

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION IN THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXAMPLED ON ZNOJMO REGION

M. Foret, P. Klusáček

Received: March 8, 2011

Abstract

FORET, M., KLUSÁČEK, P.: *The importance of the partnership and cooperation in the regional development exemplified on Znojmo region*. Acta univ. agric. et silvic. Mendel. Brun., 2011, LIX, No. 4, pp. 79–86

The article is based on the theoretical presumption that the successful and balanced spatial development at all hierarchical levels (local, regional, national, international) depends on close and effective partnership, cooperation and communication of many groups of the different actors. It brings own definition of partnership for local and regional development and there is included basic categorisation of different kind of partnerships as well. The importance of partnership and cooperation for territorial development is demonstrated on analyses of the concrete project from Znojmo region (project Moravian Wine Trails). The following part of the article pays attention to the selected problematic issues in Znojmo region which might be solved in future by means of partnership among the different groups of the stakeholders. The conclusion brings some recommendations which could be useful not only for municipal and regional authorities but for other groups of stakeholders as well.

partnership, cooperation, regional development, marketing research, wine trails, life conditions

The socio-economic local and regional development on the different territorial hierarchical levels is influenced by huge variety of factors (e.g. political, economic, social, demographic, or geographical). According to Peet and Hartwick (2009) development is different from the more conventional economic growth and it is an optimistic and utopian concept which is trying to change the world for the better, starting this change at the bottom rather than the top. This effort for the permanent improvement of life conditions depends in democratic system on active participation of different subjects and groups of actors. It could be presupposed that the regions with more efficient cooperation achieve usually more successful and balanced development than the regions where the partnership among the most important regional subjects is not developed or where are the serious conflicts and clashes of

interests among the different groups of actors. Therefore the spatial partnership and cooperation among subjects is supported by means of the financial support of the different local, regional, national and international bodies (e.g. municipal offices, regional authorities, Czech central authorities – government, institutions of European Union).

This article, which is analysing the role of partnership in the Znojmo region, is based on several current research activities realised within the scope of the project Partnership for local development (Váňová, Foret, 2009) and it follows on in the previous periods implemented surveys (Foret, 2009). The article is based on presumption that the successful and balanced spatial development at all hierarchical levels (local, regional, national, international) always depends in democratic system

on close and effective partnership, cooperation and communication of many groups of the actors from three main socio-economic sectors:

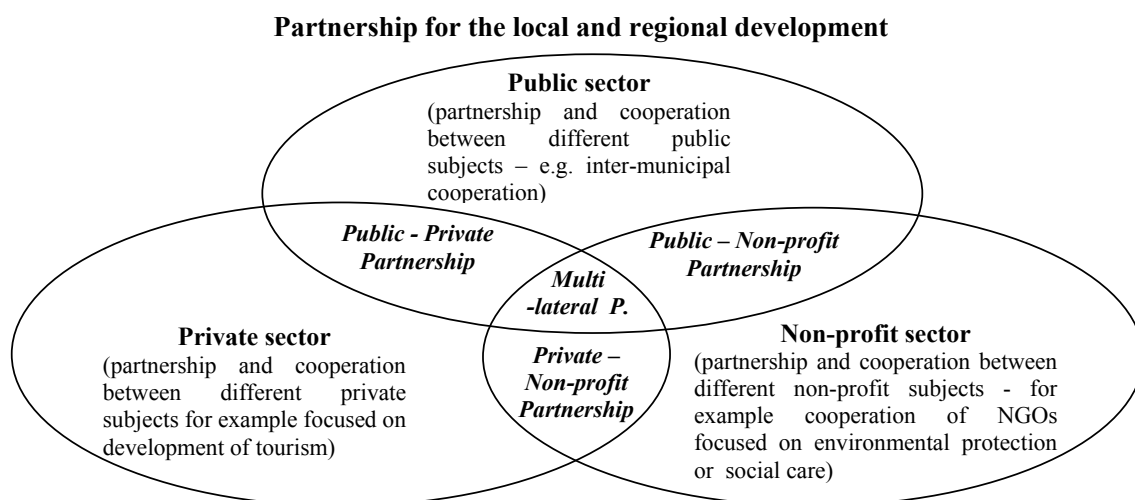
- a) **public sector** – including not only all institutions of the public government (e.g. municipal and regional authorities), but the public academic and research centres and other specialised public offices and institutions,
- b) **private sector** – is created especially by local business, small and medium size enterprises from the different branches,
- c) **non-profit sector** – is based on institutions and organisation, that are neither government nor business (e.g. NGOs, friendly societies, active citizens).

