![UiA University of Agder]

Between institutions and agency

How tensions shape the trajectory of governance

STIAN LUNDVALL BERG

SUPERVISOR

James Karlsen

PREFACE

A personal journey of mine ends with the completion of this thesis. The NORDIG program was an extension of this journey, and a valuable one to put it mildly. Having somewhat of a passion for the Nordic countries, it was only natural for me to apply for doing my Master-level studies in a program that offered the chance to live and study in three of them. The study program provided a variety of courses and experiences from the various locations which I believe will be of great value for my career. Nevertheless, I was also interested in supplementing this knowledge with practical experience by working. By doing internships relevant to the studies in my spare time, I gained that practical experience, but naturally, it has been demanding, and I expected nothing less going in. I believe the work on this thesis to be of particular value to the development of my personal skills. It has put my abilities to work with complex cases to the test, demanding hard work and dedication to produce something I can be proud to present as my final work in the NORDIG program before the journey concludes.

There are many who helped me to make this study possible. I would like to thank my supervisor, James Karlsen, for good guidance and valuable comments along the way. I would also like to thank the research team at Nordregio, who involved me in their work and provided me with insights I would not have had access to otherwise. Additionally, this thesis would not have become what it is without the informants in this study. I can not finish the preface of this thesis in good conscience without also thanking those in the staff for the NORDIG program who put in that extra work to help out when needed. Last but not least, I would like to thank my friends and family who supported me through these years.

ABSTRACT

The Europe 2020 strategy promoted the concept of smart specialization as the future for regional development strategies in Europe. The aim was to improve governance practices within European countries on sub-national levels. Nevertheless, not all regions in the European Union produced smart-specialization strategies within the year 2020. The failure to produce a strategy does not mean that actions were not taken. It is instead that actions were taken within different contexts that greatly affected how the implementation process played out. As such, smart specialization has presented opportunities to study the meaning of place. How the policy concept has been translated into action through endogenous frameworks for governance may be analyzed from a distance. However, without observing the actions of the actors involved in the process, the full picture is far from revealed. Hence, studying smart specialization up close becomes a study on how institutional frameworks interact through interpretations and actions by the people within the place in question. Using smart specialization as an experiment in how a concept may yield different outcomes based on place-specific contexts, experiences obtained from the processes may provide valuable new knowledge on how institutions and agency shape trajectories for regional development.

This thesis is based on field research conducted in the Stockholm region during interactions between regional stakeholders. The researcher was part of a project to implement smart specialization in the region, but the project stagnated and came to a stop. Furthermore, this was not the first attempt to implement smart specialization in the region. Hence, there seemed to be factors that shaped the trajectory for governance in the region that had not been properly recognized. The case is centered around interactions concerning the European Regional Development Fund, and the platform tasked with connecting the funds with the regional actors. As such, the study focuses on a narrow piece of a much greater and complex system that makes up the total of innovation activities in the region. Hence, the thesis is not about innovation activities in a region as a whole, but rather on how a set of observed events between people representing certain stakeholders was both affected by, and had an effect on the framework they operate within in a complex interplay between institutions and agents.

Through observations, interviews, and document analysis, the thesis explores the case by applying a four-dimensional analytical model built on a place-based perspective. The analytical model structures the data in a discussion concerning institutional factors, the regional approach to governance, how the mobilization was conducted, and what outcomes were observed, reflecting on matters of actors and their agency as a vital component to the process.

The initiative did not lead to a smart specialization strategy. Moreover, the workshops hardly resembled a process intended to change governance structures at all. Furthermore, the observations uncovered underlying tensions that indicated inhibiting factors on mobilization in the region. As such, to understand what happened, the study intends to explore these relations. The study found that even though the pre-existing framework for governance defined the mobilization, meaning no smart-specialization strategy would be produced, tensions between the actors eventually triggered actions that would impact practices for inclusive governance in the region.

CONTENT

LIST OF FIGURES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The last three decades have seen a transformation following a thorough rethinking of the occurrence of economic development processes and their relation to geography (McCann & Rodríguez-Pose, 2011 p. 204). The concept of place in regional development has been endorsed by both the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2009a; 2009b) and the European Union (European Commission, 2010). The EU strategy *Europe 202*0 (European Commission, 2010) is an example of a strategic document promoting multi-disciplinary governance, emphasizing the importance of connecting assets within a region to facilitate more sustainable development policies. As a result of the EU commission embracing the idea, smart specialization has quickly become a widespread concept for inclusive approaches to governance, advocating the importance of place within European countries. However, the way the strategy has been interpreted and operationalized differs depending on the region in question. Sotarauta (2018, p. 191) points out that, beyond being a question of how to formulate, implement, and evaluate a public policy for regional development, smart specialization presents a host of new challenges for the regional studies agenda. According to Sotarauta (2020, p. 3), analyzing smart specialization requires a place-based perspective as the strategic concept advocates for aligning visions and pooling resources, competencies, and powers within a geographical setting, where institutional characteristics inevitably will shape policy implementation.

During the last decade, smart specialization has gone from theory to practice. By demanding that public sector bodies develop more collaborative forms of governance, the *Europe 2020* strategy presented unique opportunities to study the interplay of institutions (Morgan, 2017, p. 569). The study in this thesis attempted to extract some of the potential knowledge from these unique opportunities in recognition that the interplay of institutions and actors within a region is not a well-documented process. More precisely, much information of great value to researchers goes undiscovered because a retrospective collection of data is limited by what informants involved recount in interviews and what was made available to the researcher in documents. In other words, the researcher depends on what is provided to them if they are not able to observe activities as they unfold. Scholars may enjoy retrospectively analyzing how policies were successfully implemented, but from this view, the detailed practicalities of policymaking are hard to detect. Not all processes yield results that can be detected by indicators in reports. As such, narratives that can teach us about place-based policies go unaccounted for in the discussion on regional development.

In 2012, the Stockholm county administrative board initiated the early phases of developing a place-based innovation strategy, inspired by smart specialization, for the structural funds programming period 2014–2020. The ambition was to encourage strategic cooperation between stakeholders through joint collaborative project activities. The rationale was to expand on the governance structures to facilitate long-term collaborative platforms that would pool resources and competence. Additionally, there were intentions to develop better oversight on the effects of the structural funds in the region. The initiative was in line with the agenda put forward by the EU Commission (European Commission, 2010), who, in turn, followed up the strategy with an ex-ante conditionality, expecting regions receiving regional development funds to produce a strategic document outlining regional priorities. As such, the objective seems clear: implement policy concepts to improve regional collaboration and manage the process accordingly to make the best use of assets at the regional level. By the end of 2019, Stockholm was not on track to meet the EU Commission's expectations within the timeframe. Though the platform channeling the regional development funds had been successful in building partnerships around key thematic areas, the scope of these was limited, and it had not facilitated the envisioned place-based policy change.

This study observes activities that took place in August and September of 2019, hosted by the platform distributing structural funds in the Stockholm region. By this time, the process was unlikely to result in a formalized smart specialization strategy. Having acted as a monitor during the activities, the researcher discovered underlying tensions not just between the stakeholders involved, but also in the institutional context of the governance process. Morgan (2017, p. 569) described smart specialization as "putting unprecedented demands on the public sector bodies," and at least from the face value of the observations, I would concur.

1.1 Research aim and question

The events observed in this thesis takes place at the end of the structural funds program period 2014-2020. In other words, the case covers the concluding events to a project where the aim had been to see the implementation of smart specialization, but as will be described, this venture of collaborative regional development was in no way straightforward. There are many other sides to this larger saga of smart-specialization in Stockholm that is beyond the scope of one thesis alone to cover. Hence, in order to limit the scope of this study, it is intended to make sense of how the observed events played out and expose how tensions between actors and institutions shape the trajectory of inclusive governance processes. By applying a theoretical framework accounting for place-based institutions, the study mapped out non-linear interactions between institutions and agents in a developing process of regional governance.

The study uses a single case, applying an inductive approach. This means that the research process begins with the observation of a problem, from which patterns are identified that helps the researcher explain the topic. The approach is, therefore, appropriate in this case, where the aim is to generate a better understanding of a case that at first had to be identified, as it did not present itself. By referring to theory, observations are analyzed through a framework that discovers patterns in an otherwise chaotic set of events. As such, the research aims to provide new knowledge on policy processes in a place-based setting, based on valuable first-hand observations. These observations are further expanded upon through interviews and document analysis. The study aims to identify a chain of interrelated problems and explore the effect of institutions and agentic behavior firsthand. The opportunity to access meetings between regional actors provides an excellent opportunity to gain practical knowledge on how the processes play out in reality and benefit the study by not relying primarily on published sources or interviewees' points of view.

By perceiving smart specialization as a set of place-based conceptual frameworks for regional policymaking, the study investigates the meaning of its introduction against the existing institutional setup in a region and how it both shapes and becomes shaped by the actors involved in the process. The thesis investigates the research question: How do tensions between actors and institutions shape the trajectory of inclusive governance processes?

1.2 Structure

The thesis is structured as follows. The next chapter outlines the theoretical framework for the study and explains fundamental theoretical concepts based on existing literature. Research on the topics of place based policies and smart specialization provides an understanding of how the concepts may be applied in practical terms, and what issues the study should pay attention to. The chapter proceeds to draw an analytical model consisting of four dimensions, structuring the theoretical concepts into a framework with questions pertaining to each dimension. Chapter 3 explains the methodical approach to the study and describes measures taken to ensure the best possible quality of the research, especially in relation to the challenges of performing observations. The chapter explains relevant information on how the researcher conducted the study and the measures taken to ensure the best possible level of integrity throughout the research process. In order to provide the reader with a better understanding of the overall context behind the case, Chapter 4 explains the operationalization of "region," the funding framework behind the activities, a quick look at Stockholm as an innovative region, and a brief overview on the history leading up to the case in this study. The data is presented in Chapter 5. Here, the analysis is structured according to the analytical model, providing a systematic discussion of the case. The last section of chapter 5 finishes with a summary based on the theoretical questions presented in chapter 2, and then answers the research question behind the study. Chapter 6 revisits the findings in a different light, reflecting upon what can be learned from the case, and draws conclusions. The study finishes with the researchers' view on the value of the study and related future research.

2.0 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter introduces the main theoretical perspectives and concepts that will be applied as a basis for the creation of an analytical model. The study uses a place-based perspective, which has become a key concept in European policies for regional development, as exemplified by the implementation of smart specialization. Therefore, the place-based perspective, and how smart specialization builds upon place-based policy principles are presented first, before an explanation of how the concept of institutions are applied in this study. Subsequently, this chapter covers institutional change in the context of place-based policies, the mobilization of actors, and the meaning of governance. Herein, related challenges are presented before finally constructing the analytical model for this study.

2.1 Place-based policies

The place-based perspective observes political behavior as fundamentally geographical. Undeniably, everything happens somewhere, but what is less obvious is what the particular 'somewhere' means and how it makes a difference. The point presented by the place-based perspective is, therefore, that it is vital for an understanding of political behavior to account for the *place*. Agnew (2011, p. 317) describes place as "the geographical context for the mediation of physical, social and economic processes." This means that place possesses specific attributes affecting regional development that, beyond simple physical features, shape how individuals relate and conduct interactive processes in ways that create a social environment with norms and structures, as well as how the distribution of resources distinguishes prospects for development within and between places. As such, place is not merely a location, but also a set of unique qualities, some of which are less tangible and thus difficult to detect because they exist as informal, institutionalized frameworks created between actors. Place becomes, in that sense, a set of behavior-shaping factors that significantly negate the applicability of "universal" policies. Therefore, when observing regional development in a place-based perspective, the research should aim to observe how public efforts for development reflect the institutions of the place in question.

A place-based policy accounts for values, perceptions, local assets and knowledge, and the local creation of visions and agenda for the future by the people of the place (Sotarauta, 2020, p. 3). Place was a core concept in the Barca report (2009), where place is not merely a matter of how a territory is divided into units in a drawn up structure of government. Barca (2009) argued that it is

also a territorially based distribution of assets that could be recognized and connected in a broader European governance structure, intending to create a more economically sustainable policy for development. Barca (2009) argued this in recognition that place provides a setting for social processes where formal and informal institutions are more likely to develop (Barca, 2009 p. 5). Zukauskaite (2018) explained that while institutions have a formal and regulative nature in the national or global dimension, the normative and cognitive forms of institutions emerge in the regional dimension, as this is where continuous social interactions between individuals take place.

2.1.1 Smart specialization

As previously alluded to, smart specialization is an example of a policy based on a place-based perspective. The concept of smart specialization is part of the Europe 2020 strategy, in which the EU Commission has laid out the ambitions for a sustainable, competitive, inclusive, and cohesive economy in Europe (Foray et al., 2012 p. 7). Smart specialization is defined as a "place-based economic transformation agenda that … focuses policy support and investments on key national/regional priorities, challenges, and needs for knowledge-based development" (Foray et al., 2012, p. 8). Smart specialization, therefore, intends to account for the context it is applied to, and promote development based on the assets of that place. Regional strategies for smart specialization pursue the involvement of diverse regional stakeholders, encouraging innovation and experimentation through mobilization (Foray et al., 2012). The mobilization is, therefore, part of a set of activities initiated by government intervention.

The form of these activities varies according to the context of the place. The government is expected to identify what interventions are needed to ensure that the process is adequately inclusive. As an inclusive policy, smart specialization challenges the government to put regional actors at the heart of the strategy design, making the regional authorities a vital initiator and driver, which implies a demand for them to have the capacity to promote interactive collaboration between all relevant regional stakeholders (Rodríguez-Pose et al., 2014, p. 10). As such, smart specialization might require a regional government to change how they approach governance for regional development. Rodríguez-Pose et al., (2014) emphasized the importance of the government to not only initiate the process but to remain involved throughout, coordinating and monitoring the process, stimulating the participation of all relevant actors in a concerted effort. A government's ability to realize this ambition might vary significantly from region to region. Rodríguez-Pose et al., (2014) concluded that public sector bodies may be challenged internally by a lack of relevant

competence to understand the tasks smart specialization presents and that they may have to develop skills to govern place-based processes that may be different to what the government has previously experienced.

2.1.2 Entrepreneurial discovery

At its core, smart specialization revolves around a mobilization that combines public, private, non-profit, and research stakeholders. In this process, the government is not working in isolation, issuing directions "down the structure" but must convince stakeholders to be involved and ensure that partnerships that emerge develop into lasting ventures. The role might be relatively new to many governments. Additionally, the ambitions of the mobilization, centered around the term entrepreneurial discovery process (EDP) is not necessarily without ambiguity in what it intended to achieve. The EDP has a somewhat unclear conceptualization in both theory and practice, as regions find different ways to apply the concept according to their interpretations. Nor is the theory of smart specialization united on the conceptualization of the EDP. According to Benner (2019), the EDP could be described as interactive activities between the public sector and regional stakeholders from other sectors in a systematic effort to plan for actions through experimentation with policy, either bilaterally or multilaterally. As such, the EDP is a planned exploration of possibilities. Radosevic (2017, p. 20) described the EDP more oriented to its goals as being about discovering suitable niches that match the comparative advantages of the region in question. According to Radosevic (2017, p. 20), it is the new activities that are given priorities, not the sectors or individual firms, as the process aims to generate structural changes through the inclusive involvement of stakeholders. This view sees the value of entrepreneurship in the discovery of activities, or rather, the areas with potential for new productive output, and not so much in the institutional change.

Grillitsch (2016) argued that if a region with a high diversity of institutions also reaches a high integration between actors, the two factors make the setting appropriate for the entrepreneurial discovery process, which in turn influences the policymakers to support the process. In conditions of low integration, however, it is more likely, according to Grillitsch (2016, p. 31), that the most dominant groups will exercise pressure to protect vested interests, thereby maintaining the established institutional framework. Grillitsch (2016, p. 29-31) suggested that policymakers would need to address groups that may have limited or even contrary incentives to collaborate for regional development policies, which he points out is primarily a political challenge.

2.1.3 Policy running ahead of theory

The challenges that smart specialization presents might indeed be unfamiliar to many regional governments. Sotarauta (2018, p. 191) stated that smart specialization is more than policy formulation, implementation, and evaluation; it is also the pooling of scattered resources, competencies, and powers in the regions. The concept has an emphasis on bottom-up processes, where public and private stakeholders are perceived as better positioned than the government to identify the opportunities and areas of strength in the region (Estrensoro & Larrea, 2016, p. 1319). The implementation of the policy agenda on the regional level has been a challenge that has received increased attention from academics, as the regions have gone from the "easy" structural analysis to the more challenging interventions surrounding the entrepreneurial discovery process (Estrensoro & Larrea, 2016, p.1320). The place-based aspect of smart specialization was consistently an essential feature of the concept, as reflected in the Barca report, which considered the concept's recognition of local knowledge to make it a superior approach to regional development in Europe (Barca, 2009, p. VII).

Nevertheless, as the concept has gone from theory to a practical experiment of European governance, many lessons have been learned that reflect the common phrase, "easier said than done." If we use the Barca report from 2009 as a starting point for the idea to later become an ex-ante conditionality for all EU member states during the program period of 2014–2020, it might be fair to say that the concept became an applied strategy fairly quickly. The high enthusiasm for the concept might have distracted from an adequate account for exactly how the adaptation should happen in light of the existing realities within the sub-national regions. This might be especially pertinent considering the overall diversity across Europe. Kroll (2015) supported this notion by pointing out that the importance of the institutional framework existing in the regions was not sufficiently accounted for in early discourse on smart specialization. Different results following the adoption of the concept in the regions have underlined the amending factor played by local conditionalities. Kroll (2015) described the smart-specialization concept as "leading unlike horses to the water," as the diversity in how the agenda has been implemented is strongly determined by the differences in institutional frameworks and the regionally specific modes of governance. According to Morgan (2017, p. 569), smart specialization was "the most ambitious regional innovation programme ever to be launched in the European Union," and that "it affords a unique opportunity to explore the interplay between institutions, innovation and development." It put unprecedented demands on regional authorities to pursue governance that is inclusive and nurtures

collaborations between regional stakeholders (Morgan, 2017). Foray et al., (2011) have referred to smart specialization as a "policy running ahead of theory," a phrase that entails learning from experimentation with the smart-specialization concept. The Smart Specialization experiment has, therefore, offered researchers a source of new knowledge from experiences of policy implementation on a regional level.

2.1.4 Same concept but different stories

The challenges of how different regions may adopt the concept have been discussed comparatively in literature, where some patterns emerge. Blažek and Morgan (2019) argued that places with less developed governing systems cannot assume the same working arrangements that have had the time to evolve in relatively developed regions. In that sense, history matters, as well as resources. Kroll (2015, p. 2094) found that it was often the case in Southern European countries, that the agenda pushed by the EU 2020 strategy along with the ex-ante conditionality for funding, brought an impetus for improving their practices of governance due to budgetary pressures making the smart specialization concept a welcomed tool. In these cases, the benefit appeared in the reshaping of governance routines (Kroll, 2015, p. 2096). In other words, institutionalized practices may be changed, given the proper incentive. In the case of central and northern European regions, Kroll (2015, p. 2095) pointed out that generally, the region provided input to the process rather than drawing lessons from it, though the benefit of mediating fragmentation in the regions was also recognized. Kroll (2015) concluded that the generalist objectives of the smart-specialization concept will evolve differently depending on the established practices for governance in each region and not solely on their resources to implement the practice. Kroll (2017 p. 111-119) further added that in the case of economically strong European regions, the smart specialization agenda should be sensitive to the already established practices in the region, as the region may be politically uninterested and not recognize smart specialization as a worthwhile investment of resources in light of their already adequate governance systems.

2.2 Institutional perspective

The place-based perspective attributes considerable importance to local institutions as the structures that have been created through time by the people in that particular place. Zukauskaite (2018, p. 44) connected institutions to the spatial dimension by pointing out that while formal and regulatory institutions such as laws and regulations operate mainly on the national, EU, or global level, the informal, normative, and cognitive institutions are rooted in a place-based context. Another way to describe this could be that while the EU may create policies to promote interactions between actors, such as with the cohesion policy, there are also informal yet commonly accepted ways to conduct such processes of governance in regions. In a sense, regions have their own cultures and have developed "their ways" of conducting interactions. When introducing a new concept to a region, it might complement the existing norms, for example, establishing funding structures that serve a supportive function to encourage entrepreneurship and innovation in a region where this was already embedded in their institutions (Zukauskaite, 2018).

On the other hand, as regions are connected with a global environment, conflicts may occur between the 'new' and the 'old.' For example, a region may have an established practice that collides with how a new institution instructs the actors to behave. The conflict between what is considered correct in one region against another, or at a supra-national level of policy-making, might not reflect what is considered appropriate within the sub-national region in question. The possible institutional conflicts emerging from structural change strategies is an important and complex issue concerning regions in the EU. The regions operate with interregional connections that are also promoted by EU level regulations aiming to facilitate regional cohesiveness within Europe. Therefore, exposure to new institutions becomes a natural part of regional development. Zukauskaite (2018, p. 45) pointed out that the established versus new institutions may have opposing goals, where one may promote innovation and the other the preservation of historically formed structures. Additionally, the institutions may simply promote alternative, but more or less incompatible models of best practices, for example, on the issue of how to most effectively govern regional development in an economically sustainable way.

