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**Evaluation of social capital promotion in rural development
programmes: a methodological approach**

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Evaluation of social capital promotion in rural development programmes: a methodological approach

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Abstract

The academic literature makes evident that the main immaterial contribution of the LEADER approach (LA) consists in the promotion of social capital in rural areas. Therefore the insertion of LA in the framework of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) should be considered as a powerful opportunity to promote rural development initiatives by means of a bottom-up methodology, much more focused on social relationships among local actors. These aspects open new opportunities also in terms of evaluations of RDPs and of LA, in the context of the already established Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF).

The objective of this paper is to present a methodology for the definition of the Relative Index of Social Capital Promotion (RISCP) to be used in the ongoing evaluation of RDPs. The RISCP doesn't represent an impact indicator, but it measures the potential social capital that could be promoted by means of the logic of intervention of selected measures of the RDPs.

Keywords: social capital, rural development programmes, evaluation, index

JEL classification: Z0

1. INTRODUCTION

The scientific literature makes evident the absence of a common concept of social capital among social sciences. Notwithstanding the different interpretations –linked to epistemological foundations– researchers acknowledge some common concepts in relation to social capital distinctive features which consist in cognitive, structural, relational, bonding, bridging and linking dimensions (paragraph 2).

These aspects are of peculiar interest for the development of rural areas, even though the applied research seems to be quite limited. The social capital topic presents a strong possibility of application in relation to Rural Development Programmes (RDPs) and LEADER approach (LA), where the immaterial objectives consist, also, in social attitude changes. In this regard, the RDPs and LA present in their main features all the different dimensions of social capital previously mentioned (paragraph 3). The problematic question is related to their evaluation within the framework established by the European regulations. At the moment, the evaluation of social capital in relation to RDPs and LA is realized with qualitative researches (as case studies analysis) or by using indicators (related, for example, to social network analysis at the level of Local Action Groups - LAGs, i.e. Franceschetti, 2009).

What is lacking is a simple and standardized index, to be applied within the ongoing evaluation framework, for measuring the social capital promotion in different RDPs measures (paragraph 4). The standardized index –considering the opportunity offered by the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF)– is based on selected indicators in relation to

specific measures which are chosen for their intervention logic, where it is feasible to analyze the different dimensions of social capital (paragraph 5). The Relative Index of Social Capital Promotion (RISCP) doesn't represent an impact indicator, but it is an output index, based on the different dimensions of social capital.

2. SOCIAL CAPITAL LITERATURE: A BRIEF REVIEW

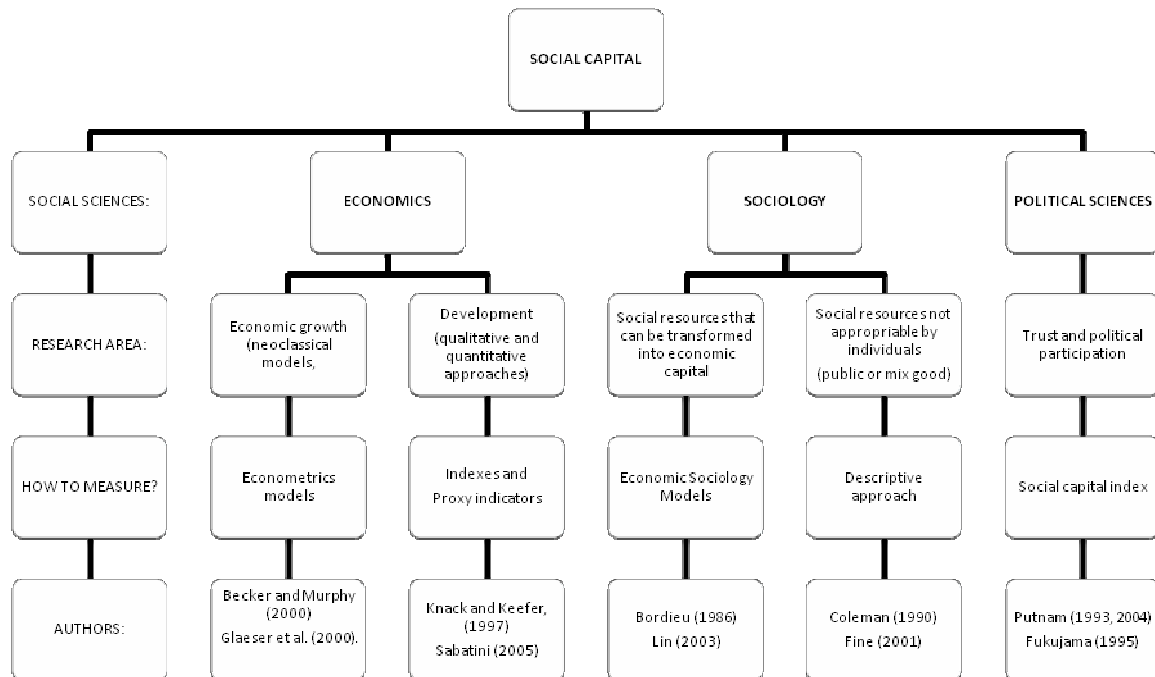
In the classic tomes of political sciences and of sociology the concept of social capital appears as a cross-sectional issue, even though the term itself is often not clearly defined. The topic is lightly sketched in researches concerning *class solidarity* and *class in itself or for itself* by Marx and Engels, in studies on *public spirit and democracy* by Tocqueville, and on *solidarity and work division* by Durkheim and in the analysis on *religious communities and power* by Weber.

