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Aliu, Armando and Parlak, Bekir and Aliu, Dorian

University of Heidelberg, Uludag University, Canakkale Onsekiz  
Mart University

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# Hybridity, Multilevel Governance and Decentralization: Supra versus Infra

Armando Aliu<sup>a</sup> Bekir Parlak<sup>b</sup> Dorian Aliu<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg, Bergheimer Straße 58, 69115 Heidelberg, Germany; <sup>b</sup>Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Chair of the Department of Public Administration, Uludag University, Gorukle Kampusu, 16059 Bursa, Turkey; <sup>c</sup>Biga Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Canakkale Onsekiz Mart University, 17200, Biga, Canakkale, Turkey

## Abstract

*The aim of our research is to examine the new trends in the hybridity research area and clarify the convergence of interests among state actors, private actors and civil society actors. Hybridity is conceived as a 'multidimensional phenomenon' and 'new paradigm' in tourism industry. The effective collaboration amongst public sector – private sector – civil society can be attained likelihood with taking into account regional governance and multilevel governance. In this study, it is argued that there is an inter-relationship between hybridity, multilevel governance and decentralization.*

**Keywords:** hybridity, multilevel governance, decentralization

## Introduction

The long term objectives of our research are listed as follows: i) the authors of this research note are conducting a large-scale research project which is currently implementing in Turkey and will be applied to the Eastern European Countries (EEC) soon. In frame of the project, we are planning to produce statistical datasets in order to ensure an opportunity that allows scientists who are interested in hybridity research area to work on positivistic/empirical works (Aliu 2014; Aliu, Parlak and Aliu 2014); ii) Thus for better contextualization of the hybridity notion, we analyzed and compared the EU member states within the EU supranational/multilevel structure and the EU candidate states that are likely to join these structures in the future.

Hybridity is argued as collaboration and voluntary or strategic efforts of state actors, private actors and non-profit organizations. The intermediary zone between the state and the market covers an ambivalent political atmosphere, a political economy of interest mediation and organizational sociology (Anheier 1991). Thus, hybridity, paradoxically, relied on confrontations with difficulties that occur among Government Organizations (GOs), Non-profit Private Organizations (NPOs) and Private Market Organizations (PMOs).

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<sup>a</sup> Corresponding Author: Email: Aliu@stud.uni-heidelberg.de

<sup>b</sup> E-mail: bepar@uludag.edu.tr

<sup>c</sup> Email: dorianaliu@gmail.com

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Functionally, the hybrid model contains state actors (government, municipality and so on) and non-state actors (private actors, civil society organizations, NGOs, lobby groups and so on) that are equally participating in various industries. The cooperation of public, private sector and civil society parts has an effective role at creating strategies, determining plans and forecasting models (Aliu 2011). With hybrid model, states are embedded with non-state actors in actor constellations in equal order, and at least of the plurality of opinion development processes. Hybrid structures emerge on a blurring base of pluralism, corporatism and network approaches. Statism ought to be distinguished from others because the state authority, command and control mechanisms are very crucial elements for state actors and particularly for the political actors (elites) who are leading states and holding power relations with non-state actors. Thus the roles, purposes and objectives of states' political elites are driving forces for shaping a hybridity model.

### **Literature Review**

In some key researches, the development of multiscale policies impacts on power relations was argued for enrichment of the 'tourism destination governance' notion (Baggio, Scott & Cooper 2010; Church 2004; d'Angella, de Carlo & Sainaghi 2010; Dredge & Jamal 2013; Haugland et al. 2011; Zahra 2011). Many studies attached considerable attention to the nexus between collaboration theory and community involvement through selection of key stakeholders at the planning process of multilevel destination governance (Araujo & Bramwell 2002; Bramwell & Sharman 1999; Cooper, Scott & Baggio 2009; d'Angella & Go 2009; Hultman & Hall 2012; Jackson & Murphy 2006; Presenza & Cipollina 2010). At the heart of the collaboration theory, there has been a shift from 'state-private partnership' (Aliu 2011; Bills 2010; Jackson & Murphy 2006; Jamal & Getz 1995; Page 2007) to 'state-private-civil society collaboration' which is also accepted as 'hybridity.'

Hybridity has been emerged on the base of critical tourism approach. Thus, the involvement of civil society to the state and private partnerships has become very crucial and even vital/moral for the enhancement of the third sector in tourism industry (Aliu 2013; Bramwell 2011; Bramwell and Lane 2011; Caton 2012; Hung, Sirakaya-Turk and Ingram 2011; Tribe 2008). In this respect, the third sector which essentially has characteristics of heterogeneity and pluralism rather than homogeneity and isomorphism, is an important factor for engagement in between public and private dichotomy.

## **Methodology**

In this study, constructivism was followed as paradigmatic research method. Constructivism, broadly conceived, is the thesis that knowledge cannot be a passive reflection of reality, but has to be more of an active construction by an agent. From ontological viewpoint, constructivism covers relativistic approach which acknowledges the fact that knowledge is socially constructed, local, and specific (Riley and Love 2000). From epistemological viewpoint, constructivism is subjectivistic (i.e. knowledge created and co-produced by researcher and subject). From methodological viewpoint, constructivism contains a process of reconstructing multiple realities through informed consensus.

