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RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND RURAL GOVERNABILITY:  
THE ANDALUSIAN CASE<sup>1</sup>

Ignacio L. Moreno<sup>2</sup>, Encarnación Aguilar<sup>3</sup>, Carmen Lozano<sup>3</sup>, and Alberto Pérez<sup>3</sup>

ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the 90s, the EU Rural Development Policy (RDP) embodied on different programmes and initiatives -such as *Leader*- has been changing the institutional way to approach rural communities among State Members. This new policy has been introducing new ideas such as multi-level governance or bottom-up decision making process, which have unfolded a new model of rural governance in Europe. Therefore, the hypothesis of this paper is that EU RPD is a key element in the ongoing process of deep transformation of rural governance in Andalusia.

This paper is the outcome of an empirical research based on fieldwork techniques that produced quantitative and qualitative data, which try to combine the micro and macro perspective. Therefore, the current situation and model of

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<sup>2</sup> Rural Sociology Group, Wageningen University. The Netherlands

<sup>3</sup> Social Anthropology Department, Universidad de Sevilla, Spain

rural governance in Andalusia will be explained; ethnographic examples of rural county governance will be used as empiric examples.

The Andalusian case represents an incredible chance to study this new model of rural governance, because 90% of the Andalusian territory has been defined as rural. At the same time, this rural territory has been divided in 50 Rural Development Areas (RDA) or counties with 50 Local Action Groups (LAGs). This paper demonstrates that this institutional network has become key element on rural governance in Andalusia, and that LAGs have a powerful position due to their mediation role between civil society and public administration.

## 1. - INTRODUCTION

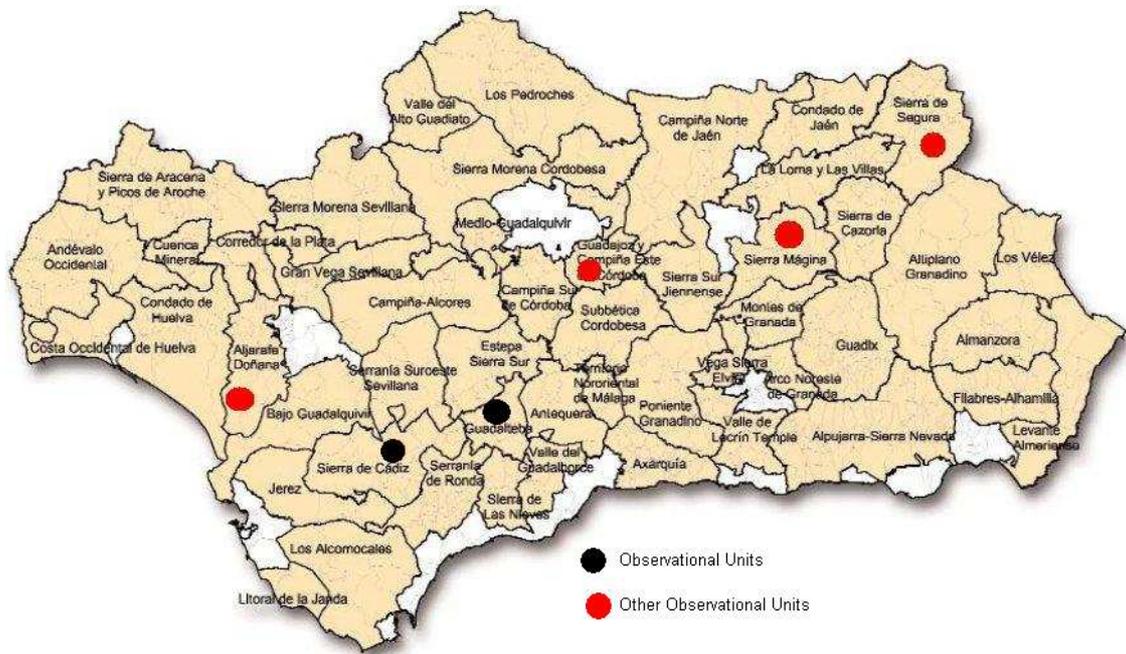
Since the Rome Treaty in 1957, as clearly defines the article 39, Europe has been working in order to achieve a good level of food production and farmers welfare. The maximum reference and tool in this sense has been the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), a regional policy that has been re-defined many times during the last decades, becoming 'a mixture of continuity and change' (Fennell, 1997: vi). But it was only at the end of the 90s when a second pillar was added to the CAP, the Rural Development Policy (RDP), a qualitative change that opened the door to new practices and partnership all over Europe *in post* of a new European rural scenario.