The social capital is a topic of sociological discussion since the 60's (Jacobs, 1961; Bourdieu, 1980, 1986; Coleman, 1990; Granovetter, 1973, 1985). Only from the 90's the social capital has become object of a specific of analysis by political scientists (Putnam et al., 1993, 2004; Fukuyama, 1995; Bagnasco et al, 2001; Bjørnskov, Mannemar Sønderskov, 2010) and by economists (Abramovitz, 1989; Nahapiet and Ghoshal, 1997; Tsai and Ghoshal, 1998; Landry et al., 1998; Subramaniam and Youndt, 2005; Becker, 1974; Becker and Murphy, 2000), in order to offer useful theoretical and applied elaborations to support the decisional processes of policy makers (figure 1).

There are different definitions of social capital. The most famous, and also most contested, is the one offered by Putnam who define social capital as: "*features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and networks, that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions*" (Putnam, 1993: 167). More generally social capital denotes the nature and intensity of involvement by an individual and/or by small communities (family, groups of relatives, etc.), in various informal networks or in formal organizations.

The sociological approach, instead, recognizes, among others, two main interpretations of social capital. The first one focuses on social capital as "*the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition*" (Bourdieu, 1986: 248). The second interpretation emphasizes the public nature of social capital as not appropriable by individuals, criticizing the premise of social relations realized only for the gain of individual benefits (Coleman, 1990).

Figure 1: Social capital and social sciences



Source: own elaboration

The divided sociological analysis of social capital has influenced economics, defining two main theoretical approaches. The first one, sustained by the neo-classical school of economics, considers social capital as a new factor in the productive function together with physical, natural and human capital. In this case the analyses focus at the microeconomic level (Becker, 1974; Becker and Murphy, 2000).

Traditional theories of economic growth were, in the 80's, strongly revised by the analysis of Romer (1986) and Lucas (1988) considering the role of technological innovation induced by improvement of human capital, shifting from exogenous to endogenous models.

The second theoretical economic concept differs from the neo-classical analysis and gives preeminence to the contribution made by social capital to development rather than just growth. In this framework meta-economic variables are becoming more and more central to the analysis of development processes also in relation to environmental capital and finally, in relation to social capital (Knack and Keefer, 1997). In this case social capital is analyzed as a qualitative factor that promotes development and the researches are realized in the domain of territorial economics and of macroeconomics. In this last context the researchers usually propose proxy indexes to measure social capital, giving prominence to specific attributes such as: trust, altruism, respect of social norms, social networks, social organizations, etc.

It is worthy to note that the significant interdisciplinary debate has not produced yet a widely agreed definition of social capital (Bjørnskov, Mannemar Sønderskov, 2010) and every researcher in his/her analysis must clarify the definition of social capital applied or proposed.

3. SOCIAL CAPITAL IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND IN LEADER APPROACH

If applied research on social capital appears very composite, it is discernible that its literature is rather limited in relation to the complex connections between social capital and development in rural areas.

In recent years the issue has gained increasing interest for economists who deal with economic growth and rural development in different socio-political contexts. Until now, little attention has been paid to this subject by Italian agrarian economists, despite the importance that the issue has today for the international scientific community. Under this profile, the main topics explored by Italian researchers are as follows:

- rural development, social capital and the analysis of local territorial systems¹
- social capital and innovation²
- social capital and network analysis³.

What is missing is a deeper analysis of the role that social capital is asked to play in relation to rural development (positive approach) and the consequent translations in terms of policies (normative approach).

This void would seem rather surprising, given that rural development policies consider the improvement of social capital as a behavioural change expected during the sustainable development of rural populations.

In this framework the *Liaison entre actions de développement de l'économie rurale* - LEADER Programme (now approach) should be considered as one of the first attempts to develop rural areas with an endogenous approach, necessarily linked with the endowment of local resources. LEADER requires a changes of social attitudes and, consequently, of governance systems, that are particularly present from the start in the LEADER I as a new strategy to develop lagging areas (Ob. 1) and areas facing structural difficulties (Ob. 5b), in LEADER II and PLUS as a programme inserted in the wide family of structural funds, and finally in the LEADER approach inside the second pillar of the CAP.

As Farrel and Thrion (2005) underline, the changes of social attitudes are the main immaterial contributions determined by LEADER or, in other words, the social capital improvement of rural areas. Consequently, the LEADER measures are of economic nature, but the processes or methods utilized to make them effective and sustainable are also of a social nature. In other words, social capital emerges in LEADER because the social relationships have an economic value and they mobilize economic activities.

