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IDENTIFYING ENDOGENOUS RURAL DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS IN THE GREEK COUNTRYSIDE

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ABSTRACT:

The aim of this paper* is to construct measures for the identification and strengthening of endogenous development processes which are experienced in the Greek countryside. Since endogenous development processes should be specific to national, regional, or even local needs and capacity, such measures must be flexible enough to enable them to be applied with equal success to the development of socio-economically different regions.

The first section is devoted to a brief description of the Greek economy, in order to illustrate the magnitude of the disparities among Greek regions and to draw attention to the potentially uneven development processes experienced by different regions within the country.

The next section presents a review of past and on-going rural development experiences in an attempt to detect the influence those historical events, social attitudes and institutional arrangements have had on the effectiveness of policies for rural development in Greece.

The third section attempts to identify development practices of endogenous character. Central to this task is the premise that there can be no unique and pre-defined optimum endogenous development process. Such an interpretation would be of limited value. Thus, a broader conceptualisation of endogenous rural development is adopted here. It is proposed that a search for an existing or potential *local comparative advantage related to the primary, secondary or the tertiary sector* can open a realistic and feasible development pathway for many rural areas. Case studies for different rural communities reveal that such local comparative advantages do exist.

Finally, a set of measures for strengthening endogenous development practices is proposed. The lack of an integrated approach to rural development which has been prevalent so far and the implementation of uniform policy measures, slightly adapted to local conditions, have both contributed to the failure to achieve the expected results. Thus, it is important that a new approach to rural development be adopted and that a framework be established for strengthening endogenous development practices.

KEYWORDS:

Rural Development, Regional Development, Agricultural Development Development Projects, Greece.

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A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE GREEK ECONOMY

The interlinked social, economic and environmental problems currently faced by rural areas demand the adoption of a new, integrated approach to rural development. Wide differences between rural and urban areas as well as within rural Greece, standards of living, employment levels, and income all pinpoint problems relating to the rural development process which has been followed to date.

In general, most regions in the country still retain a strong agricultural character. Despite the continuous restructuring of the Greek economy during the last 30-35 years, the agricultural sector continues to provide an occupation for 20.8% of the economically active population (1994), while it also contributes by 13.7% (in 1993) to the GDP. The relatively high percentage of agricultural labour is partly explained by the poor development of other sectors of the economy and the consequent weakness where the creation of new job opportunities is concerned (Glitsos, 1988). Despite a dramatic exodus of labour from the agricultural sector in the 1970s and the 1980s, Eurostat data for 1994 show that 20.8% of the population is employed in the agricultural sector, and 23.6% in the industrial sector, while 55.5% of the economically active population is engaged in the provision of services¹. The national figures, however, conceal differences in the performance of the economy at prefectural level.

The regional development status of a country is the outcome of a combination of

¹ In 1970 the percentages for the primary, the secondary and the tertiary sector were 40.8%, 25.0% and 34.2% respectively, while in 1980 the corresponding percentages were 30.3%, 30.2% and 39.5%.

historically-applied development policies and the specific features of a regional economy. In the case of Greece, the impact of regional specificity on development is manifested by the differences in the rates of growth among regions. Natural endowments, historical developments, institutional arrangements and human attitudes have contributed to this differentiation process (OECD, 1975).

The most important characteristic of regional development in Greece is its unevenness, expressed by gaps in growth between urban and rural regions as well as among rural areas. A recent study concerning rural desertification in Greece (Dimara & Skuras, 1996) distinguishes two poles of growth - the highly developed urban regions and the rural desertified ones. According to the typology used² only the prefectures of Attiki and Thessaloniki (category A, Table 1) can be characterised as "large urban areas" since they achieve high scores where population density, population growth, and income and employment levels are concerned. By contrast, a relatively large number of Greek prefectures (15.6% of the total, category E, Table 1) are characterised by a severe desertification which it is difficult to reverse. The remaining 80.3% of the prefectures in Greece lie somewhere in-between. Most of them, however, are characterised as predominantly rural.

