

Managing the development of network identity and its  
implications on network coordination: *a case study of Region  
Sealand*

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1 <http://www.ruc.dk/upload/application/octet-stream/c621ab1d/kortprobeskeng06.doc>

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## Abbreviations

GF	The Growth Forum
MCC	The Municipal Contact Committee
LGDK	Local Government Denmark
LGR 2007	Local Government Reform 2007
REDS	Regional Entrepreneurial Development Strategy
TIC	The Technology and Innovation Committee
K17	The association of 17 municipal administrators from Region Zealand

## Publication and paper presentations relevant to the thesis

### *Chapter in a book*

Radmila M. Rasmussen and Eva Sørensen (2011): Vækstforum og Kommunernes Kontaktråd: Grader af netværksidentitet, i (Sørensen, Reff and Sehested red): Offentlig styring som pluricentrisk koordination. Djøf Forlag. København

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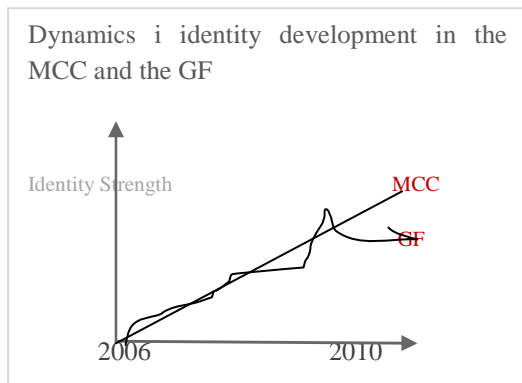
## Abstract

The thesis examines the effects of development of network identity on coordination processes that unfold in regional and municipal governance networks in Danish Region Sealand. While all other identity forms appreciate similarities network identity appreciates actors' differences. Thus it is distinctive identity form which both can enable well-functioning and enhance coordination that takes place in a governance network. Examining this claim empirically was the chief objective of this thesis.

To achieve this objective the thesis has carried out a longitude case study that includes observations, interviews, and policy documents. The empirical study embraces the process of the development of a network identity in the Regional Growth Forum (GF) and the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC) from 2006-2010. The study has in particular paid attention to how different management strategies influence the development of a network identity and consequentially, whether the developed network identity enhances coordination in the studied networks.

The thesis concludes the following:

While the Growth Forum has developed from a fragmented to a fragile network identity, the Municipal Contact Committee has developed from a network that embraced negative differences and relatively loose bonds into a strong network identity. Remarkably, the MCC has first developed sense of shared purpose which leads to appreciation of differences. While the process of identity development in the MCC can be illustrated as being a stable, upwards and linear, the GF's identity-process can be illustrated as oscillating but in an upwards direction:



The differences in the dynamics of network- identity development are related to:

- a) The scope and characteristics of network management deployed in the MCC and the GF. While the leadership of the MCC has implemented eight different management strategies, in particular storytelling to create a positive atmosphere during the MCC meetings and to shape members' perception towards a strong community, the GF's management strategies were primarily targeted at qualifying the policy outcome of its political program.
- b) The political atmosphere and institutional conditions the two networks were born into. The Growth Forum was caught in the crossfire of conflicts and arguments about the demarcation

of what is regional versus municipal authority within a given task scope. Those conflicts were routed in past experiences where the municipalities felt ruled over by the counties. At the same time, political and institutional conditions, in particular the expansion of welfare tasks and economic pressure that the Local Government Reform has imposed on municipalities had a positive impact on the development of a network identity in the MCC as it pushed municipalities to collaborate rather than compete.

Furthermore, the thesis concludes that a governance network that holds *strong* network identity, as the case with the MCC can experience an *increase* in the scope of coordination. Making the network identity prevents wicked conflicts and constitutes a platform for future common decision making. A governance network that has a relatively *weak* identity, as in the case with the Growth Forum, does not demonstrate a significant impact on the scope of coordination, as political debates and decisions that potentially could lead to conflicts were prevented by the administration who worked on making agenda.

The findings *indicate* that developing a network identity has a more significant impact and importance on coordination in the bottom-up, political-strategic network an informal network than in a governance network whose purpose is externally specified and strictly governed. However, a strong network identity may help achieving a high participation frequency among members, as it is discovered in the case of the MCC.