2.2.1 Institutions and change

Introducing a new practice is not merely a matter of exchanging the old with the new. The adaptation of a new practice, norm, belief, or other institution into an existing system, whereby it becomes part of the established practice, is the definition of institutionalization (Sotarauta, 2015 p. 90). Institutions can, therefore, evolve by the acceptance of new concepts into what is understood as the right way of conducting a practice. Mignerat and Rivard (2012) demonstrated that the process of institutionalization might take decades for a practice to reach the status of being considered appropriate and a part of the norms and rules for social action. At that stage, it becomes part of the cognitive framework that guides social processes, and over time, the cognitive framework becomes resilient and manifests itself through regulations and observable activities (Pacheco et al., 2010). In this view, regarding the questions concerning changing the established practices, Pacheco et al., (2010, p. 995) suggested that studies observe how institutional change may be inhibited or promoted by already institutionalized frameworks (such as roles, identities, and expectations of actors), how these cognitive frameworks influence resource commitments by powerful actors, and how political and economic environments may be susceptible to resistance to institutional change.

2.2.2 Agency and institutions

While entrepreneurial knowledge from the enterprises may promote innovations facilitating tangible output from the regional industry, the entrepreneurial discovery process can also illuminate the institutional context and the challenges the actors operate within. Nevertheless, this requires that actions are taken that address the institutional framework. This brings attention to the actors as agents. Agency can be understood as "an actors' ability to have some effect on the social world— altering the rules, relational ties, or distribution of resources" (Scott, 2008, p. 77). Agency is when an actor, on their own volition, decides to intervene in their world or decides not to take action. Their actions are, therefore, voluntary and based on their understanding of the best course of action in pursuit of their interests. Hence, agency may lead to actions that cause a change to the institutional setting.

Benner (2019) argued that by making knowledge about the institutional context explicit, the agents involved in the EDP may be enabled to affect the institutional context itself. Either through what Benner (2019, p. 1796) defined as downward causality, where agreed-upon policies direct actions, or through upward causation, where institutional change occurs as a result of a change in behavior by the agents. While Radosevic (2017) presented a view of the EDP wherein it is about the

identification of areas for further regional prioritization, Benner (2019) presented a view on the EDP as something non-linear, where it may lead to realizations between the regional actors that makes them reconsider the very institutional context in which they operate.

North (1990 p. 7) described a similar symbiotic relationship between agents and institutions and how institutional change occurs. According to North (1990, p. 5), organizations are, in essence, "groups of individuals bound by some common purpose to achieve objectives." North (1990, p. 5) further explains that they come to be and evolve due to the influence of the institutional framework, and in turn, the organizations influence the evolvement of the institutional framework. In short, organizations and the individuals in the organizations work within the constraints of the institutional framework. However, they also become agents of institutional change as they evolve in their pursuit to exploit opportunities (North, 1990). North (1990, p. 7) explained institutions themselves shape institutional change in how they incentivize the organizations to evolve and the feedback process from the agents reacting to changes in their perceived opportunities. The change may be incremental, whereby the perception of entrepreneurs within organizations realize they may do better by making alterations within the existing institutional framework (North, 1990, p. 79). There is a question as to how aware agents may be in their ability to know what to change, which, in turn, will determine the way actions may address the institutional framework, as the resulting change could be with or without intent. The perceptions the agents act upon depends on what kind of information they receive and process through an understanding that is based on previous experience and constructed institutions. Hence, the EDP may facilitate new sharing of knowledge between the actors and be a catalyst for incremental institutional change.

2.3 Governance

Jordan et al. (2005, p. 478) stated that there is no clear definition of what phenomena specifically constitute governance. Fundamentally, governance implies a structure for interactions and is therefore naturally loaded with formal and regulative institutions, as well as norms and rules that have come to be taken for granted. Unlike the government, which refers to society-steering bodies with formalized public authority, governance is a process of societal coordination that involves non-governmental actors as agents that influence the process. As Jordan et al., (2005, p. 478) pointed out, the actors may do this independently of a traditional formal public authority to govern their interactions, which we could extend to mean that governance is not necessarily a capacity of the government alone. Jordan et al., (2005, p. 478) proposed that while hard 'command and control'

policy instruments are a clear example of what a government may exercise, later decades have demonstrated an increased appliance of 'softer' policy instruments to conduct social coordination in pursuit of societal goals, redefining the role of the government in the process. The new policy instruments do not replace the old but rather complement them, which produces different typologies of governance, where a 'strong government' type decides the policy instruments and determines the goals. In contrast, 'strong governance' sees society as being able to organize itself by selecting instruments and identifying societal goals (Jordan et al., 2005, p. 481-484). The practice of governance by the government will, therefore, be an appliance of policy instruments that are not enforced through formalized coercive powers but rather a method of partnerships and voluntary participation by the non-governmental actors. Smart-specialization policies call for reconsideration by the government on how it applies these tools. However, according to Sotarauta (2015, p. 29-30), the rigid silo mentality of government may tend to linger in regional structures, preventing the development of new forms of governance where regional development is seen from a holistic perspective on the territory rather than from separated agencies, sectors, and their respective field and tasks. Sotarauta (2015, p. 30) further presented governance as having the aim of opening "new horizons for the coordination of social systems, and for the most part, the role of the public sector in that process." In that sense, governance is a flexible concept. Governance is also a much broader concept than the activities conducted by the government. To approach the case, the concept of governance for the purpose of this work is focused on regional authorities' operationalization of tools to facilitate the mobilization of actors.

Navarro, et al. (2011) argued that the government would have to recognize when mobilization requires their intervention and that they would assume a leading role in developing shared visions if the context for the interactions lacks this capability. Kroll et al. (2014) stressed that the government should be able to correctly assess the need to be proactive in generating a shared vision between the actors. As a means to meet this challenge, there is a demand for sufficient competent staff employed for the tasks (Kroll et al., 2014). By underestimating the importance of the right competence, governments may rely too much on external consultants in guiding complex processes of social interactions, a potential problem that may produce unplanned outcomes. For example, Kroll et al., (2014, p. 38) found that a reliance on consultants correlated with processes falling behind schedule. The issue of competence further suggests that the policymakers have to approach the activities with the intent of learning and not being dependent on consultancy to accumulate new knowledge. Kroll (2015, p. 2094) found that such suggestions for altered governance practices were often difficult to

implement where governments operate with perspectives deeply rooted in a traditional top-down priority setting.

The literature on smart specialization often touches upon the role of government to provide adequate incentives for developing productive collaborations among stakeholders. The interventions by the government are ideally to make the process inclusive for stakeholders who may not be in a position to be involved without intervention (Rodríguez-Pose et al., 2014 p.2-4). Grillitsch (2016, p. 30) warned that if the policymakers fail to involve the less powerful stakeholders in the process, they would face what he refers to as the risk of ignorance. In this case, it is not the lack of diverse regional actors that causes a lack of perspectives in the consultation process, it is the lack of willingness to partake. Policymakers in this situation find themselves facing a highly complex challenge, as the process of mediating between conflicting interests is a sensitive issue, while planning the right activities to engage the right groups in order to balance out possible power-relations require engagement from the stakeholders themselves, and the consequence of leaving them out results in the process lacking recognition of important perspectives (Grillitsch, 2016, p. 30-31). The inclusion of less powerful stakeholders is also essential for the mobilization itself, as experimentation through pilot projects is expected to produce new knowledge and experience in collaborations between the stakeholders. However, such experimentation entails a risk of failure for those involved. Laasonen and Kolehmainen (2017, p. 1685-1686) argued that such experimentation is needed and that public funds can encourage this to reduce the risks and consequences of project failure for the stakeholders. They argued that encouraging small trial-and-error activities would be crucial prior to embarking on complex innovation processes in the region (Laasonen & Kolehmainen, 2017, p. 1686). Though the logic is sound in that encouraging experimentation may create new connections between actors with little or no history of cooperation, it requires new investments and risks. It is, therefore, very much a question of available resources. A reasonable question then becomes how to connect the mobilization with sufficient resources to incentivize such risk-taking.

2.3.1 Governance and conflict

Grillitsch (2016) recognized the implications of setting priorities and the incentives and disincentives that may affect the regional actors. Ideally, the process of setting priorities should, therefore, emerge from a "participatory consultation process" (Grillitsch, 2016, p. 29). Describing it as a strategic policy-making capability, Laasonen and Kolehmainen (2017, p. 1683) presented "activities that engage key stakeholders in collective multi-actor processes of agenda-setting and sense-making to identify development issues and business opportunities in the region" as a vital capability relating to the regional network. Activities such as workshops can provide the actors with an arena for collective analysis of their operational environment. Worrall and O'Leary (2019, p. 77-79) argued that in order to create a setting appropriate for the kind of inclusive, open discussions espoused by the place-based concept, tensions between the actors cannot be overlooked in these workshops.

On the contrary, Worrall and O'Leary (2019) argued that collaborations thrive better in an environment where the participants have explored their different perspectives and discussed difficult issues. Along similar lines, Karlsen and Larrea (2012) encouraged development authorities to bring conflicts to surface deliberatively. Although a setting of excess conflict may result in no partnerships being reached between the actors, the absence of conflicts does not mean the actors are in agreement (Karlsen & Larrea, 2012, p. 222). Instead, conflicts are a natural outcome of the different positions the actors hold in the region. Therefore, Karlsen and Larrea (2012, p. 221) argued that they need to develop ownership of the process by reaching compromises. Without shared ownership of the projects, the participants might instead feel they are involved in the policymakers' project, and their reason for participation is to maintain their relationship with the government (Karlsen & Larrea, 2012, p. 221).

2.3.2 Mobilizing stakeholders

Rodríguez-Pose et al. (2014) described the phases preliminary to the entrepreneurial discovery process as depending on the correct identification of the actors best suited to help the process by partaking in the discovery of the most promising activities and areas for regional innovation. Referring to it as a "break with the past," Martínez-López and Palazuelos-Martínez (2015, p. 1643) advocated for carefully reconsidering stakeholder selection and their involvement in the process of

mobilization. This break with the past is, in a sense, the proposal of a new institution brought forth by the smart-specialization concept, which might collide with established practices in the region.

These selected key actors should, according to Rodríguez-Pose et al., (2014), be part of formulating the strategies. There is, however, a risk that the more powerful regional stakeholders may impact information (Rodríguez-Pose et.al., 2014, p. 4). The threat of the process becoming hijacked by clientelism is a concern that should not be ignored. Influential interest groups may direct the process according to their self-interest or work to preserve the status quo, rather than working for the common good of regional development (Anokhin & Schulze, 2009). While Anokhin and Schulze (2009), in their paper, addressed the inhibiting effect of corruption on innovation activities, the pursuit of the agents' self-interests should not be simply dismissed in the (probably) less corrupt regional contexts we find in Scandinavia.

Rodríguez-Pose et al. (2014) stated that even regional innovation systems not inhibited by corruption often develop lock-in situations due to leading stakeholders engaging in the activities with the sole aim of maintaining their consolidated position in the region. Rodríguez-Pose et al. (2014, p. 4) further stated that the participation of a stakeholder may be irrespective of their actual ability to take part in the entrepreneurial discovery process. In this view, it could be tempting to assume that the resistant key stakeholders are the failing component of the process. Though identifying unresponsive stakeholders as the failing link would be unfair if the assumption that they would be able to partake was misguided in the first place. It is quite possible that the presumed "leading" stakeholders may not be able to take part in the initiative to mobilize, and that there are more narratives to account for when preparing the mobilization. The matter may, therefore, be far more complicated than the understanding we may gain from analyzing data on the mobilization and its outcomes, without relating it to the institutions and rationales the actors operate in and the way they respond to their context. As mentioned, this inertia is often discussed concerning regions lacking suitable governance structures. However, it is important also to explore how resistance to transformation happens in developed regions, wherein the key stakeholders appear to respond with hesitation or rejection toward the initiative.

2.3.3 Institutionally thick regions

Developed regions with economies often built on corporatist models of organization are organizationally thick; that is, having a presence of diverse organizations, some of which play the vital role of intermediate actors, such as development agencies (Benner, 2019, p. 1794). Benner expected these regions to have a rich heritage of socio-economic coordination, and in this heritage, the region has built layers of institutions through a continuation of practices for cooperation that has become routinized (Benner, 2019, p. 1794). The issue of institutionally complex regions has also been pointed out by Sotarauta (2018, p. 194) as a possible obstacle to smart specialization efforts if the institutional framework is too complex, thus hindering the creation of shared visions between the actors. Lack of connectedness or collective learning in the region may be detrimental to smart specialization efforts (Benner, 2019, p. 1795). Benner (2019, p. 1795) proposed that these settings may even have a prevalence of institutions biased against collaboration. At the regional level, the mobilization efforts may become a difficult endeavor if values of innovation and collaboration are contested, especially in organizationally thick regions wherein priorities will call for difficult choices to be made, in order to not simply reinforce the existing practices (Trippl et al., 2019 p. 3-9). These choices are indeed difficult, as there is no correct setup to replicate. As Benner (2019, p. 1795) and Rodriguez-Pose (2013) argues, there are no universally positive or negative institutional setups; the role of prevalent institutional patterns depends on the context of time and place.

Entrepreneurial discovery is not only a matter of a diverse set of actors being in the region but also interactions between the actors belonging to the different networks, subjected to the different institutional settings, and the cognitive frameworks they operate according to in their realities (Grillitsch, 2016). Regions vary in their complexities; for example, a region with a diverse set of industries and numerous firms and other organizations may have their own established practices. Hence, a region may be home to a complex setup of different institutional frameworks. Grillitsch (2016) argued that already diverse regions might need to address integration between the existing groups of actors as their challenge in order to realize more of the potential in the region. Diversity thus raises challenges in how to implement participatory activities that promote strategic cohesion, as more stakeholders with divergent expectations are involved (Grillitsch, 2016, p. 29). Grillitsch (2016 p. 29-30) stated that due to many groups with different interests and the chance that the process may come into conflict with existing constellations, enabling mobilization would be a political challenge in the places that have a low integration across the region and its stakeholders.

2.4 Analytical model

The theory that has been presented hitherto will be structured to create an analytical model in this section. The model was initially inspired by Sotarauta's (2018) discussion on policy traps, wherein he described how smart specialization efforts, when seen in a place-based perspective, raise interesting questions on how to pool resources and align actors and how to understand their agency in the process. Sotarauta (2018) described a set of categories of concepts, two of them being institutional or governance-related obstacles that may hinder the intended transformation of a region. Perhaps most inspiring for the analytical model developed through the work in this study, was Sotarauta's mentioning of how policy traps, as he calls them, may derive from problems that could be found when observing another category of concepts. For example, as Sotarauta (2018, p. 196-197) pointed out, a lack of shared view between the actors may manifest itself as the actors acting in pursuit of self-interest. However, the problem itself may derive from a problem in the mode of governance or less tangible institutional factors such as rules and normative systems (Sotarauta, 2018, p. 196-197). Sotarauta's (2018) proposals in his article proved a useful preliminary framework for structuring and reflection during data gathering. However, the model this study requires calls for a more specific direction and connection between the concepts. The following model is therefore a different integrated approach to structuring theory and concepts, where the theory that has previously been presented is reorganized into dimensions. The term "dimension" is chosen because it describes elements or factors making up a complete entity, meaning the dimensions are part of a greater whole. The model retains its place-based application and the intention to discover connections between tensions that should not merely be observed in isolation, as inspired by Sotarauta (2018). Building on this idea, the following analytical model is intended to structure observations in relation to each other, in order to draw a clearer picture of how tensions may interrelate. The sequence is not a chronological analysis of events but rather an analysis of relatedness between issues that pertains to the dimensions described, following a line of effects that may play out across the dimensions in different ways. Hence, the sequence does not explain a timeline but a complex interplay of agency and context.

The model consists of four dimensions. Starting with the institutional dimension, the first step analyzes the place-specific context in which the actors operate. As described, the institutional dimension affects how agents interact, but it can also be affected. Therefore, the model is not a hierarchy but rather a cycle. Benner (2019) proposed two causal directions: one where the institutions shape the actors' behavior, and one where the actors' behavior may change the

24

institutions. Based on this, the model has two distinctive dimensions that affects each other in some way. One relates to the institutional, which is the context for interactions and the (formal and informal) frameworks that guide them. The other is the observable activities and will be referred to as 'mobilization.' The way in which they affect each other, the causal directions, are expanded into another two dimensions: governance and mission. The governance dimension is the direction from the institutional dimension. Here, the role of the regional authorities as the initiator and driver for the process is a medium that facilitate action upon the institutional backdrop. Events in the next dimension, mobilization, is then explored as a following step with subsequent outcomes. Here, physical activities and multi-actor interactions may take place. From this dimension, we follow the second causal direction, to the mission dimension, where behavior may impact the institutional dimension. In this fourth and last dimension, we explore prospects and outcomes of the activities in the former dimension, and identify actions that may lead to institutional change. With this general outline in place, the four dimensions and related issues will be described further.

Figure 1: Analytical model

In the institutional dimension, traditions and established practices are viewed as the basis for which further action takes place. The institutional includes both formally created structures, as well as the less tangible yet impactful collectively held beliefs that have come to be the legitimate way of conducting governance in the region. The tradition of governance in the region impacts the sequence throughout the cycle of the model, depending on how it aligns with the framework introduced by smart specialization. As such, the institutional makes sense as the start of the model. Grillitsch (2016) stated that institutional integration is an essential factor in how the process will be conducted, as it sets the conditions for how the actors may build trust and share knowledge. As smart specialization introduces new concepts for governance, the issue of how these align with what is the established practice in the region will be a shaping factor throughout the process. As such, the points of interest in the institutional dimension will give a fundament for understanding how the structures in the region affect the mobilization efforts. The question for the institutional dimension is, therefore: How did established institutional frameworks govern multi-actor mobilization in the region, and how did this relate to the inclusive and priority-based principle promoted by smart specialization?

The governance dimension focuses on how the staff in the regional government understand their role in the mobilization and how they apply the tools at their disposal to conduct the process accordingly. Kroll (2015) argued that the government's interest in assessing their practices differs between regions, in light of what the practice had been historically. Observing the governments' way to act on institutions to make actionable governance, highlights challenges perhaps underestimated in the general idea behind the adoption of smart specialization as an EU-wide regional policy concept. There might be tensions between how the authorities based in local institutions understand their role in the region and what the smart-specialization concept expects them to implement. Hence, an important question pertains to the role of the authorities and how they enact interventions based on institutional concepts. For instance, Benner (2019) suggested that the mobilization should be approached with the intent to experiment and to learn. The literature points out physical interactions between the actors through workshops as a valuable tool to identify both opportunities and issues for regional development. The potential effects of the activities highly depend on how the regional authorities approach the task. The kind of policy experimentation suggested by the smart-specialization concept suggests that the government intervenes to engage all relevant stakeholders. Constructing the most appropriate intervention with the right actors is no small challenge in complex regions.

Nevertheless, it is a critical aspect that will decide the further development and potential for learning from the mobilization. The questions explored in the governance dimension directs attention to how the public authorities operationalize their approach to governance, how appropriate the tools they employ are for the context, and how their actions reflect the established practices vis-à-vis those proposed by smart specialization. As such, the questions pertaining to governance are: How did the regional authorities tasked with regional development respond to the call for mobilizing actors in the region? How did they apply tools to organize the mobilization?

Mobilization observes direct interactions during the workshop activities. Because of the unclear definition of what exactly qualifies as an entrepreneurial discovery process, the workshop activities are referred to as 'mobilization.' In this way, we only expect the physical interactions to happen, whether it produces entrepreneurial discoveries for the region or not. Mobilization is where the agents interact in a multi-actor setting initiated by the public authorities to facilitate the smart specialization process, hence the effects of the governance setup can be observed. Tensions may be observed to manifest in various ways that may be difficult to detect. Hence, the contextualization of behavior is crucial to discover the underlying tensions.

The intention is to discern consequences of institutions and their effect on how the agents interact. For example, which actors are considered key stakeholders in the region and have both the interest and resources to partake are effects rooted in the institutional conditions. By observing the mobilization as a dimension affected by governance through how the government acted on the call for multi-actor mobilization, the interventions bear the impact of the local institutions. What is of interest are the tensions that may be revealed through how the participants respond and interact. As Rodríguez-Pose (2013) reported, engagement in activities does not necessarily mean support for structural changes. Furthermore, as Worrall and O'Leary (2019) argued, there may be tensions between the actors that require attention. Karlsen and Larrea (2012) explained that the appearance of consent between the actors might be deceiving and that implicit, underlying tensions are still present. When analyzing the mobilization, we have many points of interest to explore. Mobilization observes what stakeholders were involved, what their presence meant for the mobilization, how the actors interacted, and how tensions played out in the workshops. In a lighter formulation, mobilization discusses the questions: How did the interventions play out? What happened? Did the actors make discoveries?

