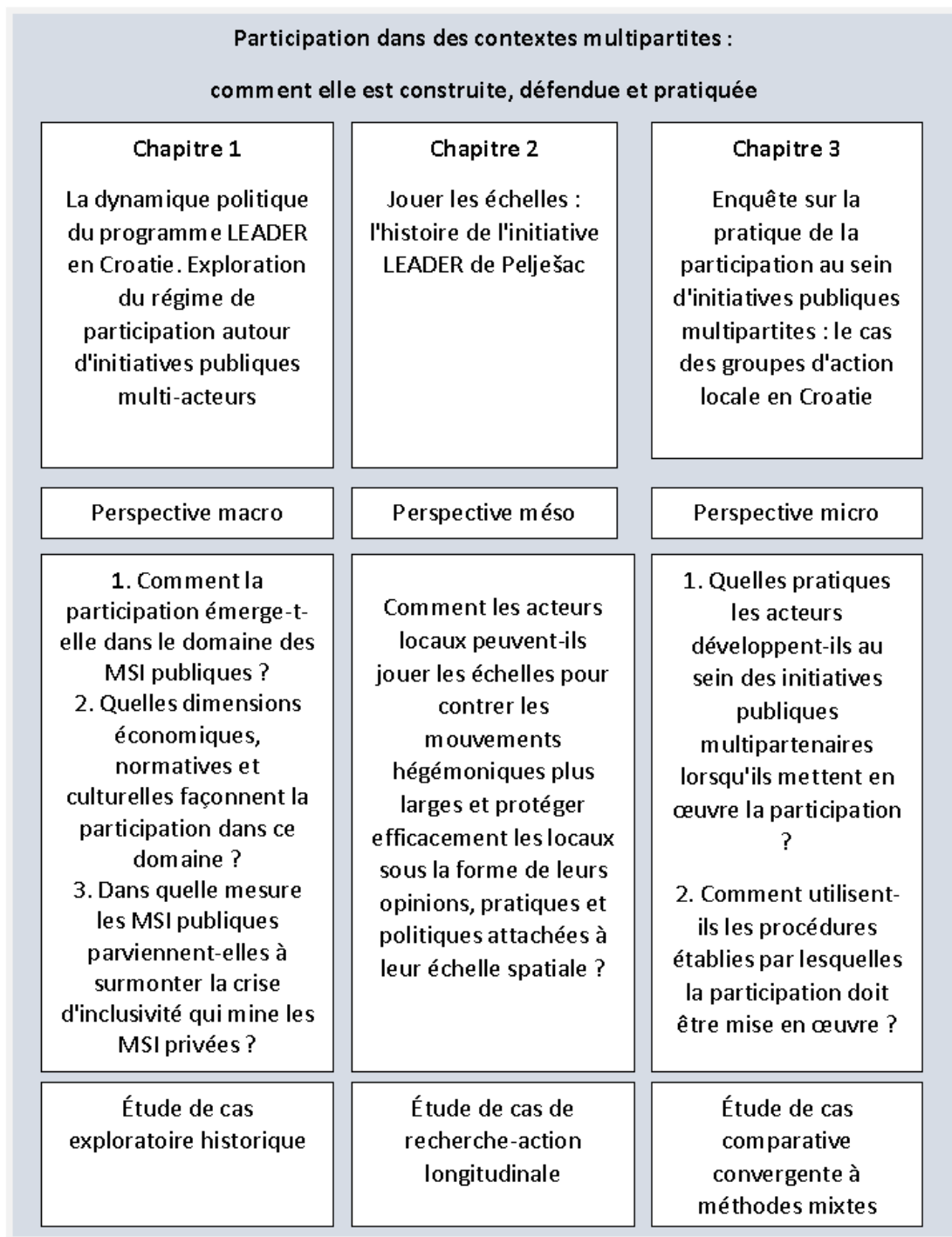
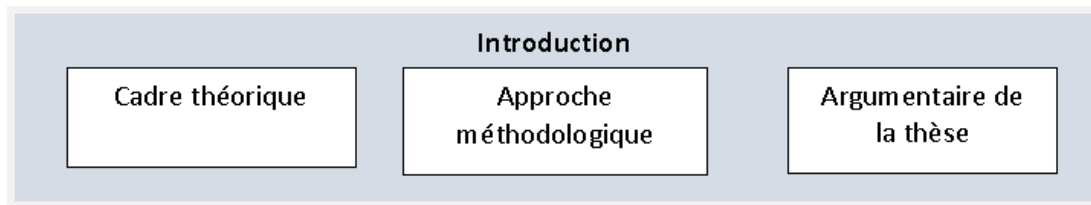
Dans le chapitre 2, le concept de *rescaling* de Spicer (2006), à travers lequel des régimes sont produits à différentes échelles spatiales, fournit un cadre analytique pour étudier les actions stratégiques dans lesquelles les acteurs locaux s'engagent pour défendre leur régime participatif et ainsi leurs modes d'utilisation du partenariat public multi-acteurs. Les résultats suggèrent que les acteurs locaux jouent les échelles, c'est-à-dire qu'ils accomplissent la protection trans-scalaire de leur échelle locale dans le temps, en s'appropriant la logique organisationnelle dominante de l'échelle nationale et en fédérant des forces alternatives d'échelle locale. La capacité des acteurs locaux à défendre leur régime participatif à travers plusieurs échelles dépend de leur capacité à " jouer les échelles ". C'est-à-dire : (1) la capacité d'une MSI locale financée par des fonds publics à construire une alliance translocale qui fournira les connaissances nécessaires aux acteurs locaux pour se réapproprier la logique organisationnelle

des régimes hégémoniques plus larges et (2) la capacité à déployer une stratégie trans-scalaire qui exercera une pression sur les blocs hégémoniques des plus grandes échelles afin de réaliser une transformation hégémonique et de sauvegarder leurs intérêts locaux dans les régimes plus larges.

Le chapitre 3 étend le cadre des régimes de valeurs, en s'inspirant de la méthodologie de Chevalier (Lacquement & Chevalier 2016 ; Chevalier, Mačiulyté, Razafimahefa & Dedeire 2017) qui étudie les formes de coordination de l'action collective favorisant le développement socio-économique au niveau local, pour enquêter sur la manière dont la participation est pratiquée. Pour ce faire, nous introduisons le concept de capital territorial. Les résultats sont présentés sous la forme d'un modèle pour la pratique de la participation dans des contextes publics multi-acteurs, démontrant comment les acteurs utilisent (ou non) la participation à travers la (non-)activation du capital territorial, un mode de gouvernance ouvert (ou fermé) et des pratiques de délibération ascendantes (ou descendantes). Ce modèle délimite les actions qui soutiennent la promulgation de la participation *substantielle* vs *procédurale*, fournissant une approche analytique qui examine de manière critique les processus de participation (Fritz & Binder, 2018).

La figure 1 présente la structure générale de la thèse.

Figure 1 Vue d'ensemble de la structure générale de la thèse



SECTION II - CADRE THÉORIQUE

En prenant pour objet de recherche la participation dans des contextes publics multipartites, cette recherche pose son cadre théorique au carrefour de la littérature critique de gestion sur les initiatives multipartites et de la littérature des études de développement sur le développement rural participatif. Dans cette section, je développe la justification de ce cadrage théorique.