# Introduction

Governance networks are perceived by many scholars as the contemporary form of government that can improve the coordination of complex public policies. The strengths of governance networks lies in their ability to encourage collective action across organizational borders; and in their flexibility to adjust to changing circumstances and stimulate innovative learning while producing least external coordination costs (Mayntz 1993:112, Börzel 1997 p. 7, O'Toole 2007, Scharpf F. W. 1993, Scharpf & Mohr 1994, Hanf & Scharpf 1978, Kooiman 2003, Koppenjan and Klijn 2004:84-85). The coordination potentials of a governance network can be realised when the network achieves joint problem solving. Motivation, trust and interdependence are the primary preconditions for realizing a joint problem solution. Joint problem solving is nevertheless the most complex challenge in a governance network as it is conditioned by socio-psychological phenomena, namely actors' perceptions of trust and mutual interdependence.

The thesis suggests that, in order to achieve joint problem solving, the governance network needs to develop what I conceptualize as a network identity. Network identity is a specific form of identity which can enable a network to function well and to perform network coordination. In order to construct network identity and to carry out network coordination, a proactive management that promotes the creation of network identity is required. Consequently, the ontological and methodological work in the thesis builds on two main claims:

Claim 1: The coordination capacity of a governance network depends on the strength of network identity, as network identity may contribute to joint problem solving and thereby achieve network coordination.

Claim 2: A network identity can be developed by network management that applies different strategies.

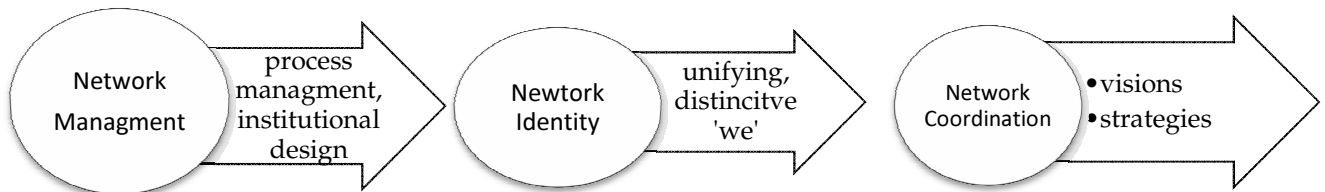
A closer reflection on the two assumptions is necessary. From a theoretical perspective, coordination executed in governance networks takes a pluricentric form as many actors participate and influence network-processes by means of interaction. Network coordination embraces all activities in the network which may bring temporary stability, reduce conflicts and the scope of tasks. Network coordination is about negotiating values into a commonly accepted and recognized decision that all participants recognize as legitimate and can support its implementation. Network identity may enable negotiations, first of all, by motivating actors to engage in network processes and to perceive others decisions as being their own. Network identity and network coordination are interrelated at the point of achieving *joint* decisions. While network coordination strives to reduce conflicts into common decisions a network identity may enable such a coordinating process. Figure 1: Network management as a means for achieving network identity and facilitating coordination in a

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<sup>2</sup> Renate Mayntz stated that the network can achieve coordination and corporation in a way neither typical of market nor of hierarchies (1993:11). Mayntz expressed the need for studying networks' dynamics before researchers can state how successful network coordination takes place.

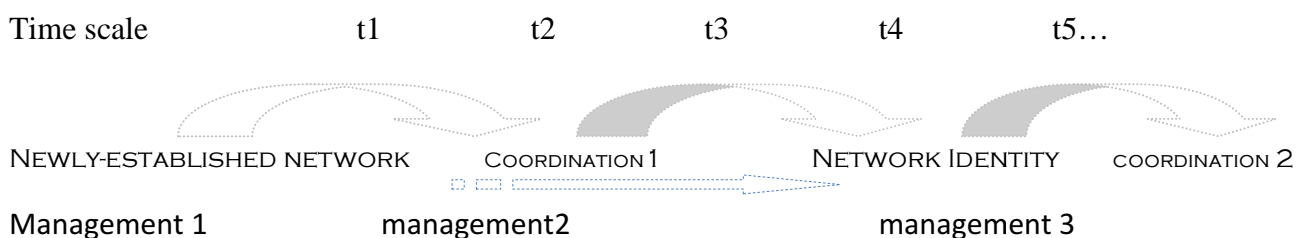


governance network. Figure 1 below illustrates the overall theoretical claim that network management may enable developing network identity and network identity may enable processes of network-coordination.



