

Leading role of civil society in the community life and cross-border space

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Abstract The increasing participation of civil society institutes in the development of communities is the leading direction of the European Union (EU) regional policy. This paper argues that the interests of a member of community in the state are grounded on “the triad of interests”: interest of a territorial community (public interest); interest of a community (common interest based on individual interests); interest of a community member (individual interest). The value orientations of a community establish the selection criteria of the community’s development vector.

The paper explains the role of civil society in the process of solution of the issues of local importance. The instruments of civil participation in making the decisions of local importance are defined and the experience of their use in the EU countries is outlined. The impact of a community’s life in cross-border space on its development is proven. The paper provides important development aspects in the process of a community’s life organization like leadership development, institutional development and development of cooperation, as well as partnership and networks.

1 Introduction

Development of a territorial community as a community of residents with common resources transforms the basics of its material existence and social organization. The ideology of the development of a territorial community is related to the range of concepts, including the development factors, provision with resources, directions and methods of provision, results, etc. However, we deem that the process of the territorial community’s development begins with organization of the community’s life (see e.g. Jiroudkova et al. 2015).

One can see that any community development starts from organization of its life. The concept of a community’s life organization is based on constituent elements: community of residents, common resources, interest of a resident and access to resources, availability of which is the major condition of forming of a viable community (Chvátalová 2016).

Having examined the organization of territorial communities’ life, we define the following key components: *community of residents*; *common resource*; *interest of a resident – member of a territorial community*; *access to resources* (defined by main provision of institutional theory).

This paper consists of six main sections (with the last section presenting overall conclusions and implications). In each of these sections, it proceeds consequently and focuses on the leading role of civil society in the process of a community's life organization in the cross-border space. We analyse the common resource of a community, scrutinize the interest of the community residents, tackle the community participation and describe the interaction of economic entities in cross-border space.

2 Common resource of a community

It is important to dwell on resources, because any community grows while it has resources to maintain its life. It is worth mentioning that scientific literature does not provide any unequivocal view over the composition of common resources.

The determining factor is that the territorial community possesses the common resource. However, some scientists conclude that the commonly owned resources require public control if their exploitation can be economically efficient (Carruthers and Stoner 1981). Other scientists suggest establishment of private property in each case where there are available resources in common ownership (Johnson 1972). In conditions of the system of private ownership, an individual is the owner and his/her word on the use of some resource is the decisive one. Therefore, some individuals are in a privileged position in terms of access to certain resources: access is open only to the owner or defined persons.

We should agree with Ostrom regarding the following statements on common resources management in a community (Ostrom 1990): individuals heavily tend to self-organization and self-governance; usually local communities can independently cope with the problems of common management without any external interference. They not only can agree on development and establishment of uniform rules of access to common resources, but also show readiness to actively participate in monitoring of compliance with these rules.

3 Interest of a resident as a member of a community

Interest of residents is the driving force and especially important component in terms of organization of a territorial community's life. Without meeting common interests, it is impossible, on one hand, to meet private interests, and on the other hand, to secure the integrity and consistency of the territorial community's life. Interest of a resident – member of a community in the country is grounded on “*the triad of interests*”: interest of a territorial community (public interest); interest of a community (common interest based on individual interests); interest of a community member (individual interest). The interests of a certain resident can possess both positive and negative capacity, i.e. they can or cannot coincide with the interests of the community or the country. However, some members of territorial communities cooperate even if it is not in their private interests, namely it is about the charity. Such mutual consideration of the complex of interests emerging within the territorial community and their interconnectivity and harmonization guarantee the recognition, existence and life of the territorial community.

Discussions of what should be considered the final goal – the welfare of a community or a resident – and if the interests of a community should submit to the interests of a resident or the interests of a resident to the interests of a community – are fruitless. L. von Mises argues that activity is always the activity of a separate person (Mises 2005). Public or social element constitutes some orientation of behaviour of some residents – members of communities. Category of goal has sense only if it is used for activity. Any step of a resident from isolated activity towards common activity leads to immediate improvement of her or his life conditions. Peaceful cooperation brings benefits to current generation of residents rather to their future descendants. A resident fully compensates what he sacrifices for society with greater benefits. Residents' sacrifice is imaginary and not temporary; they refuse less gain in order to receive bigger one later.

Varied and different-level interests within the community become the reason its members cooperate. It stipulates the organization of community's life, which includes various forms and institutes directed at meeting the needs and interests of community members – community associations, entrepreneurship entities, public associations, etc.