Mission examines the responses of the actors and how they work within the structures. The mission dimension is the causal direction where the agents' behavior may be observed as a response to the interactions and possibly influencing their own institutional setting. This dimension is a sum of the prior three dimensions, as it looks to the prospects for further actions by the agents based on how they perceive the challenges they have encountered. It is, therefore, not an endpoint, as this dimension affects the following institutional dimension, completing the cycle of the model, which in theory could continue indefinitely. Though, as North (1990) explained, the change should not expect to be in the form of a great change where old institutions are completely overturned. Instead, change may come in some sort of action that implies an incremental alteration to the institutional dimension.

Mission also captures the development of shared visions where actors may display interest in experimentation and developing new partnerships. For this to happen, they need to be willing to take risks, which should indicate commitment to a continuation of the mobilization and the building of trust. To summarize, the cycle of the analytical model is completed with an analysis of how committed the stakeholders were in the mobilization efforts and how they responded to the prospect of a continuation of the mobilization. A point of interest is then to examine the visions that were developed and what subsequent agendas or 'missions' were created. The questions are, therefore: What was the outcome of the mobilization? What did agentic behavior by participants mean in relation to the institutional framework?

3.0 METHOD

This chapter explains the methodology behind the study. As with all research, maintaining the best possible standards for quality, ethics, and integrity is desirable, yet, requires conscious efforts by the researcher to be upheld. The following sections explain how the researcher dealt with both being a monitor during a project commissioned by the EU, as well as a student gathering data for this study, particularly, how to disconnect the roles and ensure proper ethics for the research. Further, this chapter explains methods of analysis as well as expected and unexpected challenges encountered during the work on this study.

3.1 Validity and reliability

Internal validity relates to the question of whether the description of a phenomenon is correct. Jacobsen (2005, p. 214) noted that in social sciences, the academic discourse seeks to find "intersubjectivity." This means that, instead of assuming the existence of an objective truth which we as researchers eventually may discover, we are attempting to better understand our reality by building arguments that have corroborating support by other people (Jacobsen, 2005, p 214). Jacobsen presented two measures to strengthen a study's internal validity: (1) to test the validity against others, and (2) the researcher's own critical reflection on sources and information in their own work. When testing validity against others, the researcher discusses findings with those who have been observed, in order to get their perspective (Jacobsen, 2005, p. 214-215). However, as Jacobsen (2005) explained, this form of face validity is limited in that it is built on the respondents' perspectives, which may present a problem when the research discovers matters of which the involved subjects were not aware. The researcher can also test validity against previously performed research. Jacobsen (2005, p. 215) explained that if the study of a phenomenon corresponds with existing research, the validity is strengthened by providing an expanded understanding of a phenomenon that has existing evidence from studies applying other methods. The second approach to internal validation, where the researcher critically reflects on the data requires that the researcher collect data from appropriate sources. For example, the researcher may not be able to reach individuals who were central to what is being studied and instead rely on less central informants. On the other hand, the researcher's approach may affect how informants relate to the researcher conducting the study. It is therefore vital that the researcher acknowledge how this may be reflected in the information they provide and the subsequent conclusions of the study.

The issue of reliability relates to how the study may have an effect on the results. Simply put, the data used in the study must be trustworthy and reliable. This may be affected by a number of factors pertaining to the context the data gathering is conducted within, the experience and different stimuli on the informants, or even the researchers themselves. Jacobsen (2005, p 226-228) cautioned researchers to be aware of how the experience of being studied affects the informants, both in interviews and during activities that may be observed for the study. Furthermore, the context, as in time and place, of the study, may have an effect on the results (Jacobsen, 2005, p 227). For example, while this study relies on observations in the natural setting of the activities, the interviews presented a challenge in selecting the best possible context to conduct the interviews within. Instead of creating the same environment for the interviews, for this study, it was decided that the interviews should be in an environment where the informant would be comfortable sharing information. Hence, while the activities of the study present a natural setting, the interviews were set up to be conducted in a familiar place for the interviewee, of their own choosing. Additionally, it was important that the interviewee had time for an in-depth interview, which also required flexibility and openness for rescheduling by the researcher.

3.2 In pursuit of quality research

Gibbs (2007) stated that in qualitative studies that do not attempt to relate the findings to a simple and generalizable reality, the quality of the research should be strengthened through a process of reflexivity. In other words, reflexivity means that the researcher recognizes and accounts for the research inevitably reflecting some of the researcher's subjective interpretations (Gibbs, 2007, p. 92). Additionally, the sources of information, being either through observations, interviews, or analysis of other people's work, may reflect subjective perspectives. It is, therefore, crucial that the method of analysis is conducted in a way that extracts information without favoring what the researcher already knew. Biases are a threat not to be taken lightly. The study is on a case of institutions and agency, a complex setting to research, wherein the methodical approach has to be constructed for the challenge of navigating through an environment loaded with subjective views and opinions.

The study utilizes three methods for data collection: observation, interviews, and document analysis. First and foremost, the study is centered around participant observation. This is where new, firsthand insights are gained. However, observations alone hardly make for an understanding of a complex process of interactions. In order to reinforce the validity of the findings, a method of

triangulation is applied. A robust program of triangulation should, according to Flick (2018, p. 531), not just confirm existing data from the initial approach through a convergence of findings. Flick (2018) argued that in addition to confirming, triangulation should provide a good source of extra knowledge to expand upon from observations. It is for this reason, the data from the fieldwork should be expanded upon employing other methods. Interviews provide a valuable source of insights on the point of view of the involved actors, as well as the possibility to explore the case beyond the observed interactions. Document analysis is useful for questioning assumptions and perspectives made not just by the informants but also the researcher.

3.3 Observer as participant

The observations were approached according to Gold's (1958) stance of an observer as participant. In this stance, the observer has limited involvement in the activities being observed. Adler and Adler (1994, p. 380) explained that "this peripheral membership role enables the researcher to observe and interact closely enough with members to establish an insider's identity without participating in those activities constituting the core of group membership." This means that the participation of the researcher does not require representing a part in the interactions. This stance would hardly be possible for a researcher who's participation would for example be through a party involved in negotiations.

In the observer as participant approach, the researcher is able to participate in group activities as desired, which is valuable as it maintains a level of distance. The purpose of collecting data is not hidden from the group being studied. The role of an observer as participant is appropriate when the researcher is interested in participating as a means for conducting better observations to develop a more complete understanding of the activities (Kawulich, 2005). A possible concern in relation to the effect of the researcher revealing themselves as such is that the participants may behave differently than they would if they are unaware of the researcher collecting data. On the other hand, this may depend strongly on the activities and the way the researcher collects the data. For example, asking ahead of the activities for permission to record the interactions may cause the participants to feel uneasy about the researcher's presence, knowing they are being recorded, during what should be their natural interactions. Hence, collecting data during group activities was done by note-taking, which was made possible by the passive role of the researcher during the activities. Relying on note-taking may affect the reliability of the research, as exactly what is being gathered relies on the researcher's ability to detect, observe, and write. The observations followed a simple observation

plan (see Appendix 1). Following the observations, the researcher also noted additional experiences and reflections on the activities in a journal to accompany the notes for later analysis of the data.

The purpose of the researcher's presence as an observer was made clear to the participants by being visible taking notes, which is in contrast to the stance as "complete observer," where the data gathering is conducted in covert ways. Additionally, the activities would always open with an introduction of the participants, where the researchers would state the organization they represent, which in this case was Nordregio.

During the observations, attention was paid to the topic being discussed and how the actors interacted, in particular, the topics that appeared to be of interest by certain groups and how the discussions developed. Being present in the activities also provides an opportunity to experience the level of engagement in non-verbal ways. What catches interest and what does not may be expressed in ways that are not explicitly stated by the participants, hence this too would be noted. Furthermore, as the purpose is to develop a new understanding of the case and not take prior assumptions for granted, a degree of openness to unexpected discoveries is made possible by collecting data through continuous note-taking. By staying alert to objective observations throughout the activities, unexpected discoveries may provide information of great value. Maintaining alertness is naturally demanding as the work is intensive. As a result, it may, in many cases not be a sound approach. However, in short sessions in a setting that presents a good overview, it becomes more feasible for the researcher to make unexpected discoveries. Additionally, the observations gathered more quantifiable data by indicators covering the type and number of participants in the activities.

In the following chapters, the observations and are referred to as field notes by the date of the activity. The first workshop is referred do by *Field notes, 30.08.2019.* The second workshop is referred to by *Field notes, 09.09.2019.* The meeting with the Stockholm Structural Funds Partnership is referred to by *Field notes, 12.09.2019.* Actions or quotes of statements made by individual participants are also cited according to their entry in the field notes. In order to uphold the anonymity of the participants, their roles are not described in detail if this makes them identifiable in published documents related to the platform. This measure is particularly important due to published protocols of the regular Structural Funds Partnership meetings, where some key

representatives are listed.[1] In order to avoid confusion of who said or did specific things, where a non-personal description is insufficient, participants are designated a letter to separate them from other individuals if needed in the reference.

3.4 Interview

The activities provided a valuable opportunity to observe the behavior of the people involved firsthand, which may enable the study to feature insights that the individuals might not share in an interview if not asked directly. Because the case surrounds activities where the actors already have expectations and perceptions shaped by the established institutional framework, it is possible that they would explain the process as 'business as usual,' not bringing tensions to light that might be unexciting to them but of great interest in the perspective of an outsider studying their behavior. Hence, the interviews were purposely conducted after the observed events.

The interviews featured in this study were conducted about two months after the observed activities. The wait was in order for the informants to have time to continue the subsequent work following the workshops, yet not be so long after the activities that they would have problems recollecting the events and connect the topics of the interview to those activities. Additionally, and perhaps equally as important, taking time to reflect on the events with a distance from the field helps the researcher to prepare to continue the study with less attachment to the immediately created impressions made during the activities.

The interviews were one-on-one interviews approximately one hour in duration. The interviewee was free to speak Swedish or English; the researcher conducted the interview in Norwegian. In order to avoid misunderstandings, the interviewer would ask for clarification, reformulate his own questions or resort to speaking English if necessary. The interviews were semi-structured, meaning the researcher prepared a set of questions and topics to cover with the interviewee but was also prepared to divert from the prepared guide[2] whenever appropriate, for example, if the interviewee shared insights of which the researcher was previously unaware. The interview would, therefore, at times change between topics according to the development of the conversation, as the interview gave room for the interviewee to talk about what excited them. Additionally, due to the interview discovering new topics, the duration of the sessions may be longer than a rigid interview. The

[1] For an overview of the representatives present in the meeting, 12.09.2019, see appendix 2.
[2] For interview guide (in Norwegian), see appendix 3.

amount of information may become overwhelming for a single researcher to take notes and guide the interview at the same time. Hence, the interviews were recorded with the written consent of the interviewee. This consent and the rights of the interviewee to review, change, or withdraw their provided information was explained in the invitation to participate in the study (see appendix 4). Each of the interviews begun with a clarification and explanation of the purpose behind the interview where the distinction between the researcher's work as a monitor working with Nordregio, and a student collecting data for a master's thesis was made clear.

The interviews are cited in the text by referring to the date the interview took place. Insights from the perspective of a development official at Region Stockholm is provided by *interview, 30.10.2019*. Insights from a leader in the office for strategic collaborations at KTH is provided by *interview, 06.11.2019*. Both were selected due to their participation in the activities, the organization they represented, and knowledge on smart specialization activities. The interviews were transcribed in Swedish. Upon completing a finalized draft of the thesis, the quotes extracted from the transcriptions were put in a separate document which was translated with the help of a professional translation service. As some sentences lacked context, the translated quotes were then checked and minor adjustments were made accordingly by the researcher. This ensures that the researcher's influence on the translation is kept minimal. The quotes can be found in Swedish form in Appendix 5. For reference, the corresponding quotes in Swedish and English form are designated a letter for identification at the end in the reference in the text and in Appendix 5.

3.5 Document analysis

The document analysis provides context to the case at large. Documents include a wide variety of sources such as plans and related strategic documents, published protocols, and recordings from meetings and reports, laws and regulations, with a connection to the topic of the case (See Appendix 6). These are useful for the researcher to understand the historical context of the events being observed, to put the development in perspective, and to track further developments. The document analysis, as such, helps the researcher understand the conditions that form the backdrop on which the activities played out, without solely relying on the perspectives of informants or the researcher. As such, documents provide a valuable source of alternative data to reflect upon and contextualize, elaborate, and support the findings with evidence from sources beyond the firsthand data gathering conducted by the researcher.

Similarly, a document analysis may help clear up inaccuracies or possible misunderstandings in what had been observed. Documents also provide a valuable supplementary source of data to expand upon points of interest that were discovered through observations and interviews. However, as Atkinson and Coffey (1997, p. 47) warned, documents should not be treated as firm evidence of what they assert. Instead, the researcher should recognize that official records have been made to accomplish goals. This is of particular importance to the work on this study, as the access to observing the activities was through a project in which previous reports had been published, meaning caution should be paid to not solely rely on previous reports but to build an independent perspective on the case.

3.6 Fieldwork

The participation in the Interreg project Better Policy Instruments for High Innovation Projects in the European Regions (HIGHER), through Nordregio allowed for opportunities to experiment with data collection. Meetings and interactions prior to the activities provided informal interviews that helped give context to the situation, and in figuring out what methods of data gathering would be the most appropriate for this study. Additionally, access to the prior work that had been conducted by Nordregio and ongoing correspondence were also essential resources for the preliminary work on this study, contributing to the document analysis. On the other hand, the amount of involvement, even as a passive monitor, may lead the researcher to become misguided by subjective expectations and interpretations of events. Hence, the use of a journal during the fieldwork was useful for personal reflections and critique after withdrawing from the field, activities, and contacts.

3.7 Challenges

Though the analytical model may appear streamlined and perhaps simple, it is the result of a long process of reflection on the events and the relationships between the issues that were observed. The work on this study begun during the summer of 2019, which has been vital to afford the time to withdraw and reflect on the project. Initially, the analytical model featured more dimensions than the final iteration. These omitted dimensions explored the connection between competence and the way the involved stakeholders themselves are not static but rather changing in ways that affect the mobilization, more specifically, what it meant to move staff and responsibilities between organizations during the program period. This quickly became far beyond the scope of one thesis. Furthermore, the initial analytical model quickly became too complicated and lost focus. To address

the ambiguous connections between a 'start' and 'finish,' for the analytical model's cycle, the framework was reconfigured to emphasize what provided the most exciting insight, which emerged from the firsthand observations of the activities and thorough analysis.

Centering the study around the limited time-span from late August 2019 into the spring of 2020 did eliminate loose threads, as it centered the case on the project after its transfer to Region Stockholm. It had been the intention to conduct observations in early 2020 as well, but unfortunately, circumstances made it impossible. The abrupt end of the project is due to two factors. Firstly, due to reasons explained by the analysis in this study, the regional government appears to have lost interest in continuing the workshop activities. The chance for a discontinuation of the activities had been recognized from the beginning of this study, and as a plan B, the study would have observed meetings between Nordregio and the regional authorities. Secondly, whether or not disinterest would reduce access to more data gathering, the possibility to continue the research as planned was made practically impossible by the arrival of COVID-19. The crisis meant we (the research team from Nordregio) could no longer engage in meetings with the regional authorities. Additionally, the mobilization beyond the workshop activities became interrupted as the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was channeled towards projects that could help develop solutions to address the crisis. Because of this drastic and unexpected change in the environment, the data would scarcely build on the same case anymore.

3.8 Limitations of the study

The methodical approach in this study is constructed in recognition that the data relies on perspectives that are hard to verify. Better access to informants could have mitigated this weakness, but not targeting the most central informants could be detrimental for the validity. A challenge with the approach of using interviews to support and develop an understanding of the activities that had been observed is that the individuals who are interviewed are selected due to their experiences as a part of the activities. As the activities were where the case played out, it would not be relevant to interview individuals who did not personally engage in these activities. This makes access to informants dependent on the opportunity to observe them in action. While unforeseen delays for planned activities were to be expected, there is always the chance that the situational context changes drastically, as happened in this scenario.

4.0 CASE

This chapter will present general information about the case and context for the study. First, what is meant by region is explained. Next, the related funding program, which much of the case revolved around, is explained. Following this, a brief overview of Stockholm presents some examples of the industrial powerhouses the region possesses. The case relates to a narrow aspect of regional development that only touches upon innovation activities related to the ERDF in the Structural Funds Partnership (SFP) workshops. Therefore, the absence of strong regional actors from the industry in this study should not be mistaken for lack of involvement on their part in the regional innovation activities at large. Next, the HIGHER project that allowed this study to be conducted through observations is explained. The chapter concludes with a summary of the history leading up to the events.

4.1 Operationalizing region

The place-based perspective and the focus on the development of institutions as a part of policy-implementation may provide numerous ways to operationalize 'place.' According to Zukauskaite (2018), a 'region' may indicate a place where locally derived institutional contexts evolve, which indeed is a feature of 'place' in smart specialization, as proposed by Barca (2009). The term region itself is a scalable concept which functions as an analytical focusing device and needs to be defined for the research in which it is applied (Sotarauta, 2020, p. 1-2). While region may be defined in various ways, it is in the case of this study referring to the territory wherein Region Stockholm is the public authority governing regional development and the regional stakeholders based in that region. In the context of smart specialization, this requires clarification, as the regional framework of government in a country does not necessarily correspond to the framework of regions whereby smart specialization is implemented. In Sweden, eight regional SFP platforms exist to give the structural funds a regional anchoring (Svenska ESF Rådet, 2020). There are, on the other hand, 21 regional governments (Landsting) in the country governing their respective territories. Hence, the conceptualization of region that the structural funds operate by in Sweden usually involves the cooperation between regional governments that each operate within the boundaries of their respective regions. However, in the case of the region of Stockholm and smart specialization, the two regional formats correspond, as Region Stockholm is the only regional government within its respective region when defined on the 2nd level of Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics, more commonly, and hereafter, referred to as the NUTS 2 level. Hence, studying Stockholm and its

platform for distributing the structural funds reflects a more identifiable connection to a specific place and the key stakeholders therein, than what might be the case in other instances of place and smart specialization on regional levels.

4.2 About the regional development funds structure

The case and the activities that are observed in this study relate to the implementation of smart specialization in Stockholm, in which activities relied on the mobilization of actors with support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). The ERDF is allocated to the NUTS 2 level and is intended to fund activities between regional stakeholders in the process of inventing new products and services, as well as facilitate mobility between the stakeholders to address cross-sectorial challenges (Moodie et al., 2019). The program period from 2014–2020 in Stockholm has seen the investment of 298 million SEK (Tillväxtverket, 2016). This is per capita the smallest ERDF budget of all the eight NUTS 2 regions in Sweden (Paulsson, 2019 p. 7-12). Compared to the other budget channeled through the Stockholm SFP, the European Social Fund (ESF) at 845 million SEK, the ERDF is relatively small in the region.

4.3 The region of Stockholm

Stockholm is the capital of Sweden, covering an area of 6,779.2 km^2, encompassing 26 municipalities with a population of approximately two million inhabitants[3]. The region is home to several research universities such as Stockholm University (SU), Royal Institute of Technology (KTH), and Karolinska Institutet (KI). The innovation support structure in the region consists of a variety of organizations and projects working in cooperation with the academic sector. In addition to the universities' innovation support offices, collaborative ventures also grow through incubators and science parks. Production technology is an example of a thematic area of strength for the region where close collaboration between KTH and strong actors located in Stockholm, such as Scania and Saab, involves interdisciplinary cooperation. Another important industry in the region is the information and communications technology-sector, where a substantial investor in research and development, Ericsson, a telecommunication equipment company, operates from their headquarter in Kista, Stockholm. There are many more examples from which to choose. However, the message is that in general, Stockholm has a high level of innovative activities and collaborations between

---

[3] Based on current data from the Stockholm profile in the smart specialization platform's webpage hosted by the Joint Research Centre. https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/regions/se11 (Accessed 02.06.2020)

actors belonging to various disciplines, and the region is recognized as a top performer on the regional innovation scoreboard (European commission, 2019).

4.4 The HIGHER project and Nordregio

The HIGHER project is a project where eight regions in Europe collaborate in a framework aimed at improving the innovation framework and the smart-specialization strategies of the EU regions. In the case of Stockholm, the intended improvements targeted toward policy instrument recognized as the Stockholm model (Moodie et al., 2019). The HIGHER project monitors, analyzes, and exchanges experiences of the management and implementation of measures to promote innovation projects between public authorities, research centers, and industry. The project was set to run from April 2016 to the end of September 2020. Nordregio acted as the regional project partner in cooperation with regional authorities on the initiative to implement smart-specialization concepts into regional development in Stockholm. As part of their assistance to Region Stockholm, the research team from Nordregio, together with the county administrative board, and later, Region Stockholm, prepared an action plan for the then future activities, that were to be funded by the regional government. [4] On behalf of the Interreg HIGHER project, Nordregio would have researchers present in various activities hosted by the regional government monitoring the introduction of smart-specialization concepts in Stockholm.