**Figure 1: Network management as a means for achieving network identity and facilitating coordination in a governance network.**

Figure 1 shows the process of development of a network identity parallel to the impact that network identity may have on the coordination that takes place within the particular governance network. Network identity is usually not present in the beginning of a governance networks' existence. If network members express the need to develop a network identity the network manager will need to apply particular management tools that help developing such an identity. I label these tools Management 1. If management1-strategy fails to meet its purpose, a network manager is reinforced to think new management strategy, management 2 in order to achieve the goal. Changing management strategies depends on the content of the network identity and on the internal and external processes that support or undermine it. Changes can also happen due to attempts to rethink network coordination. On the other hand, in praxis, the process from time 1 (t1) to time 4 (t4), may not be one way at all, simply due to the expectation that the act of network coordination unfolds at all times. Figure 2 illustrates that development of network identity is expected to happen over time and due to active management which strategy may change to adjust the goals of that identity:



**Figure 2: Relation between network identity and network coordination**

Considering that governance networks often are established with an aim to solve particular policy problems the identity development, management and coordination are expected to intertwine. Those were the theoretical arguments.

Empirical studies of business networks show that creating a strong network identity can motivate members to participate and share knowledge; it can lower the costs associated with the acquisition

of specialized knowledge; and it can create tacit norms for coordination (Dyer and Nobeoka 2000:352, ref. to Kogut and Zander 1996:502).

Even though a few scholars hint at the importance of building identity in modern organizations, network theories have not yet offered a definition of network identity as a distinctive identity. Filling that lack, the thesis develops the content of network identity, and it elaborates the criteria for examining empirically how development of a network identity unfolds in new-established and dissimilar governance networks.

By concentrating the analytical focus on identity development, an understanding of how story telling in a network can help creating a joint problem solving among actors despite differences in interest orientations they might hold, is achieved. By focusing on identity development in governance networks that are forced to collaborate across differences in organizational cultures and institutional practices the thesis shows how conflicts in networks may be resolved. Examples of network that involve actors with different organizational identities and who need to coordinate in the conditions of competition are the Growth Forum (GF) and the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC). While the Growth Forum is a formal decision maker and coordinator of regional entrepreneurial development, the Municipal Contact Committee includes all municipal policy areas in the debate. Both networks are established in the cause of Danish Local Government Reform (LGR) 2007.

The thesis carries out a longitude case study of the Municipal Contact Committee and Regional Growth Forum, regarding how the process of identity development unfolds within the two networks. By showing processes of identity development over time, April 2006 to September 2010 the longitude case study helps building the first steps in building an empirical foundation for the concept of network identity.

From general introduction to this thesis the focus is now shifting to a more thorough reasoning on the notion of network identity.

## **1.1 Network identity**

The majority of studies on individual and collective identity emphasise how identity is a source of motivation. For example, scholars of regional identity claim that regional identity provides people with shared regional values. These values may transform the region into a cultural and economic space in the struggle for resources and power in a broader socio-spatial system (Paasi 2001:138). Also organisational identity theory has argued that people who “perceive themselves to share group membership with another in a given context, not only expect to agree with people of that group on issues relevant to their shared identity, but are motivated to strive actively to reach agreement and to coordinate their behaviour relation to those issues” (Cornelissen, Haslam, & Balmer, 2007, p. 5). Psychoanalysis points out that identity is synonymous with passion: “(...) at this unique instant demand and desire coincide, and it is this which gives to the ego this blossoming of identificatory joy from which jouissance springs” (Lacan 2. May 1962 in Stavrakakis, 2005, p. 72). The passion

of identifying with certain network values may be a powerful motivational drive. Given that nowadays policy processes are characterized by overloads of network-like channels of participation into which actors are constantly facing new opportunities to enter in a network, it becomes crucial to analyse to what extent identifying with a particular network and the issues it treats influences the actor's choice of and participation in that particular network (Interview, mayor L.T. 2008). Experiences show that private organisations and companies develop and take advantage of organizational identity, not only to raise profits, nevertheless to overcome moments of crises<sup>3</sup>.