Throughout this process of continuity and change, social sciences have been contributing to the general discussion in a significant way, opening debates and offering theoretical model and practices analysis (Esparcia, 2000; Marsden, 2003; Aguilar and Lozano, 2006; Cloke *et al*, 2006; O'Connor *et al*, 2006; Ploeg and Marsden, 2008; Aguilar *et al*, 2009). This paper aims to contribute to future debates exposing the Andalusian case, using as examples two Rural Development Areas (RDAs): Sierra de Cádiz and Guadalteba.

## 2. - METHODOLOGY

This paper is the outcome of an ongoing research project that focuses on the current process of EU rural areas reshape. Although this project has six different observational units (see Figure 1), two of them were chosen as the most representative of the new model of rural governance in Andalusia: Sierra de Cádiz and Guadalteba.

Figure 1: I+D Project Observational Units in Andalusia



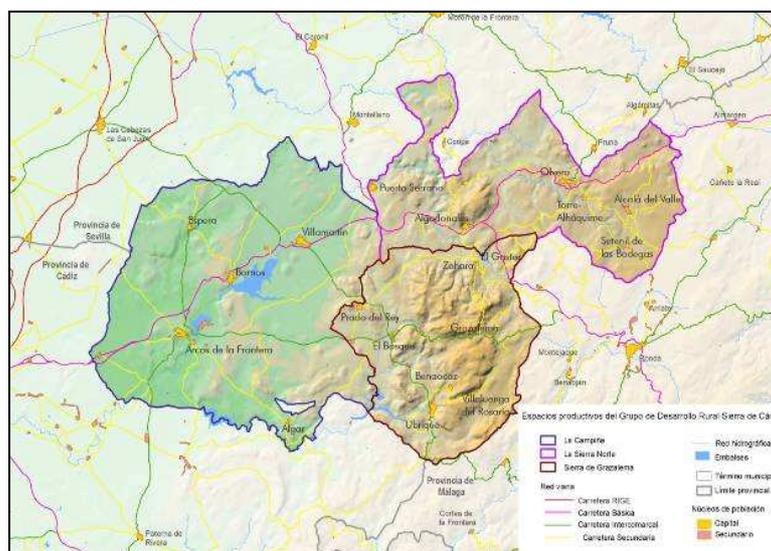
The methodology that we have implemented in order to study the evolution and changes experienced on this field answers to a combination of documents analysis and fieldwork, being the semi-structured open interviews the fieldwork's core. These interviews took place within the two RDAs mentioned before. During the fieldwork (table 1), 87 interviews were driven with different people involved in this sector, such as rural enterprising, technicians, politicians, association members, etc.

Table 1: Key Informants Typology

Informants Typology	Interviews
Rural Enterprising	57
Technician/ politician	24
Association members	6
Total	87

These observational units were chosen for two different reasons, their successful trajectory and their innovative organizational model. The first observational unit (Sierra de Cádiz) was chosen because the LAG has led a quiet successful economic diversification in this RDA. This economic diversification has been a long term process that started in 1991. Sierra de Cádiz’s LAG –also known as ACEDERSICA- was one of the 9 LAG created in Andalusia during the Leader I (1991-1995). Indeed, it was created by former technicians of the *Instituto de Fomento Andaluz* (Andalusian Development Institute). Sierra de Cádiz -as a RDA- is composed by 19 municipalities (Figure 2), it has a total area of 1.998 km<sup>2</sup> and 116.792 inhabitants.

