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***“Local Development Model applied to a Chocolate Industry in Pozoblanco
(Córdoba, Spain)”***

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Abstract: In this paper we propose to bring up the implications of a theoretical framework about local development model in relation to a chocolate industry located in Pozoblanco (Córdoba, Spain). Specifically we try to recover the activity of one of the oldest chocolate industry in Europe (dates back to 1815) designing a development model at different levels. First we will briefly describe the social, economical, labour and cultural context of Pozoblanco. Then we give details of our intervention that tries (1) To recover the principal activity of the industry and to promote its diversification as the only way to keep the business on the labour market; (2) To design a development model orientated to facilitate people under-represented in the local workforce or actually facing barriers to get into work; and (3) To place the industry in the economical, labour, social and cultural context of Pozoblanco. Finally we specify the key elements to achieve these aims.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

It is important to tackle the employment and the territory from a dynamic and a complex perspective. Specifically from a labour point of view this matter demands an identification of the territory and a reconnaissance of its essentials characteristics by the actors. Furthermore it is mainly important the action and/or reaction of these actors in relation to those features of the territory. So where we can find dynamism we can also state that there is complexity³⁰ and consequently systemic thinking. A territorial approach always takes into account these interactions as different parts of a whole.

According to organisational recursiveness³¹ (Morin, E., 1995), every territory it's a living entity. It can be considered as a reality that shapes and at the same time it is being shaped. This idea it's upheld by the ability of the territory to maintain itself. Different authors as Capra, F. (1998) and Maturana, H. and Varela, F.J. (1987) referred to this issue with the term *autopoiesis*. Literally means "auto (self)-creation" and they define it as a network of processes of production of components which through their interactions and transformations continuously regenerate and realize the network of processes (relations) that produced them (Capra, F., 1998). The self-production of the territory considered as a system brings up fluctuations of certainties and uncertainties, and evolutions and perturbations. And this is how the territory increases its complexity and finally gets more autonomy to make its own decisions and manage them.

At a first moment we must not see this increase from a positivist perspective. In fact we are talking about increase of knowledge but also about the ability to distinguish relevant knowledge from the other considered irrelevant. Learning must be always linked to the ability of discarding ideas and experiences that won't contribute to maturity.

In this reflection of territory, we can also state that every intention of development needs a certain level of development previously achieved. The development of a territory generates more autonomy to resolve situations and challenges. But new problems, situations and challenges emerge in the course of time and demand a new level of autonomy. In this paradoxical reality the territory tries to seize upon external opportunities and bring them in harmony with its own resources (Florio, M., 1996) to create new structures.

The self-production of the territory as a system it's also associated with the ability of reflecting about its organisational structures (self-organisation and self-regeneration). Finally with these actions we are able to obtain different strategies to facilitate the territorial development.

The territory as a *nonlinear system* (characterized by the elements adding up to more [or less] than the sum of the parts) reaches a state of self-regulation and therefore increases its self-management. In this point the territory is able to practice good governance.

³⁰ The term complexity refers to a network contingencies, actions, interactions, statements and chances that conforms our social reality (Morin, E., 1995).

³¹ Following Morin, E. (1995) organisational recursiveness is a process where products and effects are at the same time causes and producers of what it been made.

Governance includes several forms of citizen participation. These come from different social and economical agents. In a partnership context previously established participation is promoted through decision making processes and this fact facilitates territorial intelligence and governance based on the rationality, coherence and appropriateness of every action.

Territorial governance implies changes in the way we afford the design, management and evaluation of a policy (employment policy in this case). It refers to a kind of social governance and it's usually described as a coordination process among networks of territorial agents (Kooiman, J., 2003; Jordan, A. and Scout, A., 2006). Specifically Benz, A. (2004)³² identifies territorial governance with coordinated interactions of actors under an institutionalized system of rules. Therefore territory is the result of a co-construction of territorial agents. Rhodes, R.A.W. (1997) clarifies the character of these actors identifying territorial governance as a process where public actors share power with private actors (social and economical actors).