4.5 A brief history of smart specialization in Stockholm

Supporting the EU 2020 strategy, the EU Cohesion Policy 2014–2020 lays out an "ex-ante conditionality" for member states and regions to have a strategy on investment in research and innovation in place for receiving structural funds. This strategy identifies priority areas for the region for investments based on the sharing of knowledge between stakeholders within the regions (Foray et al., 2012). Subsequently, Stockholm, like other European regions, initiated processes to incorporate smart-specialization concepts in regional development. Sweden has in general been late to implement smart specialization, due to a lack of national coordination that would support regional work in the initial phases (Paulsson, 2019). During the 2014–2020 program period for structural funds, before this study, two processes in Stockholm were initiated to develop a smart-specialization strategy in Stockholm. However, both had stalled due to changes in staff and regional

---

[4] see appendix 6 for documents

reorganization (Paulsson, 2019, p. 10). The county administrative board conducted the early work on developing the strategy and identifying thematic areas to direct the later mobilization. However, on June 19, 2018, the national parliament decided that the responsibility for regional development would be transferred to the regional government (Länsstyrelsen Stockholm, 2018). Hence, the work towards developing a smart-specialization strategy was continued by Region Stockholm, following the transfer in January 2019, wherein Nordregio would continue their role as monitors as part of the HIGHER project (Moodie et al., 2019). The events observed thus cover the activities conducted by Region Stockholm through the SFP, which took place towards the end of the program period. Though being rather late in the program period, the transfer of responsibility for the project offers a new start for the initiative, which is now within the domain of the regional government.

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Institutional

This section provides an understanding of the institutional context which significantly affects how the mobilization effort develops. What is of interest in this regard is how the institutional context provides the setting for multi-actor engagement in the process, and how this may be conducive or unconducive to the smart-specialization agenda. The answers will describe a context that is specific to Stockholm, which provides context to later observations in this chapter.

5.1.1 The Stockholm Model

Though the documents related to the HIGHER project describes the Stockholm model as developed by the Stockholm Structural Funds Partnership (Moodie et al. 2019), it is, from an institutional perspective, a continuation of strategic grant allocation with much older roots than the platform itself. Going far back in history, governance in Stockholm has, for a long time, featured statutory agencies that are legitimized through their distance from the ministers (Lane, 2006, p. 175). Indeed, governing practices through agencies have a long tradition in Stockholm, with a history of practices dating back to reforms made in the mid-seventeenth century with the establishment of agencies to direct development in designated sectors (Lane, 2006 p. 175; Lyttkens, 2014, p. 105). The practices have naturally had time to evolve since then, and the local way of governing has continued to change as the situation required the actors to change their behavior. Stockholm certainly has a long history of developing their practices of governance.

In modern times, certain practices that would be known as the Stockholm model was "invented" sometime in the 1990s. However, applications of the model in different contexts have produced alternative iterations. Øgård (1999, p. 53-54) mentioned that Region Stockholm (at the time known as Stockholm Läns Landsting) had been utilizing a "so called Stockholm model"[5] that in some studies yielded comparative improvements in cost-efficiency through contracting out services in the health sector to the market, maintaining quality through criteria defined by the regional government. Øgård (1999, p. 56) therefore perceived the model as a response to the greater trend of New Public Management reforms that had been widespread at the time.

---

[5] Translated from Norwegian, from original quote «den såkalte Stockholmsmodellen» (Øgård, 1999, p. 54).

Another iteration of a Stockholm model applied to urban development and land allocation. Zakhour and Metzger (2018) described a policy practice that also emerged in Stockholm during the 1990s, in the form of a locally developed public-private approach to urban planning during a time of growing financial constraints (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018 p. 51-52). During this time, the city of Stockholm moved towards governance practices that involved private actors as project partners for urban development (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018, p. 52). A feature of the practice was for development authorities to incentivize actors to propose projects based on the actors' priorities by offering the allocation of grants (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018, p. 52). Therefore, this approach to governance required development officials to be able to align policy goals with the regional stakeholders' context and to balance out inhibiting disincentives. As such, development projects increasingly became the product of negotiations between the development authorities and private actors, and less connected to long term, comprehensive planning (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018, p. 54).

A milestone in its evolvement as an institutionalized practice appeared when it became colloquially known as the Stockholm model around the year 2010 (Zakhour & Metzger, 2018, p. 52). In other words, the Stockholm model as a formula only became clearly expressed and, in a sense, a recognized staple of Stockholm's established way of governance after two decades as an evolving practice around the turn of the millennium. The development of the Stockholm model as an institutionalized practice created a legitimate way of conducting multi-actor governance in the region. In light of this history, the Stockholm model as an institutionalized practice was not created specifically for the structural funds partnership but rather adapted, appearing as a purposefully constructed policy tool. When the county administrative board sought to introduce the concept of smart specialization into their practices for regional development, it was decided that the Stockholm model would be applied to the task (Moodie et al., 2019; Interview, 30.10.2019)[6]. As a result, several of the documents analyzed for this study treated the Stockholm model as a unique feature of the Stockholm SFP as well as concerning the implementation of smart specialization in the region.

In practice, the structural funds partnership in Stockholm and its use of the Stockholm model is conducted by the chief secretary[7] of the SFP, together with the platform's chairman appointed by the national government (SFS 2007:459, §3) and a joint preparation (JP) group. The JP group

---

[6] The interview with the development official from Region Stockholm did not provide an answer as to exactly when or how the Stockholm model was adopted, but she did explain that it was already a practice prior to the smart specialisation project in the region (Interview, 30.10.2019).

[7] As of 2019, the chief secretary is based in Region Stockholm. Prior to this, the secretary function belonged to the county administrative board

consists of public authorities and other parties that the national government requires to be represented in the group (SFS 2007:459, §3). These parties are, in turn, tasked to appoint their representatives to the preparation group. The SFP channels two funding programs: the ESF and the ERDF. The ERDF is managed by the Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket), which also does administrative work for the platform. The work with the ERDF is what has been connected to Stockholm's work on developing a smart-specialization strategy for the region (Moodie et al., 2019). The task of the preparation group is to present the opinions of the SFP on project proposals, which received approval from the managing authority of the funds (in this context, Tillväxtverket). The JP group plays a vital role, along with the chief secretary, in proactively identifying regional needs and calling for proposals (SWECO, 2019, p. 11). Though their tasks are primarily, according to the Stockholm model, to prioritize project proposals that align with the goals of the regional development planning documents. Nevertheless, the preparation group may take a proactive position if they identify regional needs (SWECO, 2019, p. 11).

5.1.2 Limitations of the Stockholm Model

The Stockholm Model has some critical challenges as a model for effective smart specialization governance. Research conducted by Nordregio pointed out that it does not develop long-term strategic platforms for collaborations (Moodie et al., 2019). Further, the Stockholm Model did not address collaboration outside of the ERDF project-setting (Moodie et al., 2019). Finally, the involvement of key industrial actors was limited, and smaller businesses have relatively low participation in collaborative initiatives (Moodie et al., 2019). These challenges, in addition to a lack of political involvement, contribute to the slow adoption of smart specialization (Moodie et al., 2019). The project-specific nature of the Stockholm model is not limited to its application in the SFP, but appears to be a general feature that was also recognized by Zakhour and Metzger (2018) concerning the use of the model in urban development governance, where it came at the cost of comprehensive public planning capacities.

Further, the practice of aligning proposals by regional actors to regional development goals may present two challenges to the authorities. First, they are not making 'tough choices', or rather, facing the political challenges, beyond picking which project seems to best support regional development goals. As such, political involvement is minimal. In other words, the model reflects a tendency of not being proactive in setting priorities. However, the JP group has tried to mitigate this by proactively sharing information with organizations that are members of the SFP (SWECO,

2019). Another problem with the practice is that the role of the government is not responsive to the needs of the regional actors beyond offering funds. The Stockholm model is a way to reach strong actors who are viable project-owners. While smart specialization advocates for government interventions to include small businesses, this is not a feature of the Stockholm model. While the HIGHER project and the initiative to adopt smart-specialization governance structures in Stockholm described the Stockholm model as a policy instrument to be developed and consciously enhanced, it is in this thesis treated as an institution in of itself. The difference is that the Stockholm model is here identified as a manifestation of local institutions that have had a long history of developing and spreading as a practice for governance in the region.

There appears to be a conflict between what the Stockholm model represents, which is a practice for sharing development projects with resourceful regional actors, and the idea found in smart specialization, that the government is needed to intervene to make the mobilization inclusive. The contrast in objectives of the Stockholm model and the goals of smart specialization might make it seem like a poor choice of model for governance by the authorities. However, this depends on the perspective applied to the analysis. By making the institutional dimension a factor that forms the actions of the government, the model is a set of rules that defines how Stockholm should be governed. Hence, the authorities are instead reproducing the institutional framework, rather than creating a new tool that incorporates smart specialization.

When planning for the mobilization of the ERDF, the regional authorities saw it appropriate to employ the Stockholm model as a layout for the process through the SFP (Interview, 30.10.2019). As such, the way Stockholm governs the mobilization reflects a model tested through a history of practice. The need for a reconsideration of the Stockholm model had been the issue the regional authorities had sought to address through the HIGHER project, with Nordregio providing the research team to support the process. A problem with the practice of the Stockholm model was that it was ad-hoc based, and this was discussed with the SFP JP (Field notes, 12.09.2019). The Stockholm model did not have the desired impact on the stakeholders outside of the partnership, but rather centered on the initiated actors that were represented in the mobilization workshops, and the project proposals they would develop. As a result, it was difficult to create lasting strategic collaborations built around thematic areas to implement a cohesive smart specialization strategy (Field notes, 12.09.2019; Moodie et al., 2019).

Historically, the interest in making prioritizations has been very low. There has been a very laissez-faire attitude ... I think it stems from the fact that we have had very market focused politicians ... they don't want to intervene and take too much control, but instead rely on the market and the market players to sort out challenges without intervention.

(Interview, 30.10.2019a)

Stockholm does not have a tradition of political involvement in regional actors' interactions. Instead, as recounted by the development official from Region Stockholm, the practice is to trust that the market will govern itself without much direct intervention (Interview, 30.10.2019). Though there had been a platform preparing the EDP at an earlier stage, this had been under the county administrative board and was not active following the transfer of the regional development responsibilities to Region Stockholm.[8] The difference is that the process of developing a cohesive strategy in the region was now subject to the local political goodwill to resume, and thus the local perception on what is politically sensitive:

By talking about challenges and areas of strength, instead of saying we should prioritise certain industries or sectors, it becomes less sensitive politically, and that has in a sense been an attempt to get the issue on the agenda without challenging the regional political system too much. (Interview, 30.10.2019b)

5.1.3 Institutional features affecting mobilization

The development official explained that when it comes to strategic cohesion, the region is not operating in an integrated manner, and the lack of a strategic oversight makes it difficult to connect competence between the localities at a regional level (Interview, 30.10.2019). According to her, the problem is not a lack of interest from the regional stakeholders, as both businesses and researchers were interested in discovering synergies (Interview, 30.10.2019). Instead, she noted, there is no strong actor that unites a critical mass of stakeholders around a unifying vision (Interview, 30.10.2019). She believed the universities could fill this role, but she also recognized that the academic sector had not been particularly interested in ERDF projects. She elaborated that the interest often came from individual researchers or groups seeking funds for their projects without

---

[8] The document analysis (See appendix 6) found the platform «Innovationskraft Stockholm» to be mentioned frequently in relation to the smart specialisation project in documents prior to January, 2019, but could not find any evidence of this platform operating following the transfer to Region Stockholm.

connecting it to a broader regional context, noting that it instead develops into a competition to receive funds rather than a cooperative venture (Interview, 30.10.2019).

> I don't want competition between the city and Flemingsberg, I want two nodes in the regional … clusters which supports each other and complements each other. I was very clear with them on this ... you can not submit two applications that are more or less the same and compete (Interview, 30.10.2019c)

The development official presented a perspective on the region as fragmented with structural problems for cohesive governance. Regional integration is what the smart-specialization agenda attempts to address by connecting regional stakeholders around thematic areas. As such, she believed smart specialization would mitigate the difficulties of institutional complexity in the region (interview, 30.10.2019). According to Grillitsch (2016), the institutional complexity is indeed a potential obstacle for a successful mobilization, if the region is unable to connect resources they have within their borders, leading to unrealized potential. The behavior of the actors, as described by the development official, may seem irrational if we assume that it would be in the interest of the actors in Flemingsberg and the city of Stockholm (using her examples) to share information and integrate their efforts in order to collaborate on project proposals. Institutionally speaking, the issue could be that the existing practices in their respective organizations do not actively encourage this connection.

The existing institutional framework affecting the mobilization displays two general features. First, it demonstrates that regional actors do not tend to apply together on their own volition. Regional integration is naturally a challenge in a region that has many institutionally diverse settings located across various localities in the region, a challenge that has been widely discussed in the literature concerning smart specialization. Second, the established practice of governance in the region maintains this status. It could, therefore, be reasonable to ask why they would not simply change their way of conducting governance as per the expectations from the EU Cohesion Policy 2014–2020.

It is essential to recognize that Stockholm's model for governance has evolved within the region and has strong ties to their context and experiences and that it was not created to meet the demands of the EU commission per say, but rather attempted to be employed as such. Furthermore, the

solution smart specialization offers may not be recognized as a solution to anything; it may simply be an alternative to how governance is already conducted. While the development official appears to be an agent for changing the practice, explaining with rationality that the actors should complement each other so that the funding program has a stronger impact by reaching a larger group, the actual resistance might be that the requested behavioral change in itself is a proposed 'new' institution that does not easily align with the established institutional framework.

Exploring to what extent smart specialization complements or is in conflict with existing structures would be another study in itself. However, it appears that the practices might be in some degree of contradiction. It seems that the Stockholm model pursues specific projects, while smart specialization advocates for long-term transformation of how the regional actors operate. While the two are not exclusive, there appears to be a contrast between the new and the old in the behavior the two models expect from the actors, including the regional government.

During the mobilization workshops, it became evident from the concerns the universities discussed that they perceived a need for new structures to enable collaboration in the region (Fieldnotes, 09.09.2019). The context for mobilization was, according to the leader from KTH, that people are working in silos and that there is a need for a driving force to unite a critical mass (Interview, 06.11.2019). A leader from SU had further suggested during the mobilization workshops that, in addition to facilitating more cohesion within the academic sector in the region, they need to strengthen their ties to the industry, and towards the political level (Field notes, 09.09.2019).

The regional context, expressing a "laissez-faire attitude," as the development official described it as, testifies to a culture that is not inclined to political interventions in the region. Furthermore, the Stockholm model, being a practice that predates the mobilization through the SFP, sets the framework for engagement. The model, seen as an institutionalized practice that has deep roots in the region and retains its core concepts of being a market-driven form of governance, rather than a practice of interventions for inclusive strategy design, therefore, seems hard to change. Despite this, there appears to be a desire among at least some of the regional stakeholders to establish new structures. In particular, low integration was a pertinent problem perceived by universities (Field notes, 09.09.2019). The problem relating to the structures for mobilization will be a recurring topic, which will be further elaborated in the following sections of this chapter. The main takeaway from

the observations concerning the spatial conditions for mobilization is that the institutionalized practice in the region was not inherently conducive for the mobilization efforts. Instead, the region has a tradition that values non-intervention by the regional authorities.

5.2 Governance

This section presents observations relating to the governance dimension of the mobilization process. The main questions relate to what tools the government has at their disposal and how they apply these through their interventions. The mobilization process was directed by two main tools: the workshops as the arena for interactions, and the ERDF as the resources offered to the stakeholders as the incentive, per the Stockholm model. The information discovered is also connected to the institutional framework, as this forms the basis for how the leaders understand their reality. Subsequently, the tools at the government's disposal should be appropriate for the context of the region, though the question is how they adopt new practices within this framework.

5.2.1 Unclear mandate

The SFP is the platform from which the ERDF is connected to regional actors proposing projects that address the regional development policy. In the mobilization process, it became a point of contact between the regional development authorities and the stakeholders in the region, as they were invited to discuss their ideas through direct interactions. While the action plan for the Stockholm region, following a mapping of regional areas of strength, included a plan where the regional authorities would mediate between regional stakeholders and take a guiding role (Länsstyrelsen Stockholm, 2015; Moodie et al., 2019), they were instead observed to take a much less proactive stance.

As the research team from Nordregio engaged in discussion with the JP group, questions were raised by the group regarding the notion of changing the way they operate according to the Stockholm model. One member of the JP group explicitly questioned what the ambitions of making the mobilization process inclusive to non-SFP organizations had to do with the Stockholm model (JP group representative A, Field notes, 12.09.2019). Her question pointed out a challenge that the government was facing; the process was taking place in the already established framework of the Stockholm model, which also seems to have a prescription of who are considered relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the Stockholm model lays out a separation of roles for the process. The

authorities are expected to grant funds to projects that follow predefined regional development strategies and not engage in a reconsideration of the framework for mobilization itself. The initiative appeared to rely mostly on a very limited part of the group with knowledge on smart specialization, while the JP group at large had not received any instructions that the structures should be changed, as became apparent from the observations (Field notes, 12.09.2019). When interviewed, the development official, a proponent for the expansion of the Stockholm Model explained that there is no direction given from the national level in Sweden for the regions to develop models of governance to conduct smart-specialization policies (Interview, 30.10.2019) Unlike the regional development strategy documents which are mandated by law (SFS 2017:583), the development of smart-specialization strategies has not been given a clearly defined requisite (Paulsson, 2019, p. 17).

During the discussion, the JP group raised questions addressing who should lead the mobilization, as they lack the mandate to do this themselves (Field notes, 12.09.2019). Again, reflecting the inclination towards political non-intervention. The JP group, largely consisting of officials from public bodies, then perhaps understandably struggled to connect their work to the tasks proposed to them in the presented action plan. In other words, even if they recognized a lack of integration and cohesion in the region as a problem, their task did not easily align with the ambitions of intervening. Though there were participants in the discussion noting their agreement to the proposed challenges of the Stockholm model, this was not necessarily a point on which the JP group at large was in agreement. As one JP group member asserted in response to whether or not the Stockholm model needs to be reconsidered, the Stockholm model "is recognized as a best practice in Europe," he further noted that Stockholm is still a strong investor in innovation activities, even if the region does not have the same structures as other Swedish regions that have adopted the smart specialization concept (JP group member B, Field notes, 12.09.2019).

Therefore, an overall observation from the discussion between the research team from Nordregio and the JP group was that the role of a proactively intervening public authority in the mobilization process, as proposed by the smart specialization concept, was not aligning with the operations of the SFP. This notion was particularly noticeable, as one key leader from the regional authorities in the JP group decided to be a spectator, moving away from the table to the back of the room for the whole duration of the discussion (Field notes, 12.09.2019). The behavior did not seem to be due to disagreement; on the contrary, she did follow the discussion attentively (Field notes, 12.09.2019). It

rather appeared to be that despite her key role in the JP group, she did not perceive the topic of the discussion as relevant to her responsibilities with the Stockholm model. Based on these observations, there appears to be a separation between what the Stockholm model means as a tool for strategic planning and executing the mobilization. A challenge underlying mobilization is that while Region Stockholm finances the workshops and leads the SFP, the staff leading the workshops were from the national development agency Tillväxtverket and the secretariat of the SFP in Stockholm, the latter who, according to the observations, did not recognize it as their task to change the Stockholm model. The distribution of tasks for mobilization, where the regional government did not constitute the staff in the workshops, is quite simply in line with the Stockholm model, where the funding structure as the incentive towards stakeholders is key. By this logic, it makes sense to provide the staff from Tillväxtverket as they possess the most competence about the exact funding mechanism being applied. Consequently, this may come at the cost of mobilization as a means to learn from regional stakeholders, as will be explained in the following section. The reliance on the ERDF as an incentive during the mobilization activities might also have complicated mobilization. The complicated situation the regional authorities found themselves in was perhaps best expressed by the member of the JP group who previously asked how smart specialization related to the Stockholm model. She expressed discontent with the status quo, wherein the regional authorities had problems developing a comprehensive strategy to connect funding structures in the region with development goals: "A big problem is we don't have a strategy, we have no idea what to do. We don't have a structure. We have these deals … but they are not connected" (JP group representative A, Field notes, 12.09.2019). Hence, the regional authorities themselves had an awareness of the limitation of the ERDF and its dependence on creating a strategic cohesiveness in the region. However, it seems they find themselves locked into the trajectory laid out by the Stockholm model.