If it is true that people who share common values are motivated to reach consensus and coordinate their own behaviour according to these values, then developing a network identity may help motivating network participants to prioritize this particular network. Participation by itself does not necessary lead to joint decisions or solving policy problems. Network members need to believe they are mutually dependent. Each member of the network is indispensable, because the individual member brings crucial resources, ensures legitimacy, and in the end improves the network outcome. Institutionalized interdependence presupposes that actors proactively participate and are engaged in the network debates in that they importance becomes visible to each other. To achieve a high frequency of participation and fruitful network debates, the actors need to be motivated.

Empirical studies show that governance networks may dissolve in the long run due to insufficient motivation. Strong motivation to participate and make a difference in the network may help actors overcome mistrust and to develop shared meaning and the perception of shared destiny. To pursue joint problem solving is a core condition for achieving network coordination, and it is challenge to accomplish in newly established governance networks (Scharpf F. W., 1993). Due to initial conditions of multi-signification, it is unlikely that actors share collective understandings of the problem (Hajer 2005). Multi-significance means that actors, due to their identity, bring different beliefs and values into the network.

Network identity is equivalent to bridging from a condition of multi-signification to a condition of *unifying* multi-signification. In the initial stages, network-actors also face uncertainty about each other's wiliness to invest themselves for the purpose of the network's common good (Klijn 2005). Actors who initially lack the enthusiasm to engage in the network may after identifying with the network-values, become passionate about accomplishing the networks' goals. An overarching network identity does not mean that everybody in the network has to hold similar values and perceptions. Disagreements may become the source of progress (Scharpf 1978) (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004). Disagreements in the network mean that actors engage in themselves in a network about a particular value, and that they help the network to preserve its dynamics. And disagreements occur because actors hold different values and aspirations which are part of their identity (March and Olsen 1995). As an overarching point of identification, network identity may stimulate actors to take an active part in the network despite conflicts or wicked decisions they face.

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<sup>3</sup> Majken Schultz shows how the Danish company Bang and Olufsen managed to overcome a financial crisis by reflecting on its own identity, as a manufacturer of high quality and design video and audio technology. This example tells us how identity as self-awareness may help institutions, and companies to survive in moments of crises (Ingeniøren, 22. 05. 2008).

While group and organizational identity connect actors by the value of solidarity, a network identity connects its members by the value of difference. Taking advantage of difference is a key condition for a network to utilize its governing potentials it is important to provide space for diverse ideas, even when those ideas are conflicting.

Network identity implies that network members ascribe to a story line that:

- cherishes difference as a core value of the network
- develops a shared sense of purpose, a network level ‘We’

(Chapter 3 on network identity)

Considering that identity as a source of motivation and commitment needs to be accepted by the individual, a network member, and then during the process is enhanced among other individuals, other network members. Storylines that cherish the difference and create a network level “we” need to be actively constructed. As in the case of organizational identity, a network identity requires first of all an active management (Schultz and Hatch 2004). Long term formalized governance networks may have an advantage of developing network identity because the longer the network exists, the greater the possibility it has to develop a common identity. A network identity may keep actors on track, and it may provide them with meaningful answers as to why they should prioritize this network and not another.

## **1.2 Network identity calls for network management**

The theories of governance networks claim that an important role of network management is in achieving a well functional network. “... A management of activities is crucial to the achievement of fruitful results “(Klijn, 2005, p. 337). Network management may respond effectively to the series of network problems like, conflicting goal orientation, uncertainties of interaction, even to tacit issue like enthusiasm and motivation (theory chapter 2). The issue of motivation and enthusiasm among actors seems very crucial and in order to achieve these normative goals, the network management is required to be process oriented and they have to develop what I have labelled network identity. A strong network identity may both prevent lack of motivation and wicked conflicts as well as it may enable network-coordination. Why is it reasonable to assume network identity effects network coordination?