All the main features of LA –defined in the article 61 of the Reg. 1698/05 of the European Council– have a specific link to peculiar dimensions of social capital (table 1 and figure 2). In the following part, we are going to evidence the relationships between each specific

¹ Cecchi, Grando, Sabatini, 2008.

² De Devittis, Lopolito, Maietta and Sisto, 2009.

³ Franceschetti, 2009.

feature of LEADER and the connected dimensions of social capital. In our view, the binomial relationship "feature-dimension" can be a useful instrument to analyze the rural reality, considering that, in practice, multiple dimensions of the social capital can be related to one specific feature of LEADER. In table 1 the different dimensions of social capital are described, from the analysis of the wide literature on social capital.

Table 1: Social capital dimensions

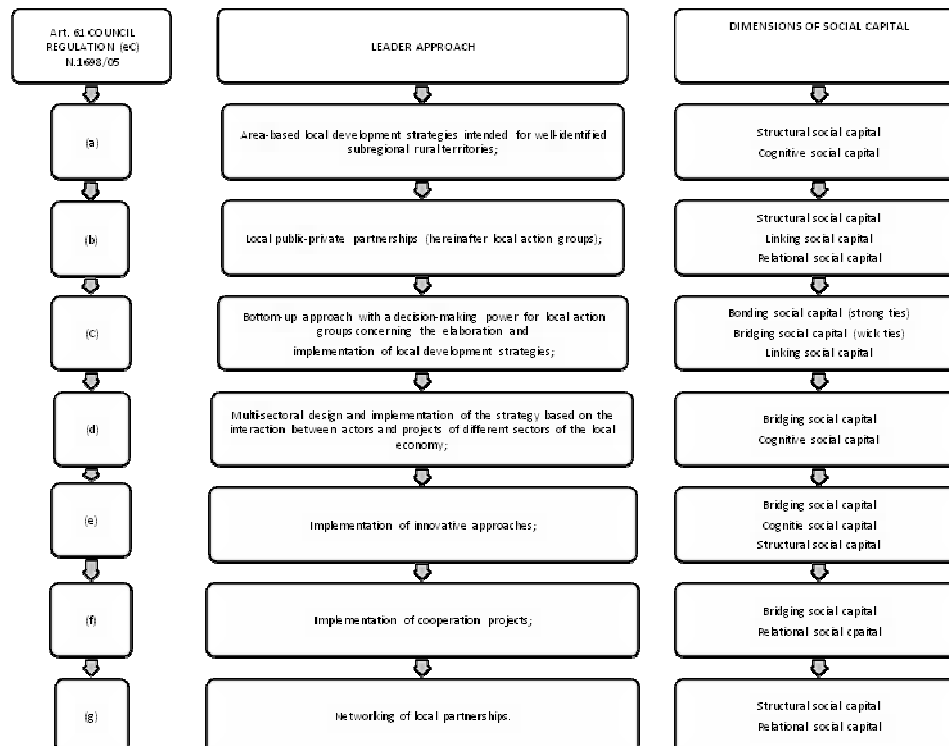
Dimensions	Description
Cognitive social capital	The cognitive dimension focuses on the shared meaning and understanding that individuals or groups have with one another. This dimension includes shared norms, values, attitudes, and beliefs and predisposes people towards mutually beneficial collective action (Krishna and Uphoff, 2002; Uphoff, 1999).
Structural social capital	Structural social capital facilitates mutually beneficial collective action through established roles and social networks supplemented by rules, procedures and precedents (Hitt et al., 2002).
Relational social capital	<i>The relational dimension focuses on the character of the connection between</i> individuals or groups. This is best characterized through trust of others and their cooperation and the identification an individual or groups has within a network.
Bonding social capital	Bonding social capital is horizontal and refers to the social interactions within a homogenous group (Halpern et al., 2002). Bonding social capital is characterized by strong social ties (intensive and repeated among members of the group). Same authors (Heffron, 2000; Wallis and Crocker et al., 1998) referred to bonding capital as localized which are defined as being found among people who live in the same or adjacent communities. The bonding (splitting) social capital is closely related to thick trust (Anheier and Kendall, 2002).
Bridging social capital	Bridging social capital is vertical between communities (Dolfsma and Dannreuther, 2003; Narayan, 2002; Narayan and Pritchett, 1999) and concerns the relationships interconnecting heterogeneous group with different backgrounds (Woodhouse, 2006). Bridging social capital is closely related to thin trust (Anheier and Kendall, 2002) or with weak ties (temporary and contingent) (Heffron, 2000).
Linking social capital	Linking social capital refers to relations between individuals and groups in different social strata in a hierarchy where power, social status and wealth are accessed by different groups (Cote and Healy, 2001:42). Woolcock (2001) extends this to include the capacity of leveraging resources, ideas and information from formal institutions beyond the community.