² More specifically, four factors were used in a cluster analysis in order to obtain some sets of homogeneous areas. These factors were: a) demographic indicators, b) economic indicators, c) changes in the demographic and the economic indicators and d) social and prosperity indicators (Dimara & Skuras, 1996).

Table 1. A typology of rural desertification in Greece.

Category	Characterisation	Prefectures
Category A	Large Urban Areas	Attiki, Thessaloniki
Category B	Problematic Urban Areas	Achaia, Euboea, Chalkidiki, Kastoria, Magnesia
Category C	Rural Dynamic Areas	Etoloakarnania, Ilia, Fthiotis, Argolis, Lakonia, Messinia, Karditsa, Trikala, Imathia, Pella, Serres, Rodopi, Evros, Xanthi, Lasithi, Korinthia, Arta, Thesprotia, Preveza, Rethymni, Pierria
Category D	Rural Dynamic with Increasing Secondary Sector Areas	Larisa, Iraklio, Boeotia, Ioannina, Drama, Kavala, Kilkis, Kozani, Lesvos
Category E	Rural Static Regions (desertified regions)	Evritania, Phocis, Arkadia, Chios, Levkas, Samos, Grevena, Florina
Category F	Rural Static Regions with Tourism Development (desertified regions)	Kerkyra, Dodecanese, Chania, Kyklades, Zakynthos, Kefalonia

Source: Dimara & Skuras, 1996

Apart from the "large urban areas", "problematic urban areas" (category B) are dominated by an urban centre that is under pressure, have experienced growth in the secondary and tertiary sector, have a stagnant primary sector and exhibit high unemployment levels. On the other hand, "rural dynamic areas" (category C) do not present any sign of desertification, have a very dynamic agricultural sector and low levels of unemployment. Regions in category D are characterised by increasing secondary and tertiary sectors and an increase in employment in the non-primary sectors of the economy. "Rural static regions" (category E) are problematic rural areas dominated by desertification. These areas demonstrate high emigration rates and do not have the ability to absorb rural migrants. Those in category F are desertified regions which, however, present a high rate of development in tourism. However, tourist activities may or may not be adequate to reverse the desertification process.

According to the above typology, the term "rural" only provides a vague picture of the economic activities that take place within these areas. Nevertheless, rural areas can be further diversified according to their

potential to develop a) the secondary and/or the tertiary sector of the economy, and b) the agricultural sector itself. In the first case, profitable activities -other than farming- can help in the development of rural areas. As is the case for many regions in Greece (categories D and F, table 1), desertified rural areas may experience growth through the promotion of tourism or manufacturing activities. In the second case, differences in land and labour productivity, the degree of mechanisation, the flexibility in adopting new production techniques or in specializing in new products etc all affect the related economic and social indicators (Panagiotou, 1982).

It should be mentioned that a typology of regions at prefectural level may be inadequate, since it may mask intra-prefectural differences. For example, although according to the classification presented by Dimara & Skuras (1996) Boeotia and Fthiotis fall under categories C and D respectively, at the intra-prefectural level not all communities in Boeotia and Pthiotis present similar levels of land and labour productivity (Panagiotou, 1982).

Historically, in most cases in Greece, the policies applied have not been

successfully combined with specific regional features. State intervention has been characterised by a lack of measures designed to eliminate differences between the regions of the country (Panagiotou, 1982).

The prefectures differ in the morphology of the land, their endowment in human and natural resources, the availability of basic infrastructure etc. As a result, some regions are more able than others to take advantage of the development policies that have been applied. The latter have proven to be less suitable to or completely inappropriate for less-favoured regions with low agricultural productivity, as is the case for many areas in Greece.

1. PATHS AND EXPERIENCES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GREECE

A theoretical approach to development that accounted for the specific features of rural Greece was presented by K. Karavidas (1931). First, he distinguished six basic socio-economic formations reflecting different ways and standards of living. These six formations were the outcome of different combinations of labour and natural resources. Then, he studied the basic structure and the functions of each formation with reference to the following main criteria: a) the population density (the demographic aspects), b) the internal dynamic or the capability of each formation to reproduce its human and natural resources, c) the way credit and finance were organised and d) the relations of each formation with the markets.