The successful and balanced territorial development is often threatened by the conflicts among the different groups of actors, because the interest and expectations about development differs. These differences could be not only among the above-mentioned groups of stakeholders but sometime in the same group as well. There could be clashes of interest between the different groups of entrepreneurs – for example companies, which are trying to develop alternative energies (e.g. wind, solar) in the landscape, have often conflicts with entrepreneurs operating in tourism. However, the most frequent conflicts are usually between the group of local inhabitants (they generally expect improvement of their conditions for regular life – e.g. services for citizens - basic schools, security, cleanness, environment protection) on the one side and the local entrepreneurs on the other side (they are especially focused on support of the commercial projects and they want to achieve financial profits). This way of commercial development is naturally often in clash of interest with plans and intentions of the other groups of actors (e.g. NGOs, local active citizens). The task of representatives of the public

government is very difficult because it is necessary to find a compromise and balance way of territorial development between the interests of different groups of actors. That is one of the most important reasons for the importance of the partnership and cooperation among the different groups of stakeholders.

Naturally the territorial cooperation could be implemented in many different ways and there are many kinds of partnerships in reality – according to our definition partnership for local and regional development includes all kinds of spatial cooperation which are necessary and important for achieving of the successful and balanced territorial development (see Fig. 1 below). It is necessary to emphasize that the partnership could be created not only at the same hierarchical level but there are important partnerships between stakeholders at the different hierarchical levels. The example of the partnership at the same hierarchical level could be for example inter-municipal cooperation, which is very popular and effective tool in many European countries (e.g. Hulst, Montfort, 2007; Denters, Rose, 2005; Svoboda, 2006; Vajdová, Čermák, Illner, 2006). The partnership between actors at the different hierarchical subject is very important as well – e.g. for successful local development project in Znojmo region it is necessary to create effective cooperation between local stakeholders and the subject at the different hierarchical levels (South Moravian Region authority, Regional Development Agency South Moravia, The Ministry for Regional Development CZ etc.). Moreover it is necessary to mention that Znojmo as a border region have very good presumptions for development of the trans-boundary cooperation (e.g. Jeřábek, Dokoupil, Havlíček, 2004; Cetkovský *et al.*, 2007).

This article is focused on the selected issues, which are connected with role of partnership for



1: Basic categorisation of partnership and cooperation

the solution of the afore-mentioned local problems in Znojmo region. Firstly, it is analysing the selected partnership important for development tourism activities in the case study area on the example of the concrete project – Moravian Wine Trails. Furthermore, it brings the discussion about the future possible objectives of cooperation in Znojmo region, which was created by means of the marketing tools – especially marketing research (public opinion research) and marketing communication (public relations). The opinions and expectations about development among different groups of local actors were identified by means of the above-mentioned methods. These research outputs could be important for local policy implementation because they could help to find a successful and balanced way of development for Znojmo region. The article brings only the selected and preliminary results of the project Partnership for local development – the detailed description of the already realised researches are available in the last chapter of Foret (2010).

Moravian Wine Trails – partnership as a tool in tourism development

The project Moravian Wine Trails is a very good example of importance of partnership and cooperation among different groups of subjects for local and regional development in the study area. This is a long-term project of development of viticulture and rural tourism in South Moravia, which was created thank to the partnership of subjects from all three above-mentioned sectors. The project has been implemented by the Czech Environmental Partnership Foundation in close collaboration with 280 wine-growing municipalities and with support of the other partners from private sector (e.g. Česká spořitelna, a. s.; Geodis, s. r. o.).

Within a few years of its existence many activities have been already realised – e.g. 1,090 km of cycling-trails were marked up, 11 tourist maps were published, 20 resting places for tourist were build up and Internet home pages of many subjects enterprising in this region were established. To support development of local small businesses, a CD “*How to do business along wine trails?*” was issued, several workshops for wine growers were organised and a study how to protect and preserve the architecture of small wine cellars was published. The socio-economic benefits of this cooperative project are directly associated with the respect to the landscape, preservation of local traditions, feasts and habits and with the renewal of old crafts. The new activities of the project, which are focused on development of „Wine-Cellar Lanes in South Moravia“, were co-financed by the European Union and the South Moravian Region.

