EXPLAINING COMPLIANCE WITH EU THROUGT POLICY IMPLEMENTATION THEORY

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Abstract: EU accession has been one of the most successful policies of the Union. Conditionality and compliance with EU norms have been the instruments used to ensure that the transformative power of the EU reached post-communist countries. There have been two main theoretical models explaining how compliance and implementation of policies have helped in this process: top-down and bottom-up. However, these approaches are challenged when it comes to EU accession in post-communist contexts, such as Albania. They are not able to capture and fully understand the entire landscape of the implementation process, but rather give separate and inconclusive elements of explanation. In this paper, I discuss policy implementation theories in the context of EU accession and compliance. The explanatory framework is derived from an inductive work based on the Albanian accession process. Rather than top-down, bottom-up, and mixed approaches that several authors have used, I argue that this process can be understood better by new modes of governance based on multilevel approach, rather than by rigid models which were developed mainly as domestic policy implementation without external pressure. Understanding coordination and interaction patterns between the many stakeholders at different levels of governance, nationally and internationally, offers a more complete picture and an in-depth understanding and explanation about compliance and implementation performance.

Implementation of policies is a complex process. As Smith (1973) has argued, developed countries have an incremental nature to their policies, meaning that they do not require drastic change when introducing new policies and legislation. Developing countries lack that kind of starting basis. They lack constructive legacies and patterns; they have little time and an overloaded agenda to effect major change. On one hand, it might be easier to transpose a whole body of EU rules without having to adapt an existing regulation (Dahl, 2007), as in the case of some policy areas in post-communist countries. On the other hand, building from scratch entails problems due to the lack of previous experience. Therefore, these countries face various problems and are stuck in between bad experience and no experience at all.

This is the position in which Albania, as a candidate country for EU membership, finds itself in, when transposing and implementing EU directives and policies. The coming into force of the Stabilization and Association Agreement in 2006 marked a qualitative new stage in bilateral relations between Albania and the EU, entailing significant new obligations and engagement for the country in many areas. In most cases cooperation has focused mainly on priorities related to the EU *acquis* in the relevant fields, with Albania committing to gradually introducing EU *acquis* into its legislation, to implement related policies and to cooperate with the EU on joint policy objectives. This agreement has also offered a clear path and road map for Albania, by describing specific objectives and time frame for adoption.

More than ten years after the agreement came into force, Albania has maintained a good pace in the process of adopting EU policies and aligning its legislation to EU directives. However, the country has not recorded a satisfactory performance in terms of proper implementation of directives, in some of the main policy areas (EU Commission, 2021). Reports that monitor and evaluate the situation every

year claim that the implementation stage has been the weak point of Albanian performance toward EU membership. Since there is a considerable gap in the literature on Albania from this point of view, this study seeks also to contribute to filling that gap.

As Bardach (1984) has explained in his work, The implementation game, 'Implementation is a process of assembling the elements required to produce a particular programmatic outcome.' This process contains different stages and elements. Bursens (2002) has identified four consecutive stages that the implementation of European regulations encompasses:

1. Formal transposition (or adoption)
2. Practical application (or final implementation)
3. Enforcement/control
4. Outcome/results.

This paper seeks to analyse and explain the second stage, in relation to the implementation of EU directives in Albania. Full implementation is the missing link in this process for Albania

The 'implementation game' so far

As main literature on implementation shows, there is a vast number of works that have studied transposition and adoption in this sense, across the EU members and other aspiring countries. They adopt a comparative approach and assess mainly quantitatively the process of transposing EU legislation in different sectors and countries. According to Cini (2003), implementation rates vary across policy areas and therefore it is not easy to generalize. Although there are interesting findings on causal relationships between adoption performance and contextual factors of aspiring the countries, sometimes studies comparing different countries fail to capture how domestic factors might influence the subsequent step – full implementation of directives. It is argued that failing to understand and to analyze this stage, not only makes it harder to explain causal relationships and factors, but also influences directly the other two stages – enforcement and outcome. For this reason, this study has been focused on full implementation.

What is full implementation dependent upon? What are the factors that influence this process?

