

The Collaborative Dilemma of Regional Governance

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D06 Comparative Regional Governance

Room : B017 26/05/2010 0900 - 1030

Roger Normann - short bio

- **Education**

- Cand.polit political science (UiT), and PhD industrial management (NTNU)

- **Current positions**

- Sr Researcher, Agderforskning (applied research)
- Postdoc (2010-13) University of Agder in organisational science (study of multi-level governance processes in UK, Lithuania and Norway)

- **Research interests**

- Network governance, rural/regional development, organisational science, action research

PART I:

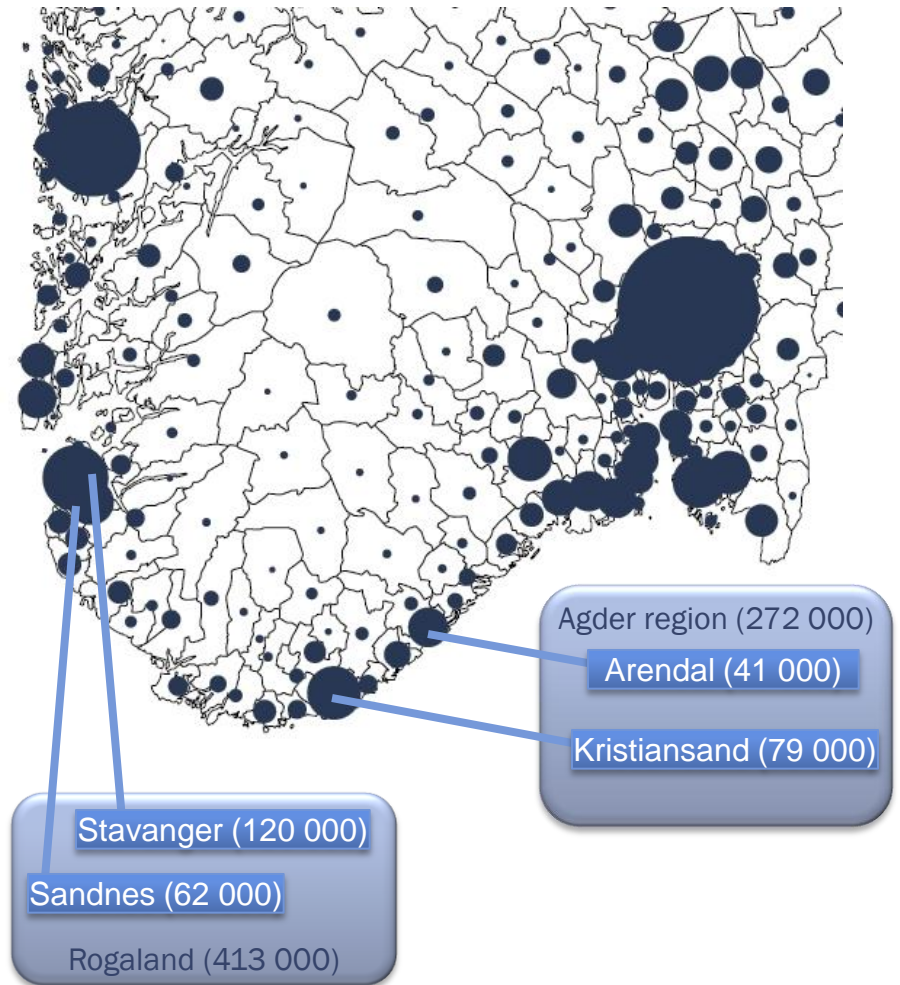
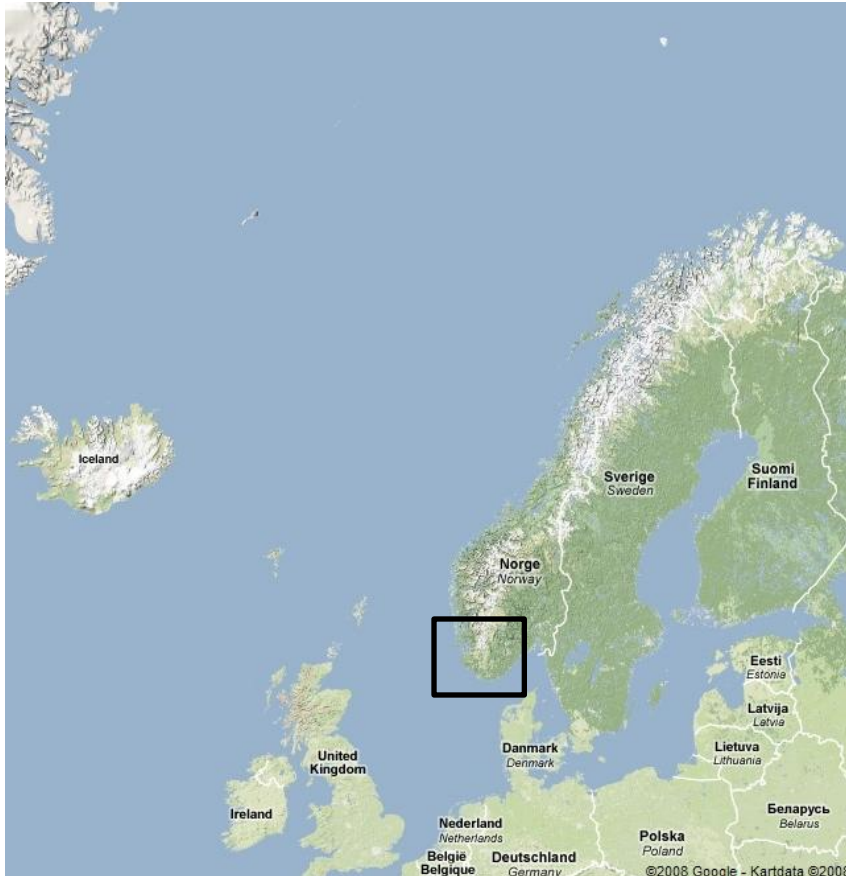
Outline and Introduction