Interests of a territorial community originate from each individual who identifies oneself as the member of the territorial community. They are initially understood as common with other individuals and are realized only by joint actions. Moreover, some psychological factors of forming of a territorial community come into force, like understanding of common resources and interest by the residents, their self-identification as the members of community, their readiness to submit their interests to community when needed, their understanding of the fact that individual interest is realized in realization of common interests, their desire to promote if not to realize common interests with their activity and their understanding of the importance of these actions and readiness to take on responsibility for that. Common interests stipulated by socio-economic, territorial, historical and other features of existence and functioning of territorial communities are directed at providing proper conditions for their life and development.

Interest of a territorial community is important in the process of making decisions regarding the common resource as far as one can observe a tendency towards the choice of efficient policy that brings positive economic results in case when economic policy is defined by broad interests extending to the majority of beneficiaries. However, when narrow interests are organized, they can play an important role, therefore, they can generate socially inefficient policy and poverty. In this case, the residents of a territorial community choose another way, for example migration. They further try to repeat some actions they associate with meeting of their needs and avoid the actions they associate with insufficient meeting of their needs. Or else, the residents of a territorial community

or a country actually (sanctions imposed by the country) modify their behaviour depending on the “pressure” on them and according to their interests. However, they cannot reach out beyond the tandem “community-state” completely, feeling the dominance of the interests of the latter and being forced to agree their behaviour with them.

As the result, the interests emerge. The more diversified they are, the residents who have interests are less likely to meet them by simple majority in a community. In such a way, there is a greater probability that the complex forms of exchange emerge and residents search for the new forms of solving the problems related to creation of various groups and coalitions.

The residents’ expectations of benefits for the same actions in terms of the use of common resources are almost incomparable. The values impose the criteria of desirability or undesirability of some goals, i.e. values are the powerful motivation regulator of human behaviour (Rokeach 1968).

However, it is worth mentioning that a territorial community according to institutional approach is an association of individuals with their own benefit functions and interests, as it was already mentioned. Thus, for example Olson declines the statement that the possibility of joint win is enough to generate common action directed at achieving the goal (Olson 1995). Thence, a member of a territorial community, who cannot be excluded from the beneficiaries of the use, management and forming of common interest, has a few incentives to voluntary join the process. What is really important within this context is how much benefit brings each action of a community member to the results achieved by the territorial community, and their number becomes a low priority.

4 Civil participation and organization of a territorial community’s life

It is a common knowledge that people usually gravitate towards force. Residents are usually attached to their communities not because they were born there, but rather because they see a community as free and strong corporate entity, they are the part to and the one that deserves efforts invested in its management. The data provided by the project “Global civil society” shows that the development of civil society indicates a community’s capability to act jointly (Anheier et al. 2001).

The following development aspects in the process of organization of a community’s life are outlined – development of leadership, i.e. the local civil society; institutional development that creates favourable conditions for community’s life; organization of communities that includes institutions and their competences in terms of making decisions on the use, maintenance and development of common resources; cooperation, partnership and networks – as an important elements of community development for implementation of communities’ initiatives.

Civil participation of territorial communities’ residents should be divided into the direct local self-governance and the one through civil society institutions. Civil society institutions are vitally important partners for decision-makers, because they know the best the needs of residents that are the users of common resources in cross-border space. It is worth mentioning that only 3.8% of Ukrainian population are the members of Ukrainian civic organizations (Mostovaya and Rahmanin 2017), while in Finland 75% of population are the members of at least one civic organization (Senkina et al. 2014).

Experience stemming from various European countries shows the variety of instruments and mechanisms of community’s management of common resources. For example, an instrument “local referendum” is enshrined in constitutions of Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Italy, Luxemburg, Poland and Portugal. Moreover, constitutional governance can be reduced to outlining of general principles, which are common for referendums of all levels (e.g. Greece, Latvia, Lithuania), or give specific provisions related solely to local voting (e.g. in Italy Constitution regulates the issues of regional referendum).

In addition to referendums, civil initiative is a popular instrument of civil participation in Europe. For example, in Czech Republic and France, civil initiative is available only at regional level, while in Belgium it was also introduced at municipal level as well in 2006. In the Netherlands, the initiative is represented at regional and local levels, however the municipalities decide on the use of the instruments. In Hungary, the use of civil initiative instrument is defined at local level.

Public budget is no less popular instrument of civil participation in Europe. Meanwhile, there is no single model of the use of the instrument “public budget”, each territorial community creates its model in correspondence with its needs. We should note that Porto Alegre (Brazil) is recognized the place of first use of public budget instrument, however, after two decades the successful practice wasn’t able to stand political changes.

Moreover, global experience shows that policy, which relies on wide public support at the stage of its development, has more chances of successful implementation than the policy that provokes substantial public opposition or is simply unknown to community. Majority of authorities’ decisions concern the residents. If people are aware of these decisions and consider themselves to have participated in the development of these decisions, they will most likely comply with such a law or such a policy.