5.2.2 Executing the mobilization

Observing the discussion between the research team and the public authorities sheds some light on how the JP group and by extension, the regional government, understands their part in the mobilization. The JP group does not appear to perceive their task as mediators between the regional actors. It seems this was reflected in how they approached the workshop activities, leaving the task of directing the workshops largely to Tillväxtverket. The majority of the attending JP group members representing the public authorities had also participated in at least one of the workshops. Their participation could have had potential for them to obtain valuable knowledge from other stakeholders' perspectives by simply listening to the discussion. However, during the workshops,

the staff directed the discussions towards an idea level, wanting to facilitate a discussion on possibilities for projects the participating actors could develop into proposals for the ERDF. On the other hand, the potential to utilize the workshop as a way for regional authorities to learn about the challenges faced by the actors was not utilized, as discussions on practical matters were restricted by the staff (Field notes, 30.08.2019 & 09.09.2019).

In relation to reconsidering current structures, the JP group did not demonstrate that they perceived the workshops as an arena for them to reconsider their operations or the Stockholm model at large. Further, the staff of the workshop, herein being the development agency and the chief secretary of the SFP, is not the reason for why the workshops did not meet expectations according to the smart specialization idea, as they conducted them in line with their tasks. The workshops were conducted on the request of the regional authorities and took form in line with the JP group understanding of the workshops as activities following the principles of the Stockholm model, and not an intervention in a process to change it.

A key observation from the workshops was in the behavior of the staff who informed the assembly that the workshops were to discuss ideas and opportunities. If the discussion went into practical matters, such as what criteria qualifies a project for funding, the staff would steer the discussion back to their intended purpose for the workshop (Field notes, 30.08.2019 & 09.09.2019). Besides demonstrating the staff's intention of incentivizing project proposals, the observation points toward the staff valuing group cohesion over conflicts, as they were explicitly asking the assembly to address practical matters at a later stage because the staff had experienced practicalities to be a source of conflicts (Field notes, 30.08.2019). It should be noted that this later stage did not mean a continuation of the workshops by the SFP or the regional government, as they lacked funds to continue the workshops (Interview, 30.10.2019). As such, the workshops were ad-hoc and approached as a means to incentivize the actors to develop project ideas that could receive ERDF, without a commitment to continuing the activities, in contrast to the outline of the project that had been laid out in strategic documents leading up to this set of interventions (see appendix 6).

5.2.3 Expectations and reality

The leader from KTH, having prior experience in smart-specialization processes in another region, noted that it is vital to establish a solid practice of cooperation between the academic and the public authorities (Interview, 06.11.2019). She further noted that the ambitions require conscious efforts to engage small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the mobilization, stressing that this relies on a strong and lasting commitment to the activities, where they (the universities and the authorities) are active in listening and responding to the needs of the businesses. This is not only for the sake of discovering projects; learning to work together has to become an objective in itself (Interview, 06.11.2019).

> When meeting between different cultures, then it takes time to become familiar with the ones from the other actors. The county board and the academic sector, for example. (Interview, 06.11.2019a)

In the previous section on the institutional dimension, the development official noted that universities could play a vital role in uniting the region around synergic visions. The problem of governing a mobilization process in a fragmented region was, according to her, the outcome of a lack of strategy setting clear priorities (Interview, 30.10.2019). However, to be able to identify these priorities through a multi-actor process, the problem had to be recognized by the upper echelon of the organizations (Interview, 30.10.2019). In the case of the SFP, the mandate grants them the tool to initiate this process in the form of announcing calls for ERDF projects. In other words, the ERDF is what the mobilization relies on to incentivize key actors to engage in strategic collaborations. The question of why the ERDF fails to entice the regional actors is a matter of how it attracts the attention of the stakeholders, in this case, the universities.

The leader from KTH explained that for her organization to engage in ERDF projects, they had to "bend" the role of a university (Interview, 06.11.2019). As academia is dependent on research funding, the ERDF is perceived as lacking a recognition that the projects cost more than the organization receives in financial terms (Interview, 06.11.2019). She further explained that there is a disconnect between what the ERDF covers and what it expects. The challenge is not just to connect the regional authorities with the academic sector. The industry also plays a vital part and needs to be involved in the mobilization directly, not just through a key actor's contacts. However, this is difficult to accomplish, as SMEs do not receive the financial support they require to

participate, which presents a problem in getting them involved in the first place (Interview, 06.11.2019; Field notes, 30.08.2019). This perspective sheds light on the restrictions of the ERDF as a tool for governing mobilization. For the authorities to successfully engage the relevant stakeholders according to the smart specialization idea, they need to have the right mandates to connect mobilization with appropriate funding mechanisms and platforms for workshops, as well as the required competence to conduct the activities. The task is complex, as the different actors have diverse interests that need to be accounted for before they can be expected to become genuinely interested. The large actors, like the universities in Stockholm, operate beyond a framework of regional actors; they pursue projects in an international arena and thus look beyond the region in their operations. On the other side of the spectrum, smaller businesses are subject to a barrier in that they lack the means to be involved in the projects that the SFP hopes will incentivize structural change in Stockholm. As the leader from KTH explained, it cannot be down to the universities to invest in Stockholm's SMEs, it has to come by other means of funding (Interview, 06.11.2019). In short, it seems like the ERDF alone covers a narrow scope of the mobilization, being mostly interpreted as an incentive targeting some key actors who are initiated into the SFP. At the same time, it does not work as an intervention to involve smaller businesses.

> KTH gains a lot from being strong internationally, being strong nationally, then regionally ... there is too little money in the structural funds ... if one were to have more structural funds, then one could be more regional (Interview, 06.11.2019b)

5.2.4 No set agenda for change

The regional authorities do not appear to have a clear agenda on how they could learn from the mobilization workshops. There is no clear mandate to support the continuation of mobilization or to use the mobilization process to bring the stakeholders' views to the consideration of the regional authorities. As a result, the way the staff executes the mobilization process is in line with established practices: to use the workshops to spread information about the ERDF. Observing the discussion of the JP group provided valuable insight into the governing machinery behind the mobilization. There did not appear to be an ongoing agenda for transformation, as the role-distribution set up by the regional authorities was in line with the Stockholm model, instead of the kind of comprehensively and thoroughly planned interventions that smart specialization champions.

The observations revealed misaligning ideas amongst the regional authorities, wherein some advocated for changing the Stockholm model, while others operated in accordance with it. The workshops may have had no defined part to play in a long-term strategic process and were instead effectively ad-hoc initiatives for calls during the soon to end program period. The mobilization significantly depends on the ERDF as the incentive, which highlights the limitations of it as a tool for regional mobilization, as it may not account for the contexts of the mobilized stakeholders. Furthermore, judging from observing the SFP JP group, the authorities behind the platform do not appear convinced that the practice needs to change. The Stockholm model is a tested model that has gained legitimacy and trust. Despite this, there were some indications towards an interest in going further with the model than its current practice by learning from the stakeholders' view, though this would require changes in how it is operationalized.

5.3 Mobilization

In this section, the workshops are presented. First, a brief comparison provides a general overview of the representation within the assemblies. Subsequently, the two workshops are analyzed in order, with a discussion of emergent tensions observed during the mobilization workshops. This chapter intends to present observations from the workshop activities and how the agents engaged in the discussions.

Figure 2 presents a general overview of sectors represented in the workshops for comparison. Public authorities include both local (municipal governments, their agencies, and associations) and regional level bodies (Region Stockholm and the county administrative board). Academic sector covers representatives from each of the universities. "Locally based innovation arenas" is an umbrella category covering science parks, clusters, foundations, and innovation platforms anchored in local development. While they constitute shared platforms where both public authorities and universities are owners, they are counted as separate due to their representation by directors representing their respective platform and its operations, and not its shareholders'. The broad category is chosen because the study does not cover detailed observations on their part in the interactions. The industry had only one representative from an association of engineers. "Other" includes a branch of the labor movement (representing the civic sector), and two individuals who in the participation list were described as consultants.

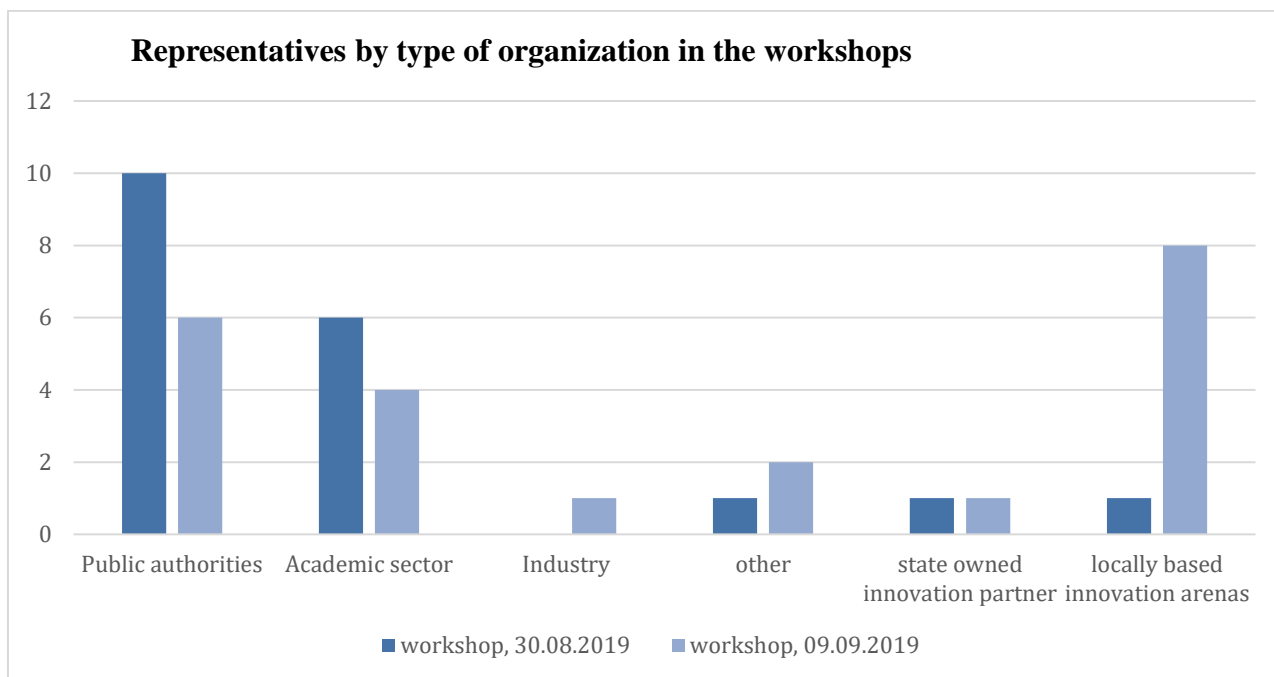**Representatives by type of organization in the workshops**

Figure 2: Representatives by type of organization in the workshops

(See Appendix 7 and Appendix 8 for a more detailed overview and categorization.)

The two workshops differed noticeably in how the assembly was composed. Perhaps three observations are most striking at first glance. In the first workshop, the public authorities, and to some extent, the academic sector, had a considerably larger presence, compared to the second workshop (see Appendix 7 & Appendix 8 for a more detailed breakdown). Secondly, only one participant representing an innovation arena was present in the first workshop, whereas the second had a far larger presence of representatives from organizations in that category. As will be described further in this section, the differences were likely a result of the topics of the workshops, though this does not explain why the public authorities had fewer participants in the second workshop. This change due to representatives from Region Stockholm, who had been four in the first workshop, and only one in the second. Additionally, the representatives differed in their positions within their organizations, as was the case with the universities, where the first workshop had academia mostly represented by researchers. In contrast, the second had representatives from the universities specializing in strategic collaborations. Except for one representative in the second workshop, industry was not represented. The overall limited representation of the industry might be the most striking unbalance, especially considering Stockholm's large industry and its importance for the regional economy and development.

56

Both workshops opened with a presentation held by the staff, comprising representatives from the national development agency and the chief secretary of the SFP. The presentations informed the group about the topic for the respective workshop and the ERDF program. The staff guided the discussions by presenting a set of open questions, that were the same in both workshops.[9] The workshops did however, cover different topics and differed in how the assembly was seated together. As will be explained further in this section, the physical positioning of the participants may have had a great impact on the interactions.

5.3.1 The first workshop

In the first workshop, the participants met to discuss how the regional funds could support efforts towards reducing CO_2 emissions in the economy. Stockholm University (SU) was represented by one manager from their external relations office along with four researchers representing expertise in environmental subjects. KTH was represented by a manager of their own recently initiated platform in industrial transformation, which was due to begin operations. Region Stockholm had, in addition to their JP group representatives, two officials from the department of regional development present, the county administrative board also presented four participants. Other organizations represented were: the collaborative innovation platform, OpenLab; the association for municipalities in the Stockholm region, Storsthlm; the state-owned umbrella organization for Swedish research institutes, RISE; and the municipality of Stockholm.

The assembly had a significant presence of representatives from the academic sector. The researchers from SU were specialists in environmental studies and had relevant expertise for the topic at hand. However, their presence did not guide the discussion; instead, they remained mostly passive through the two sessions. The representative from KTH was noticed as the most proactive person in the discussion, often addressing the staff directly with questions. In the early part of the first session, he explicitly asserted his organization as an innovation plan mediator[10] (Field notes, 30.08.2019). He further pointed out that Stockholm has an industry with big employers, all connected to supply chains of smaller businesses (Field notes, 30.08.2019). He noted that these were not represented in the workshop and warned that smaller businesses in these supply chains

---

[9] The questions asked: What are the regional needs and challenges? What is the potential contribution of a project? What groups should a project target? What actors are important to include, and where do they go from there with the mobilization? (Field notes, 30.08.2019 & 09.09.2019)

[10] In his own words "innovationsplan medlare" (Field notes, 30.08.2019)

could be impacted by policies pursuing zero emissions and would be in need of support through a transition (Field notes, 30.08.2019). He stressed that not supporting potentially weak actors, thus making them bear a heavy burden, would lead to repercussions for the sectors at large (Field notes, 30.08.2019). The point raised by KTH in the workshop underlined the lack of balanced representation in the workshop. Besides KTH as a mediator on their behalf, stakeholders from the local industry (For example, transportation and manufacturing) were not represented, although they may be relevant stakeholders to include in a discussion on how to transform the regional economy to a zero-emission goal.

The workshop focused on projects that would contribute to the policy goal of minimalizing CO_2 emissions. In this context, the assembly had asked the staff as to how a proposal could document its effect on the goal, seeking clarification on what indicators would be used (Field notes, 30.08.2019). The staff responded that they had experienced conflicts in figuring out these practicalities and that the specific details should be worked out at a later stage (Field notes, 30.08.2019). The staff clarified that the workshop and the potential project ideas should focus on how it could lead to structural changes in the region and to new collaborations, maintaining that project ideas was the topic to discuss during the workshop (Field notes, 30.08.2019).

The participants were free to mingle during the break between the two sessions, and this appeared to be the most valuable part of the workshop for many participants, judging from the level of interactions. The activity level was high, and the participants were observed to share contact information and talk in multiple groups throughout the break. Following the break, SU commented that they had identified possible projects, though they waited to see who would take the lead in the process (Field notes, 30.08.2019). The statement indicates that the researchers had benefited from the opportunity to mingle and build connections during the break or at least discovered more potential for projects that way. There were no concrete project proposals for collaborations discussed openly during the sessions, and the guiding questions presented in the introduction by the staff were not answered. The questions appeared to have been rhetorical for the participants to consider and not questions the staff sought to gain knowledge from asking. The level of activity in the workshop was characterized as mostly being between the participants sitting in the mid-table area, where the representatives from the academic sector were seated, whereas the public authorities had largely been sitting at the ends of the table. The discussion was mainly driven by the representative from KTH and the staff. The staff emphasized an open discussion of ideas, but the

assembly appeared to have an unsatisfied interest in discussing practicalities, such as the ERDF framework, how to involve other stakeholders, and the indicators by which their potential project proposals would be evaluated (Field notes, 30.08.2019).

5.3.2 The second workshop

The theme of the second workshop was to strengthen research, technological development, innovation, and SMEs (Field notes, 09.09.2019). The guiding questions remained the same as the prior workshop. The assembly differed considerably in those representing the organizations, with the universities, KI, SU, and KTH, each being represented by leaders specializing in strategic collaboration. Additionally, KTH brought a researcher in the field of digital transformation. The Association of Swedish Engineering Industries (ASEI) was represented by a director, giving the workshop a minimal degree of industry representation. In this workshop, there were considerably more local innovation arenas (Openlab, Kista Science City, Openlab, Flemingsberg Science, and Södertalje Science Park AB), bringing in connections to local challenges.[11] The format for the discussion differed from the first workshop, with the assembly being divided into four groups of around five to six people.

This format appeared effective in facilitating more discussion around the less concrete topic for the workshop. Where the first workshop saw topic-relevant expertise in the form of researchers being directly represented, this workshop had the universities first and foremost being represented by their departments of strategic collaboration. Furthermore, the topic of SME development may resonate more with science parks and incubators in the region, judging from their significantly more numerous representation in the second workshop. The assembly did not directly involve businesses, but by involving more local-level perspectives, especially through said local collaborative platforms like science parks and incubators, the second assembly appeared more balanced than that of the first workshop.

The group discussion that was observed through the two sessions of the workshop consisted of KTH (both representatives), SU, and ASEI.[12] None of these had been present in the first workshop. The researchers in the first workshop remained less active compared to the attending researcher in

---

[11] See Appendix 7 and Appendix 8 for a more detailed overview.
[12] As an observer on behalf of Nordregio, I was a part of the group, but did not take part in the discussion.

the second workshop, who, in contrast, enthusiastically shared his view on difficulties he faced in receiving funding for his work. This had been the purpose behind his participation, as the leader from KTH had invited the researcher to share experiences concerning challenges in his work and not merely propose his projects (Interview, 06.11.2019).

Rather than identifying possible projects that answer the guiding questions of the workshop, the universities were quick to begin discussing concerns about the funding framework and its limitations (Field notes, 09.09.2019). Although the concerns relating to the ERDF as a sufficient fund to mobilize had been raised in the first workshop, it was a core topic of the group discussion in this setting. Stockholm University and KTH were skeptical of the applicability of the ERDF as a fund to mobilize the projects they potentially could explore (Field notes, 09.09.2019). They found problems, in particular, with the conditionality of co-financing half of the project budget. This was a topic to which a large portion of their time during the workshop would be devoted. Another problem the group discussed in depth was how to build the necessary connections between the universities, their facilities, and the local industry. Attention to the question of what the industry needs was maintained by the representative from ASEI, who also noted that the industry could become forgotten when the regional development agenda becomes research focused (Field notes, 09.09.2019). The universities reached a shared understanding where they recognized that they did not have sufficient structures for information sharing among themselves or with industry (Field notes, 09.09.2019). As a result, they discussed how they should carry out the administrative task of owning an ERDF project in collaboration and addressed the challenge of better connecting their scattered competencies and resources, addressing their own context (Field notes, 09.09.2019).

5.3.3 Tensions

The ERDF as an overly narrow tool for governance was explained from the perspective of the leader from KTH, pointing out that it does not attract her organization. In the workshops, their actions seemed to reflect how they address this issue, namely by establishing platforms. In the first workshop, KTH was represented by a manager who was at the time establishing a new platform to facilitate interaction between the university's expertise and companies. In the second workshop, the universities explored how to develop a platform together in order to connect with the industry and to negotiate with the public authorities for their shared interests (Field notes, 09.09.2019). In other words, the mobilization process might be too demanding for the universities due to the structural

context, and identifying projects in an ad-hoc fashion presented too much of a challenge at the point when the workshops took place.

There was an academic-centered view guiding the discussion in the second workshop, perhaps best demonstrated by two specific observations. Already in the first session, the group agreed to discuss collaboration on funding programs in general and not focus on ERDF. The observation came as explicit statements, where the participants agreed that the funds were not appropriate for their situation (Field notes, 09.09.2019). The primary reason for this was that applying for the funds would demand administrative capacities that would be too costly for the universities compared to what they may gain (Field notes, 09.09.2019). Instead, they would try to position themselves better to explore alternative ways for fund procurement together. In the second workshop, at the conclusion, the universities agreed not to involve the other participants in the assembly (Field notes, 09.09.2019), making the agenda solely a mission for the academic sector.

5.3.4 Stimulating action

The second workshop discussion started with the representatives from SU and KTH discussing the context for mobilization and pointing out a lack of structures for information sharing in the region as the main problem they had to address before identifying more concrete projects. Different factors may have directed the discussion to play out the way it did. The composition of the group, largely consisting of representatives from universities, may have directed the discussion to be primarily a reflection of challenges as the academic sector perceives their reality. The ERDF may have been insufficient to make the universities act regionally, making the incentive-based model inefficient. What was observed during the second workshop was that the universities first and foremost wanted to address challenges that focused on structural challenges. However, their solution was not to involve actors from other sectors. Instead, the challenge and solution, which they discussed, was a matter for the academic sector. Furthermore, due to the more or less instant consent on discussing structural challenges, it seems likely that they held this view before attending the workshop. As such, they used the event to meet and address a challenge they perceived before the workshop took place, meaning it was likely not a new discovery.