The set of variables which has been developed to explain implementation performance has experienced an enlargement in recent years. When the number of implementation studies began to rise and expand in the 1970s, they were concentrated around the Pressman and Wildavsky findings of 1973. Their study and analysis of the implementation process in Oakland (USA) represented a new approach within this little developed field. The degree and strength of veto players' presence, the complexity of policies, the administrative capacities of bureaucratic officials, and the level of information available were some of the main factors considered to be of great influence on the implementation process. In later years this field of study was divided into two main schools of thought and therefore different approaches and variables gained new perspectives – top-down and bottom-up.

One of the most prominent scholars of implementation is O'Toole. In his work of 1986, one of the main assessment works on implementation literature, he has reviewed more than one hundred implementation studies. In these works, he sorted references to over three hundred key variables related to implementation. O'Toole's account confirms the wideness of the field and the vast number of theories and models developed. As Matland (1995) claims in his work, in the implementation field no more variables are needed – this literature needs structure.

However, in later years this field of study could finally concentrate and was divided into two main schools of thought and therefore different approaches and variables gained new perspectives – top-down and bottom-up. A third group developed later, as an attempt to combine the first two. The top-down and bottom-up approaches seemed to structure in different ways the explanation of implementation by setting up different clusters of independent factors and variables.

Top-down models (Van Meter and Van Horn, 1975; Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1981; 1983; 1989) see the starting point of the process in the authoritative decision-making of mainly central and high official actors. This has led to the concentration on variables that can be manipulated in the central level. As Matland (1995) sums it up, top-down explanations for analysing and improving implementation performance can be synthesised in four simple elements or rules: Make policy goals clear and consistent (Van

Meter and Van Horn, 1975); minimise the number of actors (Pressman and Wildavsky, 1973); limit the extent of change necessary (Mazmanian and Sabatier, 1985); and place implementation responsibility in an agency sympathetic to the policy's goals (Matland, 2003).

The top-down model has been criticized for different aspects. First, top-downers do not deal with the policy-making process (Winter 1986). By neglecting the initial phases of the policy formation, they fail to capture the many barriers that implementation carries on from early stages. Second, the top-down approach considers implementation as purely administrative process. With emphasis on clarity of rules, they tend to divide administration from politics. Third, top downers see low level actors as obstacles to successful implementation, elements to be controlled.

On the other hand, the bottom-up model argues that a more realistic understanding of implementation can be obtained by looking at a policy from the view of the target population and the service deliverers (Berman, 1978; Hjern and Porter, 1981; Hjern and Hull, 1982; Lipsky, 1978). Most advocates of this approach argue that implementation problems are created from the interaction of a policy with the micro level institutional factors. The central actors cannot impose any direct influence at this level. Therefore, environment and contextual elements might dominate the rules created at higher levels, and policymakers will be unable to control the process. The bottom-up approach theorists have also reached a conclusion that, if local, or the so-called street-level, implementers do not have the freedom and possibility to adapt policies to domestic conditions, implementation is likely to fail. They argue that there cannot be a theory of implementation which is "context free" (Palumbo, Maynard-Moody and Wright, 1984). Since it is at the micro level that policy affects people directly, then street-level bureaucrats must be involved to understand and interpret goals, strategies and expected outcomes of policies. As Cini (2003) points out, the complexity of EU directives provides the key to understanding this issue, when transposed to national level. Complexity, without adequate information and explanation of implementation mechanisms, leads to implementation failure.

While top-down model tends to present advice, bottom-uppers are more oriented towards the factors that have caused difficulties in pursuing successful implementation. For this reason, the bottom-up research usually has a strong inductive nature. Their main finding or recommendation is the need for a flexible strategy that permits adaption to local realities and contextual factors (Maynard-Moody, Musheno, and Palumbo 1990 in Matland 1995).

There are two main groups of critics to bottom-up models. The first one deals with legitimacy issues. Since street level actors are not elected and not vested with popular mandate, their discretion and flexibility in the implementation process should not serve as a tool for designing policy. As Matland (1995) points out, this autonomy might be adequate when the goals of the policy designers and the implementers are the same, but if they differ in a considerable amount, flexibility might lead to policies with lower success on official goals. The second critic is about methodology. Bottom-up authors try to capture perceptions and therefore rely on different interpretations of the actors involved for explaining implementation performance. This neglects the fact that central actors structure the goals and strategies, available resources, etc. Thus, the decision to give space and flexibility belongs anyway to central actors.