Source: <http://www.socialcapitalresearch.com/dimensions.html>

In the following part of the research, for each specific feature of LA only one dimension of social capital is described. Of course the description should be much more extended to other related dimensions of social capital (as in figure 2).

LEADER has been an interesting answer to the unfair effects related to the application of the traditional instruments of agricultural development that have determined, in some cases and in certain areas, the exclusion of some socio-economic categories from the benefits of the economic growth. In this sense, LA contributes to involve the "losers" of the previous policies (Farrel and Thrion, 2005), working on the concept of local territories that share common vision and self-perception. Consequently LA operates in the level of common meaning and understanding of a local area, in relations to norms, values and attitudes (cognitive social capital). The cognitive dimension is also linked to "a share vision of problems and, consequently, a share development strategy" (Nardone et al., 2010).

Figure 2: LEADER approach and social capital dimensions



Source: own elaboration

The organization of a Local Action Group (LAG) testifies the structuring of new kind of socio-economic relationships –of a private and public nature– in the local community, in other words a new structural social capital. Moreover the co-operation and networks features of LA are closely link to the relational dimension of social capital, based on mutual trust and a social recognition of the LAG inside a network.

The dimension of social capital related to the possibility of LAG to identify projects in different sector of interventions and to the innovative character of the initiatives is the bridging dimension. In this sense the capacity of persons and/or groups to co-operate with actors of different socio-economic sectors (bridging social capital) can be a useful strategy to sustain the occupation at local level by using the “thin ties” embedded in the territory.

The involvement of local population of rural areas in LEADER initiatives can testify different types of social participation. In this case both bridging social capital but also bonding social capital can be present. The final dimension of social capital that is considered is the linking i.e. the capacity of leveraging resources from formal institution, following Woolcock’s definition (2001).

4. EVALUATION OF SOCIAL CAPITAL PROMOTION BY MEANS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND LEADER APPROACH

The relationship between LEADER and the intangible dimensions of social capital appears to be particularly interesting in the wider framework of the evaluation of Rural Development Programmes (RDPs). A specific analysis of social capital has been inserted in the Mid-Term Evaluation of LEADER Plus Programmes (2006), with questions such as:

- *Do rural actors co-operate inside and outside the framework of the strategy?*
- *Has there been voluntary work generated within the region during the programme implementation?*
- *Has during programme implementation the co-operation between and participation of municipalities increased?*

These questions have been analyzed in selected case studies at European level. At the time of writing, a systematic and common analysis for the evaluation of social capital in rural development programmes and applied to all European regions is not available.

For the programming period 2007-2013, the evaluation of LEADER approach (4th axe of RDPs) is configured in the RDPs evaluation framework. The actual evaluation system is based on article 84 of the Reg. (EC) no. 1698/05. It gives evidence that RDPs are subject to ex-ante, intermediate, final and ex-post evaluations, realized by independent evaluators, under the responsibility of Member States and the Commission. Moreover, the evaluations are based on the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) (art. 80 of the same Regulation);

The monitoring and evaluation system of RDPs and also of LEADER is strictly linked to the CMEF that provides common indicators, limited in number and applied to each programme. The indicators, presented in art. 81, have been differentiated in: baseline, financial, output, results and impacts indicators. It is also foreseen that RDPs can specify "additional indicators" related to specific issues or features of the programme.

The accuracy of the CMEF is presented in the Handbook of the CMEF released by the Directorate-General of Agriculture and Rural Development in September 2006. The document clearly presents the monitoring and evaluation systems of RDPs at the level of each measure of the four axes. The relationship between different types of indicator and the logic of intervention of each measure is specified in annex E of the Handbook.

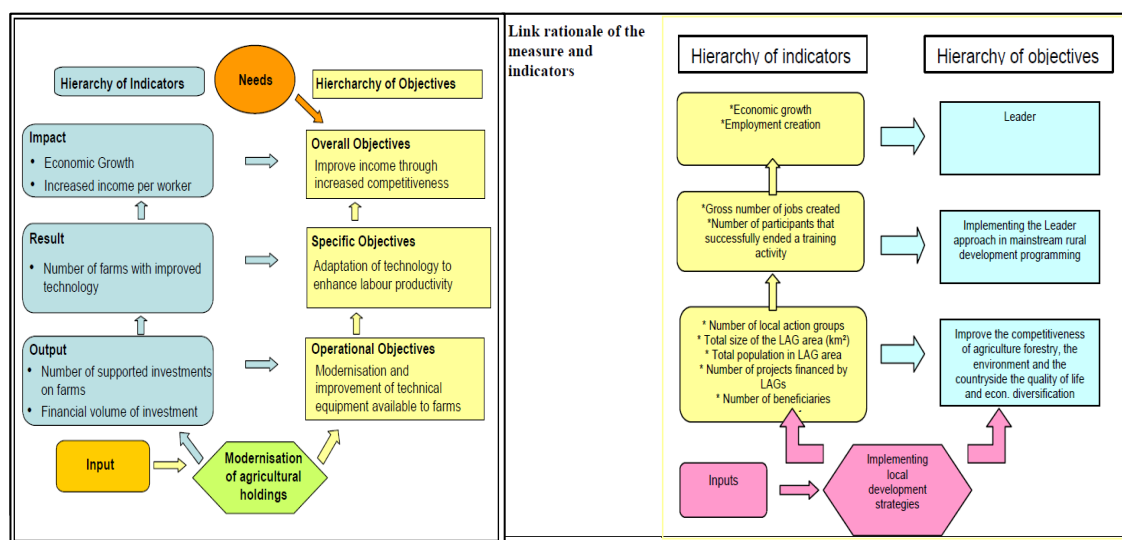
In figure 3 two examples are given in relation to the measures "Modernization of agricultural holdings Article 20(b)(i) of the Reg. (EC) no. 1698/05", for axe 1, and "Implementing local development strategies as referred in Art. 62(1)(a) with a view to achieving the objectives of one or more of the three axes defined in section 1, 2 and 3 of Article 63 (a) of the Reg. (EC) n. 1698/05", for axe 4.