## **Findings and Results**

Hypothetically, the effective collaboration among public sector – private sector – civil society can be attained likelihood with taking into account regional governance and multi-level governance. Hybridity at global governance level covers decentration (supra: centralization and infra: decentralization). Hybrid structures enhance democratic participation and interaction in quasi-indirect centralization process (at supra level) and quasi-decentralization process (at infra level).

Quasi-indirect centralization has the potential to shape the collaboration level with the leadership and central authority of state. Certainly, the “fundamental rights” enforce the participation with equal opportunity in “social rewards” (Habermas 1988) and political institutions ought to be attained through quasi-indirect centralization. A similar Habermasian approach was put forward by Moutinho (2000) who suggested a state and non-state collaboration by means of state-centric and interventionist approach. According to Moutinho, the tourism industry is dominated by private firms and small businesses across a broad spectrum of sectors, including transport, accommodation and attractions. Thus, the public sector has a key role to play in the successful development of tourism in a particular locality. Public sector intervention is necessary to ensure that the associated benefits of tourism are maximized and any potential problems are minimized for the benefit of the state sector, private sector and civil society (p.3). This point highlights the national-regional-local dialectics from multiple perspectives.

In this respect, a decentralisation process at local and/or sub-regional level can turn out as a quasi-indirect centralisation at national level. In the same manner, a possible

decentralisation process at national level can cause a quasi-indirect centralisation at supranational/transnational level. This ambivalent situation was described as “Decentration” (Mückenberger 2008).

Decentration stands for the simultaneity of the globalization as well as the localization of important economic and political decision-making processes (Hirschman 1993; Mückenberger 2008). With these facts in mind, the involvement of non-state actors to central governmental works at national level and municipality works at local level in theory provides a quasi-decentralization process, however with effective hybridity it turns out to a quasi-indirect centralization process which enhances the image and development of states’ authorities. Moreover, the institutions of the European Union have attained joint actions with non-state actors at various levels (e.g. the White Paper of the Committee of the Regions that comprises a partnership-based European Union among 2020-2030), provided that collaborations between state and non-state actors have been ranged in between multilevel governance perspectives and regional/local governance.

From hybridity perspective, this kind of innovative governance implies that non-state actors are involved in decision-making in order to provide common goods so that non-state actors may independently engage in self-regulation or a regulatory task may have been delegated to them by a public authority, or they may be regulating jointly with a public actor. This interaction may occur across levels “vertically” or across arenas “horizontally” (Mückenberger 2012). In other words, government, private sector, civil society and other agents interact in complex ways in creating governance.

If the extend of multilevel governance become larger, the collaboration level, the community involvement, stakeholder participation and indeed, hybridity scope will be more expanded (see Figure 1). The centralization at national level and decentralization at local level provides a new approach such as “centralized decentralization” (Kimbu and Ngoasong 2013) and/or “quasi-indirect centralization” as we proposed. In this framework, the state and non-state interactions at multiple levels clarify that hybridization provides triple win solution for state actors, private actors and civil society actors related issues in realm of theory and practise dichotomy.