Although these approaches seem to cover the main features of implementation, there has been wide discussion and criticism of them, mainly based on their simplifying tendency and in rejecting each other's assumptions. Even though they both offer interesting explanatory factors, a combination of the two perspectives seems to reach a better position and creates a better study relationship with the implementation variable (Elmore, 1982 and 1985). Reconciliation of the two approaches has been attempted by either specifying in advance the policy objectives, detailed means-ends, and outcome criteria (forward mapping) or specifying the behavior needed to be changed at the lowest level (backward mapping) (Matland, 1995). This allowed the consideration of the views of the target groups and local implementers. A combination of the two approaches was also seen when interest groups (advocacy coalitions) were made the unit of analysis. Advocacy coalitions are groups of policy advocates who share the same set of beliefs and goals (Sabatier 1986).

However, few attempts have been made in this direction. Elmore's forward and backward mapping approach includes the analysis of both levels – high and low. Beyond mixing up the two schools

of thoughts and claiming the importance of micro implementers and target groups, Elmore's model has been criticised for lack of explanatory power. It has not been considered a theoretical model in the traditional sense. There are no causal relationships involved or hypothesis raised.

Another attempt to mix the two main models has been pursued by Goggin et al. (1990). They have elaborated a communications model of intergovernmental policy implementation that considers implementers as part of a communication network. They refer to three main variables: constraints from the top, constraints from the bottom, and specific factors dependent on decisional results and state capacity. They put communication at the core of this model and state that information is perceived differently. There is distortion and these contextual specific conditions can affect interpretation.

Finally, Matland (1995) has done an interesting work in structuring main aspects of the two models and has developed a combination of them, based on two pillars: policy ambiguity and policy conflict. From this he has generated four implementation perspectives. Based on the degree of ambiguity and conflict involved in the policy process, four types of approaches to implementation-namely political, symbolic, experimental, and administrative-were identified. Political approach is used when conflict is high, and ambiguity is low. Symbolic approach is used when both conflict and ambiguity are high. Administrative approach is used when both conflict and ambiguity are low while experimental approach is used when ambiguity is high, and conflict is low. The crux of differentiation is that in administrative approach, which is predominantly top down, outcomes are determined by resources, while in symbolic they are decided by the strength of the local coalition. In experimental approach, which can be a mix of both top down and bottom, outcomes are decide dy the contextual condition and in case of political approach they are decided by power. This model tries to depict as clear as possible the potential situations of policy implementation in the different contexts. The experimental implementation model (low conflict, high ambiguity) seems to suit best the Albanian case. However, as argued in the next section, these models fail to capture some peculiar characteristics of policy implementation process that are specific to the Albanian (and maybe other countries') context.

Explaining implementation in Albania

Although these approaches seem to cover the main features of implementation, there has been wide discussion and criticism of them, mainly based on their simplifying tendency and not being able to explain different contexts. Grindle and Thomas (1991) have developed further the role of actors involved in the policy implementation process. In their work, they refer to the main civil servants in charge of designing the implementation of public policies as the policy elite. According to their findings, policy actors carry out their activities with some degree of independence from society pressure, although their options might be constrained by external factors. However, when state institutions have existed for some time, they tend to acquire power and organise the resources, becoming actors. Their role is crucial in the decision-making phase regarding policies, where the "perceptions and calculations of the policy elites are determining factors of the outcome" (Degnbol-Martinussen, 1999, p. 4). In this phase, they can interfere in the process of implementation by selectively promoting some aspects of policies or by distorting them. In this context, interaction and dynamics between state structures become important variables in the process of implementation.

This type of interaction varies in the case of the relationship between state and non-state actors, such as interest groups. The latter are well recognised in the literature as important stakeholders in the implementation process. As Degnbol-Martinussen (1999) argues in his work, interest and pressure groups are often prevented from exercising their influence in the policy design process, but they are very important because they can oppose effective implementation and, consequently, the achievement of the intended impact. For this reason, interaction with pressure groups and their involvement in the process is part of the factors which influence policy implementation. Chiodi (2008) claims that the creation of Albanian pressure and interest groups after communism has often been an externally driven process by donors rather than reflecting society needs and spontaneous organisation of groups. In the process of EU integration and policy implementation, this has meant the creation of gaps between them and the process, making them a 'weak public' and simply viewers.