In the logic of intervention of each measure, the output indicator is related to the operational objective, consequently the result indicator is linked to the specific objective and, finally, the impact indicator is associated to the general objective of the measure.

The question of how to evaluate the contribution of LEADER approach to RDPs objectives is still open, and practically not simple to achieve, considering the meta-economic

nature of this variable. On this purpose both the European Network for Rural Development EN RD (with the LEADER subcommittee – LSC⁴) and the “Rete Rurale Nazionale – LEADER Task Force”⁵ (at Italian level) have made interesting contributions.

Figure 3: Hierarchy of indicators and objectives of the measures “Modernization of agricultural holdings” and “Improving local development strategies”



Source: http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/index_en.htm

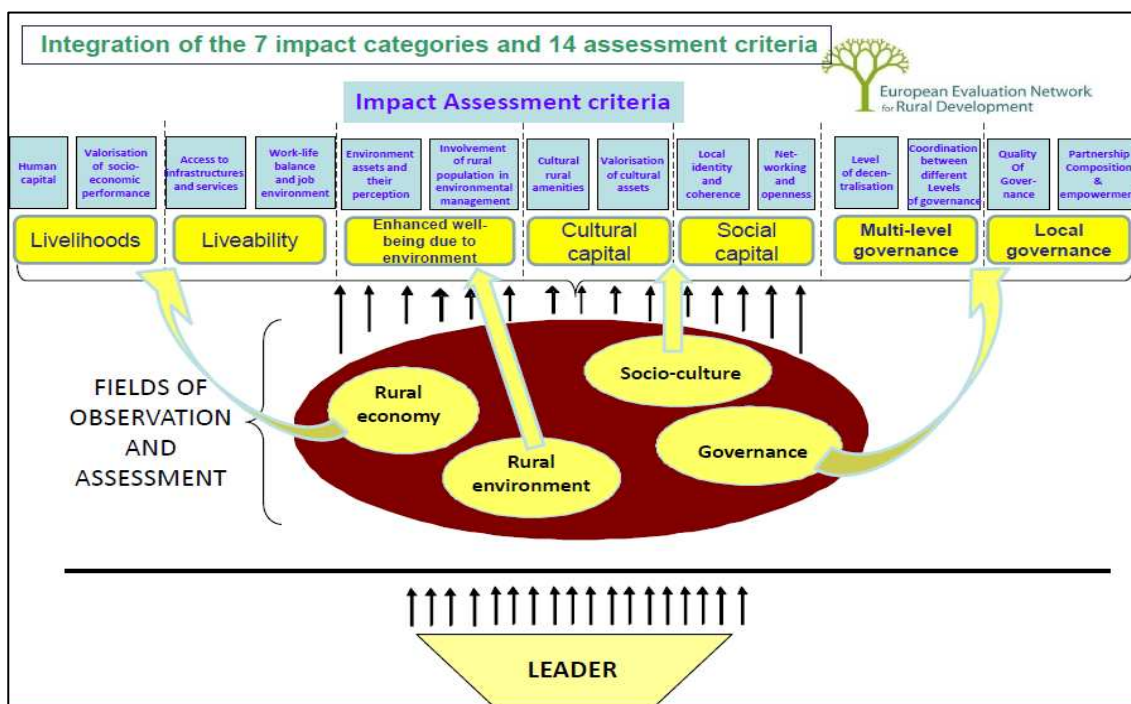
More specifically in relation to the evaluation of LEADER measures, Weinspach (2010) of the Evaluation Expert Committee Meeting has provided a practical methodological advice for assessing the impact of LEADER measures and quality of life measures, in order to facilitate a greater convergence in impact evaluation of axis 3 and 4 at EU level. For this purpose, Weinspach has individuated 7 impact categories and 14 assessment criteria. One of these seven categories is social capital, for which the assessment criteria are “Local identity and coherence” and “Networking and openness”. As measurement instrument a multi-criteria ranking tools has been foreseen.