Figure 2: Sierra de Cádiz Map



Source: ADECERSICA



levels: State, 17 Autonomous Communities, 50 provinces and 8.112 municipalities. Although since 1980s Spain has been involved in a process of administrative decentralisation, in the current scheme there was not any official administrative level that actually coincides with the LAG requirements<sup>5</sup>. At the same time, in 1992 the Maastricht Treaty came in force, introducing the Subsidiarity Principle within the EU. This principle supported the regional level as the right for RDP implementation, giving the Autonomous Communities a main role in rural governance.

Thus, it was necessary to transform the rural institutional map in order to implement and manage these processes of guided planning. 18 years later, this transformative process has drawn a new rural institutional map in Spain, where 232 LAGs try to redefine the economic and social activities within their new territories. In the case of Andalusia –as we can see in the following map- there are 50 LAGs:

Figure 4: LAGs in Andalusia



Source: Regional Minister for Agriculture, Fishery and Food

<sup>5</sup> In Spain county subdivision has never been formally implemented, although unofficially people use to refer to them as *comarcas*.

It is very important to notice that this is not a meaningless process; it is a process of territorialisation<sup>6</sup> over Andalusia rural map. Thus, this territorialisation process unfolds a new framework for social relationships, and new social relationships. According to Godelier (1990), any social relationship is provided since its appearance of sense and purpose, so is this new map.

In a first moment, it seems clear that the consolidation of the new model of development is the main aim of this new territorial organization. This new model focuses on the territorial economy rather than economic sector; it also supports innovative institutions –such as the LAGs- that facilitate civil society participation through partnership. Nevertheless, it has been highlighted by some scholars (Esparcia, 2000; Esparcia *et al*, 2000) that RD Initiatives have a double function: they have improved quality life in rural areas, but at the same time they have become very efficient tools in the hand of politic-administrative institutions which use them to legitimize their own agendas and interventions.

#### 4. - SIERRA DE CÁDIZ AS A STRATEGY OF LOCAL PRODUCTS DIFFERENTIATION

In the previous part of this paper, the expansion and unfold of a specific territorial model in Andalusia due to the RDP implementation has been explained. In this part, we try to highlight how this territorial model -based on the EU partnership model (Derkzen, 2008) - has become also a new model of rural governance. In order to do it, we will use the ethnographic example of Sierra de Cádiz, a RDA where the LAG has become the main steering institution.

The new European philosophy for RD is linked with the new function that these areas have in post-industrial society as providers of goods and services which

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<sup>6</sup> We would like make clear that for us the territory is a cultural construction; therefore, territorialisation means the process of material appropriation and claim over specific areas.

incorporate notions of quality, nature, territory and tradition (Camarero and Gonzalez, 2005). In the next paragraphs -and after a deeper description of the observational unit- we will demonstrate how the new guidelines of RD coming from Brussels are implemented by the LAG, which tends to support rural entrepreneur (Aguilar et al, 2009) and unfold new sectorial networks within the RDA (Aguilar, 2007; Aguilar and Amaya, 2007).

In this sense, and in the case of Sierra de Cádiz's LAG, from the very first moment, there was something clear in the mind of the technicians involved in the development of Sierra de Cádiz, in order to success it was necessary to promote the already existing resources in the area: outstanding cultural landscapes, craftsmanship tradition, local products and a strong cultural heritage linked with the environment in a positive synergy (Cloke and Goodwin, 1992; Brunori and Rossi, 2000; Wiskerke and Ploeg, 2004). It was a clear bet on endogenous development that denies the introduction of modernization paradigm. As the LAG Manager said in one of the interviews:

*'Sierra de Cádiz has future because it has stocks of resources; there are resources that we can use furthermore. If they would be exhausted, then we would have to be worried about the future, but it is not the case'*

*LAG Manager, male, 40 years old.*

Figure 5: The Leader Initiative in Sierra de Cádiz

	LEADER I	LEADER II	LEADER + <sup>7</sup>
Number of Projects	112	175	+100
Total Budget	10.730.000	11.853.000	+12.000.000

Resource: LAG Sierra de Cádiz

<sup>7 7</sup> The LAG is involved in the evaluation of the Leader+, therefore the final report is not available yet, the numbers offered in this figure and others have been agreed with the LAG as the most representatives.