To answer the main quest of this study, rather than looking to political aspects of implementation, the paper investigates institutions responsible for implementation, coordination and organisational capabilities, involvement of other non-state actors, etc. The political factor influences mostly the first stage – formal adoption of the directives or legislation. According to different authors, political actors do not seem to have any power over the process once the implementation stage has begun.

As explained in the previous section, the factors that influence the process of policy implementation are numerous. When studying cross-sector implementation patterns, Ruhil and Teske (2003) claim that there are three elements that shape the outcome and results of a certain implementation process: combination of input, pressure from interest groups, and decisions by institutional actors. Each of these elements can be divided into more detailed variables and be explained and formulated in a more operationalised way. The variables chosen for this study are focused mainly in:

– Organisational and Coordination capacities
– Involvement of interest groups in the process.

According to different authors, each of these variables has a specific impact on the implementation process. They also provide a good interaction between top-down and bottom-up models. From a preliminary overview of the Albanian case, the chosen variables, combined in a certain way, seem to offer potential explanations and variance between the different sectors, which other variables fail to do.

Organisational and coordination capacities are part of the general administrative capacities, which represent a well-recognised variable in the implementation literature. In the case of Albania, coordination and organization of the process is crucial in explaining implementation. There are several works which have stressed the importance of capacities in different settings and approaches. Hille and Knill (2006) have concluded that implementation performance is mostly affected by administrative capacities and less by other possible variables, such as veto players or interest groups. In their findings, they claimed that practical implementation is more about bureaucracy rather than politics. Having a well consolidated and stabilised public administration is a major concern when studying the implementation process in terms of state capacity (Knill, 2001). Albania still suffers from not having properly developed and implemented civil service reforms. Studies and reports show that legislation regarding civil servants' status is not implemented adequately and there have been several cases brought to court for unfair termination of contract due to political interference (Elbasani, 2009). Being constantly under pressure and uncertainty about their career future, influence the performance of public administration officials and policymakers when dealing with EU challenges. The administration performance is important in all stages of policy adoption, from transposition to implementation.

Therefore, it is crucial to try to understand its influence in the whole process. There are several reports and studies which assess Albanian public administration in terms of capacities (EU Commission, 2021; World Bank, 2008; SIGMA 2008; Elbasani, 2008; etc.). Although these studies do not explain variance between the different sectors of the country, they provide a well-developed assessment of the general conditions and characteristics of bureaucratic administration in Albania.

Many authors agree that to improve implementation performance, it is necessary to create and consolidate a set of institutions which build the framework for influencing output (Wolczuk, 2009; Kassim et al., 2000). They often view implementation as a problem of domestic coordination. In this aspect, shortcomings were demonstrated in Albania even in terms of responding to the EU candidate's status questionnaire. The status has been rejected three times so far. The process of coordination can influence and determine the outcome of overall compliance with the EU (De la Rosa, 2005; Dimitrova and Toshkov, 2007). A preliminary observation also relates to the fact that the Ministry of Integration in Albania is still weak and does not have strong leadership or political power to exercise pressure on other institutions to comply with EU policies. The way in which central institutions interact with other state actors and how they help in moving forward with the agenda of implementing and enforcing EU policies is related to coordination. The stronger the coordination units are, the more efficient implementation is achieved. This looks like a golden rule repeated in different studies. Some authors even suggest that strong and centralised coordination of EU directive implementation can be a solution when the country has weak administrative capacities (Dimitrova and Toshkov, 2007). Splitting administrative and coordination ca-

pacities into more detailed and understandable elements, might help in explaining the variance between sectors. In this context, the concept of strength of bureaucracy elaborated by Falkner (2005) can bring some useful suggestions. The way in which this variable was studied and operationalised is through these important sub-variables:

Capacities of proper understanding and interpreting of directives. Through a set of interviews, this study has tried to evaluate the process of dealing with adopted directives by policymakers in the respective institutions. By collecting this kind of data, we tried to establish whether there is a consultation process with other departments or external experts (even with EU officials – they will be asked about this too) or whether it is isolated work within a single office. Policy makers' perception of understanding and their instruments for interpretation can directly affect the early stage of formulation of the respective policy (Zubek & Getz, 2010). EU directives are very complex and civil servants often fail to understand them properly or interpret them according to their point of view and their experience. As Pressman (1978) has claimed, policy design and formulation should be simple. But EU legislation is much more complex and if the EU directive is not understood correctly, there is a strong likelihood that implementation performance will suffer.