At present the evaluation of LA is much more focused on analysing how the approach is relevant to the amelioration of the quality of life in rural areas, and its contribution to the achievement of the objectives presented in the other three axes. What it is not sufficiently clear, in our opinion, is the relation of LEADER in terms of social capital creation and/or promotion, and/or amelioration.

4 http://enrd.ec.europa.eu/whos-who/leader-sub-committee/en/leader-sub-committee_home_en.cfm

5 Cacace, D., Di Napoli, R. and Ricci, C. (2010).

Figure 4: Impact categories and assessment criteria for the impact evaluation of LEADER approach and Quality of Life



Source: Weinspach, 2010

5. METHODOLOGY

This research intends to offer a contribution in the definition of the “Relative Index of Social Capital Promotion” RISCP by means of RDPs or LA at different territorial levels (regional and national).

The methodology, utilized for the definition of the index, is hereby described:

- analysis and selection of the measures of the RDPs in relation to the nature of the target group (giving primacy to the collective and/or public nature of the beneficiary group);
- analysis of the “social capital dimensions” of the measures previously selected, by means of 6 questions related to the different dimensions of social capital (structural, relational, cognitive, bonding, bridging and linking);
- final selection of the measures which are much more suitable to promote social capital in rural areas, considering the previous dimensions;
- provision of the index by means of the output indicators (as proxy indicators) using the ones proposed by the CMEF.

This methodology can be applied to all the axes of the RDPs or only to the LA.

5.1. Analysis and selection of the measures of the RDPs

The documents, utilized for the analysis of the all the measure of the RDPs, are:

- rural development policy legislation for 2007-2013 (strategic guidelines and policy instruments)⁶
- common monitoring and evaluation framework for 2007-2013 (guidance document, general guidance, programming and measure guidance)⁷ and in particular Guidance note E – Measure fiches.

The focus of the analysis was the target group of the measure with the following selection criteria:

- “If the target group has a only a private nature (i.e. private forest holders), then the measure is not selected”;
- “If the target group has a collective (i.e. associations, organizations) and/or public nature (municipalities), then the measure is selected”.

The collective nature of the target group is obviously linked to the hypothesis that an already organized group of beneficiaries has a much higher probability of a higher social capital (of whatever forms) than a single person. This entails that the research, with this criteria, selects only measures where the presence of social capital is already assured.

After this first selection, the measures analyzed were of the 1st, 3rd and 4th axes. The measures of the 2nd axe, after this first analysis, were not included because the target group where mostly composed by private actors (i.e. farmers) or by private and/or collective actors (i.e. forest holder and their organization) or by private and/or collective and/or public actors (i.e. forest holders and municipalities), but not “only collective and/or public actors”.

Nevertheless, given the importance of the 2nd axe, it has been decided to consider also the measures where the target group was both private and collective and/or public, and to ignore the measures where the beneficiaries were only private subjects. The measures thus resulting are described in table 2.

5.2. Analysis of the social capital dimensions of the measures

The following steps of the methodology which foresees the analysis of the different measures in relation to their social capital dimensions for this purpose can be considered as evaluation criteria. This process has been realized by means of 6 specific questions related to each typology of social capital that is well known and acknowledged in the scientific literature.

The questions are presented in table 3, which also describes their logical construction and the possible answer with the relative score.

⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/leg/index_en.htm

⁷ http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/rurdev/eval/index_en.htm

Table 2: Selection of the RDPs measures in relation to the collective or public nature of the target group

Code	Measure	Target group
133	Information and promotion activities	Organisations of whatever legal form (excluding professional and/or inter-professional organisations representing one or more sectors) which bring together operators participating in a quality scheme (art. 32 of Regulation 1698/2005)
142	Producer groups	Producer groups officially recognised by the new Member States by 31 December 2013
214	Agri-environment payments	Farmers or other land managers
216	Support to Non-productive investments (agriculture)	Farmers or other land managers
221	First afforestation of agricultural land	Private owners, municipalities, or their associations
223	First afforestation of non agricultural land	Private owners, municipalities, or their associations
225	Forest-environment payments	Beneficiaries (private, collective, public)
226	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions	Forest holders (private, collective, public)
227	Support to Non-productive investments (forests)	Forest holders (private, collective, public)
313	Encouragement of tourism activities	Population in rural areas (a village or group of villages in rural areas)
321	Basic services for the economy and rural population	Population in rural areas (a village or group of villages in rural areas)
322	Village renewal and development	Population in rural areas (a village or group of villages in rural areas)
323	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	Population in rural areas (a village or group of villages in rural areas)
341	Skills acquisition, animation and implementation of local development strategies	Partnerships and their partners involved in the development and implementation of a local development strategy
41	Implementing local development strategies	LAG
421	Implementing cooperation projects	LAG
431	Running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory as referred to in article 59	LAG

Source: own elaboration

5.3. Selection of the measures that are more suitable to promote the social capital in rural areas

The analysis of the previously selected measures by means of the different questions on the social capital component of the RDPs, allows us to make a ranking of the different measures and to verify which one is much more suitable to promote social capital in rural areas. Table 4 presents the results in relations to different axes.