Karavidas strongly criticised the development theories dominant at the time, and especially the modernisation approach, for espousing and focusing on a continuous process of change. Instead, he advocated a

different approach to development, founded on the specific features and the endogenous dynamics of the Greek rural area (Vegleris *et al.*, 1990). He concluded that a new development path should be followed, combining technological progress and capitalist specialisation with economic and cultural autonomy. With respect to the agricultural sector, he argued that the empowerment of communities and of local co-operatives can better serve capitalist development.

According to his critics, Karavidas' work was weak where the provision of a thorough determination of the means and the way by which agricultural communities could be organised on a co-operative basis was concerned. His theory was based on the assumption that the necessary radical changes would be initiated and realised by State intervention. Nevertheless, he proposed a different path to development, aiming at maintaining rural population and revitalising rural areas as social, cultural and economic entities.

Further analysis of, and research on, the four criteria used by Karavidas could form the basis for designing a solid framework for endogenous rural development. Karavidas challenged the conventional approaches to development and promoted a new dialogue on the impasses stemming from current rural development practices (Mouzelis, 1978). The arguments supported by Karavidas, however, were never actually translated into policy measures.

The measures applied during the post-war period provide an indication of the goals set by the State and of the direction given to the process of development. After the Second World War, a debate on the appropriate development strategies

flourished among scientists and politicians. More specifically, this debate focused on whether the agricultural or the industrial sector should be the key to the country's development process. Others supported the integrated development of both sectors, justified by the invaluable interactions for mutual advancement between agriculture and industry (Maraveyas, 1992).

According to the prevailing internal socio-economic relations and international circumstances, emphasis was placed on the ability of Greece to pursue the goal of industrialisation, on the costs involved and on the selection of agents that would undertake such initiatives. Eventually, the interested parties agreed upon a development strategy based on industrialisation, originating in private initiatives. Therefore, any design of rural development policy had to support this development model. Rural development policy was designed to promote continuous capital accumulation through agricultural price policy. On the other hand, the structural policy of agriculture was neglected to the degree that persistent structural problems of Greek agriculture were not addressed. As Maraveyas stated (1992), the development path adopted in Greece constituted a system with internal cohesion, in favour of industrialisation, and agriculture was not given the first priority. It was a path based on the experience of other, already developed countries.

The economic and social dynamic of that era gave agriculture the role of the "complementary" sector in the process of development, and agricultural policy was designed accordingly. Agricultural development was desirable only to the extent that it supported the development of other sectors of the economy. In brief, the

main goals of agricultural policy were the following:

1. An increase in agricultural incomes through improvements in productivity
2. Price stabilisation
3. An increase in agricultural exports and self-sufficiency in basic primary products.

The goals were to be attained by means of (1) a prices and incomes policy and (2) investments and a structural policy. The prices and incomes policy would keep the price of basic food products at relatively low levels, while structural policy and investments would promote productivity, control the exodus of farm labour and enhance the operation of domestic markets.

Gradually, the agricultural sector was modernised and agricultural incomes were improved. Nevertheless, the confrontation of the structural problems in Greek agriculture was neglected. As a result, issues such as the small average size and the fragmentation of agricultural holdings, low productivity, and the ageing agricultural population have not been dealt with successfully. Simultaneously, the massive exodus of labour from agriculture during the 1960s and 1970s aggravated these problems and added new ones stemming from rural desertification.

After the accession of Greece to the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981, the national policies mentioned above continued to apply, since they were in conformity with the framework of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Nevertheless, the persistent structural problems of Greek agriculture had already decreased the competitiveness of the sector. Although Greek governments adopted policies to give further support to the income

of farmers, no serious attempt was made to restructure the sector or to promote investments.

