The Strategic Leadership Relay
How to Keep Regional Innovation Journeys in Motion?

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This talk is about…

• the place of leadership in regional innovation journeys,
• processes of (institutional) change

But it is also about…
• a missing face and a prospective centre for human spare parts
To put it simply

- **Innovation** = something new + implementation + value added

- **Innovation system** is a network of actors in the public and private sectors whose activities and interactions initiate, import, modify, and diffuse new knowledge.

- **Innovation policy** is actions by public organisations that influence innovation processes
Let us not replicate Silicon Valley

- No ‘one size fit for all’ formula for promoting innovativeness - not even among the Nordic countries (Asheim et al 2011)
- Innovation policies and practices do not vary only between countries but also within them (Tödling & Trippl 2005)
- Innovation policies and knowledge bases - analytical, synthetic, symbolic (Asheim et al. 2007)
- Unique advantages have to be actively constructed and innovation policies customised
The regional innovation journey involves creating a new regional vision, experimenting in how it could be delivered, creating a regional consensus and ultimately delivering change.
Many studies treat policy issues as if innovation systems automatically function well or as if they self-transform themselves without conscious efforts or much organizing, wheeling and dealing and instituting in many policy arenas, and beyond. (Uyarra 2010)
Leadership is about creating a way for people to contribute to making something different happen.
Strategic leadership refers to abilities to anticipate, envision, maintain flexibility, find essential issues (think strategically) and pool the most relevant resources, competences and powers that will create a viable future for a community in question.
Leadership studies in the regional development context

Three perspectives in mind

- the **process perspective** that informs a study on dynamism of regional development and secures a temporally conscious approach,

- **network perspective** that informs about the social relationships of the actors in and beyond the regional development world and

- **governance perspective** that informs about the wider systemic issues framing and molding both the actual systems and journeys as well as forms of leadership
• **Purposive governance** is an ordering process that is the direct expression of goals which are pursued consciously by human agents working alone or in concert [intentions]

• **Spontaneous governance** is an ordering process that is a function of self-organizing mechanisms which operate across human purposes without humans directly controlling this operation or its outcome [emergence]

(Collinge & Gibney 2010)
• the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others (Wrong 1997)
• the power of social systems and structures (Foucault 1980)
• power as the relational effect of social interaction - networked relationships of power (Allen 2003)
• ‘would it not be possible to exercise power without deliberately aiming to do so’ (Lukes 1986)
Institutional and resource power
• Power to act and decide – direct power exercised by official actors
• Power to create institutions and formulate official strategies
• Power to direct resources

Interpretive power
• Power to create and reshape interpretations
• Power to affect development view (more or less detailed system of beliefs and values)

Network power
• Power to influence interaction processes
Need a new jaw?
One size fits one!
Figure by Nina Mustikkamäki / Sente
I - Seeds of change (1997-2000)

- Reg dev organisations
- Prof. Hovatta joins Regea

II – Collective Interpretation (2001-2004)

- UTA professor
- TUT professor
- Existing expertise
- Informal discussions
- Discussions with all relevant parties


- Endowed professorship (City of Tampere)
- Regea (2005)
- Research project
- Tissue bank
- No business
- Leadership of UTA and Univ. hospital

IV – Institutionalization (2008-)

- Breakthrough treatments (2006/2007)

Situation now
- Commercialization
- Changing university hospital routines
- Lack of basic funding / trap of project funding
- Joint institute UTA/TUT

Global expectations

- Diminish

Planning group

Excitement, collective interpretation (excl research community)

Business plan
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Institutional & resource power

Policy knowledge

Interpretive power

Network power

Seeds of change

Process knowledge

Substance knowledge

Institutional & resource power

Policy knowledge
Institutional & resource power
Policy knowledge
Substance knowledge
Process knowledge
Network power
Collective Interpretation
Interpretive power
Interpretive power

Network power

Process knowledge

Institutional & resource power

Policy knowledge

Launch of activity

Substance knowledge
Strategic leadership is a power and knowledge relay. Institutionalization and process knowledge are key components. Interpretive power is central, with institutional and resource power framing the perspective. Network power and substance knowledge anchor the diagram.
Conclusions

1. Leadership is a multi-scalar and multi-actor process
   - Not a solo activity, no ‘heroic leadership’ - individuals do play a role and take a lead

2. Leadership is a relay of power and knowledge in time
   - Different actors surface in different phases of development
   - Constellation of different skills, competencies, knowledge and power

3. Leadership makes a difference
   - It may be one of the factors in a competitiveness puzzle
   - It may be one of the factors that explains how and why some localities are able to adapt to the complex and rapidly changing social and economic circumstances of the modern world
   - It may be one of the factors in failures