II.1. L'idéal des initiatives multipartites : la participation pour favoriser l'inclusion

Grâce à un réseau complexe d'acteurs dont les règles définissent la portée et la nature de la participation (Maher, Valenzuela et Böhm, 2019), les MSI créent des espaces de dialogue et de nouvelles formes de "régulation douce" (Moog et al., 2015, p. 2) civiques ou intersectorielles qui contribuent à "démocratiser l'entreprise" et à combler les lacunes réglementaires de l'économie mondiale (Scherer et Palazzo, 2007). Ils fournissent des mécanismes de participation/négociation " ouverts " amenant à l'échelle mondiale ; les producteurs nationaux et multinationaux, les acheteurs, les grossistes, les banques et les distributeurs, et avec l'échelle locale sont représentés par les ONG sociales et environnementales internationales et les acteurs locaux (Fransen & Kolk, 2007 ; Cheyns, 2015). Promulgués par le biais d'alliances multipartites, de partenariats, de normes et de tables rondes, ils suivent différentes approches procédurales aboutissant à une plateforme de dialogue ou à une organisation indépendante avec sa structure de gouvernance (Martens, Gansemans, Orbie et D'Haese, 2018, p. 3). Comme les règles de partage du pouvoir qui permettent une participation égale (Luttrell, 2008), la mise en

place de groupes de travail (Schouten, Leroy et Glasbergen, 2012) ou la consultation publique (Cheyns et Risgaard, 2014).

La pratique de la participation à des partenariats multipartites, tels que les initiatives multipartites (MSI) au sein du monde de l'entreprise, est apparue avec la mondialisation (Soundararajan, Brown & Wicks, 2019 ;). L'hypothèse sous-jacente était que la mondialisation a entraîné une diminution de la capacité de l'État à réglementer les entreprises (Scherer & Palazzo, 2007), créant ainsi un "vide réglementaire" (Matten & Crane, 2005, p.172). Ce vide réglementaire face à un État faible a entraîné la nécessité d'une nouvelle gouvernance mondiale sous la forme d'initiatives multipartites. La gouvernance multipartite, qui comprend des ONG et les entreprises, travaille ensemble pour combler le vide de gouvernance laissé par l'État affaibli (Matten & Crane, 2005. ; Scherer, 2018 ; Scherer & Palazzo, 2007). La participation des parties prenantes au sein d'initiatives multipartites facilite donc " l'inclusion de ceux qui sont affectés par les décisions politiques et économiques, augmente la confiance et donne aux parties prenantes le pouvoir de devenir des cocréateurs actifs et de contribuer avec leurs connaissances" (Scherer & Voegtlin, 2018, p. 39).

Ces initiatives multipartites prennent différentes formes et tailles (Cheyns, 2014, Fransen, 2011) et opèrent à différentes échelles (Martens et al., 2018). Elles s'attaquent à des questions allant des diamants de la guerre (processus de Kimberley) au financement de projets (principes de l'Équateur), des principes généraux des affaires (Pacte mondial des Nations unies) à la communication des performances des entreprises en matière de durabilité (Global Reporting Initiative), ou de la gestion durable des ressources (Forest Stewardship Council) aux normes de transparence nécessaires pour créer une responsabilité dans les pays riches en ressources (Initiative pour la transparence des industries extractives) (Zeyen, Beckmann & Wolters, 2014). Elles sont destinées à combler le déficit de gouvernance que l'État n'a pas réussi à combler et à assurer une plus grande participation des acteurs locaux, leur permettant ainsi de mieux vivre.

Cependant, ces approches positivistes du rôle politique des entreprises, qui occupent une place de premier plan dans les questions de gouvernance multipartite, ont été violemment contestées. Ainsi, la place et la participation des acteurs locaux au sein de ces MSI ont fait l'objet de nombreuses critiques.

Cheyns (2015, p. 2) a souligné que " comprendre la participation implique d'examiner ses mécanismes et leur capacité à fournir plusieurs éléments permettant aux participants de se faire entendre et d'opérer non seulement dans une pluralité de parties prenantes (l'autorité fondatrice des MSI) mais aussi dans une pluralité de principes de justice ". La justice est comprise comme " des arrangements sociaux qui permettent à tous les membres (adultes) de la société d'interagir les uns avec les autres en tant que pairs " (Fraser 2013, p. 164, cité dans Blue, Rasol & Fast, 2019). Utting (2002) a démontré que ce n'est pas le cas, car les MSI formées pour réglementer la conduite des entreprises n'ont pas réussi à inclure les travailleurs marginalisés, les syndicats et les acteurs locaux.

Cette incapacité de la participation à inclure les intérêts et les parties prenantes marginalisées en tant que pairs se manifeste de diverses manières. La première vague d'exclusion consiste à "inviter" les parties prenantes à participer, rendant la participation ouverte à certains et fermée à d'autres (Cheyns 2014). Deuxièmement, la connaissance experte des entreprises et des normes internationales est valorisée par rapport aux formes locales de connaissance (Banerjee 2008, Cheyns, 2014). Une telle exclusion des formes locales de connaissances a pour conséquence de réduire au silence les voix des acteurs qui s'opposent à la logique des entreprises (Banerjee, 2018). Afin de participer, les acteurs sont tenus d'adopter une position de sujet rendue disponible par un discours donné (Mayes, Pini & Macdonald 2013, p. 844). Ce discours étant encadré par " des institutions internationales telles que les Nations Unies et la Banque mondiale, les catégories sont hostiles à de nombreux groupes affectés négativement par les entreprises " (Spivak 1999, cité dans Banerjee, 2008, p. 36-37). Mettre en avant les intérêts des entreprises et exclure les intérêts des parties prenantes marginalisées des MSI. Dans le même ordre d'idées,

la recherche a démontré que les asymétries de ressources se traduisent par une asymétrie dans la capacité à participer. Plus précisément, les ressources des agriculteurs ou des ONG locales sont limitées par rapport aux entreprises (Fuchs et al., 2011 ; Nelson & Tallontire, 2014, Kohne, 2014, cité dans Cheyns & Risgaard, 2014). Enfin, comme les MSI et leurs normes interagissent avec les contextes politiques et économiques locaux, elles sont souvent saisies par des acteurs puissants ancrés dans les relations de pouvoir locales hiérarchiques (Cheyns & Riisgaard, 2014).

Les principales sources de critique de la participation au sein des MSI se sont concentrées sur les relations de pouvoir à l'œuvre (Utting, 2002 ; Fransen & Kolk, 2007 ; Banerjee, 2008, Ponte & Cheyns, 2013 ; Cheyns, 2014, Martens et al., 2018 ; Soundararajan, Brown & Wicks 2019), révélant que ces dispositifs participatifs n'ont pas changé les structures de pouvoir de la gouvernance ou affecté le résultat des processus de participation au-delà des pratiques rhétoriques (Paloniemi et al., 2015, p. 339). Comme le souligne Banerjee (2018, p. 810) " dans pratiquement tous les cas de consultations avec les communautés locales ", la principale préoccupation des acteurs du marché et de l'État était d'identifier les conditions dans lesquelles leur activité pouvait se poursuivre plutôt que de répondre aux préoccupations des communautés locales, telles que les impacts sociaux, économiques et environnementaux, et les autres opportunités de développement économique disponibles.

Il est donc nécessaire de former des réseaux de gouvernance translocaux qui opèrent localement mais ont des influences sur plusieurs niveaux régionaux et nationaux (Banerjee 2018, p. 813). Une telle approche territoriale de la participation dans des contextes multipartites résonne avec le travail effectué dans le domaine des études sur le développement, spécifiquement sur le sujet du développement participatif.