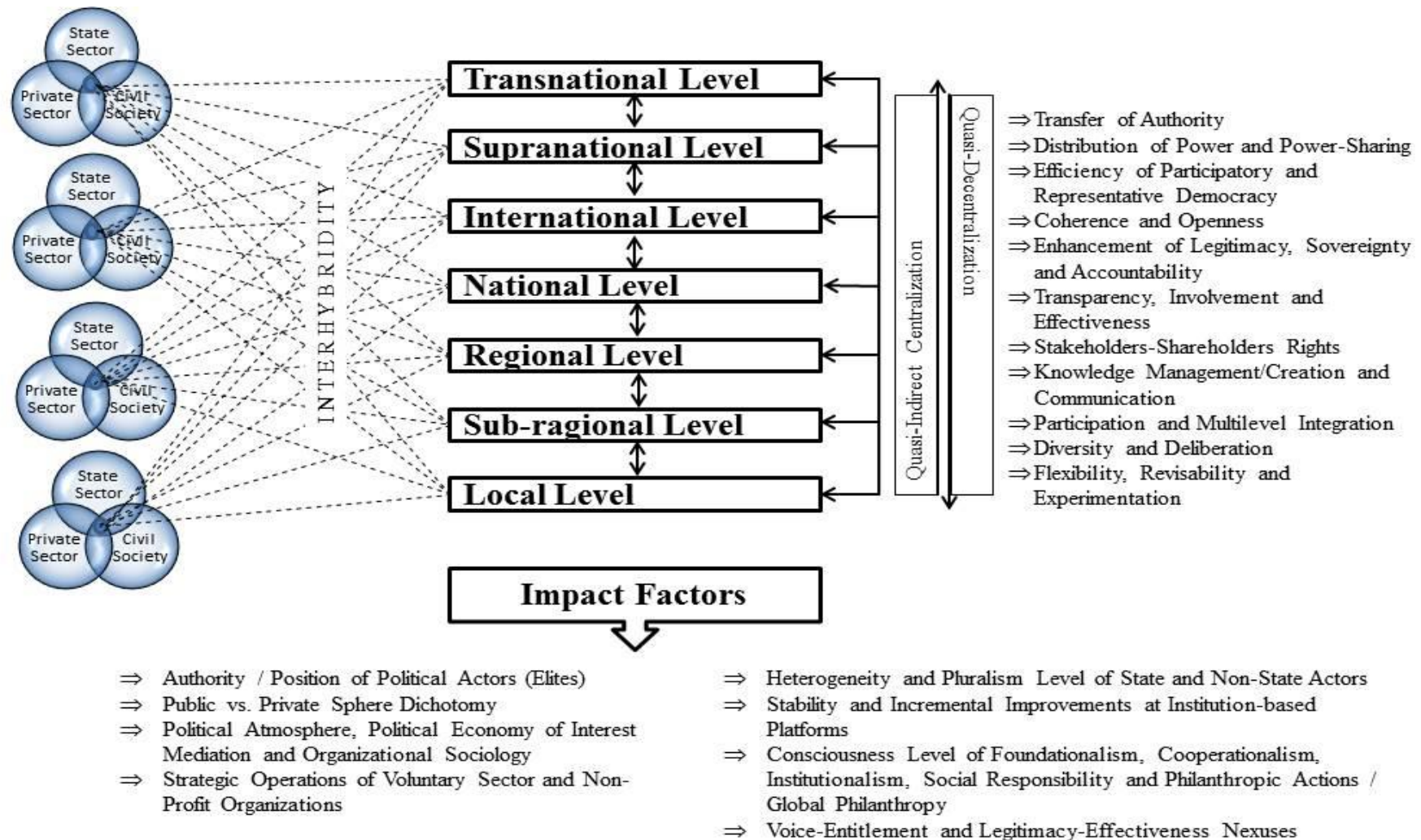
From triple win point of view, social scientists should strongly criticise and contest the researches which are focusing only on destination regions’ self-interest maximizations without embedding hybridity. Ethically, a strategic source region and destination region

partnership which does not take into account local communities' interests should be contested as well. Aliu (2013) developed “a theory of interhybridity” which is a compound process of interactions among two or more hybrid forms (see Figure 1). The most relevant impact factors in these ambivalent forms can be listed as such: i) governance, ii) collaboration and synergy, iii) democratization and economic liberalization, iv) employment relationship and labor regulations, v) partnership of epistemic communities, vi) centralization / decentralization, vii) social capital and communitarianism, viii) hypernorms and industrial relations, ix) justification and integrated social contracts, x) transnational networks and welfare state.

### **Conclusion and Implications**

The research imply that public sector – private sector – civil society triangle (hybridity) significantly affects the quasi-indirect centralization and enhancement of the authority/position of political actors (*elites*); balances the public and private/counterpublic sphere dichotomy effectively. Hypothetically, hybridity has a significant influence on political atmosphere, political economy of interest mediation and organizational sociology, and a positive impact on the strategic operations of voluntary sector and non-profit organizations; affects the heterogeneity and pluralism level of state and non-state actors and provides that states are embedded with non-state actors in actor constellations in equal order, and at least of the plurality of opinion development processes. Hybridity strengthens the consciousness level of foundationalism, cooperationalism, institutionalism, social responsibility and philanthropic actions, preserves stability of states and ensures incremental improvements at institution-based platforms.

Tourism industry is a good example for better conceptualizing and examining the content of hybridity approach. Hybridity in tourism industry can be clarified with the tourism system approach that is through the travel paths taken by individual consumers. This approach is usually termed a “geographical system of tourism” (Cooper and Hall 2008). For more detailed analyses, the research question “how hybridity in the tourism industry could be possible across actors” might not be adequately responded through overcoming geographical or physical distances among the multi-actors interactions. Thus many researches ought to be done for correlating hybridity with socio-cultural distances and political distances.



**Figure 1:** The Inter-relationship Model of Hybridity, Multilevel Governance and Decentration  
**Source:** Authors' Compilation from Aliu 2013; Hall 2011; Herrmann 2011; Ruhanen et al. 2010

However, beyond descriptive inter-relating process, the interesting question would be for the ways this kind of “idealized hybridity” actually happens and works effectively. For instance, how does participation actually work? How does it influence policy and the private sector? How does this play out in multi-level governance and what are the implications for tourism industry? The authors of this research note merely assign a name to a complex situation of interests’ amalgamation or even an industrial handicap that will be visible in tourism industry in the near future.

This study goes one step further and attempts to enhance the hybrid model which has a catalyst role in terms of balancing social problems and civil society needs. Paradigmatically, it is better to perceive the hybrid model as a combination of “communicative and strategic action” (Habermas 1979; Habermas 1990) that means the reciprocal recognition within the model is precondition for significant functionality. This will shape social relations with moral meanings of communication.

Consequently, this research note is suggesting that more tourism research should be done based on hybridity approaches, and it contributes to the case how hybridity helps to explain social reality better. Moreover, it attempts to illustrate that tourism research so far has overlooked and left unexplained certain problems; and that hybridity might help to shed light on these.



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