- **PART I:** Outline and Introduction
- **PART II:** Theory
- **PART III:** Data
- **PART IV:** Reflections

This presentation is an outline for an forthcoming chapter in: Johnsen, H. C. G., & Ennals, J. R. (Eds) (2011) *Creating Collaborative Advantage* (Farnham: Gower).

The Agder region in the southernmost part of Norway

Some population figures (2008), source Statistics Norway



Another regional governance dilemma?

- **Premises:**

- Governance network practices needs steering in order to realise specific goals. Without any shared strategy, vision or purpose development processes can develop into strategic null-sum games among network participants --- **to little steering of governance networks can lead to institutional fragmentation**
- Regional stakeholders/elites have only a limited degree of formal hierarchical power over network actors, if they steer to much participants can object, exit, choose alternatives, sabotage (turn into syrup), etc. --- **therefore can also to much steering of governance networks lead to institutional fragmentation**
- **Assumption:** Regional governance networks can only work effectively if network structures also is accompanied with a “collaborative rationality”.

- **Question:**

- How can we facilitate the emergence of an “collaborative rationality” and thus avoiding the regional governance steering dilemma?

Quote from a Norwegian parliament member from the Agder region

”The process that lead to the development of a new university has done something with the whole region. The dialogue between the regions industry and academics is lifted to a whole new level, and we now, more than ever, has a common understanding of the importance and dependence of each other. The industry has become more aware that they share a responsibility that the university educates the competence they need in the future, and the university has become more conscious of the needs of business life”.

Svein Harberg,
Member of Parliament, Conservatives (H), Fædrelandsvennen April 23th 2010 [trans. from Norwegian]

PART II:

Theory

- PART I: Outline and Introduction
- **PART II: Theory**
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What is a regional governance system?

- Building on the definition of a 'governance network' by Sørensen and Torfing (2005; 2007) we can envisage that a regional governance network system can include also some of these elements:
 1. Actors, organisations, networks who participates in regional development processes, including the resources, capabilities, bargaining leverages, and interests, they embody.
 2. Formal rules and informal norms (collaborative rationality) witch regulates behaviour between actors in networks
 3. Structures, ideas, narratives which informs actors what it is that is sensible, correct, expedient, and likewise what is unwise, counterproductive, and unreasonable, etc.
 4. All forms of direct, indirect and meta-steering of one or more networks.
- The totality that networks, actors, network resources, norms, structures, and steering efforts form within the framework of an region can be understood as a regional governance system.

Three sources of network collaboration

- How can a “collaborative rationality” evolve in such a way that the regional governance steering dilemma can be avoided?
- Three independent sources of network collaboration:
 - **Instrumental collaboration (type A):**
 - **Institutional collaboration (type B):**
 - **Ideological collaboration (type C):**

The three types of collaboration

- **Instrumental collaboration (type A):**
 - Resulting from successful(*) negotiation and/or coordination of particular issues, positions, resources, interests etc. between network actors, thus instrumental collaboration in particular applies to measurable quantities.
 - (*) Successful refers not to the justness, ethics or smartness of the negotiated terms but to what extent open conflict is avoided and further collective action is made possible.
- **Institutional collaboration (type B):**
 - Emerges when network actors adapt their actions to appropriate (culturally acceptable) norms and rules, thus institutional collaboration refers to informal regulative mechanisms that exists between actors in networks.
- **Ideological collaboration (type C):**
 - Stems from the mobilisation of actors and institutions energies and capabilities within a discursively constructed framework. Thus, ideological collaboration is based on the presence of common beliefs, shared understandings, ideas, and visions. Influencing such ideas is often labelled meta-governance.
- Collaboration based on type A, B, and C can individually produce consensus and facilitate effective collaborative patterns in the network.
- However the most potent combinations emerge when one or more of the three successfully are combined.