If we are to perceive their solution as an effect of the entrepreneurial discovery process, albeit unplanned, it does not fit in well with either the description by Radosevic (2017), where the focus is on discovering new activities, or that of Benner (2019), where the discovery process is a systematic

effort to plan for actions through experimentation. Instead, there seems to be an aspect of unplanned entrepreneurial discovery stimulated by the ERDF, but not directly incentivized by it.

Had the composition of the group been more balanced and inclusive of representatives from other types of organizations, for example, the science parks, perhaps the discussion would have revolved around more specific business-entrepreneurial projects or challenges that account for more local agendas for growth.[13] However, the universities are not a field-specific organization, and thus covers a wide array of thematic areas in which they can offer expertise. Therefore, their involvement in the workshops is also a question of what the academic institutions can provide regional projects and if they connect the right branch of their organization in the mobilization process. It could be that the second workshop was simply too broad in its theme for the organization to know how they should fit in with a mobilization focused on the place-based challenges of regional development, especially in the absence of a strategy outlining specific priorities.

> KTH Södertälje is a perfect campus for working on a more regional basis. And KTH Kista is also such a campus .. our campus is Valhallavägen, and KTH is big, it has bigger projects, but it should be possible to work more locally (Interview, 06.11.2019c)

An interesting observation in comparison to the first workshop was that, whereas the representative in the first workshop asserted KTH as an "innovation mediator," the representatives from both KTH and SU discussed insufficiencies in their current structures to be able to connect their competence and resources when interacting with industry. In contrast to the first workshop, where the staff was active in guiding the discussion, they had less influence over the divided group format of the second workshop. Though the stated purpose in both workshops was to discuss ideas and not practicalities, when divided into smaller groups, as in the second workshop, the staff was not involved to remind the participants of their intentions for the workshop. As a result, the group this study observed in the second workshop, mainly consisting of the universities, were free to discuss concerns about the practicalities as they saw fit. This freedom greatly affected the discussion, reflecting their perspective on the "real" issues, in contrast to what was observed to happen in the first workshop. The discussions in the second workshop also had a much higher level of activity when compared to the first workshop. This was not only for the observed group, but the assembly at large. Whereas

---

[13] Though the universities are involved with these platforms outside of the workshops, the kind of knowledge the representatives could have brought to the discussion would likely impact the discussion in some way, as their operations concerns local businesses.

the first workshop's discussion often had occasional breaks of silence, the discussions during the second workshop was engaging for the assembly at large, to the point that the staff had problems in being heard when they announced it was time for the break between the two sessions of the workshops. The vastly different level of engagement could have been a result of the group format being more accessible for each of the individual participants to take an active part in the discussion, as a result of the groups being smaller, making it easier to be heard, and without people at the far ends of a table being physically positioned far away from the center.

5.4 Mission

This section presents the last dimension of the analytical model. The purpose of this section is to analyze the discovered outcomes of the mobilization. A successful mobilization requires the actors' commitment to a continuation of the process, meaning they are interested in continuing and open to engaging in experimentation with other stakeholders as partners. Therefore, an important question to ask is how the stakeholders may perceive the prospects of their future engagement. The universities were, as observed, not able to mobilize, but that in itself became the catalyst for a mission they created for themselves. On the side of the public authorities, there is the issue of what the future looks like for their initiative to continue the workshops. The workshops would ideally be the starting point from which more engagement follows, and shared views could emerge over time. A crucial factor for the practice of these workshops to become institutionalized is, therefore, also that the public authorities continue hosting the arena for direct interactions.

5.4.1 Potential vision

The universities were more concerned with the practical challenges of how to work with the ERDF framework than with developing ideas for potential projects. Both the universities and the public development authorities were concerned about the perceived lack of institutional integration in the region. Where the public authorities would like to achieve strategic cohesion, the universities reflected a view considering the practicalities of involving different actors. The underlying rationale for the mobilization was to discover projects to collaborate on, as the public authorities valued in the workshops. In practice, this reflects the Stockholm model. The universities, on the other hand, were also concerned about figuring out what is and is not possible in the current context and, through their actions, discovering ways to create new potential even if that meant breaking with the intention behind the workshop activities.

The aversion toward addressing practicalities may have prevented the possibility of aligning views on the need for institutional integration itself. As such, there was not an exploration of public-academic interventions to address the fragmentation, despite the possible potential that might have been left undiscovered. For example, as the regional government left the task of leading the workshops to Tillväxtverket and the SFP secretariat, the potential for the officials from region Stockholm to learn about the perspectives of other stakeholders during the workshops was limited. With that said, the regional government did not appear to have had this intention, judging from their reduced number of participants in the second workshop. However, the regional government had collected feedback following the workshops (Interview, 30.10.2019). However, as this feedback would be based on what the participants decide to share, it might not provide them with an awareness of the tensions that could be observed by close observation. The discovered underlying tensions, rooted in the stakeholders' perceived obstacles, thus appear to have been underestimated. The obstacles for mobilization could have been addressed if the workshops were focused on discussing the ERDF framework. However, as practicalities were not discussed, possible tensions and conflicts related to the context of the mobilization itself were not addressed.

One critical point of tension that emerged was that the universities did not appear interested in the current framework for mobilization. Their disinterest could be observed through them discussing practical matters in all the observed sessions, addressing frameworks, and not project ideas. The concern appears to have been a critical issue from the point of view of the universities, as it was not only mentioned in the second workshop, but retrospectively, the observations gave context to issues from the first workshop. In the first workshop, the issue of challenges relating to the framework was not thoroughly discussed, though it did emerge in more subtle ways, with the assembly asking for clarification on how a project proposal could demonstrate a connection to regional policy goals (Field notes, 30.08.2019). The tension surrounding practicalities being sorted out prior to expecting a commitment to an entrepreneurial discovery process also arose during the discussion with the JP group. A representative from Stockholm University asserted that the mobilization needs a "hard facts" based explanation with clear criteria on what grounds a project is granted funding, as the stakeholders might not trust the authorities (Field notes, 12.09.2019). Hence, there appear to be critical tensions that were left unaddressed throughout the process, and the objective of smart specialization would perhaps have been better served by activities focusing on reconciling conflicts.

5.4.2 Mission entailing change

It was therefore clear from observing the universities that they perceived practicalities as a matter that required more discussion before they could be expected to commit to the mobilization. The leader from KTH recounted that there were concerns regarding the prospects that the co-financing share would increase in the near future. These concerns were coupled with doubts that the authorities would address the challenges the universities face in taking part in the mobilization:

> [On the prospect of the ERDF becoming more accommodating to the universities] They always say so, they are always speaking about it. Always. That it will change, and become easier, but we never get to know exactly when that is, and we wonder, at what point in time ... That is how it is all the time, 'we will simplify, we listen to what you tell us', and so on and I just heard, I have not read it myself yet but that it could become 60% co-financing for example. It does, of course, mean that universities can't. [we] find it difficult to be involved. (Interview, 06.11.2019d)

It appears that the universities found the right course of action was to pursue collective advocacy. This was observed through their discussion in the second workshop, where their reasoning and argumentation explored this topic rather than concrete project proposals for the ERDF. In this sense, it could be interpreted that they decided to take action that was contrary to the purpose of the workshops. On the other hand, they sought to overcome obstacles they perceived as inhibiting their ability to mobilize. The leader from KTH explained when later interviewed that the challenges to apply for the regional funds in the current context were too great (Interview, 06.11.2019). However, a result following their discussion during the workshop, KTH and SU (KI was also involved following the workshop) had begun meeting regularly to cooperate in the structural funds programs, possibly bringing the regional funds on the future agenda of the universities in Stockholm (Interview, 06.11.2019). Following up on the progress made following the second workshop, the leader from KTH confirmed that the initiative had resulted in the universities working together on procuring structural funds (Interview, 06.11.2019).

> We are meeting again next week, and Stockholm University has been [very proactive] regarding information pertaining to Tillväxtverket in relation to the ERDF call for grants. (Interview, 06.11.2019e)

The kind of mission the universities embarked on was a pursuit of shared advocacy for the academic institutions. Their new collaboration involved a shared engagement, vis-à-vis the development authorities between the offices for strategic collaborations (Interview, 06.11.2019). The access the universities had to the ERDF might have been constrained due to the administrative and financial burden of owning a regional development project. As a result, they developed a mission to address this structural problem. Although the collaboration they initiated then was not directly tied to local challenges in Stockholm, it was rooted in the regional context. It addressed their agency in the region vis-à-vis the public authorities, possibly changing how they operate within the framework of the Stockholm Model.

5.4.3 Outcome

The leader from KTH explained that learning to cooperate requires time and conscious effort to connect the right people at the right levels in their organizations (Interview, 06.11.2019). Furthermore, those who represent their organization in interactive activities such as the workshops will have to gain the attention and support for the proposals from the managers in their organizations (Interview, 06.11.2019). Securing internal support is critical, as the potential results for proposed projects have the prerequisite that the organization is willing to invest resources into the project and sustain its commitment over time. The leader from KTH recognized that this commitment does not exist in practice with the structural funds, a consequence of the funding simply not attracting the attention of her organization. Therefore, the situation is that the ERDF proposals that do result in enacted projects become "satellites" to her organization's main activities (Interview, 06.11.2019). As the mobilization has relied on the ERDF as the incentive for actors to address policy goals with project proposals, rather than using the workshops as an arena for involving the stakeholders in a process of addressing the framework for governance, the mobilization does not attract involvement for the sake of influencing regional policy making. Consequently, the universities could not find sufficient rationale in increasing their commitment to regional mobilization.

When interviewed, the development official from Region Stockholm recounted that she had hoped more progress would have been made toward shared views during the workshops and that they would have discovered more issues that could further be developed into strategic priorities for the region (Interview, 30.10.2019). The plan going forward was to continue the initiative for workshops in the following year. However, the initiative was still struggling to gain political support in Region Stockholm.

> I have talked to a lot of people who were present, many thought it was good, they thought the workshops were good, they thought it was a good opportunity to meet to speak about these matters. … However, I think perhaps we did not go as far as I had hoped, but the workshops were still an attempt to kick start a process, but if it was down to me- or if I had- if we over at Region Stockholm continued the process, then we could have considered it to be like a starting point. … I think it would have had a more meaningful impact and a more natural development if they had continued till the end of the year. (Interview, 30.10.2019d)

The mobilization workshop had received positive responses from the participants, and the development official from Region Stockholm had ambitions to see the process continue (Interview, 30.10.2019). However, she noted that the future depends on the levels above her in Region Stockholm, and is subject to political goodwill (Interview, 30.10.2019). In other words, there has to be a will to continue the push to alter the established practices of the Stockholm Model. The leader from KTH also recounted the workshops as a positive experience, pointing out the benefit of being in direct contact with the staff from Tillväxtverket as a particular strength of the intervention (Interview, 06.11.2019). Based on this, there had been positive experiences from the workshops, despite the observed constrictions on discussing the funding framework. However, the initiative for a continuation did not gain momentum internally in Region Stockholm. In early 2020, the initiative to host more workshops and to follow up on the HIGHER action plan to develop long-term platforms had not managed to gain political support and lacked the resources to continue (J. Moodie, Senior Research Fellow at Nordregio, Personal Communication, 28.04.2020).

> I have done what I could to drive it forward, but the problem is that it has to be directed by the management in Region Stockholm ... it must therefore go through our politicians ... and then communication becomes a problem, that is in such a large and hierarchical organization, no simple task (Interview, 30.10.2019e)

5.5 Summary

The following four pages will bring back the questions of the analytical model presented in chapter 2. The questions are discussed in sequence with a brief summary of the discoveries made in this study. Upon having revisited the institutional, governance, mobilization and mission dimensions, the chapter returns to the underlying question of this study.

How did established institutional frameworks govern multi-actor mobilization in the region, and how did this relate to the inclusive and priority-based principle promoted by smart specialization?

Throughout this study, the established practices of the Stockholm model had set the scene for actions. Region Stockholm was in a situation where the region experienced problems governing a territory where competence and resources being dispersed across various localities was challenging to connect at the regional level. At face value, this is due to political non-intervention, as efforts to address it did not gain political support. On the other hand, what was observed, indicates a misalignment between the established practice for governance and the new concepts introduced by smart specialization. The SFP reflects the practice espoused by the Stockholm model, a practice that appears to be deeply institutionalized in the region, guiding interactions and defining roles. Region Stockholm sought to support regional mobilization by inviting key regional stakeholders to workshops where they could share knowledge and develop strategic priorities together. It does, however, seem like the logic behind the Stockholm model guided these activities, resulting in the regional approach to governance for the mobilization activities being an extension of the established practice rather than an intervention to change it.

How did the regional authorities tasked with regional development respond to the call for mobilizing actors in the region? How did they apply tools to organize the mobilization?

The Stockholm model provided a template from which the regional authorities interpreted the task to mobilize regional actors. The tools for the mobilization, primarily being the workshops and the ERDF, appear to have been planned according to the perceptions that developed according to place-based institutions, rather than the smart specialization concept. On the other hand, smart specialization espouses principles that are supposed to be up to the regional authorities to interpret and implement in order for it to be a place-based policy. Though the smart specialization concept espouses certain concepts that was not reflected in the Stockholm model, the public authorities were

not convinced that the practice had to change. However, there was some disagreement existing within the JP group on that issue. The distribution of roles, where the regional government took a passive stance, left the workshops to follow the existing practices. Where the focus was on the ERDF as an incentive and accordingly, Tillväxtverket providing the staff in the workshops. While JP group officials had participated in the workshops, there is no clear evidence that they engaged in the workshops to reflect on the structures and their role vis-à-vis the stakeholders. It might have been counter to the intention of collective strategy making for the regional government to engage in creating project proposals, rather than being listeners to the concerns surrounding the context for mobilization. The ERDF is in itself limited, which is a problem emphasized by the challenge the regional authorities experience in achieving strategic cohesion and connecting funding programs. Furthermore, there does not appear to have been a plan to involve businesses. The outcome being that the mobilization is not executed in a framework suited to enable an inclusive mobilization in the region.

How did the interventions play out? What happened? Did the actors make discoveries?

The workshops were directed to facilitate concrete ideas in a framework that did not appear ready for the task. Underlying tensions that should have been reconciled were not being addressed. What issues were being addressed during the discussion greatly depended not just on who took a proactive role, but also the format of the workshops. During the first workshop, the number of representatives from universities did not directly translate into dominance over the discussion or framing of issues. Possibly due to the individual participant's role within their organization, though, it seems freedom to address concerns drastically changed what topics were discussed. This was observed in the second workshop, where the group observed mainly consisted of leaders from the academic sector, and hence was rather centered on issues concerning challenges from the perspective of universities in the region. In this case, the staff did not have the same directing role over the discussions, and the university representatives were free to frame the discussion as they saw fit. Subsequently, tensions between their operations and the framework for the ERDF were freely discussed at length. The result was that the universities developed a mission that addressed their concerns rather than public policies. Both workshops had minimal or no representation from industry. In the second workshop, the innovation arenas were present, but not in the group that was observed. They could have rooted the discussion in ongoing local challenges, but the composition of the groups did not facilitate this. The workshops did not represent an inclusive assembly of

regional stakeholders, as was even pointed out during the first workshop. Coupled with the workshop activities not continuing, this likely gave little room for new discoveries to be made between actors of different disciplines. Nevertheless, the universities did appear to develop an agenda of their own that may lead to institutional change.

What was the outcome of the mobilization? What does agentic behavior by participants mean in relation to the institutional framework?

The universities were key stakeholders in the mobilization activities, but the ERDF framework did not seem to inspire engagement on their part. The tensions were inhibiting to the extent that the participants were not interested in discussing regional needs outside of their sector. However, the shared self-advocacy they engaged in as a reaction to not being able to propose viable project proposals could become an enabling factor for future mobilization. As recounted in the interview, this agenda already resulted in actions soon after the workshops. As such, the workshops were not without success stories. On the side of Region Stockholm, it seems the workshops did not inspire a continuation of the efforts despite positive responses on the initiative from stakeholders. Considering the lack of conviction within the JP group that the Stockholm model should be changed, and the institutionalized practice of non-intervention in the regional government, it was perhaps not a surprising outcome. Instead, it follows the values of the Stockholm model, with limited intervention by the government and distance between the administrative and political bodies.

How do tensions between actors and institutions shape the trajectory of inclusive governance processes?

The purpose of this study was to observe the introduction of smart specialization against the region's institutional backdrop. Focusing on the activities conducted to mobilize actors for the ERDF, the study explored the behavior of involved actors and their response to tensions. The overarching question asked how tensions between actors and institutions shape the trajectory of inclusive governance processes. Using Stockholm as a case, the study found that institutions existing in a place can still conflict with interregional cohesion policy concepts that, perhaps ironically, when seen in hindsight, supposedly asserted superiority over other policies in accounting for local institutions in the first place. An important factor was that the initiative to implement smart

specialization relied on the existing institutionalized practice and that there was no clear agenda to change this along the way, certainly not at the point in time this study was conducted. However, That is not to say the initiative to introduce smart specialization was without structural effects in Stockholm. Tensions between actors were key to what was observed, and observing it first hand was how the study could discover that their agency came in the form of deciding not to go along with the process, yet engaging in a mission of their own in response to the mobilization. The universities did pursue their own interests, but as a result of not being able to mobilize, they wanted to reposition themselves structurally, possibly making the ERDF a more viable source of funding for their projects and thus developing their connections in the region. If they were to be successful in this venture, the observed agentic behavior has indeed shaped the future trajectory of inclusive governance processes in the region.

6.0 CONCLUSION

The results of this study were not groundbreaking for the literature on smart specialization or place-based theory. Instead, what was observed corroborates much of the existing theory by documenting a case of regional development in action. Notably, as explained by Kroll (2015; 2017), more resourceful regions with well-functioning governance structures may not interpret the smart-specialization agenda as one of transforming their institutional setup. Hence, a major change was rather unlikely. On the other hand, such a change would probably not require a study based on observations, to be discovered in the first place.

The contribution of this study lies in that it explores institutions and agency up close. A strength of this study is that it is sensitive to the incremental changes, as it is based on firsthand observations being made within the group discussions. The place-based perspective has potential to teach us about how regional actors operationalize policy concepts that come from higher levels of government. Where, in some cases, new concepts might be a game-changer, that is not always the case, as could be seen from the lack of political interest throughout the project. Instead, the 'new' institutional concept becomes, at best, an addition to the already existing institutional framework. As such, the way it plays out is greatly defined by the existing institutional framework it is added to. In this case, to the extent that it is hard to recognize the mobilization as connected to smart specialization without knowing the history of the initiative.

A feature of this particular case, was that Stockholm has developed its way of conducting governance in a way that has become institutionalized and even recognized as the 'correct way to govern' by the notion that there is an acknowledged 'Stockholm model' that provides a regionally legitimate practice. Hence, 'picking up' the idea of the Stockholm model might have been made easier than if the same study were to be conducted somewhere else. However, grasping how important this institution is for how governance is operationalized was something that only appeared through analyzing the data thoroughly for months after the activities took place. As previously stated, the perception held not just by involved individuals representing the regional government, but also the research team, was that the Stockholm model was a tool that could be rationally altered to suit the task of smart specialization. While the Stockholm model had been considered a tool for governance in the stages leading up to the events being observed, it made more sense to perceive it as an institution shaping the process of governance itself once the data

could be analyzed outside of the field. On the other hand, the process is not linear, and unpredictable feedback towards the framework may occur by the response of actors. Hence, agency of non-governmental stakeholders very much has a role to play, and may as well be what eventually changes the deeply institutionalized model for governance. In other words, the institutional framework is a defining factor that was used as the start of a chain of events, yet, the institution is itself affected by the actions of the involved agents. Most certainly by agents representing powerful stakeholders' prerogative to simply decline to participate, but also to redefine how they engage and possibly altering the rules of the game. However, in this case the study unfortunately came short of observing this in action due to the change in circumstances surrounding the study.

The observations present evidence that the Stockholm model in some iteration, was the template for which the regional government and the SFP structured the workshop. There was no clear agenda for a thorough structural change that also involved the development authorities. Instead the task of changing the system had been understood by the development authorities as a requirement towards the regional actors for receiving the ERDF. Yet, the desired topic for discussions had been on possible project proposals. Based on the evidence in this study, there is an interesting mismatch to be observed between the Stockholm model and the smart specialization concept. Smart specialization has been advocated for based on its claimed superiority in being place-based, yet, could not align with the institutionalized Stockholm model, which very much is a practice based on what has legitimacy in the region. One may, in that sense, ask if a European level policy that breaks with institutionalized governance models endogenously developed and legitimized within its respective place can truly claim to be place-based. Instead, perhaps funding structures like the ERDF is serving Europeans better by directly addressing weaknesses with the existing frameworks within a place, rather than aiming to reform it.