II.2. La participation comme nouveau paradigme de développement

La participation au sein du développement participatif fait référence à " l'implication d'un nombre significatif de personnes dans des situations ou des actions qui améliorent leur bien-être, comme leur revenu, leur sécurité, leur estime de soi, etc. " (Nawaz 2013, p. 27). (Nawaz 2013, p. 27). Elle est censée permettre de mieux concevoir les projets de développement, de mieux cibler les bénéficiaires de ces projets et d'être plus rentable et plus rapide dans la fourniture des intrants du projet (Mansuri & Rao 2004, p. 6). Elle se concentre sur les approches locales du développement et sensibilise les gens à participer aux programmes de développement (Cooke & Kotari, 2001). Cette participation est obtenue par "l'implication dans les processus de prise de décision, la mise en œuvre des programmes, le partage des bénéfices des programmes de développement et l'implication dans les efforts d'évaluation de ces programmes" (Adebo 2000, cité dans Nawaz 2013). En tant que telle, elle constitue un "nouveau paradigme" du développement (Chambers, 1994) où la participation est un moyen crucial pour assurer l'inclusion qui permet aux pauvres d'avoir le contrôle des décisions (Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Le développement participatif fait donc référence à l'implication de la communauté dans le développement. Il s'agit d'une approche politique alternative qui vise à transformer les relations de pouvoir préétablies du haut vers le bas. Cela signifie que "les personnes qui ont à la fois le droit et le devoir de participer à la résolution de leurs problèmes, ont de plus grandes responsabilités dans l'évaluation de leurs propres besoins, la mobilisation des ressources locales et la suggestion de nouvelles solutions, ainsi que la création et le maintien d'organisations locales" Nawaz (2013, p. 27). Une telle approche est apparue comme une reconnaissance de l'erreur et de l'inadéquation des approches descendantes du développement dans les années 1970 (Nawaz, 2013), spécifiquement dans l'agriculture (Chambers, 1994). Une approche où le

développement n'est pas seulement une question de croissance économique mais " la promotion de la redistribution et la réduction des inégalités " (Chambers, 1994, p. 965). En 1970, les ONG occidentales sont apparues pour lutter contre la pauvreté dans le Sud en favorisant le développement participatif, car elles sont réputées plus honnêtes et efficaces que l'État (Van Rooy, 2014). Elles ont développé des techniques qui "reconnaissent les connaissances locales et "mettent le dernier en premier", telles que la recherche sur les systèmes agricoles et l'évaluation rurale rapide et participative dans les années 1980 (Chambers, 1983) ; l'utilisation accrue de la participation comme norme dans l'agenda du développement durable des années 1990 (par exemple, CNUED, 1992)" (Reed, 2008 p. 2418). Néanmoins, malgré sa large adoption, plusieurs praticiens et chercheurs ont jugé cette approche comme un "acte de foi dans le développement" (Cleaver, 2001) avec peu de preuves empiriques à l'appui.

Cleaver (2001, p. 53) a souligné que la " participation " aux activités de développement s'est transformée en un exercice de gestion basé sur des " boîtes à outils " de procédures et de techniques, se détournant de ses racines radicales qui étaient la participation des acteurs locaux à l'élaboration des activités de développement et la problématisation du développement. L'intégration de la participation en a fait un instrument pour promouvoir des intérêts politiques pragmatiques et se concentrer sur l'efficacité des projets (Mansuri & Rao 2004, Cleaver 2001). En outre, plutôt que d'utiliser leur " savoir local " pour construire des projets de développement, les acteurs locaux acquièrent " de nouvelles formes de savoir de planification " (Moose, 2001, p. 32). Le concept de participation légitime les priorités de projet préalablement établies par les bailleurs de fonds extérieurs au territoire à développer (Moose 2001, cité dans Mansuri & Rao, 2004).

Par conséquent, les approches de développement participatif n'ont pas réussi à donner du pouvoir aux acteurs locaux dans le Sud, car l'accent a été mis sur la mise en œuvre du projet et l'obtention des résultats du projet, tel que défini par l'organisation donatrice, plutôt que de répondre aux demandes des acteurs locaux (Cleaver, 2004, Moose 2004). En outre, la

focalisation sur le projet et la recherche de l'efficacité ont fait de la participation un bouc émissaire pour garantir l'adoption du projet par les communautés locales, plutôt que de construire le projet en tenant compte des connaissances et des besoins locaux (Moose, 2004, Uma & Kothari 2001). Enfin, la participation aux projets de développement a négligé de nombreuses activités communautaires qui se déroulaient au travers d'interactions quotidiennes et d'arrangements socialement ancrés, en se concentrant sur des institutions locales très visibles et formelles (Cleaver 2004, p. 53). En tant que telle, elle n'a pas tenu compte des formes locales de capital culturel et social qui réduiraient les coûts de transaction et permettraient aux participants de récolter les bénéfices de la participation (voir Ray, 2002).

S'appuyant sur les leçons apprises dans le Sud global, la troisième approche du développement a émergé dans les années 1990, l'approche néoendogène ou territoriale (Ray 2000, 2001, 2002). L'approche territoriale du développement s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un débat plus large sur la manière de ressusciter l'économie rurale et, plus important encore, sur ses relations avec la société au sens large et, par conséquent, sur "la nature des interventions publiques dans l'économie sociale rurale" (Ray, 2002, p. 225). Il a suggéré que le développement est mieux animé en se concentrant sur les besoins de l'ensemble du territoire plutôt que sur un secteur spécifique de l'économie rurale (Ray 2000,2002). Un tel développement doit être réalisé en réorientant les activités de développement, y compris l'activité économique, afin d'exploiter les ressources physiques et humaines du territoire et de conserver un maximum des bénéfices qui en résultent sur le territoire. Par conséquent, les territoires doivent avoir une relation dynamique avec l'Etat et le supra-état, conformément à la décentralisation contemporaine et au modus operandi de "l'Etat gestionnaire" (Ray, 2002, p. 229). Enfin, l'approche territoriale du développement était axée sur les besoins, les capacités et les perspectives des populations locales, ce qui lui conférait une dimension éthique importante en mettant l'accent sur le principe et le processus de la participation locale à la conception et à la mise en œuvre des actions de développement. La participation locale se manifeste par "l'adoption de valeurs culturelles,

environnementales et communautaires dans les interventions de développement" (Ray 2002, p. 228).

Une telle approche vient en réponse à la mondialisation, dont l'interrelation globale a infligé aux territoires de graves vulnérabilités écologiques, économiques et sociales (Horlings & Marsden, 2014). L'approche territoriale "gagne en importance aux yeux des États membres de l'UE (UE, 20007), dans les politiques européennes de cohésion territoriale (CE, 2010a), dans les stratégies et pratiques de développement pour la période de programmation de l'UE après 2013, et dans le Livre vert sur le financement de la recherche et de l'innovation (CE, 2010b)" (Horlings & Marsden, 2014 p. 5). Par conséquent, l'initiative LEADER apparaît comme une démonstration du renforcement des relations politico-économiques entre le territoire et les niveaux régional, national et transnational, le territoire représentant la nouvelle dimension de l'organisation économique et de la régulation du système (Ray 2002).

LEADER, qui signifie Liaison Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale, faisait partie du Nouveau Paradigme Rural (Ray 1998, OCDE, 2006, Horlings & Marsden, 2014, Navarro et al., 2016) " qui est un modèle de développement rural, basé sur le partenariat, la programmation et la participation locale visant à la réalisation d'un développement rural intégré, afin de parvenir à une utilisation plus efficace des ressources et à une réduction des inégalités régionales et sociales (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019, p. 13). Il a été établi dans le cadre de la première réforme des fonds structurels de l'UE en 1991(Lošťák & Hudečková, 2008), représentant une évolution vers des programmes de développement rural plus larges, structurés autour des ressources locales (Moseley, 1997) en joignant ensemble " les aspirations locales avec les actifs à l'intérieur et au-delà du territoire ", tels que les fonds de l'UE - dans le processus de mobilisation du lieu, de l'espace et de la prise de décision démocratique (Shucksmith, 2012 p. 12). La Déclaration de Cork de 1992 consacre la participation et l'approche ascendante du développement qui exploite la créativité et la solidarité des communautés rurales (Navarro et al., 2016, p. 271).