Miedes, B. (2007: 49) highlighted different strategies to improve territorial governance:

1. Establishment of a framework of responsibilities among different levels of governance and different territorial actors.
2. Institutionalization of guidelines of how actors could work in partnership context (specifically in the way of exchanging and sharing information).
3. Analysis of strategies taken and evaluation of decision making processes.
4. Development of instruments to facilitate coordination and the coherence of strategies.

According to all these reflections we conclude saying that territory and territorial actor are joined together as one entity and under the same policy in a common decision context.

The development of a territory is always preceded by the development of its actors. The decentralizing processes of the latest decades have strengthened this fact (OCDE, 2004).

Although local entities have stronger power (institutionalized power) than in the past decades it's finally the organized participation of territorial actors –and their interest in the design, management and evaluation of the project (Vázquez Barquero, A, 1992: 387)– the decisive elements that makes possible successfully local initiatives.

Consequently decentralizing processes are not guarantee by its own of the effectiveness and efficiency of public policies.

Aware of the important role of territorial agents it's also necessary within a local initiative to clarify a local development model.

As Pérez Ramírez, B. and Carrillo Benito, E. (2000: 48) have pointed we can define a local development model as a microeconomical planification model that makes possible to

³² See Treib, O. et al (2007). "Modes of governance: towards a conceptual clarification". *Journal of European Public Policy*, 14 (1), 1–20.

create employment, incomes and wealth by taking into account the resources of the territory. The purpose is to increase social welfare and the quality of life of a territory.

These authors also highlighted the conditions that every territory needs to articulate a local development model. Briefly we describe them:

- (1) There must be an integration of all the economical sectors.
- (2) The employment policies must be aware of the territorial resources.
- (3) External resources are important elements for the territory as they are complementary for the local development model.
- (4) Small and medium companies are the entities that make possible the local development.
- (5) The environment is considered as a strategic element in the local development model.
- (6) Local development model implies decentralizing processes in relation to general policies.

Over the last decades new theories and strategies have appeared about local development to enrich the term (Mendez, R., 2002). They emphasize its different components: social (welfare), environmental (sustainability), political (governance and local participation), cultural (protection of the cultural heritage and the own identity) and geographical (territorial arrangement), with the purpose of achieving the highest heights of living.

Concerning this theoretical framework about local development we propose to bring up its implications in relation to a chocolate industry located in Pozoblanco (Córdoba, Spain). Specifically we try to recover the activity of one of the oldest chocolate industry in Europe, designing a development model at different levels.

First we will briefly describe the social, economical, labour and cultural context of Pozoblanco. Then we will give the details of our intervention.

2. THE CONTEXT OF POZOBLANCO

Pozoblanco is situated in a Valley called Pedroche at the north of the province of Córdoba (in the region of Andalusia, Spain). The valley is composed by 17 villages. Pozoblanco is the principal town of the valley.

It has 15.956 inhabitants. Nearly the 50% are men (48%) and most of the citizens are between 34 and 45 years old.

From a demographical point of view it's significant the percentage of people with disability supported and attended by a professional association located in the city (PRODE) in charge of the promotion of this collective and their families trying to offer a better quality of life through training and employment opportunities. This professional association also attends people coming from other areas of the valley.

From a labour point of view the 42,7% of the population is economically active. According to this population the 81,3% are employed and the 18,7% are unemployed.

The most extended qualification is the Secondary level (36%). Highest qualification is represented by the 10% of the citizens and the same rate represents the population with no qualification.

Occupational training is mainly related to the following occupations: electrician, mechanic, nursery and secretary. A better linking between supply and demand is necessary in this issue. In other words training must give answers to the labour market demands.

The most principal business in Pozoblanco refers to retail trade, estate agency, financial and business services, transport and storage, textile industry, cattle farming (Pozoblanco holds a guarantee of origin in pork), agriculture, manufacturing and construction. There is an important alimentary industry (COVAP).

Although there are three industrial areas, the city is demanding more spaces in this sense. Local administration is making an effort in this sense.