It is necessary to emphasize that Znojmo region is important part of the whole project, because the main tourist route (the so-called backbone or “flag” trail) connects the towns of Znojmo and Uherské Hradiště (see red colour in Fig. 2). Its total length is 280 km and it is symbolically called the Moravian Wine Trail. Moreover, there is Znojmo Wine Trail (see deep green colour in Fig. 2) in the total length of 163 km. The very interesting is a fact that project Moravian Wine Trails incorporated the new activities from the local level to the system of existing activities at the higher hierarchical levels – there are connections to the already implemented international projects:

- a) **Prague – Vienna Greenways**, which has been established in 1992, is a corridor of trails and pathways for hikers, cyclists, riders and water sportsman that connecting these two important Central European capitals;



2: Map of wine trails and wine growing regions in South Moravia

b) Krakow – Moravia – Vienna Greenways, which was marked up in 2003, established trails, which pass through the most interesting localities between the Polish city of Krakow and the Austrian capital of Vienna.

However, there are not only positive effects connected with the project Moravian Wine Trails, but there are a few problematic points as well. Until now, this project has been considerably influenced by the fact that it was elaborated “at the table”. The result is that the interest of local people is relatively low; this concerns not only wine growers but also municipalities: in many municipalities the representatives of local administration are not aware of the fact that there is a cycling-trail in their locality with signposts, orientation tables, maps etc. Another, a closely related problem is the question how to effectively integrate Moravian Wine Trails system into the network of so-called microregions (groups of cooperating municipalities) and their other activities. The management of microregions seems to be the most important factor of future improvement of this project. There are sympathetic efforts to inform the public about individual localities, microregions and regions. Inhabitants try to revive and dust off old traditions, organise local festivals and promote their villages.

These efforts, however, should be supported not only by non-profit organisations of the type of Environmental Partnership or private subjects (e.g. Česká spořitelna, a.s.) but more strongly also by public governmental and regional bodies (South Moravian Regional Office, Viticulture Fund, universities etc.) because only in this way it will be possible to continue in the development of this important form of rural tourism and of the whole region. In spite of some mentioned problems or weak points, the project could be perceived as quite successful and it shows the importance of partnership for local and regional development of Znojmo region.

Future objectives of the partnership – results of two researches

The following part of article is focused on the selected problematic issues in Znojmo region which might be solved in future by means of partnership of different groups of stakeholders. The identification of the issues was implemented based on own research activities. The first research, which was focused on the visitors of Znojmo in the summer tourist period 2009, try to identify their detailed socio-economic profile – it means, from which location they came, which kind of transport they used, what was the main goal of their visit, and how they were satisfied. The interviews with visitors were realised during four month from July to September 2009 by students of The Private College of Economic Studies in Znojmo and the research sample was 1800 respondents. The second research was focused on perception of situation in Znojmo among local

inhabitants. In other words, the first research pays attention to the perception of the situation among the visitors, while the second research was dealing with opinions of local inhabitants.

Profile of visitor in summer tourist season 2009 in Znojmo town

Znojmo could be perceived from visitors' point of view as the important entrance gate for whole Znojmo region and that is main reason why the survey was implemented in this most important town of the whole study area. Concerning to the research results, the typical visitor of Znojmo in summer tourist season 2009:

- was usually younger (81 % respondents were younger than 45 years),
- had higher education (62 % with e-levels or university degree),
- came from South Moravian Region and from urban municipalities (72 %),
- arrived specially to Znojmo, which was the main goal of its travel (69 %), usually by car,
- travelled not alone (2/3), but with members of his family or friends,
- arrived to Znojmo because of recreation and tourism (48 %),
- his perception of town was positive (76 %), cultural and natural monuments and pubs were mostly appreciated.

The visitors arrived to Znojmo especially from the South Moravian Region or from the regions in close surroundings (Vysocina Region, Zlin Region) or from capital Prague. Therefore the representatives of local government in Znojmo and other subjects operating in tourism should focused on improvement of publicity and advertising both in the other region of the Czech Republic and in the neighbouring regions in Austria. The implementation of the partnerships supporting projects and activities based on trans-boundary cooperation seems to be very useful.

However, the research discovered the different serious problems as well. The respondents especially criticised the town orientation system, the neglected social and transport infrastructure – especially shops, bus and railway station. The investments should be primary focused on bus station, because buses have the higher frequency of use among visitors than trains. The very interesting finding is the fact that the most positive evaluation was connected with the nature. The natural landscape was perceived among respondents extremely positive and there is influence of the Podyji National Park representing a well-preserved forest of the river Dyje in the border region between the Czech Republic and Austria. There could be another potential for new development of tourism activities because Znojmo is – as was already mentioned – one of the most optimal starting points for trips to this National Park.