Typology of collaborative network patterns that produces consensus

Type	Description	Collaborative pattern
A	Agreements based on negotiations and strategic interactions.	Related to a specific issues or phases. Not necessarily manifested into a repeating relational pattern.
B	Interactions based on a relational understanding of other actors and institutions.	Related to a specific collaborative arenas. The relational patterns (norms) are not necessarily transferable to other arenas or spheres.
C	Joint action based on a shared understandings and beliefs.	Related to specific contextual circumstances. The dominant narrative (discursive framework) is difficult to change/adept to new circumstances.
A+B	Networks organised around a specific subject matter or development issue.	Relatively robust collaborative patterns are likely to emerge. Doesn't necessarily transcend institutional boundaries or spheres.
A+C	Transactions between actors/institutions from different contexts (visitors) that recognise shared beliefs, values, norms.	Situational and not necessarily rooted in a deeper relational understanding of the other.
B+C	An ceremonial type of interaction that repeats itself and could transcend specific contexts.	An ineffective but robust (repeating) collaborative pattern.
A+B+C	Actors committed to collaborating on a broader range of issues that transcends specific arenas, institutional interest or contexts.	The most resilient collaborative pattern, the critical issue is the inherent quality of the development narrative.

PART III:

Data

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Comparing two regional governance system (RGS) steering strategies

- Emphasising two dimensions: The role of elected politicians, and regional strategy
 - Regional strategies are important since they potentially can meta govern loosely coupled network actors
 - Direct involvement by elected politicians (regional /city representative government) is important since these are the actors most likely over time to held necessary legitimacy across different intuitions and sectors in the regional governance system