Therefore, it is about reciprocity based on solidarity principle, which provides broader social advantages rather than those possessed or reduced by certain privileged groups of a community – both inside and outside the community. These advantages exceed traditional tangible results; they also provide trust, leadership in a

community, social capital, stability and reduction of dependence factors, which are usually seen as important but difficult to measure.

Foreign experience shows both positive impact of direct community's participation in local self-governance and development of territorial communities through promotion of civil society. The outcomes of these initiatives leads to the increase in self-reliance and sustainability.

Different countries settle own models of civil society institutions' involving into public management. One of the most effective form of civil society at the local level are NGO, medias, public funds and instruments of a democracy at the local authority level (public councils, public hearings, petitions, referendum, local initiatives etc.) The main aim of the civil society activity is a protection of human, local authority, state rights and interests, taking account to the interests of future ages (Strielkowski et al. 2016).

The interaction of private and public human rights protection between civil society stakeholders and the territorial community forms the local philanthropy system.

In this system civil society actors try to protect public interests and the rights and interests of minority social groups which need help. With regard to the above, the main roles of civil society stakeholders in the territorial communities' development are the following ones:

- activators of changes and progress
- motivators for local councils and administrations to work democratically in the public interests;
- helpers for implementation of local projects and regional policy;
- limiters which settle social limits to the authority;
- advocacy that force public advocacy and lobby for public right and freedoms;
- controllers – “watching dogs” of the administration;
- promoters the achievements and good ideas for the territorial community.

5 Interaction of economic entities in cross-border space

Territorial community's life stipulates not only cooperation between its residents, but with other economic entities as well. Dichotomous division of all possible interaction types into two opposite types – cooperation and competition – is most common. Border community's living environment is defined also by living environment of the neighbouring territory, including those across the border, which can be explained the following way:

- if the system of providing the benefits in the internal community can be conditionally displayed in the form of full circle, for the border community the circle will be cut by the border line;
- personal contacts take place regardless of to what extent the border is closed, i.e. people at least travel to visit relatives and cross-border cooperation takes place in its simplest form – “direct contacts”. There are no mutual responsibilities at this level, so no agreements are signed;
- with the development of cooperation, the agreements are concluded to expand the circle of received benefits;
- the more territorial communities cooperate, the more liabilities the state undertakes in terms of the “care” for cooperation entities and providing them with favourable conditions to solve the problems of the territories. Therefore, the circle of benefits system expands;
- the Council of Europe and the EU engage in the processes by forming its regional policy and imposing general European priorities.

Therefore, the peculiarities of providing the territorial communities' living conditions indicate the cooperation between economic entities on both sides of the border, in particular the residents of territorial communities, and the availability of common resources generated by cross-border space, which can be accessed by economic entities on both sides of the border. Interaction between economic entities in cross-border space can be classified across the following features (Tymechko 2016):

- by the nature of basic institute: exchange; redistribution; mutual assistance;
- by formalization: formalized interaction; informal interaction; partially formalized interaction;
- by legal nature: legal interaction; illegal interaction.
- by cooperation entities: cross-border interaction entities and cross-border interaction participants;
- by localization of interaction: within the defined zone; within the cross-border region, etc;
- by the level of governance: public; regional/interregional; local;
- by vector: horizontal interaction; vertical interaction;
- by the number of entities: bilateral interaction (two entities); trilateral interaction (three entities); multilateral interaction;

- by the level of legal regulation: private law; public law;
- by functions of institutional environment: framework regulation; maintaining of predictability and stability; maintaining of freedom and safety; minimizing of transaction costs; transfer of knowledge;
- by functions of specific institutes: coordination; cooperation and distribution;
- by form: Euroregion; cross-border market; cross-border cluster; cross-border park; cross-border partnership; European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation; Euroregional Cooperation Grouping, etc.

6 Conclusions and discussions

Taking into account the abovementioned results and outcomes, the authors think that it is reasonable to pay attention to the following issues in order to strengthen the role of civil society in the processes of organization of territorial communities' life: First of all, the key issue is the development of local civil society to activate communities as cross-border cooperation entities and impact the forming and implementation of cross-border cooperation policy.

Second, it is the "institutionalisation" of the network in cross-border space, which includes three components: common resources in cross-border space, entities and their actions regarding the relevant resources, which stipulate the use, preserving and development of common resources in cross-border space.

Third, functioning of cross-border cooperation bodies according to the law in order to improve the efficiency of cross-border cooperation coordination. Forth, forming and implementation of public information-awareness raising policy in the sphere of promotion of civil society and civil participation in solution of local, regional and national issues.

Finally, the fifth key aspect is elaboration of regional and local target programs to promote the development of civil society. This is important for attracting society to forming and implementation of state policy and solution of local problems. It is also crucial for creating the advisory authorities on promotion of development of civil society.

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