It is interesting to note that within the 1st axe 2 measures present a higher capacity to promote social capital, within the 2nd axe 7 measures, and within the 3rd 5 measures. All the LEADER measures (4th axe) promote social capital, as already attested in scientific literature.

Another aspect is related to the scores, and the consequent index construction. For this last purpose only the measures that present a score ≥ 4 points are utilized (this means that minimum four dimensions of social capital are considered).

For 1st axe, only one measure is selected (133), for the 2nd axe, four measures are identified (214, 216, 221 and 223) and for the 3rd axe, 2 measures (313 and 323).

Table 3: Questions for the selection of the measures

Dimensions	Questions	Description
Relational	Q1: Does the measure require the collective dimension of the target group, on the basis of pre-existing relationships among group members? Answer and score: Yes: 1 No: 0	A pre-existing organized target group means that the relational dimension of social capital is acquired. The relational dimension requires a mutual recognition of group members, in being part of the some social, political or economic organization. This is realized by means of a social, political or economic norm.
Structural	Q2: Does the measure give support to the formation of new networks? Answer and score: Yes: 1 No: 0	The structural dimension analyzes the relationships and networks of a group. In this sense the measure acquires the existence of a previous group and fosters its stability within a network, by means of an economic investment.
Cognitive	Q3: Does the measure facilitate new initiatives aiming to improve environmental quality (both of a profit and non-profit nature)? Answer and score: Yes: 1 No: 0	The cognitive dimension of social capital refers to social norms such as trust, mutual recognition of individuals, etc. Considering the importance of the environmental dimension in RDPs, the question considers the quality of the environment as a social value linking the community with "thin ties".
Bonding	Q4: Does the measure facilitate the link among socio-economic actors within the same economic sector? Answer and score: Yes: 1 No: 0	The bonding dimension of social capital fosters relationship and networks among the same groups.
Bridging	Q5: Does the measure facilitate the link among socio-economic actors of different economic sector? Answer and score: Yes: 1 No: 0	The bridging dimension of social capital fosters relationship and networks among individuals pertaining to different groups.
Linking	Q6: Do the actors take benefits from relationship with other actors that have a political and economic power? Answer and score: Yes: 1 No: 0	The linking dimension of social capital considers the capacity of the actors to take benefit from the relationship with other actors that have a political-economic power.

Source: own elaboration

Table 4: Results of the evaluation in relation to 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th axes

Code	Measure description	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Tot
133	Information and promotion activities	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
142	Producer groups	1	1	0	1	0	0	3
214	Agri-environment payments	0	1	1	0	1	1	4
216	Support to non-productive investments (agriculture)	0	1	1	0	1	1	4
221	First afforestation of agricultural land	0	1	1	0	1	1	4
223	First afforestation of non agricultural land	0	1	1	0	1	1	4
225	Forest-environment payments	0	1	1	1	0	0	3
226	Restoring forestry potential and introducing prevention actions	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
227	Support to non-productive investments (forests)	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
313	Encouragement of tourism activities	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
321	Basic services for the economy and rural population	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
322	Village renewal and development	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
323	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	1	1	1	0	1	1	5
341	Skills acquisition, animation and implementation of local development strategies	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
41	Implementing local development strategies	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
421	Implementing cooperation projects	1	1	0	0	1	1	4
431	Running the local action group, acquiring skills and animating the territory	1	1	0	0	1	1	4

Source: own elaboration

5.4. Index construction

The previous part of the methodology has been realized with the focus to select the RDPs measures that, for their internal construction, are much more able to promote social capital, utilizing as filters:

- the collective and/or public nature of the target group, in the case of 1st, 3rd, 4th axes
- the private and collective and/or public nature of the target group, in the case of 2nd axe.

Therefore, the measures focused only on private actors were excluded from the selection, giving the hypothesis that in an already established group the presence of social capital is much more assured than in the case of a single person.

Now it is possible to illustrate the Relative Index of Social Capital Promotion (RISCP) that can be constructed.

It is important to note that this index:

- is based on the output indicators of the CMEF, for this reason it is not necessary to utilize new data collection, out of the system already foreseen within the CMEF
- is calculated as a proxy indicator of the “relative capacity of the selected measures to promote new social capital”. It does not measure the impact in terms of social capital realized by the measure
- can be detected every year, in the annual relation that the Member State prepares in relation to the ongoing evaluation process
- is realized at the level of RDPs or at the level of LEADER approach.

In relation to the selected measures of table 4, the output indicator “No. of contracts activated by the measure” has been utilized for the construction of the Relative Index of Social Capital Promotion (RISCP).