The RGS in the Agder region

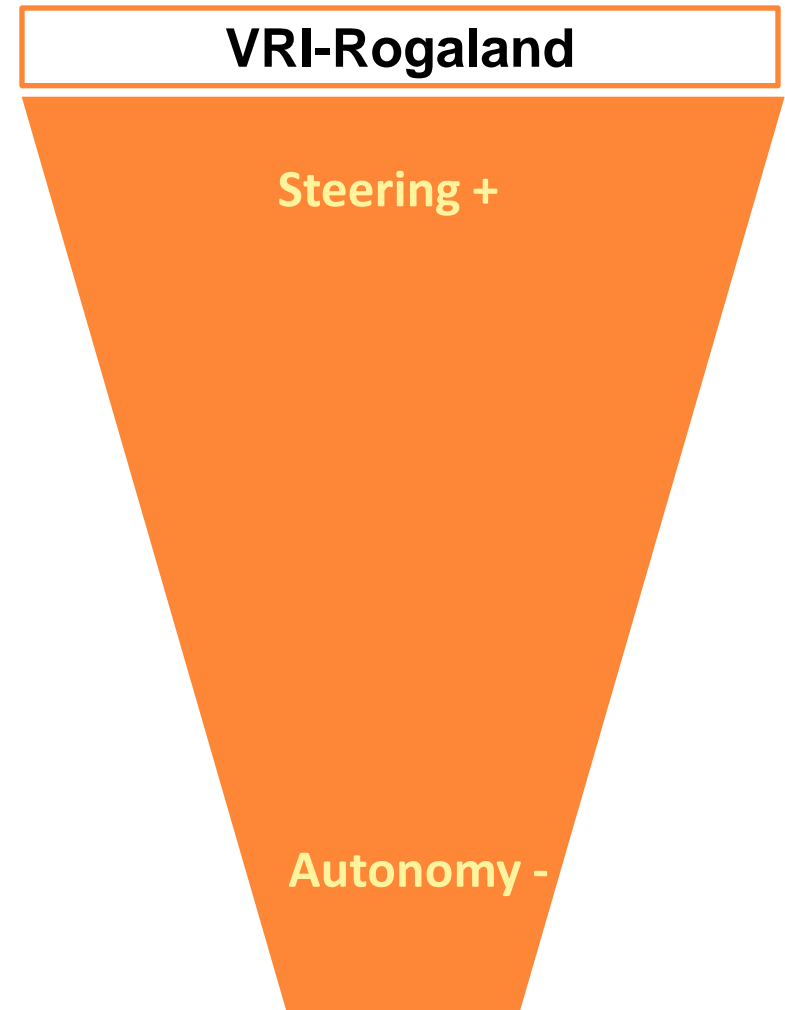
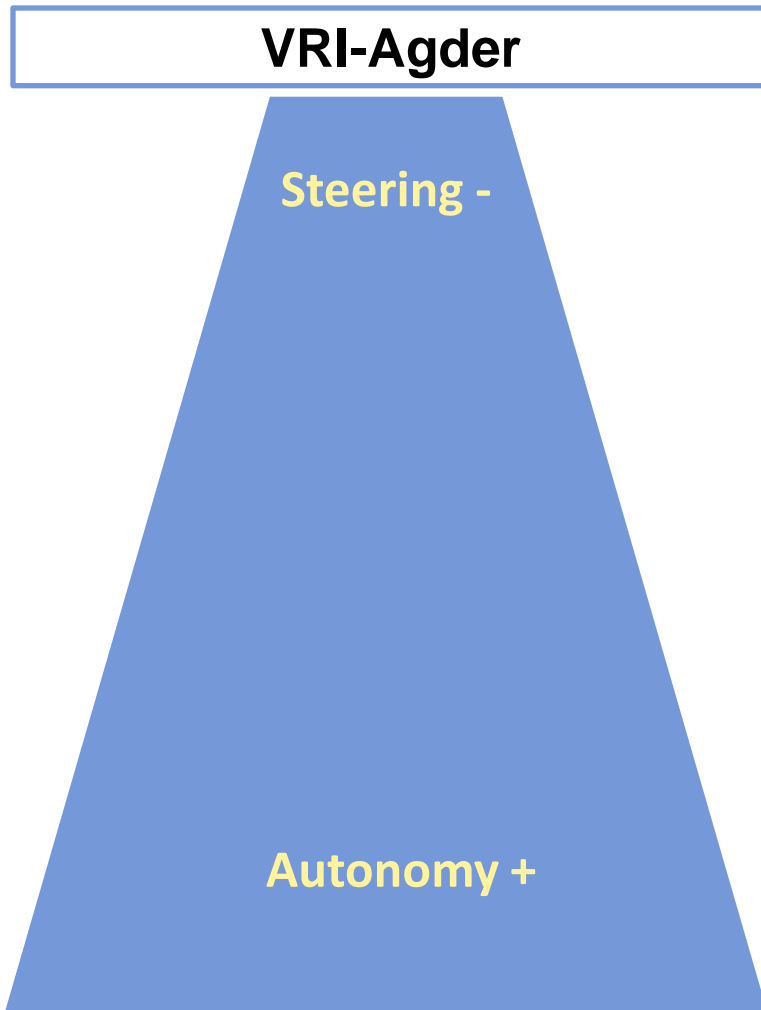
- 1990
 - Regionalisation processes take off
- 1995-2005
 - Unifying regional strategies
 - Unelected leadership/dev. regime (Normann 2007)
 - Success story in terms of effectiveness
 - All major governance network lead by non- elected
 - Strong sense of collaboration for a common purpose
- 2005-2010
 - Realised strategies are not replaced, new strategies emerges; fragmentation (OECD 2009)
 - New role for counties; takes on regional leadership
 - Old leaders still present; In sum; Institutional fragmentation of the RGS
 - All major governance network lead by non- elected
 - Even if the rhetoric's indicate the presences of a collaborative spirit, practice tells another story; of competing and multiple strategies, leaders and goals.
- 1990-2010
 - almost exponential expansion of regional governance system elements

The RGS in Rogaland

- 1990-2005
 - Regionalisation processes take off
 - Strong leadership anchored in the city (Mayor)
 - Regional strategies are developed
 - Success story in terms of effectiveness
- 2005-2010
 - New role for counties; increased level of competition between city government and regional (county) government.
 - Some signs of fragmentation but the city Mayor still dominates
 - Strong sense of shared purpose – collaboration characterised by high level of consensus.
 - All major governance network lead by elected (city Mayor)
- 1990-2010
 - almost exponential expansion of regional governance system elements

A possible effect?

Comparison of two dimensions in two similar regional governance networks in Agder and Rogaland



Reflections

- **Theory**

- In order to understand processes that relates directly to the presence/absence of a collaborative rationality in RGS/GN we should draw on insights stemming from a broad range of theoretical perspectives; I suggest these could include RCT, new institutional theory, and structural theory.

- **Data**

- Empirically there seems to be several paths to and away from actor collaboration in networks

- **In practice**

- Of all the factors that influence collaboration regional strategies and regional leadership seems “easiest” to address directly.

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