Le pouvoir se déployant autour du développement a donc été reconceptualisé comme " étant une question de production sociale (capacité des groupes à agir) plutôt que de contrôle social (par le gouvernement ou les élites), c'est-à-dire avec un " pouvoir sur " plutôt qu'un " pouvoir de " (Shucksmith 2012, p. 15). LEADER a redistribué le pouvoir politique en donnant la préférence aux acteurs locaux et en opérant une discrimination partielle en faveur des GAL et contre la bureaucratie étatique, tout en limitant sa fonction en soutenant le renforcement des capacités et la création des GAL en tant qu'institutions devant mettre en œuvre cette approche territoriale du développement (Kovach, 2000). Le GAL est là pour connecter et coordonner les actions afin d'améliorer les résultats du programme de développement. Les GAL sont là pour améliorer les relations sociales (Hoffman & Hoffman, 2018) basées sur la collaboration, les co-partenariats et la consultation des parties prenantes (Secco et al., 2011). Cette coordination de l'action locale est intrinsèquement dépendante des dimensions relationnelles entre les acteurs locaux (Torre & Filippi 2005, cités dans Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020). Plus précisément, elle s'établit via la proximité entre les acteurs et la production et l'échange de connaissances entre eux (voir Esparcia et al., 2016). À ce titre, elle renforce la capacité des acteurs locaux et " contribue à la mise en œuvre du projet territorial " (Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020, p. 66).

Pour saisir ces multiples dimensions du GAL, les chercheurs ont développé la notion de capital territorial (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016 ; Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020), qui repose sur le développement du capital humain et du capital social (Navarro & Cejudo, 2020). Le capital social est " défini comme des réseaux œuvrant pour un bien commun, et le capital humain est considéré comme un ensemble de traits utilisés pour travailler à un objectif commun " (Permingeat & Vanneste, 2019, p. 13). Premièrement, elle se concentre sur la façon dont l'économie et la production locales sont intégrées dans un système plus large, tel que le territoire. Ensuite, elle fait référence à la proximité des relations qui forment le capital social. Enfin, ce "système territorial fonctionne selon un système de règles et de normes, créant un

modèle de gouvernance locale à travers des structures de partenariat et des réseaux de coopération" (Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020, p. 83). En combinant ces trois dimensions, les GAL parviennent à mobiliser les actifs localisés pour "former la base de la compétitivité économique potentielle de la zone" (Lacquement, Chevalier & Cejudo, 2020, p. 67).

Une telle approche délimite que la capacité des acteurs locaux organisés autour du GAL à défendre leur capacité de décision sur leur développement dépend de la combinaison " d'approches hybrides et de négociations entre les dynamiques descendantes et ascendantes et entre les influences locales et externes " (Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020 p. 84). Par ailleurs, si cette approche délimite les dynamiques au sein du territoire qui conduiront à un développement participatif, tel que celui promu par LEADER, nous manquons encore de recul sur les acteurs de l'action stratégique qui se cachent derrière ces approches hybrides, ces négociations et ces influences extérieures. C'est pourquoi nous étudions l'action stratégique qui mobilise le capital territorial.

Ainsi, la participation et la manière dont elle est construite, défendue et pratiquée dépendra de la stratégie adoptée par les acteurs au sein du GAL. Cela interroge la capacité des acteurs à construire des stratégies qui leur permettront de reconfigurer les intérêts, les coalitions et les alliances au sein des structures hégémoniques (Wittneben, Okereke, Banerjee & Levy, 2012) et ainsi de repositionner les relations de pouvoir en leur faveur.

En m'appuyant sur ma posture de gestionnaire, j'éclaire la capacité d'agence qui dépasse le déterminisme du territoire et d'autres formes de déterminisme. Comme celui de l'Etat. De la littérature sur les études de gestion et d'organisation qui se sont concentrées sur les MSI visant à gouverner la conduite des entreprises à la littérature sur les études de développement qui se sont concentrées sur la participation pour mobiliser le capital territorial afin de favoriser le développement économique et social, nous pouvons voir que la participation n'est pas

simplement ancrée dans une histoire spécifique mais qu'elle est un processus de co-construction. En outre, il s'agit d'un processus gouverné, et en tant que tel, il a une dimension politique, sociale et économique (Levy & Spicer, 2013). En outre, les structures hégémoniques freinent partiellement ce processus par lequel la participation se construit. Néanmoins, les acteurs au sein de ces structures ont la capacité agentielle de transformer les structures dans lesquelles ils sont inscrits (voir (Levy & Egan, 2003 ; Spicer & Sewell, 2010 ; Levy et al., 2016 ; Palpacuer & Seignour, 2019).

II.3. La participation comme processus politiquement construit : régimes de valeurs et pouvoir hégémonique

La participation " signifie différentes choses pour ceux qui gouvernent et ceux qui sont gouvernés " (Chatterjee, 2004, cité dans Ehrnström-Fuentes 2016, p. 435). Dans la mesure où l'emploi d'une stratégie par l'action stratégique par laquelle les acteurs sociaux créent et maintiennent des mondes sociaux stables représente une forme de pouvoir (Levy & Scully, 2007). Ce pouvoir dépend de la capacité des acteurs à influencer les tactiques, l'établissement de l'agenda et le pouvoir intégré dans les systèmes sociaux et techniques (Maguire, 2004). Les acteurs politiques ne se contentent pas d'analyser mais cherchent également à transformer les champs organisationnels par une combinaison de stratégies discursives, organisationnelles et économiques (Levy et al., 2010, p. 90). Le champ organisationnel est une communauté d'organisations qui partagent un système de signification commun et dont les participants interagissent plus fréquemment et exclusivement entre eux qu'avec les autres acteurs du champ (Levy & Scully, 2008), ce qui met en évidence la nature de l'interaction entre les acteurs et les structures. Par conséquent, les acteurs disposant de moins de ressources peuvent déjouer leurs

rivaux s'ils sont "dotés d'une stratégie intelligente, d'un bon timing et d'un peu de chance" (Levy & Egan, 2003, p. 813).

Cette théorie stratégique du pouvoir s'inspire du concept d'*hégémonie* de Gramsci en tant qu'"activité de formation d'opinion" fondée sur des relations dialectiques entre les forces sociales, par laquelle des visions du monde particulières sont naturalisées et présentées comme universellement valables et avantageuses pour tous (Cox 1980, Morton 2007, cité dans Girei 2016, p. 197). Laclau & Mouffe (2014) ont appliqué ce concept d'hégémonie à une forme plus large de relation sociale. Ils soulignent que " l'hégémonie a des conditions de possibilité très précises, tant du point de vue de ce qu'une relation exige pour être conçue comme hégémonique que du point de vue de la construction d'un sujet hégémonique " (Laclau & Mouffe, 2014, p. xii). Dans les études sur l'organisation et la gestion, cette compréhension de l'hégémonie a été transposée à une compréhension ascendante de la mosaïque des luttes politiques, économiques et discursives dans la gouvernance (Newell & Levy, 2002), en se concentrant sur le processus de construction de coalitions, de conflits et d'accommodements qui conduisent au changement social (Levy & Egan, 2003) en se concentrant sur le rôle des ONG et de la corporation (Bo, Böhm & Reynolds, 2019). Levy (Levy 2008 ; Levy & Spicer 2013 ; Levy Reinecke & Manning 2016)

Construire et utiliser la participation : les régimes de participation

Levy (2008, Levy & Spicer 2013 ; Levy, Reinecke & Manning 2016) a développé le concept de régimes de valeur pour étudier ces dynamiques. Les régimes de valeur impliquent un réseau d'acteurs et d'organisations qui stabilisent " deux dimensions interreliées de la valeur, les processus économiques de production et d'échange, ainsi que les valeurs normatives et culturelles " (Levy & Spicer, 2013, p. 673) fonctionnant comme un mécanisme de gouvernance

qui renvoie aux " normes qui canalisent et contraignent l'activité et son impact " (Levy 2008, p. 946).