Since 1991, the LAG has been responsible for the implementation of many initiatives and programmes, but Leader Initiatives has been the main instrument of the LAG (Figure 5).

The implementation of this projects has followed an integral approach, paying attention to the different economic sectors in the area, financing their modernization and improvement, and promoting the constitution of sectorial and territorial associations in order to vertebrate the territory. This recipe has been transforming the area day by day, we are not talking here about massive introduction of capital in a short period of time, but about selective distribution of resource between rural enterprising distributed in the whole RDA. This transformation has been influenced by two processes, the adaptation to the European normative and the introduction of high quality systems. Although it has been pointed out the risk of homogenisation existing in these processes (Leitch, 2003), in this case the LAG has been taken it as a chance to promote distinctive production and services, labelling them under the title of *Sierra de Cádiz*. The LAG paid special attention to the introduction of high quality systems as the “Q of Quality” for tourism establishments, and the “Parque Natural” quality label (Aguilar and Amaya, 2007; Aguilar, 2007). Nevertheless, the main bet of the LAG has been a strategy of local products differentiation. The main outcome of this strategy is the transformation of the name *Sierra de Cádiz* in a label that consumers link to the ideas of quality, nature and tradition. This strategy has been implemented in three different sectors, which are the core of the county economy: cheese, olive oil and rural tourism.

Cattle-raising is a traditional activity in this area, and it has been part of their practices from immemorial times. This practice is linked to the existence of two indigenous breeds of goat and sheep, the *Payoya Goat* or *Cabra Payoya* and the *Grazalema’s Merina Sheep* or *Oveja Merina de Grazalema*; both of them recognized by the national authorities as breeds of special protection. Traditionally, cheese production use to be restricted to herdsmen’s families, and

it was destined to self-consumption. Herdsmen were not cattle raising goats and sheep for cheese production, but for their meat and wool in the case of the sheep, and their meat and milk in the case of the goat; cheese production was a cultural practice to manage milk stocks (Aguilar, 2002; Aguilar and Lozano, 2006).

These three main goods (milk, meat and wool) used to be sold as raw material to companies that were operating in the area, for the herdsmen it was a fast income for the family economy, and reduce the needs of investment to land rent and fodder. In the case of the milk, most of the production was sold to FARLACTÁREA a multinational company represented in 24 different countries, specialized in cheese production of goat, sheep and cows. But on the 90s this situation started to change.

On 1995 there were a couple of cheese factories already operating in the area, but they were producing just daily farmer cheese. Then, two rural enterprising decided to invest in the foundation of a new cheese factory in Villaluenga, the smallest village in the area, with less than 500 inhabitants. They chose this village for two main reasons, there was a strong tradition of cheese production, and the continuous practice of cattle-raising has development the perfect environment for this activity. Two years later, and with the support of the LAG, the new factory opened with a new brand "*Quesos Payoyo*"<sup>8</sup>, showing up the clear intention for linking their products with the territory and the existing indigenous breeds. Nowadays, the factory produces more than 80.000 kg of 14 different kinds of cheese, and 18 people work in this factory.

This experience did not past unnoticed in the area, in the last ten years new factories have been opened, and the factories that were operating already have diversify their production and included mature cheese of both milk, goat and sheep. There is a total number of 7 factories in the area, and 3 of them have

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<sup>8</sup> Payoyo is the gentilic for people born and living in this area

received international awards, something that have open for them markets in United Kingdom, France and Italy. Although it is something that made fell proud to the producers, almost half of their production is sold straight in the shops allocated in the factory, due to the strong synergy with the local tourism industry and the defence of the value of quality over quantity. At the same time, this new industry has a straight influence in herdsmen of the area and the indigenous breeds of goat and sheep, as one of the factory manager remarked:

*'When we opened the factory we were thinking about the sustainable development of the shire, because if we did not invest in this factory, the Garzalema Merina Sheep disappears, because we are the main buyers of their milk. Previous to the factory, the cheese were made by the shepherds, but the introduction of the European normative put this practice in danger, to make cheese it was necessary to adapt their practice to specific hygienic conditions that they could not afford. Here there was a family tradition, but it was necessary the adaptation to the new normative.'*

Factory Owner and Cheese Master, 52 years old.