The index is calculated as follows:

$$RISCP_i = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^m x_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m x_{ij}} + \frac{\sum_{j=1}^p y_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^p y_{ij}} + \frac{\sum_{j=1}^q z_{ij}}{\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^q z_{ij}}$$

where:

- $i = 1, \dots, n$ are the regions;
- $j = 1, \dots, m$ are the selected measures of the 1st axe; $1, \dots, p$ are the selected measures of the 2nd axe; $1, \dots, q$ are the selected measures of the 3rd axe;
- x_{ij} represents the no. of contracts activated by the j -measure of the 1st axe in the i region;
- y_{ij} represents the no. of activated contracts by the j -measure of the 2nd axe in the i region;
- z_{ij} represents the no. of activated contracts by the j -measure of the 3rd axe in the i region;
- $\sum_{j=1}^m x_{ij}$: n o. of activated contracts in the 1st axe in the i region

- $\sum_{i=1}^n \sum_{j=1}^m x_{ij} : \text{Total}$ no. of contracts activated by the selected measures of the 1st axe (j= 1, ..., m) in the i regions.

All the variable are, of course, measured in the same timeframe (a defined year or the entire programming period 2007-2013).

The index varies between 0 and 3, where the 0 level means that no additional social capital has been promoted by the i region, and 3 that only the i region has activated all the additional social capital.

5.5. *RISCP and LEADER axe*

In relation to LA, it has to be counted that not all the measures, identified in the Reg. (CE) no.1698/05, can be activated, but only the ones which are defined by the specific RDP. In the Italian case, the measures identified at regional level for each RDP are presented in table 5.

It is interesting to compare all the RDPs measures with the ones that are much more able to promote social capital, considering the methodology previously presented (measures evidenced with a grey color in table 5). In this regard the 2nd axe presents a higher capacity to promote social capital then the 3rd and 1st axes respectively.

Also in relation to LA it is possible to apply the RISCP, but in this case the variables are measured at the level of Local Action Groups. So in this case the $i = 1, \dots, n$ are the LAGs of the considered RDP and not the regions.

Table 5: Measures that can be activated by LEADER in Italian regions

Measures	Abruzzo	Basilicata	Calabria	Campania	Emilia	Friuli	Lazio	Liguria	Lombardia	Marche	Molise	Piemonte	Prov. Aut.	Prov. Aut.	Puglia	Sardegna	Sicilia	Toscana	Umbria	Val	Veneto
111		x			x			x	x			x	x	x							x
112								x	x					x							
113								x													
114					x			x	x												
115								x													
121		x	x		x			x	x			x		x							x
122					x			x	x			x		x							x
123			x		x	x		x	x			x	x	x							x
124	x							x	x			x						x			x
125								x	x					x							x
126								x													
131								x													
132					x			x	x				x								x
133			x					x	x			x	x					x			x
141								x													
142								x													
211								x	x												
212								x													
213								x													
214					x			x	x												
215					x			x													
216	x	x	x	x	x			x	x		x	x									x
221					x			x	x												x
222								x													
223								x	x												
224								x													
225								x													
226								x													
227	x		x	x	x	x		x			x	x									x
311	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
312	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x
313	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
321	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
322	x			x	x		x	x	x		x		x	x		x	x	x		x	
323		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x		x		x		x	x	x	x	x	x
331		x	x		x		x	x	x	x		x			x			x	x	x	x
341						x	x	x								x	x	x	x		x

Source: own elaboration based on INEA documents

6. CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

Social capital is one of the criteria for the LA approach evaluation as clarified by the Expert Group for RD evaluations. In the previous programming period, the social capital has been evaluated within the LEADER Plus (2000-2006) by means of qualitative researches applied in some initiatives and giving evidence to the collective actions of beneficiaries or to the voluntary nature of works generated by the programme, and so on.

The insertion of LEADER in the framework of RDPs (2007-2013) helps the evaluators in their tasks with an already established system for the monitoring and evaluation of the programmes (CMEF). This, of course, is an opportunity to utilize acknowledged and consolidated indicators for the analysis and evaluation of LEADER approach. For this purpose,

we have focused on the logic of intervention of different measures analyzing the social capital dimensions involved, in order to understand the relative capacity of LEADER to promote social capital.

Therefore, the RISC applied at the level of RDPs or at the level of LA could be a useful instrument to be utilized by evaluators to:

- verify, within an ongoing evaluation process, the capacity of the programme to promote social capital;
- compare the data, with a cross-sectional analysis, in order to obtain, for a specific moment, a relative ranking of the considered instrument related to its social capital dimension;
- compare the data, with a longitudinal analysis, in order to monitor, in the considered timeframe, how is evolving the relative capacity of the programme to promote social capital;
- realize other qualitative studies, in relation to the measures selected with the presented methodology, to capture much more data and information on the different social capital dimensions and characteristics.

In terms of further researches, the index could be much more refined if the questions for the selection of the measures (table 4) were proposed to an expert group on rural development, and not only based on the analysis of the rural development legislations and of the common monitoring and evaluation framework for 2007-2013, that could represent a weak point of this analysis. For this purpose also a much more detailed ranking could be included, using for example a Likert scale.

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