It may very well be that regional frameworks for governance would yield different results depending on the funding structure. There is also a fundamental question to be asked about the added value for regions who already perform well, to implement smart specialization beyond simply doing the deed to meet requirements from the EU, considering that it is indeed a project that requires a great deal of commitment and resources depending on the complexity of the region in question.

The study was written during a time of great uncertainties for the European economy. At the same time, the European Commission has been planning the next program period for the structural funds. It may be that lessons learned from the experiment of smart specialization in the program period 2014-2020 will be of great value, not only to the regional governments but also to the policymakers positioned in higher levels in Europe. In this case, the involvement of regional actors was based on who was recognized as key stakeholders and potential project owners. Little attention was given to the SMEs directly, which may have been a weakness of the ERDF during this program period. Given the current uncertainties in the economy and the meaning of established institutions for governance in developed regions like Stockholm, there is an urgent need to learn from the recent smart specialization experiment. This study will conclude with the suggestion that further development in literature on regional development, applying a place-based perspective will be vital to help funding structures work with the institutions of places in the next program period.

6.1 Future research

This thesis advocates for the valuable insights field research may contribute to the literature on regional development. While the reality for scholars studying regional development might not offer such opportunities in excess, the considerable value in extracting knowledge from the field first hand should be utilized when possible. As such, theory on regional development may be further enriched by researchers seeking out more opportunities to perform field research. This creation of new knowledge could also be of value for the actors involved, such as governments and institutions producing policy concepts to be implemented. Though the research team in this study monitored on behalf of the HIGHER project, it is possible that closer cooperation between the research team and the actors involved could have provided added value to the process. As the opportunities to observe activities during this project became restricted to just a few activities, it is reasonable to assume this study only scratched the surface of an environment that could have provided much more valuable knowledge. It is also possible that if the research team was better suited to, and the regional authorities were interested, they could have committed to developing knowledge together. There could in that case have been a symbiotic relationship of sorts that could have promoted desirable change for the regional authorities, and long term access to the field for the researchers. As such, going further than mere observations and towards methods along the lines of action research. Such methods, although challenging and perhaps unfamiliar to many researchers, could provide the literature with valuable contributions on regional development. This possibility to observe agency and institutions is particularly relevant for place-based theory.

The insight gained from observing the interactions firsthand has provided discoveries that would scarcely be picked up through document analysis or interviews, as the institutional tensions would be expressed differently depending on the individual's point of view. Instead, being able to research the meaning of institutions and agency through observation uncovers narratives of regional development that do not manifest itself in published results or data gathered based on quantifiable indicators. While being very complex cases, that are challenging to identify and analyze, they are by no means less valuable to our understanding of regional development.

Future research should attempt to extract as much knowledge as possible from the experiences with smart specialization. In this case, the place-based 'superiority' was negated by the presence of already legitimate governance practices. The question may then be asked if there is a way to better account for institutions in the future. Accounting for the institutional frameworks of a place may provide a more exciting policy concept for the regional governments to adopt. In this sense, the new concepts that are proposed should attempt to better align with institutional contexts so that there would be less tension between the established practices and the frameworks introduced by higher levels of government, such as the national, or EU level. Aligning does not mean amplifying the existing features of the model in practice, but rather to assess and mitigate its shortcomings and possibly to add more potential for growth by compensation for its weaknesses.

It may be easier to observe change as a response to events like a crisis, where institutional setups are reconsidered out of urgent necessity. Judging from the global crisis during which the work on this study concludes, there should be no shortcomings in such cases to analyze in the immediate future. On the other hand, I believe there is still much to learn about the real meaning of, and the interplay between, place-based institutions and agency in times of relatively stable conditions.

RESOURCES

Adler, P.A. & Adler, P. (1994). Observation techniques. In Denzin N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (p. 377-392). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Agnew, J. (2011). Space and Place. In Agnew, J. & Livingstone, D. (eds) The SAGE handbook of Geographical Knowledge, (print p. 316-330). London: SAGE Publications ltd.,doi: 10.4135/9781446201091.n24

Anokhin, S. & Schulze, W.S. (2009) Entrepreneurship, innovation, and corruption, *Journal of Business Venturing*, 24(5), (p. 465-476), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2008.06.001

Atkinson, P.A. & Coffey, A. (1997). Analysing documentary realities. In D. Silverman (ed), *Qualitative research: Theory, method and practice,* (p. 45-62). London: Sage.

Barca, F. (2009) An agenda for a reformed cohesion policy: a place-based approach to meeting European Union challenges and expectations, Independent Report prepared at the request of Danuta Hübner, Commissioner for Regional Policy, Brussels: European Commission

Benner, M. (2019). Smart specialization and institutional context: the role of institutional discovery, change and leapfrogging, *European Planning Studies*, 27(9), (p. 1791-1810), doi: 10.1080/09654313.2019.1643826

Blažek, J. & Morgan, K. (2019) The institutional worlds of entrepeneurial discovery. In Mariussen, Å., Virkkala, S., Finne, H. & Aasen, T. (eds.) (2019). *The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process and Regional Development* (p. 54-73). London: Routledge, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351273763

European Commission (2010). Europe 2020 *A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.* Brussels. Retrieved 31.05.2020 from: https://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/pdf/COMPLET%20EN%20BARROSO%20%20%20007%20-%20Europe%202020%20-%20EN%20version.pdf

European Commission (2019) *Regional innovation scoreboard 2019*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. doi: 10.2873/89165 retrieved from: https://op.europa.eu/s/n7lH

Flick, U. (2018) Triangulation in Data Collection. In Flick, U. (ed) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection.* (p. 527-544). ISBN: 9781526416070

Foray, D., David, P.A., & Hall, B.H. (2011). Smart specialisation From academic idea to political instrument, the surprising career of a concept and the difficulties involved in its implementation. *No. EPFL-WORKING-170252*. EPFL

Foray, D., Goddard, J., Beldarrain, X.G., Landabaso, M., McCann, P., Morgan, K., Nauwelaers, C. & Ortega-Argilés, R. (2012). *Guide to Reseach and Innovation Strategies for Smart Specialisation (RIS 3)*. Luxembourg: Publications office of the European Union. doi:10.2776/65746. ISBN: 978-92-79-25094-1

Gibbs, G.R. (2007) *Analyzing Qualitative Data.* London: Sage Publications. ISBN: 9781849208574

Gold, R.L. (1958). Roles in sociological field observations. *Social Forces*, 36(3), (p. 217-223). https://doi.org/10.2307/2573808

Grillitsch, M. (2016). Institutions, smart specialisation dynamics and policy. *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy*, 34(1), (p. 22-37). https://doi.org/10.1177/0263774X15614694

Jacobsen, D-I (2005). *Hvordan gjennomføre undersøkelser?: Innføring I samfunnsvitenskapelig metode* (2nd ed.) Kristiansand: Høyskoleforlaget

Jordan, A., Wurzel, R.K.W. & Zito, A. (2005) The Rise of 'New' Policy Instruments in Comparative Perspective: Has Governance Eclipsed Government?. *Political Stucies,* 53(3), (p. 477-496). https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9248.2005.00540.x

Karlsen, J. & Larrea, M. (2012) Emergence of Leadership in the Basque Country. In Sotarauta, M., Horlings, I., & Liddle, J. (Eds.). *Leadership and change in sustainable regional development*. (p. 212-233). Retrieved (03.03.2020) from https://ebookcentral.proquest.com

Kawulich, B. (2005) Participant Observation as a Data Collection Method. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research,* 6(2), (p. n/a) doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.17169/fqs-6.2.466

Kroll, H. (2015) Efforts to Implement Smart Specialization in Practice—Leading Unlike Horses to the Water, *European Planning Studies,* 23(10), (p. 2079-2098), doi: 10.1080/09654313.2014.1003036

Kroll, H. (2017). Smart Specialization Policy in an Economically Well-Developed, Multilevel Governance System. Radosevic, S., Curaj, A., Gheorghiu, R., Andreescu, L. & Wade, I. (eds.) *Advances in the Theory and Practice of Smart Specialization*. Academic Press, (p. 99-123), ISBN 9780128041376, https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-804137-6.00005-X.

Kroll, H., Muller, E., Schnabl, E. & Zenker, A. (2014). From Smart Concept to Challenging Practice – How European Regions Deal with the Commission's Request for Novel Innovation Strategies. *Working Papers Firms and Region* No. R2/2014. Fraunhofer Institute for Systems and Innovation Research ISI: Karlsruhe

Laasonen, V. & Kolehmainen, J. (2017) Capabilities in knowledgebased regional development – towards a dynamic framework, European Planning Studies, 25(10), (p. 1673-1692), doi: 10.1080/09654313.2017.1337727

Lane, J-E. (2006) *Public Administration and Public management: The Principal-agent perspective*. London: Routledge ISBN: 9781134199969

Lyttkens C.H. (2015) Surprising Institutions. In Bitros G., Kyriazis N. (eds.) *Essays in Contemporary Economics*. (p. 103-115) Springer: Cham. ISBN 978-3-319-10043-2

Länsstyrelsen Stockholm (2018), Innovationskraft Sthlm 3 Juli, Newsletter, Retrieved 05.02.2020 from http://www.anpdm.com/newsletterweb/454758427640415A4A78414259/41405C4A764345594A794347504271

Länsstyrelsen Stockholm (2015) Kartläggning av styrkeområden i Stockholmsregionen. Rapport 2015:4. ISBN: 978-91-7281-628-2

Martínez-López, D. & Palazuelos-Martínez, M. (2015). Breaking with the Past in Smart Specialisation: A New Model of Selection of Business Stakeholders Within the Entrepreneurial Process of Discovery. *Journal of the Knowledge Economy.* 10(4), (p. 1643 -1656) (issued 2019). https://doi.org/10.1007/s13132-015-0271-6

McCann, Philip and Andrés Rodríguez-Pose (2011), "Why and When Development Policy Should Be Place Based", in *OECD Regional Outlook 2011: Building Resilient Regions for Stronger Economies (*p. 203-213), Paris: OECD Publishing,

Mignerat, M. & Rivard, S. (2012) The institutionalization of information system project management practices, *Information and Organization*, 22(2), (p. 125-153), https://doi.org/10.1016/j.infoandorg.2012.01.003

Moodie, J. Wøien, M. & Lindqvist, M. (2019) *Action Plan for the Stockholm Region: Building Effective S3 Governance Structures*. Action Plan prepared for the Interreg Europe HIGHER Programme. Stockholm: Nordregio & Region Stockholm. Retrieved 02.02.2020 from: https://www.interregeurope.eu/higher/library/#folder=1309

Morgan, K. (2017). Nurturing novelty: Regional innovation policy in the age of smart specialisation. *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, *35*(4), (p. 569–583). https://doi.org/10.1177/0263774X16645106

Navarro, M., Aranguren, M.J. & Magro, E. (2011). Smart Specialisation Strategies: The Case of the Basque Country. *Orkestra Working Papers Series in Territorial Competitiveness.* 2011R07, Orkestra – Basque Institute of Competitiveness.

North, D.C. (1990). *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance.* Cambridge University Press. ISBN: 9780521394161

OECD (2009a), How Regions Grow: Trends and Analysis, OECD Publishing, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264039469-en.

OECD (2009b), Regions Matter: Economic Recovery, Innovation and Sustainable Growth, OECD Publishing, http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264076525-en.

Pacheco, D.F., York, J.G., Dean, T.J. & Sarasvathy, D.S. (2019) The Coevolution of Institutional Entrepeneurship: A Tale of Two Theories. *Journal of Management*, 36(4), (p. 974-1010) doi: 10.1177/0149206309360280

Paulsson, D. (2019). *Report on the implementation of smart specialisation in Sweden*. Independent expert report. Retrieved 03.01.2020 from https://tillvaxtverket.se/amnesomraden/regional-kapacitet/smart-specialisering/vad-ar-smart-specialisering.html

Radosevic, S. (2017). Assessing EU Smart Specialization Policy in a Comparative Perspective. in Radosevic, S., Curaj, A., Gheorghiu, R., Andreescu, L. & Wade, I. (eds.) *Advances in the Theory and Practice of Smart Specialization*. Academic Press, (p. 1-36), ISBN 9780128041376, https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-804137-6.00001-2.

Rodríguez-Pose, A. (2013). Do institutions matter for regional development? *Regional Studies*, 47(7), (p. 1034–1047). doi:10.1080/ 00343404.2012.748978

Rodríguez-Pose, A., Cataldo, M. & Rainoldi, A. (2014). The Role of Government Institutions for Smart Specialisation and Regional Development. *S3 Policy Brief Series* No. 04/2014. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. doi:10.2791/71842

Scott, W.R. (2008), Institutions and Organizations: Ideas and Interests, 3rd ed. Sage Publications, Los Angeles, CA. ISBN: 978-1-4129-5090-9

SFS 2007:459 Om Strukturfondspartnerskap. Stockholm: Näringsdepartementet

SFS 2017:583. Förordning om regionalt tillväxtarbete. Stockholm: Näringsdepartementet.

Sotarauta, M. (2015). *Leadership and the City : Power, Strategy and Networks in the Making of Knowledge Cities,* Taylor & Francis Group. retrieved 06.02.2020 from ProQuest Ebook Central

Sotarauta, M. (2018) Smart specialization and place leadership: dreaming about shared visions, falling into policy traps?, *Regional Studies, Regional Science*, 5(1), (p. 190-203), doi: 10.1080/21681376.2018.1480902

Sotarauta, M. (2020) Place-based Policy, Place Sensitivity and Place Leadership. *Sente Working Papers*, 46/2020. doi: 10.13140/RG.2.2.31740.28803

Svenska ESF Rådet. (2020). Strukturfondspartnerskap. Retrieved 20.03.2020 from https://www.esf.se/Vara-fonder/Socialfonden1/Overgripande-information-om-socialfondsprogrammet/Strukturfondspartnerskap/

SWECO (2019) Utvärdering av Stockholmsmodellen. Slutrapport Augusti 2019. Retrieved 20.01.2020 from https://www.gronbostadstockholm.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/11/Utvärdering-Stockholmsmodellen_30aug.pdf

Tillväxtverket (2016) *Develop Sweden! The EU structural and Investment Funds in Sweden* 2014-2020 Pub.nr.: Info 0617. .Stockholm: Ordförrådet. ISBN: 978-91-87903-40-3 Retrieved from: https://tillvaxtverket.se/download/18.a48a52e155169e594d383f/1465392683944/Develop%20Sweden.pdf

Trippl, M., Zukauskaite, E. & Healy, A. (2019): Shaping smart specialization: the role of place-specific factors in advanced, intermediate and less-developed European regions, *Regional Studies*, doi: 10.1080/00343404.2019.1582763

Worrall, R. & O'Leary, F. (2019). Towards greater collective impact: Developing the collaborative capability of the local community development committees (LCDCs). Administration. 67(1). (p. 73-83). doi: 10.2478/admin-2019-0009.

Zakhour, S. & Metzger, J. (2018) From a "Planning-Led Regime" to a "Development-Led Regime" (and Back Again?): The Role of Municipal Planning in the Urban Governance of Stockholm, *disP - The Planning Review*, 54(4), (p. 46-58), doi: 10.1080/02513625.2018.1562797

Zukauskaite, E. (2018) Variety of Regional Innovation Systems and Their Institutional Characteristics. In A. Isaksen, R. Martin & M. Trippl (eds). *New Avenues for Regional Innovation Systems – Theoretical Advances, Empirical Cases and Policy Lessons.* (p. 41-60). Springer Publishing. ISBN 978-3-319-71661-9

Øgård, M. (1999) New public management og den nordiske velferdsstaten/tenkningen "redning eller trussel? " in K., Ståhlberg (ed). *Den nordiska modellen i en brytningstid: Forskningsprogrammet Norden och Europa*. København: Nordisk Ministerråd.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Observation plan

Observation guide:	
Number of participants in meeting	
Type of participants*	• Organization • Role in organization
Main characteristics of the activity	• Program • Information • Role of staff • Level of activity / mood • Physical characteristics (seating, etc.)
Meeting report / Minutes	• Proactiveness / Who takes a lead in the discussion • What concerns are raised • How are issues framed? • How do the activities develop? • Proactiveness / Who takes a lead in the discussion
Issues addressing the policy instrument (Stockholm Model)	• Positive / negative elements identified
Project ideas identified / proposed	

Appendix 2: Attendance, meeting, 12.09.2019

Attendance, discussion meeting, 12.09.2019	
Organization	**Relation to the SFP**
SFP	Chief secretary
Region Stockholm	JP group
Region Stockholm	JP group
Stockholm municipality	JP group
County administrative board	JP group
Storsthlm	JP group
Stockholms Universitet	Not regular in JP group
ABF (representing non-profit)	JP group
Försäkringskassan	JP group
Arbetsförmedlingen	JP group
Region Stockholm	JP group
Nordregio	Higher project
Nordregio	Higher project

Appendix 3: Interview guide (In Norwegian)

Om prosjektet:

Prosjektet handler om ledelse i Stockholm. Jeg ønsker å forstå hvordan aktører i regionen samarbeider, og hvordan lederskapet er fordelt mellom aktrene. Jeg ønsker å utvikle en bedre forståelse for hvordan personer som representerer sin organisasjon former strukturene og hvordan de opererer i et dynamisk miljø i konstant endring. Ledelse og lederskap, i sammenheng med oppgaven er et konsept som både har en formell og uformell dimensjon.

Studien skal utforskje innovativ ledelse (governance) og offentlig administrasjon, og fokuserer på observasjoner fra workshoper, samt innsikt fra intervjuer for å forstå konteksten som former prosessene for utvikling i regionen.

Hovedtemaer for intervjuet:

          Ditt ansvarsområde, hva er ditt prosjekt?

          Hva er status for (din organisasjon), hva er strategien for samarbeid?

          Hvordan foregår samarbeid?

- o   Hva har vært vanskelig?

- o   Hva har gått bra?

- o   Hvordan er det å forholde seg til andre aktører?

          Hvordan opplever du å kommunisere med aktører som også har sine egne interesser?

          Ditt perspektiv på workhopene og samarbeidsplatformen i Stockholm?

          Ditt perspektiv på lederskapet i regionen. Er det en samlende visjon å følge?

Om deg og ditt arbeid

- Hva jobber du med?

- Hvor lenge har du jobbet med dette?

- Hvordan har du kommet hit / hvilke erfaringer har du fra tidligere?

- I forhold til dine tidligere erfaringer, hvilke utfordringer opplever du i Stockholm?

Organisasjonens strategi

          Hvorfor deltok du? Hvordan ble du valgt / hvordan blir deltagere plukket ut?

- Hva er hovedutfordringene i å anskaffe midler?

  - o   Hva er tilgjengelig?

  - o   Hva tilbyr det offentlige?

- Hva er pådriveren for samarbeid fra din organisasjon sin side?

  - o   Ressurstilgang?

  - o   Hvordan har dette endret seg over tid?

- Hva motiverte deg / din organisasjon til å ta del i workshopen med strukturfondpartnerskapet?

  - o   Hadde du tidligere erfaring med dette?

Hva er den største hindringen for mer samarbeid?

Om det offentlige: Hvordan er det å forholde seg til de andre offentlige organisasjoner som

Tillväxtverket og SLL (og Stockholm Stad?)

> Alternativ follow-up: Under den første workshopen ble det nevnt at Stockholm stad / kommune og Stockholm Län Landsting har erfart problemer i å samarbeide. Kan du fortelle litt om dette?

- Hva er stockholms strategi? Hvorfor har disse workshopene blitt holdt?
- Hvorfor er det viktig med en smartspesialiseringsstrategi i Stockholm

  Hvilken verdi gir dette regionen?

  hva gjør denne med stockholmsmodellen?

- Hva er regionens styrke? -og svakhet? Hvordan håndteres dette?

Organisasjonen og samarbeid

- Hvem er de viktigste stakeholders dere samarbeider med?
  - Utenfor regionen
  - Innenfor regionen

  Har du eksempler på samarbeidsprosjekter?

- Hvilke (andre) platformer er dere en del av?
- Hvordan fungerer samarbeidet med strukturfondpartnerskapet (evt. Andre platformer)?
- Hvordan opplever du kommunikasjonen med andre aktører i regionen?

- Hvordan er det å finne synergier / sammenfallende interesser å samarbeide over?
  - Er enkelte aktører enklere enn andre?
  - Tror du aktørers egeninteresser / perspektiver hindrer dere?

- Hva slags utfordringer har dere møtt i samarbeidsprosesser:
  - Institusjonelt
  - Finansielt
  - Legislativt
  - Sektor-spesifikt
- Hvordan støtter / hindrer det politiske samarbeid i regionen? Er strukturene tilrettelagt for samarbeid?