The above discussion has focused on how network identity may motivate network actors to access joint problem solving. It is now necessary to discuss assumption A2 (p.2), namely the claim that network identity may facilitate joint problem solving, and thereby coordination.

### 1.3 Consequences on coordination

In their frequently quoted book “Democratic Governance” (1995) James G. March and Johan Olsen claim that shared and consistent identities facilitate coordinated action. They are in particular focused on political identities, which they consider “... as an instrument of political mobilization and coordination ...to match the survival requirement imposed by the environment” (March & Olsen, 1995, p. 68). Although March and Olsen don’t explain precisely why political identities are a better instruments of coordination, than for example legal regulation, or receiving public assets, interpreting their theory in its totality, one gets the impression that March and Olsen believe, rather, in the effectiveness of soft instruments like solidarity, genuine dialog, and public ethos.

Firstly, governance networks include knowledgeable actors who can inspire, adjust, rephrase problems and propose solutions. Negotiations in a governance network are the main factor in producing policy coordination (Peters 2006:124; Sørensen and Torfing 2007:12, 74; Hajer 2005).

Secondly, governance networks may resolve two contradictory functions in coordination, namely common policy solving which cuts across several organizations while protecting the interests and goals of the home organization, the network participants represent. In order to succeed, a governance network needs to work out solutions which both satisfy the particular and common interests of the participants.

Thirdly, relative interdependence is the core characteristic in an ideal network type, and interdependence and trust among actors call for strong coordination. For example, Millward and Provan (1995) had worked on ideas about measuring the effectiveness and outcome of governance networks. They conclude that the effectiveness of a network is not equal to the sum of individual organizations’ success, but of how organizations lift the task at ‘network level performance’ (Kenis and Provan 2006:2). The necessity of working at the network level is highlighted by other scholars, for example, Jan Kooiman (1993, 2003) who points out how no single actor possesses the knowledge, capacity, and overview to effectively solve, what Kooiman characterizes as dynamic, diverse and complex public problems (Kooiman 2003:4).

Finally, relatively stable networks in which actors are mutually dependent may achieve relatively high welfare gains (Scharpf & Mohr, 1994, s. 4). Middle sized networks are a more effective form of coordination because the network connects actors from levels and positions which a hierarchy does not, and because the exchange of information and knowledge is direct. Consequently, the externality costs of coordination in a middle size group are low (Scharpf & Mohr, 1994).

Various theorists have described network coordination as horizontal self-coordination. The purpose of coordination is not a pure exchange of ideas and knowledge, but the joint production and distribution of public assets. Although coordination has predominantly positive connotations, like producing collective goods and reducing complexity, a moment of avoiding coordination may be necessary due to negative externalities which may be produced by trying to coordinate cross resorts (Thompson, Frances, Levacic, & Mitchell, 1991, p. 3). The risk of negative coordination is a side

effect in terms that important resources are lost. Therefore the extent and intensity of coordination is an unstable and always negotiating process (Christensen, Christiansen, & Ibsen, 1999, s. 81).

Given that a governance networks aspire to produce joint problem solving, it is more likely that governance network practices positive coordination. However, it is unlikely that all actors are equally connected at all times, which means that the relational structures of the network may impose a diversity of coordination, in which the continuum of a strong positive and a weak negative coordination may exist. Negative coordination in a governance network would mean the absence or exclusion of particular actors from the internal connectedness.

According to network theorists, in particular, Fritz Scharpf who offers the predominant ideas about network coordination, network coordination is about processes of *deciding* and *distributing* assets by joint strategies in a web of relations characterized by collaboration (elaborated further in the theory chapter 2). As mentioned previously, the act of coordination happens from the moment a network is established. Scholars emphasize the first moments as often being characterized by uncertainties and significant differences in actors' perceptions of networks' goals, functioning, interrelations, etc. In other words, collaboration is not given. Empirical studies show how governance networks that operate with scarce resources often need to rely on voluntary participation and intentionally develop stories that create synergy and a common ground of action (Sørensen and Torfing 2000).