The LAG has been supporting this process from the very first moment. From their perspective, it has been considered a way to promote cultural heritage that was going to disappear, due to low level of incomes for herdsmen, something that have change with this new local milk market. They have supported this process of innovation in three different ways: assisting the modernization of their productive process, promoting their attendance to exhibitions, and introducing quality labels for their brands. Currently, it has been approved the creation of a two Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) -one for goat cheese and other for sheep cheese-. These labels will guarantee the origin and quality of their products, but also the existence of indigenous breeds and shepherds.

The second case is the Olive Oil production. Andalusia is the biggest producers of olives in Spain, 80% of the Spanish total production comes from our land

(MAPA, 2000), and Sierra de Cádiz represent the 85% of the total production in the Province of Cádiz, with more than 37.000 hectares of olives trees; even the name of towns like Olvera highlight the old relationship between this area and the olive production. These data contrast with the low productivity that usually involves the olive groves, but the climate and adaptability of the olive trees has supported this relationship for long. Olive groves distribution in Sierra de Cádiz contrast with the rest of Andalusia, because the land is divided in small plots instead of large, although the organisation of the sector is quiet similar, having as main system of organisation the farming co-operative. Before the mid 90s, most of the production use to be sold as raw material or manufacture on the local mills for unlabelled exportation, but the foundation of the Association for the guarantee of origin by the LAG and some cooperatives started to change this tendency.

In March 1998 the association approved the initiative to request a PDO for extra virgin olive oil produced in Sierra de Cádiz. Four years later, the Andalusian government recognised it and published under the law APA/2005/2002, establishing a Regulatory Board and the internal regulations; the name of the PDO would be "Sierra de Cádiz". The introduction of the PDO in Sierra de Cádiz was a clear strategy to drive a transformation in the sector, it was necessary to improve the productive system and promote the production of high quality extra virgin oil. Once more, the LAG assisted this process giving financial support for the restructuring of the sector from high quantity to high quality production, and preparing meetings with cooperatives and small producer in order to introduce them in the project. The PDO had a straight consequence, and it was the extra value added to the final product. Nowadays, more than 20.000 hectares of olive groves are under the PDO Sierra de Cádiz, 8 mills and 7 brands that produce every year around 15 millions of kg of extra virgin olive oil, up to the harvest.

One of the consequences of the post-industrial society on rural areas is a change in the perception of rural areas from agricultural to place of consumption (Aguilar, 2007). In this sense, it is importance to notice that nowadays, rural areas have to

satisfy new demands of direct and indirect consumption, such as environmental quality, landscape and cultural inquiring. Therefore, a new dynamic can be noticed in these areas, an slow shift from first to third sector, which involved the re-organization and promotion of rural tourism in the area (Aguilar, 2002; Aguilar, Merino, and Mingens, 2003).

It is important to remember that tourism is one of the main economic sectors in Andalusia, with a total income of 17.268€ millions, it represent 12.6 % of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 11.8% of the employed population works in this sector (IMPACTUR, 2006). Therefore, it seems clear that tourism is an important industry for this region, but there is an unbalanced distribution of the sector, centred in the coast line with the 69% of the total number of bed offered in the region (SAETA, 2007: 175). Thus, rural tourism has been mainly a marginal activity in the sector, but from year 2000, the number of bed offered in this kind of establishment has been increasing constantly.

Figure 6: Number of bed in rural establishment in Andalusia, evolution and variation



Source: Consejería de Turismo, Comercio y Deporte (SAETA)

Sierra de Cádiz has been involved in this process from the very first moment, even before this kind of activity would become part of the politicians' agenda or recognised as a niche for RD. It is necessary to underline that in 1977 *Sierra de Grazalema* was designated by the Unesco Biosphere Reserve. It was declared the first natural park in Andalusia in 1984, and is one of most ecologically

outstanding areas in the whole country. With a total area of 51,695ha this natural park is famous for its spectacularly rugged limestone landscape of cliffs, gullies, caves and gorges. At the same time, the importance of the cultural landscapes in this area were recognised with the first tourist cultural route in Andalusia, The *Route of the White Villages*<sup>9</sup>, that included the whole 19 municipalities of Sierra de Cádiz. Therefore, tourism was not strange in the area, but it was an unstructured activity that did not produce many incomes for the inhabitants due to lack of organisation.