I: *Comparison of changes in Znojmo – the answers on the question: “How the situation in Znojmo has been changed for last four years electoral term?”*

Answer	Year 2006	Year 2010
To better (improvement)	55.0%	49.0%
To worse (worsening)	13.0%	17.0%
Same (stable situation)	24.0%	24.0%
I do not know	8.0%	10.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

II: *Perception of the life conditions in Znojmo among the local inhabitants*

Category	Znojmo town	
	Positive perception	Negative perception
Cleanness	81.0%	19.0%
Public transport	76.0%	24.0%
Culture opportunities	67.0%	33.0%
Sport opportunities	60.0%	40.0%
Network of shops	64.0%	36.0%
Environment	76.0%	24.0%
Health care	56.0%	44.0%
Job opportunities	15.0%	85.0%
Local government	61.0%	39.0%
General style of life	85.0%	15.0%

Perception of situation in Znojmo among local inhabitants

The first part of the second survey, which was realised in spring 2006 by the students of The Private College of Economic Studies in Znojmo, included the question how the town Znojmo was changed during last four years. The respondents from the local inhabitants evaluated the development of Znojmo in 2006 – at the end of four years electoral term of local political representatives. The same methodology was implemented in March 2010 – again in the year of municipal elections. The comparison of the results contains the Tab. I.

The results show that the positive evaluation was prevailing both in 2006 and in 2010. Almost half of respondents in 2010 perceived, that Znojmo has been change to better for the previous four years. However, the share of positive answers was slightly higher (6%) in 2006 than in 2010. Additionally, the more respondents (4%) found worsening the situation in 2010 in comparison to 2006. It is evident that the evaluation of the first four years electoral term 2002–2006 was slightly better than perception of the second period 2006–2010.

Perception of life conditions in Znojmo among local inhabitants

The last part of second survey, which was focused on life conditions in Znojmo, was realised by Research and Advising Centre of The Private College of Economic Studies in Znojmo in March 2010. The sample of survey included 560 local adult respondents in the age category (18+). This

marketing research was realised by means of the interviews with respondents and the results are showed in the Tab. II.

The afore-mentioned results show that the problems in Znojmo are especially associated with lack of job opportunities (85% of respondents) and with the health care system (44%). Naturally this is logical output because Znojmo region belongs in the Czech Republic to the areas with highest unemployment rate. Therefore the future partnership of local stakeholders should be focused especially on these two areas. The solution of unemployment rate in current difficult economic circumstances is, naturally, a real challenge for all participated groups of actors! On the other side, Znojmo can offer – according to opinion of its local inhabitants – other values, which are usually positively evaluated and very important – e.g. cleanness, environment, and especially fact, that the local inhabitants appreciate the local style of life.

CONCLUSIONS

The partial analyses of the project Moravian Wine Trails showed that the successful and balanced spatial development at local level in the conditions of the Czech Republic often depends on close and effective partnership, cooperation and communication of many groups of the different stakeholders from private, public and non-profit sector. In spite of some problems or weak points connected with this project, it could be perceived as quite successful. Naturally the local groups of actors should try to find the answer to the question how to

effectively integrate Moravian Wine Trails system into the network of so-called microregions (groups of cooperating municipalities) and their other activities. The improvements of inter-municipal cooperation and increase of quality management at microregional level seems to be the most important factor of the future successful and balanced development.

The results of the first marketing researches showed that the representatives of local government in Znojmo region and other subjects operating in tourism should in future focused on improvement

of publicity and advertising both in the other region of the Czech Republic and in neighbouring regions in Austria. It would be very useful to deepen the trans-boundary cooperation within the scope of existing Euroregion South Moravia-Austrian Weinviertel-Western Slovakia. The second realised survey identified that the most problematic issues connected with Znojmo town are lack of job opportunities and some problems with the health care system. Naturally, the local stakeholders should pay special attention to find successful and balanced solutions of these serious issues.

SUMMARY

The article is based on the presumption that the successful and balanced spatial development at the all hierarchical levels (local, regional, national and international) is strongly influenced by the effective partnership, cooperation and communication among the different groups of the stakeholders. It contains the own definition of the partnership for local and regional development and the basic categorisation of the different types of partnerships, which play significant role within the studied issue. The importance of partnership and cooperation is analysed by means of the concrete development project already implemented on the territory of the case study area (it is the project of so called Moravian Wine Trails).