Scholars of public administration pay attention to the role of stories, symbols, and shared meaning. This way of studying governance networks and public policy is at common dominator labeled interpretive approach (Yanow 2000, Hajer and Wagenaar 2003, Bevir and Rhodes 2003). This thesis is inspired by the interpretive approach in studying network coordination and network identity as well. Given that the interpretive approach cherishes the role of beliefs, values and traditions in understanding social and political behavior, this approach can help investigating how the diversity of beliefs in the studied governance networks is transcended from disparate into compatible. Even though total coordination is implausible due to immanent mechanisms of exclusion in any network, successful coordination would be the one which reduces chaos and complexity and creates temporary stability.

The processes of coordination have a reverse impact on identity: a network may develop a common identity during processes of coordination; and it can also be that the scope and characteristics of network coordination are highly influenced by network identity. How these processes unfold is to be examined empirically. The success level and outcome of these processes is, according to scholars varying with management initiatives. This means that network management may be an important constitutive of network coordination and identity too. The relationship between network identity, network management and network coordination can be illustrated as a parallel process with simultaneous consequentiality:



**Figure 3: The relation between management and identity development**

Figure 3 shows that network identity is created and changed due to the network management (process and institutional design), which consequentially influences the processes of coordination. The figure attempts to illustrate how different management strategies over time period (1, 2 ...) can influence the dynamics in the creation of network identity and coordination in that those develop different content which are marked by numbers (1, 2 ...). Even if joint problem solving and network identity is achieved within a governance network it is still an empirical question as to whether joint problem solving improves the coordination regardless of creation of network identity. For example, negative coordination, where partners do not collaborate at all, clearly decreases coordination scope. The impact the development of identity has on the coordination processes relates to the governance networks is a situational and empirical matter.

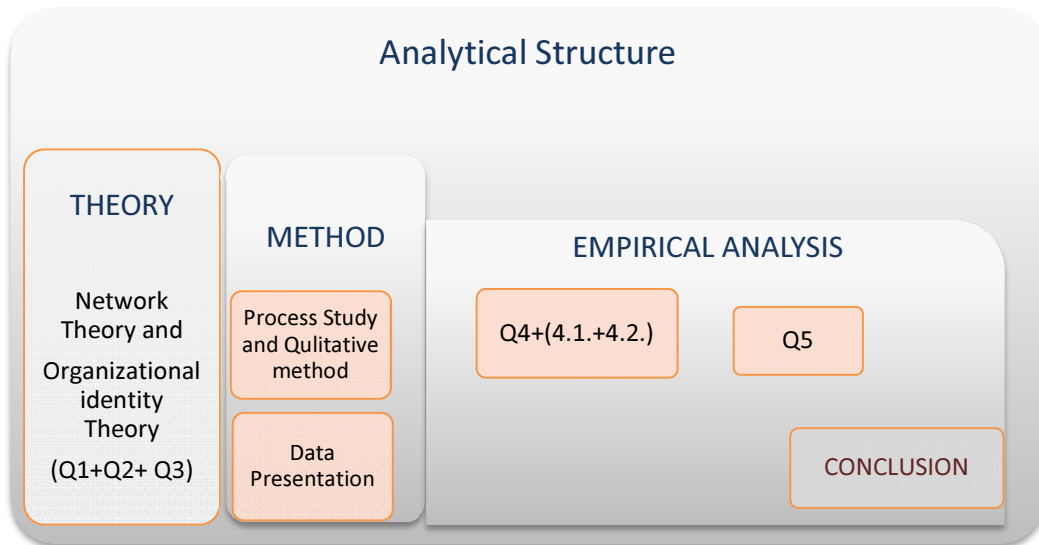
Thus, the main research question to be answered using the empirical data is:

**Which management strategies facilitate the development of a network identity in the pursuit of network coordination?**

Sub-questions that will guide the structure of the thesis are:

1. What is network coordination?
2. What is network identity?
3. What is network management and which management strategies can help developing network identity?
4. What characterises the content of the network identity in the Growth Forum (GF) and the Municipal Contact Committee MCC)?
  - Which management strategies and how enable the development of the network identity in the Growth Forum and the MCC?
  - Does, and if so how, a story-line of identity influence the process of coordination?
5. What can be learned from comparing the Growth Forum and the MCC?

The sub-questions Q1, Q2 and Q3 are answered though theoretical discussion, while question Q4 is answered through empirical analysis of the Growth Forum and the MCC. Q5 are answered in chapter that compares the two governance networks. The Figure 4 below shows the disposition of the thesis.



