

A drop in the sea or catalyst for change: diverse effects of the place-based approach in Europe

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Place-based development as a mainstream policy tool

What matters in place-based development?

- sound institutional environment (EU 2015), designed in a multi-scalar way (Gertler 2010)
- enabling institutional context (Trigilia 2001, EU 2015)
- transformative agency of place leadership (Horlings 2018)
- distribution of authority and ‘true subsidiarity’ (Rodríguez-Pose 2013)

Approach of RELOCAL project

The aim of the case studies is “to investigate whether spatial justice, as a fair and equitable distribution in space of socially valued resources and the opportunities to use them, can be achieved through place-based strategies, and whether these can be achieved within as well as across places and times” (Madanipour et al., 2017: 79)

Objectives

1. Show the **interplay between local agency, place specific institutional arrangements and the domestic institutional environment** in three place-based interventions based on RELOCAL case studies
2. We aim to answer questions:
 - **how and to what extent the domestic institutional environment can influence local institutional arrangements** summoned for the delivery of spatial justice through place-based interventions
 - **what kind of capacities the domestic institutional environment offers** for local communities
 - to engage in policy design, strategy and dialogue with the central government
 - to build local alliances at their own discretion
 - the kind of institutional arrangements that evolve

Case study localities - marginalized urban neighbourhoods



Rotterdam Zuid NL

- former dock-worker neighbourhood on the edge of the wealthiest city in NL
- concentration of economically vulnerable, socially and ethnically diverse families
- Services are available locally, formal and informal organizations

György telep HU

- former miner colony on the periphery of a shrinking county seat
- High ratio of substandard flats inhabited mainly by Roma
- Services are available in the city



Pata-Rat RO

Informal settlements in the landfill area of the developed metropolitan area inhabited mainly Roma, evicted from the city centre
Poor housing conditions
Services are not available

Case study actions



Nationaal Programma Rotterdam Zuid (NPRZ)

Laboratory of urban rehabilitation programmes for decades
CP instrument combined with domestic sources

György telep

Experiences in urban planning
CP instruments the only available sources



Pata-Cluj

The action based on a former UNDP interventions and funded by external agency
CP instrument for Roma housing is available after 2014
Local government is an active agent in (re)producing spatial marginality

Structural factors

The three cases and its localities are affected differently by structural trends, such as

- the rescaling of the national state: outsourcing services to private actors or downloading delivery to the local level accentuated as a result of global crisis
- general withdrawal of the central state from social policy, reduced funding for education and healthcare
- increased transfer dependency of the local level
- fiscal centralization was temporary in some countries or had long term effects in others characterized by overregulated state capacities and reaffirmed central state power
- variations in the governance of central-local relations characterized by different levels of local autonomy

Analytical dimensions

- How and what ways can the **institutional environment** provide capacities for local communities
 - to engage in policy design, strategy and dialogue with the central government
 - and to build local alliances at their own discretion and supporting institutional arrangements
- How and what ways can **collaborative agency and local institutional arrangements** can start and support joint action locally, in order to
 - (re)frame local issues
 - connect different logics
 - bring diverse actors together around joint agendas
 - engage in a dialogue-based relationship with upper tiers of government

		Rotterdam	György-telep	Pata Cluj
Institutional environment	Local agency	reciprocal relations between central and local levels	top down and dependent relations between central and local level	no relations between the central and local level
		local level has transformative capacity to shape objectives	national level has authority to define developmental objectives	externally induced development initiated by transnational actor did not liaise with national policy
Institutional arrangements		collaborative agency with capacity to build coalition between cross -sectoral actors from different scales	transformation from collaborative to informal local agency that has informal capacity for a hegemonic coalition	diverging objectives and unequal power relations between the local actors – disintegrated local agency
		deliberative, stable coalition with commitment to objectives	changing relations from ‘synergic alliance’ of diverse actors to hegemony of powerful actors depend on national policy objectives	temporal, ad hoc coalition for the given project

Lessons

1. The **commitment of the state to provide an institutional environment** that enables local agents with capacities for coalition-building and to have a say in the definition of developmental goals, is a key factor in the efficiency of place-based interventions. Commitment is a fragile concept, **place-based interventions are highly vulnerable to politics**. The **lack or expiry of political will of state actors** to provide an enabling institutional backbone and financial support for place-based projects, can cause deformations in project objectives and uneven reshuffling in the distribution of power and responsibilities.
2. **Multi-annual planning for place-based policies is hard to achieve** in institutional environments that either for reasons of centralization or half-hearted decentralization, do not provide institutional and financial resources for the sustainability of place-based interventions.
3. **Limits of Cohesion policy funded place-based initiatives in a multi-level regulatory framework of the European Union**. Within the multi-level governance system of the EU, the effects of domestic institutional constellations can often be stronger than the catalysing role of place-based development. Place-based interventions have weak capacities to affect domestic policy systems through spill-overs and social learning as features of state structures can hijack place-based initiatives to deliver policy objectives of national governments. If the latter are based on the systematic reproduction of injustice narrowly targeted place-based projects will remain just a drop in the sea by providing temporary oxygen tubes for marginalized communities.

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Thank you for your attention!

Project Consortium



RELOCAL is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 Programme
13 partners in 11 Member States
October 2016 – May 2021 (56 months)
Project coordinator: University of Eastern Finland
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RELOCAL has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under Grant Agreement N° 727097

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