Figure 7: Distribution of Leader I investment per measure

Measure	Projects	Investment (€)	%
Technical Support	7	324.698	3,14
Formation	31	180.102	1.74
<b>Rural Tourism</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>6.379.110</b>	<b>61.46</b>
PYME	7	775.033	7.47
Valuating	29	2.259.036	21.76
Management	-	459.915	4.43
Total	112	10.336.987	100%

Source: Sierra de Cádiz LAG, Leader I report

This situation changed when ACEDERSICA -the LAG- got involved in this situation. In 1995 the LAG got together some of the main tourist agents in the area, and together they constituted the *Sierra de Cádiz Rural Tourism Association* (SCRTA). Nowadays, this association is a unique platform for the support of this activity in the area and the promotion of their establishments in national and international exhibitions. Since then, a total number of 50 local bussines have joined the association. Through this association, the LAG has been in continuous contact with the rural enterprising involved in this activity, and with the support of the Leader Initiatives many new businesses have opened

<sup>9</sup> The main reason for the name of this tourist route is traditionally the walls of the houses have been painted always on white, it gives to the area a beautiful and homogenous aesthetic that have been recognized as part of their cultural identity

their doors and other have improved their facilities. Nevertheless, rural tourism has been the main measure per investment and projects since the LAG started his activity (Figures 7 and 8).

Figure 8: Distribution of Leader II investment per measure

Measure	Projects	Investment (€)	%
Technical Support	25	846.800	7,13
Formation	10	112.189	0,94
<b>Rural Tourism</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>4.590.676</b>	<b>38,64</b>
PYME	13	1.224.825	10,31
Valuating	49	4.199.136	35,34
Management	9	906.979	7,63
Total	175	11.831.926	100%

Source: Sierra de Cádiz LAG, Leader II report

This investment have incredible consequences in the area, nowadays Sierra de Cádiz account with a total number of 134 rural tourism establishment that offer more than 4.300 beds (SAETA, 2007). With the arrival of *Leader +*, the LAG decided to go further and designed a program whose main objective was the introduction of quality labels in the already existing net of establishment, offering technical and financial support in the introduction of the labels *Q de Calidad* and *Parque Natural*. For people involved in this business, it seems clear that quality is the only path in order to increase their competitiveness, as one of the member of the SCRTA told us:

*'Future is on quality. The future for us is to offer high quality products and services, because people pay for it, they do.'*

Manager with "Parque Natural" label, 42 years old

This program facilitated certification for more than 15 establishments, but the idea of quality goes further than just a label. The idea of quality has been the

main support to preserve and improve the cultural landscapes in the area. In 2004, with the support of the LAG and the tourist establishment in the area, Grazalema Natural Park Joined the EUROPARC Federation under the European Chapter for Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas. This strategy does not answer merely to economic reasons, but to the way people in Sierra de Cádiz understand quality tourism:

*'If you have to talk about quality in tourism practice, I would mix it with sustainable tourism. Quality is not just about how incredible is the house that you are offering to your costumer, but about the kind of tourist activities that he would get access here'*

Manager with "Q of Quality" label, 46 years old.

## 5. - GUADALTEBA, CENTRALISING THE DECENTRALIZATION

In the third part of this paper we have explained that one of the most interesting outcomes of RDP in Europe is the ongoing process of decentralization supported by the Subsidiarity Principle. In this part we introduce the ethnographic example of *Consortio Guadalteba* (GC), an interesting example of institutional development where the county achieves the maximum level of authority throughout a double process of centralisation-decentralization. In this process not only the macro level hand over authority and power to the county level, but also the municipalities hand over part of their competences to the county level.

