The CRORURIS project: A scenario-based approach to discuss planning and development of Croatian rural areas

Petra Radeljak Kaufmann
Aleksandar Lukić

University of Zagreb, Faculty of Science, Department of Geography
The CRORURIS project – why?

- Rural areas:

  - given their size, population number, functions and variety of challenges they face, the question of the future of rural areas is one of the most pressing issues in Europe today
  - evident from recent scenario-based approaches on national and EU level (e.g. SCENAR 2020, EURURALIS etc.)

- the majority of Croatian rural areas face tremendous demographic and economic challenges
  - often synonymous with problem areas possessing negative demographic, economic and social features
  - 1/3 of Croatian territory is home to less than 7% of the population
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- Complexities of challenges in rural areas require an interdisciplinary approach to study possible future developments

- Scenario method:
  - an important part of planning in business and public policy, technology foresight, environmental studies, as well as spatial research and planning
  - used at different spatial levels, from global to local (e.g. Alcamo, 2008; de Nijs et al., 2004; Özkaynak, 2008)

- scenarios help envision various development possibilities, integrate various aspects of spatial development,
- being multidimensional, they mirror socio-geographical complexity thus avoiding overly simplistic views on development
The CRORURIS project — goal:

- producing a set of alternative future scenarios for Croatian rural areas in 2030
  - as a basis for informed and evidence-based public debate on rural futures

- 4 main objectives:
  - **Objective 1**: Developing a conceptual framework for understanding recent changes in rural Croatia
    - by identifying current processes, main drivers of change and local responses
    - different areas face different problems
    - so far little effort has been invested to offer a more comprehensive, interdisciplinary understanding
    - the conceptual framework is intended to reflect the interplay between global context and driving forces, and national, regional and local factors
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- Methodology and work plan for Objective 1:
  - literature review
  - analyses for the period of 1991-2001-2011:
    - the rural demographic patterns;
    - the economic and agricultural market transformations and trends; and
    - the environmental and land-use change.
  - questionnaire survey: participants of the first Croatian Rural Parliament, April 2015
  - 6 case studies

- key drivers of change in rural areas of Croatia 1991-2011
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Objective 2: Developing a methodological framework

- Lowe and Ward (2009) suggested developing conceptual framework into typology of rural areas based on multivariate analysis
- development of new a typology of Croatian rural areas, using factor and cluster analysis
  - the typology will be used in creating a matrix consisting of the most important change-drivers derived from typology, set against the recognized types of rural areas
- the final result is a model simulating rural dynamics in Croatia, developed using judgement on the degree of impact each change-driver will have on the different area types
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  - as a basis for informed and evidence-based public debate on rural futures

- 4 main objectives:
  - Objective 3: Constructing alternative future scenarios of rural Croatia and relating them to the context of rural Europe
    - statistical techniques will be used to perform large series of simulations of the newly developed model
    - the results of model simulation will serve as an input to develop scenario storylines
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- 4 main objectives:
  - Objective 4: Encouraging and supporting discussion about the future of rural areas in academic, decision-making and public discourse
    - different outputs of the results, including the online atlas and web-based GIS discussion tool, organizing a final workshop “What is the future of Rural Areas in Croatia?” and preparing policy recommendations
    - promoting debate on Croatian rural futures among different stakeholder groups in rural development (governmental, non-governmental and private sector)
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- The interdisciplinary team (11 members):
  - human and physical geographers,
  - a GIS specialist,
  - a sociologist,
  - an agricultural economist, and
  - a psychologist-statistician.
The CRORURIS project: the course

- Duration: October 2014 – October 2017
  - the first year: developing a conceptual framework for understanding recent change in rural Croatia
  - two main objectives for the 2nd and the 3rd year:
    - to develop a methodological framework for identifying predominant trends and key uncertainties, based on an integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches;
    - to construct alternative future scenarios related to the context of rural Europe.
Conclusion

• we hope that CRORURIS study will:
  
  • improve interdisciplinary, and comprehensive views on the complexities of planning and development in rural areas of Croatia
  • enrich existing methodological knowledge in scenario development
  • aid in decision-making processes
  • enable networking in creating a broader picture of rural areas and their future perspectives in Central and South-East Europe
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