  (Regional administrasjon, Nasjonalt nivå, EU..)`

- Hvordan kan stockholm bli bedre for samarbeid?
  - Har du forslag til den offentlige ledelsen i Stockholm / SLL / Tillväxtverket
  - Hvordan bør strukturene endres?

      o   Hva er dine tanker om fremtiden for Stockholm og strukturfondpartnerskapet / en

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:10px;">

Ditt perspektiv på workshopene:

      o   Hva synes du om workshopene? (særlig med tanke på den holdt 09.09, men om du har erfart andre som var bedre / dårligere / like, fortell gjerne om dette)

      o   Hvilke forventninger hadde du? / hva var planen?

      o   Hva ble resultatet? – Eksempler?

      o   Hva tror du kunne vært bedre?

      o   Hadde workshopen en tydelig agenda? Var det en visjon å følge?

      o   Hva tenker du om forventningene til ledelsen for workshopen? Passet de din organisasjon's situasjon?

</div>

    smartspesialiseringsstrategi i Stockholm?

Å lede stockholm

Hvordan vil du beskrive lederskapet i stockholm?

Hvordan opplever du kommunikasjon på tvers av institusjoner og organisasjoner for å jobbe sammen om overordnede mål?

    Tror du budskapet om å utvikle en S3 har blitt spredd godt nok?

Kommer aktører (som for eksempel de akademiske) tidlig inn og gir sitt perspektiv på saker? For eksempel i forkant av workshoper?

Hvordan er prosessene? Opplever du forvirring?

Klarer aktørene å finne sammenfallende interesser?

Hvordan opplever du lederskapet i Stockholm? Hvem leder? Hvem bør lede mer? Tar noen mer initiativ enn andre? **Finnes det et lederskap?**

Avsluttende spørsmål:

- Kom dere videre med samarbeidet etter workshopene?

Fra ditt perspektiv, er det noe viktig jeg har oversett? / har du noe å legge til om temaet?

Appendix 4: Invitation to participate in the study

Invitation to take part in the research study

«Institutional innovators in Stockholm»

I would like to invite you to take part a research project intended to explore structural change processes in Stockholm from the point of view of those involved in the processes. This document will give you information pertaining to the purpose of the project and what participation will mean for you.

Purpose

The purpose of the project is to study the change processes and innovation systems in Stockholm. The project will analyze the encounters of institutional entrepeneurs and institutions, exploring how change agents facilitate changes in the institutions that govern their own activities. With the mobility workshops hosted by Tillväxtverket and Stockholm Läns Landsting (Stockholm County Council) as an anchoring point from which important actors are identified and interviewed further, the project will give an insight into the nature of institutional entrepeneurship and change processes, building on insights from those involved in the processes.

The project is for a Masters thesis and will be written as part of *the Nordic Master programme in Innovative Governance and Public Management*. The program is a joint programme between the University of Tampere, Finland, University of Agder, Norway and KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden. The responsible institution for the project is the University of Agder, Norway.

Why you are receiving a request to participate:

After I took part in the meetings held on the 30th of August 2019 and 9th of September 2019 as an observator, I am selecting individuals for interviews whom I believe would have valuable insights for my analysis. The project aims to explore the processes from the involved actors' point of view. As a representative for one of the key actors that took part in the meetings, your insights would be of great value for the study. It is as a participant in the workshops which is how I have obtained your contact information.

What participation means for you:

The interview will be open, and on your terms. I do not want to take more of your time than necessary, and the duration can be agreed upon according to your schedule.

In order to fully capture the information you provide, I also ask for your permission to record the interview on a dedicated recorder. <u>This is negotiable if you prefer me to base the data gathering on notes taken during the interview</u>. If you accept the interview to be recorded, it will be transcribed as soon as possible and the recording will not be processed on a device that could be connected to the internet. The transcribed text file will then be saved separately from personal information that could identify you.

Your anonymity

The project is a study on change processes. The selected participants for the project are interviewed because of their insights from the perspective and strategic views held by different institutions in Stockholm. What I aim to present in the study should in itself not be a risk to your anonymity.

In order to make a judgement on the possible risk to your anonymity, I discussed the issue with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data. The risk is estimated to be very low, and it is unlikely that you should be identifiable. I was however advised to note that those who know about your participation in the workshop may be able to identify you.

Your participation is voluntary

Your participation is voluntarily, and you can at any point withdraw consent. All information will then be anonymized.

Protection of your data

All information will be stored according to the General Data Protection Regulation. Only the student and the project supervisor at University of Agder will have access to the data gathered from the interviews.

Name and contact information will be replaced with a code for which the key is stored separately from the rest of the data. The recordings, should you accept the interviews to be recorded, will not be stored for longer than necessary to transcribe the interview. The data will be stored on a dedicated drive and on secure servers provided by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

At the end of the project, 31.05.2020, any personal information still stored will be deleted.

Your rights:

As long as you are identifiable in the data material, you have the rights to:

- Access to what personal information is registered on you

- Have your personal information corrected

- Have your personal information deleted

- Be delivered a copy of your personal information

- File a complaint to the data protection office or to the Data Protection Agency.

- Be informed about how your information will be used.

Our rights to process your personal information:

We process your information based on your consent.

On behalf of University of Agder, NSD – the Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS has decided that the processing of personal information in this project is in line with the General Data Protection Regulation (Personvernregelverket).

Should you have questions regarding the study or wish to make use of your rights, please contact:

- University of Agder by (supervisor) James Tommy Karlsen, james.karlsen@uia.no +47 37233161

- (Student) Stian Lundvall Berg, stianb15@student.uia.no, +47 48202701

- Data protection Office (personvernombud) Ina Danielsen, ina.danielsen@uia.no, +47 45254401

- NSD – Norwegian Centre for Research Data AS (Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS), personvernstjenester@nsd.no, +47 55582117

Declaration of consent

I have received and understood the information about the project «Institutional innovators in Stockholm».

I consent to

☑ Take part in the interview

On the terms that:

□ I am to be referred to in a way that does not identify me personally in the publication.

(Other terms)_____

Please select one:

□ I accept the interview being recorded for the purpose of being transcribed.

□ I prefer *not* to have the interview recorded.

I consent to my information being stored until the end of the project 31.05.2020. After this, all information will be anonymized.

_____

(Signature and date)

Appendix 5: Quotes in Swedish

Interview, 30.10.2019:
«Historiskt, så har intresse for at göra prioriteringar oftast varit väldig lågt. Det har funnes väldig mycket laissez-faire attitude … Jag tror det bottnar i at vi har hatt väldigt markedsorienterad politikäre … dom vil ju inte gå in å styra så mycket, dom vil jo förlita sig på marknaden och marknadens aktörer, at sakar och ting klarar sig själv.» (Interview, 30.10.2019a)
«Genom at prata om utmaningar och styrkeområdena istället for at säga vi skal prioritera visse branscher eller sektorer, så blir det mindre känsligt rent politiskt, och det har ju varit et sett at forsöka, å få upp frågan på agendan utan at utmana det regionale politiske systemet for mycket. » (Interview, 30.10.2019b)
«Jag vil inte ha konkurrens mellan Huvudstaden och Flemingsberg, jag vil ha två noder i det regionale … clustret som stöttar varandra och kompletterar varandra. Det har Jäg var väldigt tydlig med dem … ni kan inte komma med två ansökningar som mer eller mindre ser likadan ut och konkurrera (Interview, 30.10.2019c).
«Jag har pratat med en del som har varit med, många har tycket det var bra, man tyckte det var bra workshop, man tyckte det var bra tillfälle å träffas å prata om de här sakerna. … Sen tycker jag kanske vi inte kom så långt jag hade hopats, men workshoperna var liksom ändå et sett at försöka kicka igong en process, men hade jag fått, eller hade jag, hade vi på Region Stockholm fortsatt den processen, så hade vi kunnat se det lite som et startskott. … Jag tror at dom hade hatt större betydelse om processerna hade kunnat fortsette liksom lite mer naturligt direkte för årsskiftet (Interview, 30.10.2019d).
«Jag har gjort vad jag kan for at driva på det, men problemet är jo at den måste jo då beställas från ledningen på Region Stockholm … det måste jo då gå via våra politiker … och det som blir problemet da med kommunikation, den är i sån här stor och hierarkisk organisation, inte lett» (Interview, 30.10.2019e).
Interview, 06.11.2019:
«Når man sees från olika kulturer så tar det tid bara där, känna varandra från de olika aktören. Länsstyrelsen och akademien till exempel» (Interview, 06.11.2019a)
«KTH vinner jo mycket på at vara stärka internationellt, var stärka nationellt, sen regionalt … det är for lite pengar i strukturfonderna … om man skulle ha mer strukturfonder, da skulle det bli mer regionalt» (Interview, 06.11.2019b)
«KTH Södertälje, är jo en perfekt campus for at jobba mer regionalt. Och KTH Kista är också en sån här Campus.. vårt campus är jo Valhallavägen, och KTH är stort. Här jo stora projekter, men man skulle kunna jobba mycket närmare (Interview, 06.11.2019c)
«[On the prospect of the ERDF becoming more accommodating to the universities] They always say so. Always pratar dem om det. Alltid. At det kommer at förändras, det kommer at bli enklare, men vi får jo aldrig veta riktig når det är, och vi tänker når i tiden ... Så det där är jo hela tiden, det där, liksom at vi kommer at förenkla, vi hör vad ni säger, lite grann och nu fick jo jag höra, jag har inte själv läst det men at det skulle vara 60% medfinansiering till exempel. Det gör jo at universiteten inte kan- har svårt at- at vara med» (Interview, 06.11.2019d)
«nästa vecka ses vi igen och då har SU varit [very proactive] på information på Tillväxtverket angående utlysningen ERUF pengarna nu» (Interview, 06.11.2019e)

Appendix 6: Documents analyzed

Document	Data analyzed
SWECO (2019) Utvärdering av Stockholmsmodellen. Slutrapport Augusti 2019. Retrieved from https://www.gronbostadstockholm.se/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/11/Utvärdering-Stockholmsmodellen_30aug.pdf	Operations and status of the SFP, types of projects
Riksrevisionen (2020) *Regionala strukturfondspartnerskap.* (RIR 2020:10) Riksdagens Interntryckeri, Stockholm. Retrieved from: https://www.riksrevisionen.se/download/18.5877d0cf1714e46c43fd443/1586248887526/RiR%202020_10%20Anpassad.pdf	Operations and status of the SFP
Wøien, M., Kristensen, I. & Teräs, J. (2019) *The status, characteristics and potential of SMART SPECIALISATION in Nordic Regions.* (NORDREGIO REPORT 2019:3). ISBN 978-91-87295-67-6 Retrieved from: http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:1295018/FULLTEXT01.pdf	Smart Specialization in Stockholm, history.
Hallin, G. & Lindquist, P. (2018) *Samverkanseffekter inom Regionalfonden: en utvärdering.* Report by Kontigo AB on behalf of Tillväxtverket. ISBN: 978-91-88601-90-2 Retrieved from: https://publector.org/publication/Samverkanseffekter-inom-Regionalfonden-en-utvardering/Titel	ERDF effects in Sweden. Could not identify significant structural changes in terms of projects initiated through the Stockholm Model
Tillväxtverket (2014) Operational *PROGRAMME UNDER THE 'INVESTMENT FOR GROWTH AND JOBS' GOAL.* Operational programme for the SE110 region. CCI: C(2014)9970. Retrieved from: https://tillvaxtverket.se/download/18.661748141551692c5bea89b7/1468398414458/Operativt%20program%20Stockholm%20engelsk%20version.pdf	Thematic objectives and focus for the ERDF in Stockholm to create a Smart Specialization Strategy.
Länsstyrelsen Stockholm, (2017, December, 20). Innovationskraft Sthlm Frukostmöte 18 december 2017. Retrieved 04.10.2020 from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZukhAJBUSSM	(Video recording) Meeting on Smart Specialisation in Stockholm held in an early stage of the HIGHER project. Opinions by stakeholders.
Länsstyrelsen i Stockholm (2017) *Årsredovisning 2017.* ISBN: 978-91-728-790-6 https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/download/18.4771ab7716298ed82ba7283d/1526068884776/Årsredovisning%202017%20Länsstyrelsen%20	Confirmation on follow-up on HIGHER project and the work on Smart Specialisation.
Länsstyrelsen i Stockholm (2015) Kartläggning av styrkeområden i Stockholmsregionen. Rapport 2015:4. ISBN: 978-91-7281-628-2	Mapping of regional strengths and challenges in Stockholm.
Länsstyrelsen Stockholm, (2014). Stockholm 2025: The world's most innovation-driven economy. Action Programme for the Stockholm region. Retrieved from: https://s3platform.jrc.ec.europa.eu/documents/20182/232763/SE_Stockholm_RIS3_2014_Final.pdf/7e013219-7ab9-406d-8f16-40addbeb2950	Preliminary plan, prior to activities held on the SFP platform.Early formulations of the initiative.
Länsstyrelsen Stockholm (2018) *Strategisk inriktning för hållbar tillväxt och attraktionskraft i Stockholm län 2025+.* Rapport 2018:12. ISBN: 078-91-7291-822-4 https://www.lansstyrelsen.se/download/18.6ae610001636c9c68e547ac3/1530607639719/Rapport%202018-12%20Strategisk%20inriktning%202025.pdf	Interpretation of Smart Specialisation as a tool for focusing limited public funds (resembling Stockholm Model). Clear recognition of Smart Specialisation as an ex-ante conditionality. Confirmation that prior documents published by Länsstyrelsen does not constitute a Smart Specialisation strategy

(Documents analyzed, continued)	
Moodie, J. Wøien, M. & Lindqvist, M. (2019) *Action Plan for the Stockholm Region: Building Effective S3 Governance Structures*. Action Plan prepared for the Interreg Europe HIGHER Programme. Stockholm: Nordregio & Region Stockholm. https://www.interregeurope.eu/higher/library/#folder=1309	The Stockholm Model as a tool, appropriate for Smart Specialization (not perceived as an institution)
Draganič, M. & Ferlinc, M. (2017) *Benchmarking report*. Project publication for the HIGHER project. Retrieved from: https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevprojects/library/file_1523612467.pdf	Comparison to another Scandinavian policy tool for Smart Specialisation
Interreg Europe (2017) The Entrepreneurial Discovery Process The case of Stockholm (Sweden): The Stockholm Model for smart specialisation. *HIGHER Good Practice Collection of Smart Specialisation Practices.* Retrieved from: https://www.interregeurope.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/tx_tevprojects/library/GoodPractice_Stockholm.pdf	Description of the Stockholm Model as a response to the call for Smart Specialization (EU level)
Stockholms Läns Landsting (2018) *Överenskommelse med Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län om överföring av det regionala utvecklingsansvaret*. LS 2018-1201. Recveived from: https://www.sll.se/globalassets/5.-politik/politiska-organ/landstingsstyrelsen/2018/2018-12-18/p-16-ls-1201.pdf	Agreement on transfering responsibilities for regional development from the County Administrative Board to the regional government.
Länsstyrelsen i Stockholm & Stockholm Läns Landsting (2018) *Överenskommelse från överläggningar mellan Länsstyrelsen i Stockholms län och Stockholms läns landsting med anledning av uppdrag att förbereda en överföring av det regionala utvecklingsansvaret.* ID: 106-28870-2018. Received from: https://www.sll.se/globalassets/5.-politik/politiska-organ/landstingsstyrelsen/2018/2018-12-18/p-16-ls-1201.pdf	Commitments and responsibilities for the continuation of the Smart Specialization project and collaboration with Nordregio as monitors.
Strukturfondspartnerskap Stockholms Län (2019, October, 10). *Sammanträdesprotokoll Nr 3a/2019* retrieved from: https://www.sll.se/globalassets/4.-regional-utveckling/alla-projekt-inom-regional-utveckling/strukturfond/sfp-protokoll-3a20191010.pdf	SFP meetings
Strukturfondspartnerskap Stockholms Län (2019, June, 15) *Sammanträdesprotokoll Nr 2b/2019*. retrieved from: https://www.sll.se/globalassets/4.-regional-utveckling/rufs/sfp-protokoll-dnr-trn-2019-0065-4.pdf	What topics are discussed Data on representation in the SFP Proposals
Strukturfondspartnerskap Stockholms Län (2018, December, 7) *Sammanträdesprotokoll Nr 4b/2018*. Retrieved from: https://www.sll.se/globalassets/4.-regional-utveckling/sa-arbetar-vi-med-regional-utveckling/strukturfondspartnerskapet/protokoll/sfp-protokoll-181207.pdf	Statements on the operations of the SFP by chairman JP Group declining to comment on SWECO (2019) report.
Region Stockholm (n. d. a). Regional lärandeplan för strukturfonerna 2014-2020 i Stockholmsregionen. Retrieved 12.01.2020 from: https://www.sll.se/globalassets/4.-regional-utveckling/sa-arbetar-vi-med-regional-utveckling/strukturfondspartnerskapet/larandeplan-for-strukturfondspartnerskapet-stockholms-lan.pdf	Description of the Stockholm Model.
(Non-public documents:)	
Personal correspondence between Nordregio and Region Stockholm (in posession of author until 15.01.2020)	Activities in relation to the HIGHER project
Personal correspondance with research team at Nordregio (stored in author's personal student e-mail at University of Agder)	
HIGHER Project Application Form (stored in Nordregio's database)	Initial timeline and budget of the HIGHER project Intended tasks and responsibilities of project partners in the HIGHER project.

Appendix 7: Attendance, 1st Workshop, 30.08.2019

(The attendance lists were anonymized upon collection)

Attendance, 1st workshop, 30.08.2019		
Organization	**Description**	In figure as:
Stockholm University	External relations project manager	Academic sector
Stockholm University	Researcher, Environmental science	Academic sector
Stockholm University	Researcher, Environmental science	Academic sector
Stockholm University	Researcher, Hydrology and water resources	Academic sector
Stockholm University	Researcher, system entrepreneurship and sustainability	Academic sector
KTH Royal Institute of Technology	Lab Manager, Technical Mechanics	Academic sector
Region Stockholm	Regional planner	Public authority
Region Stockholm	Regional planner	Public authority
Region Stockholm	Regional planner	Public authority
Region Stockholm	Development coordinator	Public authority
Stockholm County Association of Local Authorities (Storsthlm)	Representative, Energy office	Public authority
Stockholm Municipality (Stockholm Stad)	EU program project leader	Public authority
Stockholm Municipality (Stockholm Stad)	Business development manager	Public authority
Stockholm County Administrative Board	Development leader	Public authority
Stockholm County Administrative Board	Development leader	Public authority
Stockholm County Administrative Board	Climate and energy strategist	Public authority
Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund (ABF) (The Workers' Educational Association	Ombudsman	Other
Openlab	Director	Local innovation arena
RISE Research Insitutes of Sweden	Project leader	State owned innovation partner
Staff:		
SFP	Secretary	
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)	Officer for ERDF program	(Not listed)
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)	Regional program manager	(Not listed)
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)	Economist	(Not listed)
Monitors:		
Nordregio	Monitor	(Not listed)
Nordregio	Monitor	(Not listed)

Appendix 8: Attendance, 2nd workshop, 09.09.2019

Attendance, 2nd workshop, 09.09.2019		
Organization	**Description**	**In figure as:**
Stockholm University	Leader, strategic collaborations	Academic Sector
KTH Royal Institute of Technology	Leader, strategic collaborations	Academic Sector
KTH Royal Institute of Technology	Researcher, Industrial management	Academic Sector
Karolinska Institute	Leader, strategic collaborations	Academic Sector
Region Stockholm	Development coordinator	Public Authority
Stockholm County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen)	Development leader	Public Authority
Stockholm County Administrative Board (Länsstyrelsen)	Development leader	Public Authority
Stockholm County Association of Local Authorities (Storsthlm)	Representative of the municipalities	Public Authority
Stockholm County Association of Local Authorities (Storsthlm)	Process leader, Representative of the municipalities	Public Authority
Stockholm Stad	EU program project leader	Public Authority
Association for Swedish Engineering Idustries (Teknikföretagen)	Director	Industry
Flemingsberg Science	Director	Local innovation arena
Flemingsberg Science	Director	Local innovation arena
Stockholm Science City Foundation	Director	Local innovation arena
Södertälje Science park AB	Project leader	Local innovation arena
Kista Science City	Director	Local innovation arena
STING	Director	Local innovation arena
STING	Coach	Local innovation arena
Openlab	Director	Local innovation arena
ALMI (State owned incubator for startups)	Leader, collaborations	State owned innovation partner
Framtidsbyggd i förandring nätverk (konsult)	Consultant	Other
Framtidsbyggd i förandring nätverk (konsult)	Consultant	Other
Staff:		
SFP	Secretary	
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)	Officer for ERDF program	(Not Listed)
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)	Regional program manager	(Not Listed)
Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (Tillväxtverket)	Economist	(Not Listed)
Monitors:		
Nordregio	Monitor	(Not Listed)
Nordregio	Monitor	(Not Listed)
EIT Health	Observer	(Not Listed)