**Figure 4: The structure and the disposition of the theses**

The overview of the chapters introduces the theory, methods, empirical data and analysis and it describes how the main research question and sub-questions are epistemologically and methodologically answered.

The thesis examines how policy coordination happens through governance networks and whether network coordination may be enabled by developing a network identity. The main research question traverses earlier and new research agendas. The issue of coordination has occupied scholars of public administration as long as the disciplinary foundations of public administration studies exist (Peters 2006). However, when combined with the study of identity processes in the governance network, the thesis is ascribed to the newer waves of governance network studies. The theses offer a novel perspective on an ancient problem.

## 1.4 Chapter overview

INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

Introduction: Research problem, main hypothesis, main research question and thesis structure

THEORY

Chapter 1: Network Coordination

For the purpose of analysing the relationship between network coordination and identity in a governance network it is necessary to clarify what a governance network is and how it is distinguished from a hierarchy, market, or an organization. The chapter discusses characteristics of a governance network as mean of policy coordination when the focus is sat mainly on the story lines and storytelling.



## Chapter 2: Network Identity

In this chapter, I review the theory of organizational identity with the theory of governance networks in order to define the main values of a network identity.

## Chapter 3: Network Management

Having defined network identity this chapter identifies the concrete management strategies that may lead to development of a network identity in a concrete governance network. These strategies are analyzed in the empirical data (chapter 6 and 7).

## METHOD

### Chapter 4: Method

The method chapter is primarily written in the terms of ‘what I’ve done’. First, I reflect on what I find the best way to examine the creation of network identity and its implications for network coordination. I describe how observations, qualitative interviews and document studies complement each other. I also provide examples of criteria for gathering and interpreting the data. As the main aspects of the local government reform were introduced in 2007, I had opportunity to conduct a process study which enables researcher to capture moments of coherence and disruption in identity development, and thereby it helps understanding under which conditions and how coordinating policies are interrelated in the articulation of the network identity.

## EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

### Chapter 5: Case presentation

This introduction of the empirical analysis neatly describes the Regional Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee as two different networks in terms of their institutional arrangements. Although being different, the two networks are related to each other by the common task of coordinating regional development policy. The chapter also describes the 2007 Danish Local Government Reform (LGR) which is the political background for the two cases. As the most profound (and perhaps most controversial political reform since the decentralization in 1970’s), the LGR 2007 is a significant case which offers the contemporary possibility of studying network identity and coordination. LGR 2007 is characterized by terminating existing networks and creating new network relations; by produced governing bodies that in its logic are ordered simultaneously compete and collaborate; and by governing uncertainties, enforcing politicians and administrations to learning by doing.

### Chapter 6: Growth Forum (GF)

*Analysis 1: Network identity - its content and process.* This analysis describes the *characteristics* of network identity developed in the Regional Growth Forum. It also presents how the identity has changed over the period of four years.

*Analysis 2: Managing network identity.* It describes how different network management strategies are implemented and have influenced the creation of network identity. The role of network manager in the creation of network identity is discussed as well.

*Analysis 3: Network identity and network coordination.* This analysis discusses critically the relationship between network identity and network coordination: to what extent has the development of network identity impact on coordination of policy within the Growth Forum?

#### Chapter 7: Municipal Contact Committee (MCC)

The analysis 1, 2 and 3 are structured the same way as it is with the case of the Growth Forum.

*Analysis 1: Network identity - its content and process*

*Analysis 2: Managing network identity in practice*

*Analysis 3: Network identity and network coordination*

#### Chapter 8: Case Comparing

This chapter discusses how *differences* in the MCC and the GF regarding the developed network identity; the implemented management strategies, and the relation to the coordination of policy, can be explained. What can we learned from these two cases?

#### Chapter 9: Conclusion and Prospects for future research

Danish Summary

References

Appendix

## THEORY

This part of the thesis discusses and further develops the concept of network coordination, network identity and network management. As described in the introduction, the relationship between these concepts builds on the assumption that a) network coordination can be enhanced by a network identity, and that b) a network identity is not given but needs to be developed by proactive network management.