Ce concept est approprié pour étudier le processus politique par lequel la participation est construite. Dans le premier chapitre, le cadre analytique des régimes de valeurs est utilisé pour décrire l'Etat et le régime de participation des ONG comme des mécanismes de gouvernance qui privilégient un certain processus économique de production et d'échange et les valeurs normatives et culturelles qui définissent le niveau de participation dans une MSI donnée. Le cadre analytique des régimes de valeurs nous permet d'étudier les multiples dimensions du champ LEADER qui est constitué comme un contexte de multi-gouvernance (voir Berriet-Sollicec, Laidin, Lepicier et al., 2016) d'institutions étatiques et de réseaux financés par des fonds publics où l'État et ses acteurs interagissent à travers le processus de coordination et d'interdépendance (Maurel, 2008). Deuxièmement, un régime de valeurs fonctionne comme un mécanisme de gouvernance, faisant référence aux " règles, institutions et normes qui canalisent et contraignent l'activité économique et ses impacts " (Levy, 2008, 946). Dans le domaine de LEADER, cela se manifeste par la conception de la mesure LEADER et la fixation des conditions de financement ou des exigences en matière de cadre institutionnel au niveau local (Berriet-Sollicec & al, 2016, p. 30). En tant que telle, elle nous permet d'étudier l'action stratégique dans laquelle les acteurs s'engagent à travers la participation. Enfin, Levy et al. (2015) soulignent que les résultats des luttes de pouvoir sont inscrits dans des régimes de valeurs multidimensionnels. Une perspective systématique sur le processus complexe et dynamique de construction d'un régime de valeurs révèle l'agence stratégique des challengers, tels que les ONG, sur le long terme (Levy et al., 2015, p. 33). Une telle approche permet d'enquêter sur la capacité d'inclusion des régimes de l'État et des ONG dans le domaine des MSI publiques, comme le domaine LEADER.

En outre, afin d'étudier la mise en œuvre de la participation sous la forme de pratiques de participation au sein des MSI, le cadre néo-gramscien est complété par la notion de capital territorial.

Afin de comprendre comment la participation est pratiquée, le chapitre 3 se concentre sur les actions que les acteurs entreprennent lorsqu'ils mettent en œuvre la participation. En élargissant le cadre néo-gramscien développé au chapitre 1 avec la notion de capital territorial (Lacquement & Chevalier, 2016 ; Lacquement, Chevalier & Navarro, 2020), nous pouvons étudier les mises en œuvre de la participation, en donnant le régime de participation dans lequel elle s'inscrit. Une telle perspective est essentielle pour comprendre les actions stratégiques qui vont définir la capacité d'agence et, par conséquent, la possibilité d'inclusion au sein des MSI. Deuxièmement, comme Moog et collègues l'ont souligné (2015, p. 485), pour comprendre quel type d'espace politique les MSI offrent, nous devons comprendre les MSI concernant les opportunités changeantes et les dynamiques de pouvoir au sein de leur terrain politique plus large. Il s'agit par exemple de LEADER au sein de l'Union européenne et LEADER en tant que mesure étatique. L'étude de LEADER nous permet donc de prendre en compte le champ plus large de la gouvernance des institutions dans le domaine des MSI et de comprendre les compromis et les tensions fondamentales qu'entraîne la participation à de telles arènes (Moog et al., 2015, Levy et al., 2016).

Les résultats suggèrent que la participation représente un processus qui ressemble à la "guerre de position" par laquelle de multiples bases de pouvoir modifient leurs valeurs économiques et normatives ainsi que leur système de gouvernance pour gagner en légitimité, ce qui entraîne l'émergence de deux régimes de valeurs, l'État et les ONG. Par conséquent, la capacité des MSI à être inclusives dépendra des caractéristiques des dimensions économiques, normatives et de gouvernance du régime de valeurs qui s'imposera dans le champ des MSI publiques. La question est donc maintenant de savoir comment les acteurs peuvent défendre leur vision du monde.

Défendre la participation : la capacité des "acteurs à jouer la balance".

Les caractéristiques du régime de participation décrites dans les chapitres 1 et 3 ne s'appliquent pas lorsque nous descendons à l'échelle micro des acteurs locaux. Néanmoins, comprendre l'agence comme une forme d'action stratégique dans laquelle les acteurs locaux s'engagent pour résister à l'hégémonie dérivant d'autres échelles est essentiel pour comprendre comment la participation des acteurs locaux est soutenue et déployée, permettant aux mouvements de résistance d'atteindre leurs objectifs.

Comprendre comment et dans quels contextes les acteurs locaux s'engagent dans une action stratégique pour faire jouer en leur faveur les processus hégémoniques dérivant d'autres échelles est crucial si nous voulons comprendre comment la participation des acteurs locaux est défendue à travers le temps et l'espace au sein de systèmes de gouvernance plus larges ; et, en tant que telle, assure des environnements inclusifs.

Le chapitre 2 suggère donc que l'appropriation des discours et des connaissances dominants permet aux acteurs locaux de jouer les échelles, c'est-à-dire d'accomplir la protection trans-scalaire de l'échelle locale à travers le temps. Ils le font en construisant une (1) alliance translocale qui va s'emparer de différents éléments de différentes échelles pour construire une (2) stratégie transcalaire qui devient centrale pour l'évolution des échelles spatiales dans le temps car elle exerce une pression sur le bloc hégémonique de la part de différents acteurs opérant à différentes échelles, qui forment l'alliance translocale.

Plus précisément, le rescaling est une forme d'action stratégique qui se rapporte au mécanisme organisationnel poussant à l'ajustement du bloc historique en s'appropriant des processus discursifs et politiques (Mollona et Pareschi, 2020) qui existent à d'autres échelles impliquées

dans la construction d'une alliance translocale d'acteurs situés dans divers territoires en Europe. L'alliance trans-locale fournit aux acteurs locaux les connaissances nécessaires pour contrer le bloc hégémonique. Ce savoir est ensuite déployé comme une stratégie transcalaire à travers les échelles en exerçant une pression sur le bloc hégémonique à diverses échelles nationales et européennes, déclenchant un réexamen du savoir hégémonique. Le chapitre 2 définit cette stratégie comme le jeu des échelles. Le jeu des échelles implique que les acteurs locaux protègent leur échelle politique d'une diffusion hégémonique plus large en s'appropriant le savoir hégémonique à leur avantage.

La pratique substantielle et procédurale de la participation

Nous savons que la participation peut être soit procédurale, soit substantielle (Martens et al., 2018 ; Paloniemi et al., 2015). Selon le contexte, qui peut être une organisation (Adamson et al., 2020 ; Tavella, 2020), une initiative multi-acteurs (Banerjee, 2018 ; de Bakker et al., 2018 ; Martens et al. ; 2018), ou un processus de gouvernance (Lee & Romano, 2013, Paloniemi et al., 2015 ; Grosser, 2016 ; Schleifer, 2019), des relations de pouvoir, des connaissances et des ressources économiques inégales peuvent influencer la qualité de la participation. Cependant, la manière dont ces relations de pouvoir, ces connaissances et ces ressources économiques sont mises en œuvre à travers la pratique de la participation au sein d'une initiative multipartite reste peu claire.

Sans ces connaissances, la participation risque de continuer à "reproduire les inégalités et à créer de fausses promesses" (Paloniemi et al., 2018), ce qui entraînera davantage d'inégalités sociales et l'abandon des terres dans les zones rurales. De telles tendances ne feront que contribuer au changement climatique en favorisant le déclin de l'agrobiodiversité, les feux de forêt et la diminution des surfaces agricoles. Au-delà du développement rural, savoir comment

pratiquer la participation est crucial pour relever les grands défis actuels - car ils exigent l'engagement actif de nombreux acteurs aux intérêts divergents.