Clear procedures in policymakers' activity. The second aspect that we could notice in the Albanian case, is related to the degree of institutionalisation within public administration. Regulatory instruments and internal procedures will be compared between the different policy areas. What the norms and practices are and how they are internalised by policymakers. Through the unstructured questions in the interviews, I will try to understand any possible interaction between formal and informal institutions, informal rules, and routines. According to Zubek (2005), this might be very important especially for explaining differences between different sectors. And furthermore, how is policymakers' work measured in terms of success and failure? What are the accountability instruments used and how do they monitor and follow up the directive, which they designed, for implementation? From our data, getting and understanding their perceptions and the answers to these questions, whether there are formal rules and procedures, or informal practices, can be relevant for implementation. As a matter of fact, ministries adopt their own internal regulation. This exercised autonomy might become a source of different work practices and therefore lead to different results in implementation. Moreover, the use of other possible instruments (for example Regulatory Impact Assessment) which monitor and evaluate the policies in their field, is an important aspect for the quality of policy design and implementation.

Financial and human resources. Financial availability and human resources are other fundamental components related to administrative capacity. The agenda which Albania has adopted, and the commitments of implementation require adequate financial resources. This is partly derived from EU financial assistance through IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession) but the most of it must be provided from the Albanian budget. Being one of the poorest countries of Europe makes this task even more difficult. Implementation deficit is often caused by insufficient financial support and lack of personnel resources. Classic models fail often to consider this element and, especially in the EU accession context, it appears to be an important one. For this reason, when dealing with countries such as Albania, it is particularly relevant to include it in the research design.

Process coordination and organisation. Coordination of complying with EU directives can be as important as administrative capacities. There are two different levels of coordination: central and ministerial. Central coordination is crucial to the overall process. The responsible institution has numerous competences. If we look at the experience of other post-communist countries, there are different institutional settings which deal with central coordination of the EU integration process in different countries. However, it seems that there three main institutions chosen for this important job: some countries have chosen to build a Ministry of European Integration; others have created a structure within the prime minister's office; and others have delegated this work to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the case of Albania, a Ministry of European Integration was set up before signing the SAA. The Ministry was later merged with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[1]. According to the literature and experiences of different countries, no single way is better than any other (Maniokas, 2009). Each of these methods has proved to be successful when other conditions were met. The main criteria of the institution in charge of coordina-

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[1] In 2017 the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs was established.

tion should be the clear and uncontested leadership of coordination and political power. The institution involved should be perceived as very important and it must have the opportunity to exercise pressure and its power in relation to other ministries. To evaluate this central coordinator role in different policy areas in Albania, interviews with civil servants from the different ministries will be asked about the role of the ministry which coordinates the process. How has it influenced their work in focusing attention and assigning priorities? Has it provided monitoring for implementation? Has it provided technical assistance and expertise to ministries? If the role of the ministry has varied in different areas, this might be a source for explaining implementation performance.

Trying to understand whether there is a clear division of competences is also an element that might bring interesting findings (Montjoy, 1993). It is important to understand and compare the different institutions, to seek possible variations in the way that competences are divided within the engaged structures. This process is also very important with reference to the role of solving institutional disputes which might occur. The central coordinator should design and set up a functioning mechanism for solving inter-agency disputes over competences. It should also have an active role as mediator in settling conflicts between government units regarding EU integration competences. Albania has experienced several cases of inter-agency conflicts and institutional clashes. Rather than following legal procedures to higher institutions, these disputes can be settled and resolved by the main coordinator. Through document analysis and interviews, the study tried to capture possible cases of the influence of these elements in the implementation process.

The central coordinator and the ministerial structures are also responsible for the organisational aspects of communication flows. Their role can directly affect the exchange of information between government units. Since sharing information is very important in the overall implementation process, coordination structures within the ministries and the leading ministry of share these competences. Especially referring to the structures within the ministries, information channels with street-level officials prove to be relevant for the Albanian case.