Under the new international situation of expanding trade liberalisation (GATT), the reform of the CAP, the problems of structural surpluses, environmental degradation, unemployment, desertification etc, the inadequacy of the policies applied was evident. Agricultural policy could not operate as the only means for promoting development in rural areas nor could it be thought of as the equivalent of rural development policy. Greece never adopted an integrated rural development policy and depended on regional development policies to achieve partial goals (Skuras, 1996). The approach towards rural development was sectoral, not integrated, based on special programs that were implemented separately by different planning agencies. In recent years, it was realised that such an approach is neither sufficient nor efficient. Objectives of high priority (i.e. rural tourism, ecological tourism, environmental conservation) were neglected.

Since her accession, Greece has adopted both the regional and rural development policies of the EEC. Following the reforms introduced in 1989, the whole country has been classified as an Objective 1 region (lagging/ less developed). Two important approaches to integrated development have been attempted under EEC administration by means of a) the Integrated Mediterranean Programs (IMPs) and b) the LEADER I initiative. Though rather different in their structure, both have more or less the same objectives. The IMPs are a clear top-down approach to the integrated development of certain areas, while the LEADER I initiative is a bottom-up approach, attempting to organise local

actors towards the achievement of integrated development in certain rural areas (Skuras, 1996).

With LEADER II, which followed LEADER I, the Commission proposed that rural areas should begin to look for new solutions to their problems, giving priority to actions and investment programs that fulfil such criteria as innovation, resource mobility and tangibility of results (Skuras, 1996).

Mention should also be made of an additional element that characterises the theoretical and political approaches to rural development in Greece that have been developed so far. Local actors have shown their inability to become an organic part of the decision-making development process, and top-down approaches to rural development have prevailed.

2. IDENTIFYING ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT PARADIGMS IN THE GREEK COUNTRYSIDE

Within a broader conceptualisation of endogenous rural development, however, theories which acknowledge regional specificity as a cornerstone of planning development are again becoming central. In that sense, the study of regional specialisation, deriving from the specific resource endowments (which determine long-term production) and the specific socio-economic features, may reveal the existence of local comparative advantages that could promote self-sustained growth in a locality.

Below, the outcome of three studies will be presented as conclusions from the Greek experience of development, and as "proof" that a broader conceptualisation of endogenous rural development is needed.

A study by Panagiotou (1982) showed that the same measures for modernisation did not have the same development effect

on all communities. Since communities differ where the availability of land and water is concerned, and therefore in potential land and labour productivity, it follows that some communities could adopt capital-intensive processes of agricultural production, while the development of others would be hampered by structural impediments.

Louloudis, Martinos and Panagiotou (1984), in their study of five communities in the prefecture of Ioannina, stressed the lack of policies for strengthening production activities in less-favoured areas. These communities relied only on price support policies in order to achieve a reasonable income level. Consequently, income declined gradually and led to desertification and marginalisation of these areas. While local markets were shrinking and the local economy was impoverished, structural measures were needed in order to mobilise resources that were left unexploited.

Studying the various uses of land in the prefecture of Chania, Androulaki and Kromidakis (1995) stressed that the region exhibited a false profile of desertification that did not correspond to its actual potential. The results of low productivity in agriculture in the area were outweighed by the outcome of a well-established tourist industry. Nevertheless, co-operation and co-existence of these two sectors could provide a sound basis for long-term development in the region.

Consequently, the policy measures necessary for encouraging endogenous development should be based on the experience that has affected and determined the development potentials of a specific setting. Thus, a typology of regions which aims at the identification of areas with similar structural problems and potentials is needed.

Next, case studies that were undertaken in various rural regions of Greece (Louloudis, Martinos & Panagiotou, 1984; Androulaki & Kromidakis, 1995) will be briefly reviewed in an attempt to identify endogenous development practices in Greece. It should be mentioned that none of these studies followed the endogenous rural development approach. Nevertheless, the results obtained focused on the potential for development of specific rural areas and can thus be used in an endogenous rural development approach.

A study based in five communities in Ioannina (Louloudis, Martinos & Panagiotou, 1984) revealed that a lack of infrastructure and a lack of economic activities alternative or complementary to agriculture promoted the gradual depopulation and marginalisation of these areas.