Par conséquent, le chapitre 3 de ma thèse souligne que nous devons aller au-delà des enquêtes sur les pratiques discursives et adopter une approche holistique vers l'investigation des pratiques qui mettent en œuvre la participation ; sans cette connaissance, la participation risque de " reproduire les inégalités et de créer de fausses promesses " (Paloniemi et al., 2018). Pour aborder cette question dans le chapitre 3, je construis un modèle de pratique de la participation dans des contextes publics multi-acteurs pour démontrer comment les acteurs pratiquent la participation par l'activation du capital territorial, du mode de gouvernance et des pratiques de délibération. Il délimite les actions qui conduisent à la promulgation d'une participation substantielle ou procédurale, fournissant une approche analytique qui examine de manière critique les processus de participation (Fritz et Binder, 2018).

SECTION III - Démarche méthodologique

Supposons que nous voulions relever les grands défis d'aujourd'hui de manière juste. Dans ce cas, je soutiens qu'il est nécessaire de mieux comprendre la nature et la pratique de la participation dans les contextes multipartites, et encore plus dans les contextes multipartites publics établis pour travailler au bien commun - car ils exigent la participation substantielle de nombreux acteurs aux intérêts divergents, en utilisant des fonds publics.

En m'inspirant de ces énigmes et des défis auxquels j'ai été confronté en tant que directeur d'une telle organisation, j'ai articulé la présente thèse autour de trois questions : comment la participation est-elle construite, comment est-elle défendue et comment est-elle pratiquée ? Premièrement, comment construisons-nous la participation dans un cadre multipartite lorsque cette participation est imposée par un financement externe (l'UE) et une réglementation externe (l'État). Deuxièmement, comment cette participation, imposée aux acteurs locaux, peut-elle être défendue face aux pressions hégémoniques afin de servir les intérêts des acteurs locaux ? Enfin, comment la participation est-elle pratiquée au quotidien, quel type de participation met-elle en œuvre, et à quelles fins ?

La présente thèse vise à apporter un éclairage sur les dynamiques politiques qui façonnent l'environnement dans lequel s'inscrivent les MSI (Levy, 2008, Levy & Spicer, 2013 ; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016), (2) l'action stratégique des acteurs locaux qui la sous-tendent (Banerjee 2018) et les pratiques dans lesquelles les acteurs locaux s'engagent (Mantere & Vaara, 2008, Tavella, 2020, Brielmaier & Friesl, 2021) pour la soutenir. Pour ce faire, il s'appuie sur le questionnement managérial évoqué plus haut. En tant que telle, elle se situe dans le courant critique de la littérature dans les études sur l'organisation et la gestion qui vise à révéler le caractère socialement construit de ce qui est présenté comme naturel et donné, exposant ainsi les relations de pouvoir et le phénomène de la domination (Leglise, 2021 p. 196).

Plus précisément, j'ai l'intention de démontrer que la participation est un processus politiquement construit à travers le temps et les échelles spatiales.

Dans ce qui suit, je présente les hypothèses ontologiques et épistémologiques de ma recherche et le type de perspective méthodologique qui en découle.

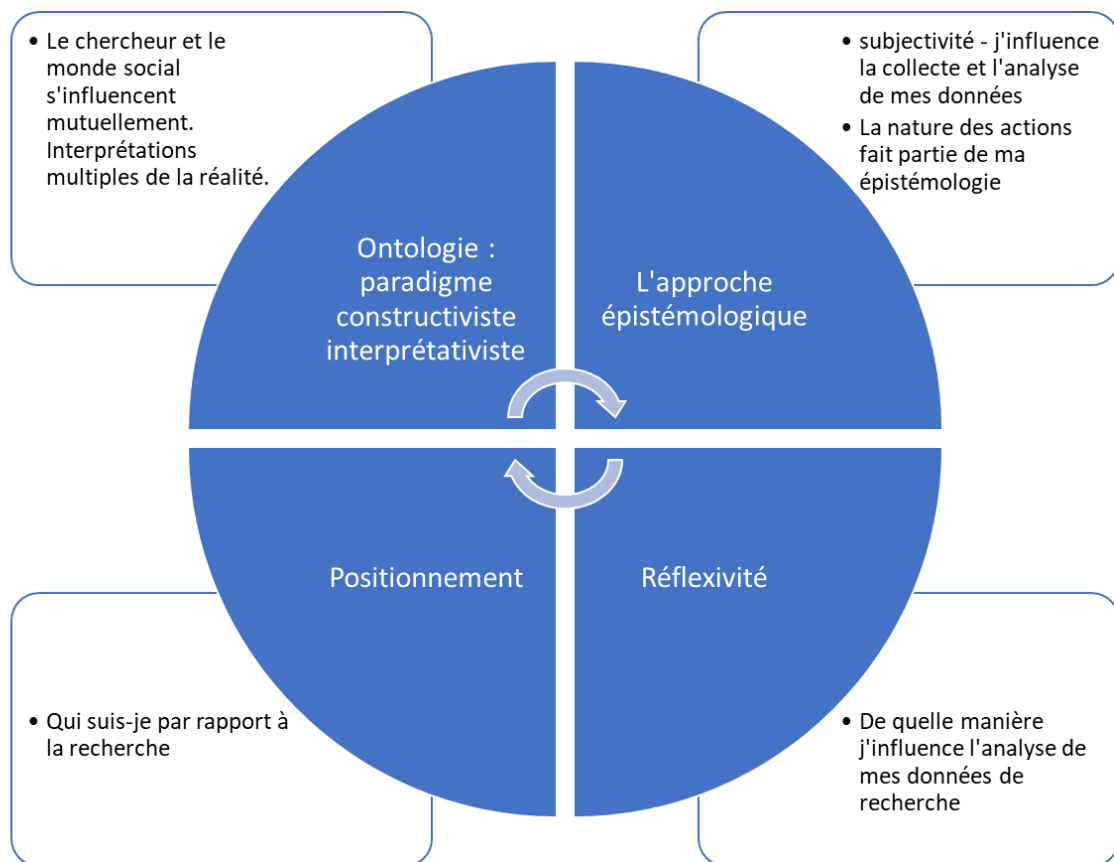
III.1. Considérations ontologiques et épistémologiques

Selon Pitard (2017, p. 2), la relation d'un chercheur à ses données est basée sur des croyances et des hypothèses philosophiques accumulées tout au long d'une vie qui inhibent l'esprit sans savoir du chercheur. Par conséquent, le questionnement managérial qui sous-tend cette thèse dicte que l'hypothèse ontologique de ma recherche découle de la compréhension de Harvey (1973, p. 289-290) selon laquelle la recherche doit être dirigée vers la découverte des règles de transformation par lesquelles la société est constamment restructurée plutôt que vers la recherche de causes au sens isolé. Plus précisément, je considère la réalité comme socialement construite, " remettant ainsi en question l'objectivité de la connaissance et de la réalité, et rejetant la possibilité de la neutralité d'un chercheur " (Lacerda, 2016, p. 80).

Cela signifie que cette thèse encadre le récit d'une représentation sociale de la réalité, reflétant mes choix sur ce qui était significatif pour répondre à mes questions de recherche. Cependant, elle est également matérialiste, étant donné que les individus sont considérés comme le produit de forces historiques et sociales spécifiques. Comme Lacerda (2016, p. 80), je soutiens que le comportement des individus est conditionné par les normes sociales et les artefacts matériels, qui soutiennent le contexte historique dans lequel ils sont inclus. Par conséquent, pour moi, la réalité est socialement construite, et la structure résultant de ces processus sociaux conditionne le comportement des individus.

Conformément aux hypothèses ci-dessus, l'épistémologie qui sous-tend ma recherche est basée sur le paradigme de recherche interprétatif/constructiviste qui suppose que le chercheur et le monde social s'influencent mutuellement et que les résultats sont inévitablement influencés par la perspective et les valeurs du chercheur (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Il postule que les valeurs des chercheurs sont intrinsèques à toutes les phases du processus de recherche et que les résultats de la recherche émergent du dialogue entre le chercheur et la personne recherchée (Pitard, 2017). Cela signifie que le chercheur et le participant à la recherche sont connectés de manière interactive et qu'ils façonnent les données au fur et à mesure de la recherche. Lorsqu'une action donnée est terminée, la lentille du chercheur est retournée, amorçant le processus réflexif. Le cercle à travers lequel ma position épistémologique se développe est présenté dans la figure 2.