Referring to environmental initiatives the city is now tackling the renewable energy.

Malls and regional public services (hospital services and justice administration) conformed Pozoblanco's external resources.

As local resources we can distinguish the following ones:

1. **Natural resources:** the potential of Pozoblanco referring to its local environment needs to be discovered. Today there is not much tourist activity and leisure time initiatives.
2. **Human resources:** on the contrary to the first point, the population of Pozoblanco has much business initiative.
3. **Infrastructures:** although the city has improved in this issue, there is still much work to do.

The local administration's strategy in order to promote the economy of the city looks for the dialogue of the territorial actors in a partnership context. Through different workshops a local employment strategy has been actually programmed and now it's being developed.

Our proposal follows the path of the local administration. In fact we have already presented the principles ideas of this initiative and we are now trying to state the next step.

3. RECOVERING A CHOCOLATE INDUSTRY

The real value of the industry it's in his history. According to different documents the industry dates back to 1860. Nevertheless some evidences indicate that the industry appeared in 1815, but actually we cannot prove this fact with documents. From its origins this factory has never stopped his manufacturing for the Andalusian provinces of Sevilla, Granada, Huelva and Córdoba, and for other Spanish regions like Extremadura and Castilla la Mancha.

Four generations of the Cabrera family have run the industry. Although the actual owner (Hipólito Cabrera, 82 years old) actually makes chocolate with the illusion of the first time, he is aware that the industry needs a new impulse to answer today's competitive labour market. Located in the town centre, the three-storey building still conserves the original architecture.

Hipólito Cabrera's industry has its own registered trademark ("Bombolín"). His products have received many European and transnational awards. In the valley many people still remember the good times of the industry.

In our intention of activating the chocolate industry we propose:

1. To recover the principal activity of the industry and to promote its diversification as the only way to keep the business on the labour market. We based this state in five key elements within a local development model:
 - a. Organisational flexibility of the industry's human resources and of the production processes. In this last case there is still machinery that can be used, apart from some inversions that needs to be done in this sense.
 - b. The industry need to be move to another place. Specifically to one of the industrial areas that surrounds the city. Thus it makes more comfortable the manufacturing and the storing.
 - c. The particularity of being the only chocolate industry over the valley seems to be a business advantage.
 - d. It also important to bet for the sustainability of the environment (being aware of the environmental regulations) and to follow the health rules and contingency plans.
 - e. Finally in this point it's important to take part on the alimentary industry located in Pozoblanco because it could enrich one of the principal productive processes of the territory.
2. To design a development model orientated to facilitate people under-represented in the local workforce or actually facing barriers to get into work.
 - a. By hiring people with disabilities as local workforce. The Professional Association of the city in this issue (PRODE) has an important role in this point.
 - b. Hiring this collective as workforce could make possible the changing of the business form of the industry from a sole proprietor to what we call in Spanish employment policy a Special Employment Centre. This Centre offers training and work experience to people with disabilities. Following the actual employment law local business with more than 50 employees can hire the services of the Special Employment Centre, so this collective would have the opportunity to be directly in contact with the labour market.

3. To place the industry in the economical, labour, social and cultural context of Pozoblanco.
 - a. The development model above described is an example of generating employment, incomes and wealth in the territory.
 - b. From a cultural point of view the possibility of recovering the history of the industry could be a good opportunity to create a museum to show machinery and documents from the past century becoming a cultural offer of the territory. Part of the workforce to maintain the museum could be hired from the Special Employment Centre.
 - c. Being conscious of the lack of training referred to the alimentary manufacture we propose its inclusion on the local training offers.

To enhance this local development model governance and partnership must be present. We can state that local agents are aware of these proposals and they all have shown much interest.

At the moment we had some meetings with the local administration, the director of the Professional Association orientated to people with disabilities (PRODE) and with other key agents of the territory. We have already arranged new meetings.

Finally with this development model we are expecting to contribute to the local development of Pozoblanco by giving to the chocolate industry a new impulse.

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