Last, but not least, coordination and organisational aspects with **EU officials** remain crucial elements. Enhancing communication between their government and the European Union, is another matter of coordination. This is considered an important factor for implementation performance. The research aimed to explore how specific conditions and requests from the country are taken into consideration by EU officials and most importantly, how much they are aware of the reality and how much they interact with their counterparts when they elaborate the strategies (Kohler-Koch, 2003). In Albania, many such efforts carried out by the EU fail just because they are designed at their headquarters in Brussels and applied to a variety of local settings. The background and the specific conditions can determine the performance of complying with Europe (Giuliani, 2003). This can be avoided through increasing communication and coordination between Albanian policymakers and the respective EU officials. For each of the directives, the study gathered data of possible consultation and coordination between the parties.

Interest groups and civil society organizations constitute an important part of the implementation process. Involving local agencies and actors in developing agendas might be a very good instrument in increasing the efficiency and legitimacy of the adopted agenda. Implementation practices and strategies need to be discussed with experts and different actors to avoid making the wrong choices (Borghetto and Franchino, 2010). From preliminary work, it seemed that there has been little involvement of actors other than government employees when discussing and adopting EU directives. The study tried to understand how this process might influence and produce a proper implementation process.

Kriszen (1993) has suggested that including interest groups, NGOs and think tanks, in the early stages of policy formulation might become a source of success for implementation. Not only would this improve the level of information and expertise necessary for formulating policies, but it would have an impact of the legitimacy of the implemented directive. This is relatively easy in countries with a high degree of corporativism. In the case of Albania, interest groups are poorly organised, with low efficiency in terms of properly articulating their interests and dealing with the relevant institutions. For this reason, they neglect the formulation stage and deal mainly with the implementation phase (when it's 'too late'). As Smith (1995) has observed, groups attempt to influence implementation rather than formulation. In

this way, governments initiate policies without consultation. Some best practices from other countries have suggested the creation of mandatory monitoring committees with NGOs for certain directives. The Albanian case offers interesting results in analysing this variable and it might be a strong explanatory factor for full implementation. Preliminary results have shown that theories on interest group engagement might be tested successfully in the Albanian case (trade directives which have been successful have been pursued utilising consultation procedures with well-organised interest groups). However, this depends not only on formal consultation but also on the capacity and ability of the interest group itself.

As mentioned earlier, most of civil society organizations and NGOs in Albania were created from international organizations and donors, based on their understanding of the context and their strategies. This fact becomes relevant when looking into implementation and the role that these groups have in the process. Since they are not based on bottom-up approach (thus real needs and push factors from below), but rather 'appointed' from the top, their participation in the policy design and implementation process does not seem to give a proper contribution. They often lack understanding of reality and do not represent citizens' or groups' interest (that they are supposed to represent). From our interviews with policy makers and representatives of civil society groups we could collect interesting accounts of their (lack of) cooperation. Policy makers feel that there is little contribution made by these groups because they lack expertise and knowledge of the reality. While civil society groups complain about the lack of transparency and information given from policy makers, and the fact that their opinions are not considered. In this gap between these two important actors of the implementation process we could see that this different approach, we are arguing about, can explain implementation deficit for the Albanian context. Therefore, classic models, which fail to capture these deficiencies need to be revised when applied to the EU accession countries of the post communist area, with reference to Albania.

Conclusions

As this paper tried to argue, policy implementation theories need to maintain their revision attitude when moving in time and space. After the first theoretical works in the 70', mainly Pressman and Wildavsky (1973), developments in public policy and governance have bought new elements to be studied. Therefore, this area of study has changed and was enriched by other contributions. In the 1980s' it was further developed under two main approaches: top-down and bottom-up. Even though these two main strategies of explanation have been used broadly in the field, this paper tried to affirm that they are challenged when it comes to EU accession process of post communist countries, such as Albania. Both models fail to capture a broader picture of the implementation process in this case, and they rather give separate and inconclusive frames of explanation. Based on an inductive work on the Albanian accession process, the paper tried to add other elements to the classic models by creating a new framework of analysis when looking into implementation deficit. The process can be explained by new modes of governance based on multilevel characteristics, rather than by rigid theories which were developed mainly with reference to domestic policy implementation without external interference. As we could see, external influence has marked the process (creation of civil society groups and organizations) and further research work is necessary for exploring their role in the Albanian case. In addition, understanding interaction patterns between different actors in different levels of governance, nationally and internationally, offers in-depth explanation about implementation performance in Albania and brings to scholars' attention other variables which are often neglected by the above-mentioned theoretical models.

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