Figure 2 La position épistémologique de cette thèse



Source: adapté de Pitard (2017).

III.2. Présentation des articles et des principaux résultats

Dans le chapitre 1, j'ai observé la dynamique politique des contextes sociopolitiques plus larges dans lesquels s'inscrivent les MSI, en posant la question suivante : comment la participation émerge-t-elle dans le domaine des MSI publiques ? Quelles sont les dimensions économiques, normatives et culturelles qui définissent la participation dans le domaine des MSI publiques ? Les MSI publiques parviennent-elles à surmonter les critiques d'inclusion auxquelles sont confrontées les MSI privées ? Pour répondre à la question de recherche, nous avons construit une étude de cas explicative historique (Yin, 2003) du programme LEADER en Croatie (2014-2019) qui s'appuie sur le concept de régimes de valeurs développé par Levy (Levy et Spicer, 2013 ; Levy, Reinecke & Manning, 2016). Les régimes de valeurs fournissent un cadre analytique qui nous permet d'articuler trois dimensions du contexte sociopolitique plus large dans lequel s'inscrit la participation aux MSI : 1. Le réseau d'acteurs et d'organisations qui interagissent autour d'éléments économiques et sémiotiques dans les MSI publiques ; 2. Le mécanisme de gouvernance sous la forme de règles, d'institutions et de normes qui canalisent et contraignent la participation dans le domaine des MSI publiques ; 3. Les valeurs normatives et culturelles de la participation dans le domaine des MSI publiques du point de vue des acteurs. Notre proposition initiale est que le régime de valeurs dans lequel s'inscrit une MSI individuelle façonne la nature de la participation au sein de cette MSI. Nos résultats suggèrent que la participation est construite à travers un régime de participation : un mécanisme de gouvernance ainsi qu'un ensemble de valeurs normatives et culturelles qui privilégient certaines formes de production et d'échange économiques, ainsi que des niveaux inégaux de participation au sein d'une MSI donnée.

Dans le chapitre 2, je me place au centre de l'action stratégique, en demandant *comment les acteurs locaux peuvent jouer les échelles pour contrer les mouvements hégémoniques plus*

larges et protéger efficacement leurs points de vue, pratiques et politiques attachés à leurs échelles spatiales. Pour répondre à la question de recherche, nous avons exploré la stratégie de l'État national et des acteurs locaux autour du Rulebook pour les zones à contraintes naturelles ou spécifiques en utilisant une approche participative longitudinale (Gioia et al., 2013) pour construire un récit du cas du point de vue des acteurs locaux. Nous adoptons le prisme théorique des échelles spatiales en tant qu'espaces socialement produits par le processus de redimensionnement, c'est-à-dire les changements dans les modèles d'accumulation de capital, de régulation et de mobilisation du discours (Spicer, 2006), pour étudier l'agence des acteurs locaux face aux menaces hégémoniques (Banerjee, 2011).

L'analyse suggère que l'appropriation des discours et des savoirs dominants permet aux acteurs locaux de jouer les échelles, c'est-à-dire d'accomplir la protection trans-scalaire de l'échelle locale à travers le temps. Ils le font en construisant une (1) alliance translocale qui va s'emparer de différents éléments de différentes échelles pour construire une (2) stratégie transscalaire déployée pour exercer une pression sur le bloc hégémonique à partir de différentes échelles et via différents acteurs de l'alliance translocale.

Dans le chapitre 3, je m'appuie sur mon expérience vécue pour établir des comparaisons en demandant quelles actions les acteurs entreprennent au sein des initiatives publiques multipartites lorsqu'ils mettent en œuvre la participation ? Comment utilisent-ils la participation ? J'ai construit un design de recherche mixte convergent (Creswell et Creswell, 2018) qui s'appuie sur le concept de capital territorial tel qu'utilisé par Lacquement et Chevalier (2016).

Le capital territorial fournit un cadre d'analyse qui relie trois dimensions du territoire local cruciales pour son développement : 1. les ressources matérielles du territoire, 2. les ressources immatérielles du territoire, 3. le capital interpersonnel développé entre les individus engagés dans le développement local et la gouvernance locale (Lacquement et Chevalier, 2016, p. 2). Dans leur étude de cas d'un GAL hongrois, Lacquement et Chevalier (2016) se sont intéressés

aux formes d'action collective favorisant le développement économique et la mobilisation du capital territorial au sein d'un GAL. Je développe leur cadre car il me permet d'étudier les conditions dans lesquelles les acteurs locaux coopèrent et comment.

En m'appuyant sur les perspectives offertes par la littérature, la proposition de départ à partir de laquelle j'ai développé mon cadre méthodologique est que les activités mêmes mises en œuvre par les acteurs contribuent à façonner la nature de la participation au sein des Groupes d'action locale individuels. Je définis cela comme la *pratique de la participation*. Le modèle émergent de la pratique de la participation dans des contextes publics multi-acteurs décrit les actions que les acteurs entreprennent pour mettre en œuvre la participation. Il montre comment les acteurs construisent la participation en activant le capital territorial, la gouvernance inclusive et la délibération. Il délimite les actions qui conduisent à la mise en œuvre d'une participation substantielle ou procédurale, fournissant une approche analytique qui examine de manière critique les processus de participation (Fritz et Binder, 2018).

SECTION IV: Outline de la thèse

Cette thèse étudie la stratégie et l'agence de la participation dans des contextes publics multi-acteurs, en se concentrant sur la mise en œuvre du programme LEADER pour le développement rural participatif de l'Union européenne en Croatie. Pour ce faire, j'analyse tout d'abord la dynamique politique du contexte sociopolitique plus large dans lequel s'inscrivent les institutions multipartites, dans le chapitre 1, afin d'étudier comment la participation est construite. Je fais ensuite un zoom sur l'échelle locale, en examinant dans le chapitre 2 comment les acteurs locaux se sont organisés autour d'une MSI contre une nouvelle réglementation imposée par l'État et encadrée par l'UE qui menaçait les formes locales de subsistance sur la péninsule croate de Pelješac, afin d'examiner comment les acteurs locaux défendent leurs intérêts, défendant ainsi leur participation au sein du régime hégémonique de participation. Enfin, dans le chapitre 3, j'étudie la pratique de la participation par le biais d'une méthode de recherche mixte combinant l'analyse statistique des 54 GAL en Croatie avec l'analyse comparative du travail de sept de ces groupes d'action locale afin d'étudier comment la participation est pratiquée. La figure 3 présente une vue d'ensemble des résultats et des contributions de ma thèse.

Figure 2 Aperçu des résultats et des contributions

Enquête sur les processus participatifs dans des contextes multipartites.