It was in 1993 when the GC and the Guadalteba County was formally established. The GC could be described as a supra-municipal public organization. In a first moment, his main objective was to offer services in a county level, such as rubbish collection. This first step was the seed for a new territory managing model, which has become a new platform of institutional cooperation towards development. During the last 15 year, this institution has

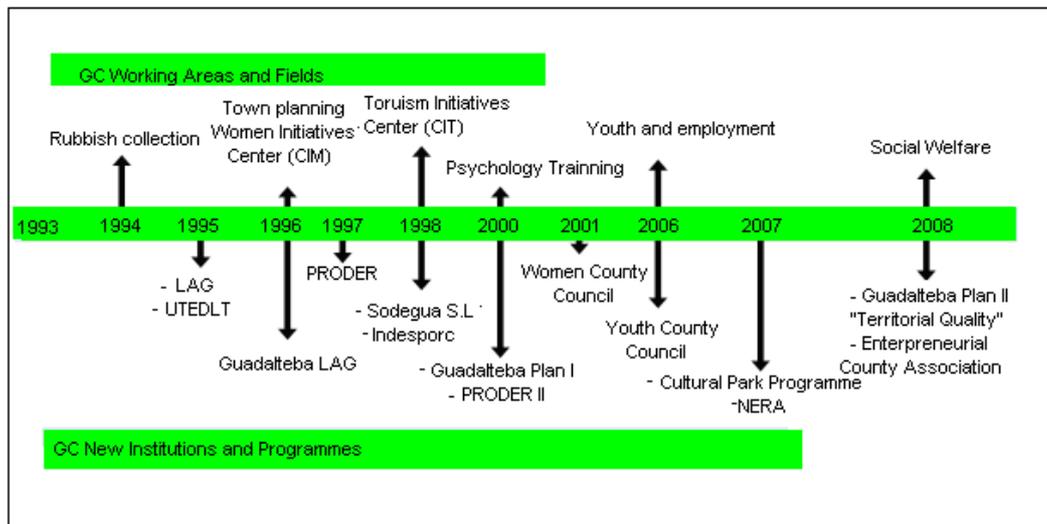
been growing constantly (Figure 9), and all these new functions and competences have been materialized in the area known as *Parque Guadalteba* (Picture 1).

Picture 1: Panoramic view of *Parque Guadalteba*



Source: GC

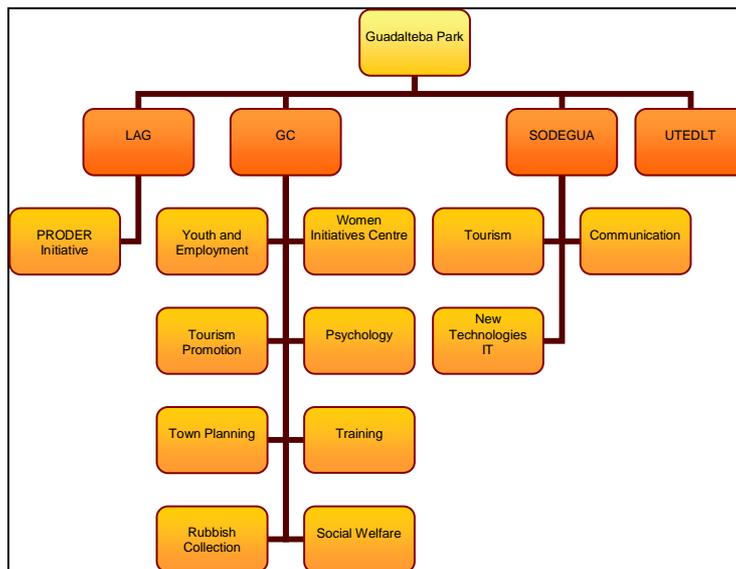
Figure 9: GC chronology, working areas and embraced institutions in the last 15 years



Source: Own design

In this way, and through a continuous process of negotiation with local councils and the regional government, GC has become the most influential and powerful institution in the county. It is important to notice that this subsidiary body, which was created in a first moment to collect rubbish in the county, in only 15 years, has become the main administrative unit in the area with an impressive internal structure (Figure 10):

Figure 10: Guadalupe organization chart



There are different factors which brought about this long but successful process of *Parque Guadalupe* design and unfold. Firstly, the seven councils embraced in Guadalupe had a very clear political will in this sense. They thought that it was the only possible path towards socioeconomic development for these municipalities, characterised by their small size and lack of resources.

