

3RD POLISH LAW & ECONOMICS CONFERENCE

Rural Policy and Political Accountability: Looking at the Pilot Programme LEADER+ in Poland

Jan Fałkowski¹
(University of Warsaw and CEAPS)

Abstract

The 'LEADER community initiatives' and the 'LEADER approach' have been commonly accepted as an innovative way for development of rural areas in the European Union. Yet, little is known about factors determining the adoption of this approach. This paper focuses on the role of institutional factors that are thought to affect political accountability. Using data from the early stage of LEADER implementation in Poland, it is shown that the programme was adopted in municipalities with majoritarian elections and electoral districts of smaller size. This is consistent with political economy literature arguing that policy innovations are more likely to occur in an environment where holding politicians to account is easier. This suggests that efforts to encourage 'bottom-up' rural development projects cannot ignore incentives of the local officials who may oppose initiatives that can threaten their rents to holding political office.

¹ E-mail: jfalkowski@wne.uw.edu.pl