Questions de recherche :	Comment la participation est-elle construite ?	Comment la participation est-elle défendue ?	Comment la participation est-elle pratiquée ?
Chapitre	1. La dynamique politique du programme LEADER en Croatie : Exploration du régime de participation autour des initiatives publiques multi-acteurs	2. Jouer les échelles : L'histoire de l'initiative LEADER de Pelješac	3. Enquête sur la pratique de la participation au sein d'initiatives publiques multi-acteurs : Le cas des groupes d'action locale en Croatie
Cadre analytique	Régimes de valeurs (Levy, 2008)	Échelles spatiales (Spicer, 2006)	Capital territorial (Chevalier et al., 2010)
Contexte	Luttes de pouvoir entre le régime des ONG et celui de l'Etat autour du déroulement du programme LEADER en Croatie (1999-2019)	L'agencement des acteurs locaux face aux processus hégémoniques qui menacent les formes locales de subsistance sur la péninsule croate de Pelješac.	Enquête sur le travail des groupes d'action locale en Croatie (2016-2021)
Contribution	La participation est construite à travers un régime de participation : un mécanisme de gouvernance qui privilégie certains processus économiques de production et d'échange, ainsi que les valeurs normatives et culturelles qui définissent le niveau de	Les acteurs locaux défendent leurs intérêts et leur participation au sein d'une MSI en s'appropriant la logique organisationnelle dominante à leur avantage. Ils jouent les échelles en construisant une (1) alliance translocal et en déployant une (2) stratégie trans-	Le modèle de pratique de la participation montre comment les acteurs utilisent la participation par l'activation du capital territorial, le modèle de gouvernance et les pratiques de délibération. Il délimite l'action qui conduit à la mise en œuvre de la participation

CHAPITRE I

La dynamique politique du programme LEADER en Croatie. Exploration du regime de participation autour des initiatives publiques multipartites

Résumé : Cette étude contribue à la littérature sur les dynamiques politiques dans les initiatives multi-acteurs en explorant le contexte sociopolitique plus large dans lequel s'inscrivent les MSI, qui fournit le cadre de la construction de la participation au sein des MSI individuelles. Elle le fait en suivant l'émergence de deux régimes de participation dans la mise en œuvre d'un programme européen de développement rural en Croatie, respectivement dirigés par l'État et par des organisations non gouvernementales (ONG), qui fonctionnent sur la base de mécanismes de gouvernance distincts, privilégient des formes économiques de production et d'échange différentes et promeuvent des valeurs normatives et culturelles différentes. Ces trois dimensions façonnent effectivement la participation inégale au sein des MSI individuelles intégrées dans l'un de ces deux régimes. Nous avons effectué une analyse historique de l'émergence des MSI financées par des fonds publics en Croatie via la mise en œuvre du programme politique européen LEADER (acronyme de Liaisons Entre Actions de Développement de l'Economie Rurale) de 1999 à 2019.

Nous posons la question suivante : comment la participation émerge-t-elle dans le domaine des MSI publiques ? Quelles dimensions économiques, normatives et culturelles façonnent la participation dans ce domaine ? Dans quelle mesure les MSI publiques parviennent-elles à surmonter la crise d'inclusivité qui mine les MSI privées ? Sur la base d'expériences vécues et de sources de données multiples, l'étude conceptualise trois phases à travers lesquelles les régimes de participation des ONG et de l'État émergent, entrent en concurrence, puis convergent : Perturbation, réalignement et accommodement. Les résultats suggèrent que la participation est façonnée par un processus qui ressemble à une "guerre de position" par laquelle de multiples bases de pouvoir modifient leurs valeurs économiques et normatives ainsi que leur système de gouvernance afin de gagner en légitimité dans le nouveau domaine en construction, ce qui entraîne l'émergence de deux régimes de participation. Par conséquent, la capacité des MSI à être participatives dépendra des caractéristiques des dimensions économiques, normatives et de gouvernance du régime de participation établi au sein du champ plus large dans lequel elles s'inscrivent.

Mots-clés : MSI, participation, régimes, luttes de pouvoir, guerre de position, LEADER, Croatie

CHAPITRE II

Jouer les échelles: l'histoire de l'initiative LEADER de Pelješac

Résumé : La présente étude contribue à la littérature sur les mouvements de résistance en décrivant l'action stratégique dans laquelle les acteurs locaux s'engagent à travers les échelles spatiales lorsqu'ils sont confrontés à des processus hégémoniques. Grâce à une approche longitudinale innovante, cette étude examine comment les acteurs locaux se sont organisés contre une nouvelle réglementation, imposée par l'État et encadrée par l'UE, qui menaçait les formes locales de subsistance sur la péninsule croate de Pelješac. Sur la base d'expériences vécues et de sources de données multiples, l'étude constate que l'appropriation des logiques organisationnelles dominantes permet aux acteurs locaux de jouer les échelles, c'est-à-dire d'accomplir la protection trans-scalaire de l'échelle locale à travers le temps.

Ils le font en construisant une (1) alliance translocale qui va s'emparer de différents éléments de différentes échelles pour construire une (2) stratégie trans-scalaire qui devient centrale dans l'évolution des échelles spatiales. La stratégie trans-scalaire exerce une pression sur le bloc hégémonique depuis différentes échelles et via différents acteurs de l'alliance translocale. Les résultats suggèrent que la capacité à jouer les échelles découle de la manière dont la logique organisationnelle dominante est repensée. Jouer les échelles implique que les acteurs locaux protègent leur échelle politique d'une diffusion hégémonique plus large en s'appropriant la logique organisationnelle dominante à leur avantage, grâce aux connaissances acquises par l'alliance translocale.

Mots-clés : échelles spatiales, rescaling, jouer les échelles, logique organisationnelle, MSI trans-scalaire

CHAPITRE III

Enquête sur la pratique de la participation au sein des initiatives publiques multipartites: le cas des Groupes d'action locale en Croatie

Résumé : Cette étude contribue à la littérature sur la participation dans les initiatives publiques multipartites qui traite de la manière dont la participation est mise en œuvre dans ces contextes. À l'aide d'un modèle de recherche convergent à méthodes mixtes, j'étudie le travail de sept Groupes d'action locale en Croatie - des initiatives publiques multipartites mettant en œuvre le programme européen pour le développement rural appelé LEADER. Je pose la question suivante : quelles pratiques les acteurs développent-ils au sein des initiatives publiques multi-acteurs lorsqu'ils mettent en œuvre la participation ? Comment utilisent-ils les procédures établies par lesquelles la participation doit être mise en œuvre ? Et avec quels résultats ? Sur la base de multiples sources de données, je développe un modèle pour la pratique de la participation et identifie trois variables clés autour desquelles la mise en œuvre de la participation se déroule : l'activation du capital territorial, le mode de gouvernance et les pratiques de délibération. Le modèle identifie les actions par lesquelles la participation est rendue soit simplement procédurale, soit substantielle. Il fournit une approche analytique qui examine de manière critique les processus de participation et répond aux appels à la recherche en gestion et en organisation pour révéler les pratiques sous-jacentes de la participation.

Mots-clés : LEADER, développement, participation, inclusion, MSI, méthodes mixtes, le capital territorial.

CONCLUSION GÉNÉRALE

La participation en tant que processus politiquement construit: à travers le temps et les échelles spatiales

Cette thèse étudie la stratégie et l'agence de la participation dans des contextes publics multi-acteurs, en se concentrant sur la mise en œuvre du programme LEADER de développement rural participatif de l'Union européenne en Croatie. Pour ce faire, j'analyse d'abord la dynamique politique du contexte socio-politique plus large dans lequel s'inscrivent les MSI, dans le chapitre 1, afin d'étudier comment la participation est construite. Je fais ensuite un zoom sur l'échelle locale, en examinant au chapitre 2 comment les acteurs locaux se sont organisés autour d'une MSI contre une nouvelle réglementation imposée par l'État et encadrée par l'UE qui menaçait les formes locales de subsistance sur la péninsule croate de Pelješac, afin d'examiner comment les acteurs locaux ont défendu leur propre échelle, défendant ainsi leur participation au sein du régime hégémonique de l'échelle nationale. Enfin, dans le chapitre 3, j'étudie la pratique de la participation par le biais d'une méthode de recherche mixte combinant l'analyse statistique des 54 GAL en Croatie avec l'analyse qualitative du travail de sept de ces groupes d'action locale afin d'étudier comment la participation est pratiquée.

La principale contribution de cette thèse est un compte rendu processuel de la participation dans des contextes publics multipartites et le développement de concepts théoriques et d'un cadre méthodologique pour l'analyser en tant que telle. En outre, elle apporte une contribution pratique à la gestion des pratiques participatives dans des contextes multipartites tels que les groupes d'action locale.