Secondly, this project was the outcome of an intensive and open debate about objectives and functions that the GC would have. This debate took place from 1993 to 1995; in this debate took part not only administrative institution, but also independent local agents. At the same time, it is also important the high level of

internal flexibility that characterised the GC; and the outstanding coordination with the other institutions embraced in *Parque Guadalteba*.

Innovation is one of the central ideas that have outlined the institutional construction of Guadalteba. Nowadays, innovation is a concept that uses to be understood as technological improvement, but we talk about innovation in the say way that Damanpour (1987) understand it. We are talking about administrative and organizational innovations, innovations that produce changes in the structure and the internal organization of any given institution.

It is necessary to remember that the creation of Guadalteba as a county had different consequences, and one of them was a change in the organizational structure of those institutions linked with this territory; at the local, but also at provincial level.

Organizational innovations are also those that link the institution with its environment. Taking as reference this institution –*Parque Guadalteba*- a new territory has been unfolded. Guadalteba County has been created from zero, indeed even the name is brand new, and the different municipalities belonged to other counties before its creation.

At this point it may seem that the case of Guadalteba is a successful example of institutional innovation, but what is even more important is that GC has become a successful experiment, thus future replication in other RDA may happens.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this paper a general perspective of RDP consequences on Andalusia has been offered. Once the implemented methodology has been explained, a brief description of RDP consequences on the Andalusian institutional map has been exposed; underlining the importance of a new level on the institutional map –the

county- that sometimes is defined as local level, but we take as different. In the fourth part, an example of RD practices in rural areas has been offered, using as an example the case of *Sierra de Cádiz*. Then, the innovative institutional model embodied in *Parque Guadalteba* has been described, highlighting the fact that the decentralisation process that characterise RD in EU can be more complex. In this last part the current paper we would like to share some of the conclusions and uncertainties that the unfinished research is bringing to our minds.

Our hypothesis was that EU RDP is a key element in the ongoing process of deep transformation of rural governance in Andalusia; it seems us that this hypothesis has been proved. According to our research, there is a high level of institutionalisation of RD practices in Andalusia, and at the same time, -as we have demonstrated with the GC example- there is also a high level of *institutional thickness* (Amin. and Robins, 1990; Amin and Thrift, 1995) in RD practice. These two dynamics are so strong, that this new model of RD has even generated a new process of administrative territorialisation, which have unfolded a new model of rural governance in Andalusia.

This process of territorialisation has two main consequences: there is a **high level of institutional intervention** in the local economic strategy, and in some cases – as happens in Guadalteba- **RD institutions has become the new reference for local government** in the area due to their high level of *institutional thickness*. Sierra de Cádiz is a good example of high level of institutional intervention, because the LAG has leaded the local economic strategy of quality production in the three main sectors: Cheese, Olive oil and Rural Tourism.

In this sense, it is important to remember that the concept of participatory development comes from a radical proposal unfold at community development field (Hickey and Mohan, 2004); but the ongoing institutionalisation of these processes means that the original philosophy may have been reduced to a matter of justificatory rhetoric and institutional legitimation (Cooke and Kothari,

2001). In the case of EU RD practices, this new philosophy has been embodied in the concept of rural partnership, a concept that has been object of an intensive debate (see Derkzen, 2008). It is not the aim of this paper to go deeper in this debate, but after the exposition of the State of the art in Andalusia, it seems clear that there is a lack of independent rural enterprising.

In the same way, it is important to underline that in local partnership symbolic power is crucial. Although each representative in the LAG assembly have the same position, it cannot be denied that the manager, president and technicians have a symbolic capital that others cannot achieve. Thus, these are structural power relationships, and any decision taken in this kind of meetings is conditioned by them.

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