Studying land use in the district of Selino (Chania), Androulaki & Kromidakis (1995) revealed that differentiated development patterns could provide the only possible solution for promoting the development of all regions.

In the paragraphs that follow, several examples of endogenous development practices in Greece are presented.

More specifically, the operation of the cheese industry in Kefalochori (Ioannina) could be identified as an endogenous development practice. Using locally-produced milk, this industry provides employment opportunities which could be further enhanced if exports of the final product were promoted. Moreover, there is the potential of the establishment of a wool industry, thus strengthening the operation of the local market since it could again be linked to local primary production. There is also the potential of developing winter

tourism, aimed especially at the attraction of hunters.

The production of traditional handicrafts in Ano Pedina (Ioannina) could also be identified as an endogenous practice. Local women operate a small enterprise which provides an additional source of income. Given that old churches in the area attract a lot of tourists, the small manufacturing industry has a local market for its products. In addition, the traditional knowledge of handicrafts could be used to establish a training centre for women from other communities. In the case of Elafotopos (Ioannina), however, the potential for producing traditional handicrafts and for attracting tourists is weakened, at present, by the lack of the necessary infrastructure.

The communities of Kato Pedina and Plagia (Ioannina) can be characterised as less-favoured. Plagia is situated in a mountainous region, in which agriculture prevails. Due to structural problems, productivity is low, although the situation could improve if infrastructure improved and local farmers proceeded to common use of the existing machinery. Intensification of agriculture and especially of livestock husbandry seems to be the main path to the development of Kato Pedina, while apiculture and poultry-keeping constitute alternative production activities.

In the case of Palaeochora (Chania), there is potential for linking primary production to tourist activities. Given that a large number of tourists visit Palaeochora each summer, a better-organized distribution channel to local shops and hotels could further enhance the local market. If the conditions of access (i.e. the roads) between Palaeochora and Kandanos (Chania) improved, the small number of medium-sized manufacturing industries that operate

in Kandanos could have a market for the foodstuffs they manufacture (e.g. olive oil and cheese). The beautiful scenery and the archaeological sites in the district of Selino could be promoted as tourist attractions.

Common elements in the examples mentioned above justify the characterisation of the practices as endogenous and able to provide income and employment opportunities to rural residents. Most activities use local human and natural resources, thus reinforcing the local markets and economy and alleviating the difficulties of connection to other national or foreign markets. Thus, these practices could be utilised towards the maintenance of the population in certain areas, and the achievement of social and economic stability.

Policy intervention in these areas has been such that local resources were mobilised. Nevertheless, the efficient use of local resources was mainly the result of local initiatives, since local actors were directly involved in the process of developing their own region, thus guaranteeing a self-sustained process of growth.

3. MEASURES FOR STRENGTHENING ENDOGENOUS DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES

In accordance with the theoretical framework presented in the previous section and the attempt to identify endogenous development practices, policy measures should be promoted in order to strengthen the existing endogenous development practices and to create the necessary conditions for the appearance of similar practices. The ultimate goal of such measures would be the successful confrontation of the current problems of rural areas.

A holistic approach to current impasses would require a balanced interaction between internal and external developmental forces in rural areas. This way, co-ordinated actions between the State and local agents could promote the gradual integration of rural areas into the overall economy of the country.

Measures for strengthening and establishing endogenous development practices may relate to:

- Infrastructure, in order to improve access to rural areas, and especially to remote and less-favoured ones. Rural desertification is partly the outcome of low standards of living stemming from a lack of infrastructure (roads, telecommunications, health and education services, etc.). Moreover, infrastructure is an essential requisite for access to markets and for the successful operation of any economic activity.
- Efficiency in the agricultural sector. Specific programs providing individual support measures for the practice of agriculture in areas with unfavourable structures (small average size of farms, fragmented land, irrigation problems etc.) raise farming costs and weaken the competitiveness of agricultural products. Apart from structural adjustments, serious steps should be taken towards the establishment of joint farming groups (with the collaboration of farmers), and the achievement of economies of scale.
- Diversification of production systems. For example, production should follow the dictates of market forces while creating the conditions for economic viability with respect to the environment. In accordance with Community rules, organic farming relates to various crop-farming practices that protect the environment and promote sustainable agricultural development. It could be particularly important for the sustainability of small farms in those regions or areas where major natural handicaps impair the competitiveness of farming. These areas include, for example, mountainous areas, less-favoured areas and Mediterranean areas where the establishment of viable conventional agriculture is hampered by the lack of water, naturally poor soil, and inefficient farming structures.
- Economic efficiency of local markets, in order to achieve greater and better distribution of income in rural areas. In any given area a network of co-operation between local processors and local consumers can be established, in order to promote direct consumption of local products by local consumers. A food distribution circuit could be seen as the result of the extension of farming to the food chain. In certain areas, this could imply the establishment of a linkage between farmers and local consumers. Such a circuit could constitute a challenge to the traditional notion of a 'chain' of enterprises which represent successive phases in the processing of uniform products.
- Other activities, based on the potential of rural areas to develop the secondary or the tertiary sector of the economy, besides agriculture. These activities may or may not be linked directly to farming. For example, small industries for the processing of

agricultural products could be established (e.g. the cheese industry in Kefalochori) and agro-tourism could also contribute to the development of many areas, provided that access and appropriate accommodation facilities are available. Moreover, promotion of small, family handicraft businesses specialising in textiles and other products in areas such as Elafotopos and Ano Pedina could provide a supplementary income to residents of rural areas, especially to women. New products such as honey could also be produced. Activities concerned with environmental protection should be promoted in many less-favoured mountainous regions. Energy-saving activities and waste-control industries could be promoted simultaneously.

This list only gives an indication of the steps towards the strengthening of an existing local comparative advantage, and was drawn from examples found in the literature concerning Greece. In any case, intervention policies should be designed and implemented so as to strengthen the interest of local groups, by promoting local initiatives and the involvement of local resources in development projects.

Increased power in the hands of local authorities could enable local control of a development project, since the close social relationships in rural areas would facilitate this task. Nevertheless, the instance of patronage between the rural population and the local or central political authority should not be underestimated. Such relations have resulted in the narrow, self-orientated behaviour of Greek farmers (Kasimis *et al.*, 1991); it would be difficult to bring about a reverse in this behaviour unless decision-making processes involved more people.

Guidelines for selecting measures aimed at the enforcement of endogenous development practices should be based on assertion of the following:

- The role of State and national institutes in promoting self-sustained growth in rural areas
- The role of non-governmental organisations and local agencies in promoting development
- The potential to design an institutional framework for supporting the activities and the initiatives of the aforementioned organisations
- The role of credit and finance services in promoting development
- The possibility of effective co-ordination of rural and regional development policies
- The feasibility of and perspective for technological advancement (environmentally friendly technologies) and environmental conservation
- The development of human capital
- Traditional practices and methods of production
- Access for all to information and the appropriate infrastructure.

A common goal, therefore, would be to eliminate regional difficulties by developing activities which promote regional economic and social stability.

CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary issues of rural development appear to be case-specific. Nevertheless, within this overwhelming heterogeneity of development patterns, self-sustained practices can be identified as evolving from a balanced interaction

between developmental forces. State intervention policies, local agencies and the available local, human and natural resources, all have an influence on the structure and the evolution of rural areas.

The endogenous rural development approach adopted here is founded on this specificity. It entails patterns of growth that promote the progressive integration of rural areas with the rest of the economy.

The examples used in this paper reveal that the policies of intervention of State or local agencies should enhance

elements of specificity, instead of the uniformity previously espoused in rural development patterns. Thus, rural areas should adopt the process of development that is best suited for them and supported by locally available resources.

Research is needed in order to identify areas that have similar problems and unexplored potential. Such a task may necessitate the construction of a typology of Greek rural areas, according to both their present level of development and their future potential.

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