The partial analyses of the selected development project show that the successful and balanced local development in the Czech Republic usually depends on the creation of the effective partnership and cooperation among all involved groups of actors from public, private and non-profit sector. In spite of the fact that the studied project was associated with some problems, it can be perceived as good example of positive effects of cooperation for successful and balanced spatial development. However, there is a important question how to join together the system of Moravian Wine Trails with the network of the cooperating municipalities. Therefore it is very important for future regional development to deepen the existing intermunicipal cooperation and to use more sophisticated and updated tools of territorial management as well.

Analyses of the results of the first realised marketing research show that the representatives of the public administration and other subjects involved in the tourism should pay attention to the improvements of the publicity – especially with focus both on more remote regions in the Czech Republic (with Prague exemption) and on the cross-border regions in Austria. Therefore it would be very useful to deepen the trans-boundary cooperation within the scope of existing Euroregion South Moravia-Austrian Weinviertel-Western Slovakia. The second realised marketing survey identified that the most problematic issues connected with Znojmo town are lack of job opportunities and some serious problems with the health care system. Naturally, all involved stakeholders should pay special attention to find successful and balanced solutions of these serious issues.

Acknowledgements

This paper was elaborated within the framework of the research project of the Mendel University in Brno, No. MSM 6215648904 called Czech economy in processes of integration and globalisation and development of agrarian sector and sector of services under new conditions of European integrated market as a part of solving the topical specialization No 04 "Development trends in agribusiness, formation of segmented markets within commodity chains and food networks in the process of integration and globalization and change of agricultural policy".

REFERENCES:

- CETKOVSKÝ, S., KLUSÁČEK, P., MARTINÁT, S., ZAPLETALOVÁ, J., 2007: Some aspects of cross-border cooperation in euroregions of the Czech Republic, *Moravian Geographical Reports*. Vol. 15, No. 1 (2007), p. 43–55, ISSN 1210-8812.
- DENTERS, B., ROSE, L. E. (eds.), 2005: *Comparing Local Governance. Trends and Developments*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 293 s.
- FORET, M., 2008: *Marketingová komunikace*. 2. aktualizované vydání, Computer Press, Brno 2008, 454 s. + CD, ISBN 80-251-1041-9.

- FORET, M., 2009: Marketingový výzkum pro městský úřad. Sborník příspěvků z mezinárodní vědecké konference Region v rozvoji společnosti, Brno 15. 10. 2009. 1. vydání, Mendelova zemědělská a lesnická univerzita v Brně, ISBN 978-80-7375-330-6, s. 73–78.
- FORET, M., 2010: Marketing pro začátečníky. 2. vydání, Computer Press, Brno 2010, 178 s., ISBN 978-80-251-1942-6.
- HULST, R., MONTFORT, A., 2007: Inter-municipal cooperation in Europe, Springer, 238 s.
- JEŘÁBEK, M., DOKOUPIL, J., HAVLÍČEK, T., 2004: České pohraničí – bariéra nebo prostor zprostředkování? Praha: Academia, 296 s.
- PEET, R., HARTWICK, E., 2009: Theories of Development. Second edition. New York: The Guilford Press, 324 s.
- SVOBODA, K., 2006: Spolupráce obcí v nových členských státech Evropské unie, Veřejná správa, Roč. 17, č. 32, Příloha, s. I–V.
- VAJDOVÁ, Z., ČERMÁK, D., ILLNER, M., 2006: Autonomie a spolupráce: důsledky ustavení obecního zřízení v roce 1990, Sociologický ústav Akademie věd České republiky, Praha, 108 s.
- VANĚOVÁ, A., FORET, M., 2008: Partnerství pro místní rozvoj – Partnerstvo pre miestny rozvoj. In: Sborník příspěvků 4. mezinárodní vědecké konference Nové trendy – nové nápady 2008, 1. vydání, Nové trendy – nové nápady 2009. 1. vydání, Znojmo, Soukromá vysoká škola ekonomická Znojmo, s. r. o., s. 410–419, ISBN 978-80-87314-04-3.

Address

prof. PhDr. Miroslav Foret, CSc., Mgr. Petr Klusáček, Ph.D., Ústav regionálního rozvoje a veřejné správy, Mendelova univerzita v Brně, třída Generála Píky 7, 613 00 Brno, Česká republika, e-mail: foret@mendelu.cz, klusacek@node.mendelu.cz