Considering that the existing theories do not provide an adequate understanding of the three concepts, it is necessary to do so. This can be achieved by combining theories in a novel way.

This theory part establishes a framework which will later be employed to analyze the empirical data presented in chapters six and seven. The theory section is divided into three chapters, each concerning one of the three concepts referred to above, and a summary.

Chapter one engages in defining a notion of network coordination from an interpretive approach. First, the current definitions of a governance network are reviewed. Then I reflect on potentials and challenges governance networks face in producing collective action. The chapter discusses and elaborates the notion of network coordination. It extrapolates the main question I pose when identifying and analyzing network coordination in the empirical data.

Chapter two concerns the conceptualization of network identity. Given that network theories have not yet clearly defined a notion of network identity, I examine social identity theory and organizational identity theory regarding how these theories can contribute to define the concept of network identity. After having defined the content and main ontological characteristics of network identity, its key elements will be employed in interpreting the empirical data.

Chapter three discusses the management tools that are appropriate for developing a network identity. Both the literature on network management and that on organizational identity are reviewed in order to select and propose the concrete management strategies that may *enable* the development of network identity.

Finally, a discussion about how the three concepts are identified in the empirical data is undertaken.

# Chapter 1 Network coordination as story-telling

“...as Pressman and Wildawsky (1984) argued some years ago, much more has been said about creating coordination than actually has been done about it, and coordination remains a principal “philosophers’ stone” in the analysis of good public administration” (Peters, 2006, p. 115)

Contemporary theory on public administration has dealt with the theme of how to create coordination mechanisms that effectively solve challenges of complex and messy public policies. In this debate, coordination that unfolds through governance networks is seen as a promising way of combining affirmative aspects of market and hierarchical coordination and achieving a more optimal coordination approach. This is because a governance network connects vertical and horizontal levels of governance (Scharpf and Mohr 1994, Börzel 1997). The notion of network coordination has predominantly been defined in terms of game theory and social choice institutionalism.

This chapter reviews the existing approaches to network coordination and employs interpretive theory in order to take into account the role of story-telling in the processes of network coordination.

The chapter reviews the literature on governance networks and selects a definition of a governance network that is the starting point for the theoretical discussion of the concepts of network coordination and network identity. Then the literature that has treated the theme of coordination within policy and public administration is reviewed in order to develop an adequate definition of network coordination. Finally, the relation to the empirical research will be discussed.

## 1.1 Clarifying the concept of governance network

Contemporary definitions of governance networks can be placed on the scale ranging from rational choice institutionalism to sociological neo-institutionalism. The narrower definitions of governance networks are even more plentiful. Quantitative analysis, for example, Social Network Analysis maps the number of relations and the directions of network relations which helps analyzing the scope and characteristics of the network relations. One of the first qualitative definitions of governance networks can be found in the work of Swedish political scientist Benny Hjern. Hjern defines policy networks as collective actors who represent:

“... a set of members of public or private organizations who (1) make decisions on how to use combined resources in (2) some class of problems, having (3) a widely shared set of constraint and (4) who are in a communication network with one another.” (Hjern 1982:22)

During 1990s studies concerning the mapping of the proliferation, typology and importance of governance networks in public policies flourished. Each study provided its own definition. Governance networks are perceived as:

“... Webs of relatively stable and ongoing relationships which mobilizes and pool dispersed resources so that collective (or parallel) action can be orchestrated toward the solution of a common policy.” (Kenis and Schneider 1991:36)

Networks combine a plurality of autonomous actors who pursue chosen goals by coordinated action (Mayntz 1993:9). Those agents represent a cluster of connected organizations that are mutually dependent on resources (Rhodes, 1997, p. 37). And agents’ interactions are shaped around a policy problem or policy program (Kickert, Klijn and Koppenjan 1997:6). Thereby governance networks represent a form of *co-governance* suited in a moment of relatively open public-private interplay which represents a variety of interests (Kooiman, 2003, p. 106).

Governance networks are also perceived as a communicative action. Communicative governance action flourishes to deal with ever increasing complexity. Networked governance which emphasizes interaction and communication has not only had an impact on policy making but also on how we study it (ibid. 5). Its main concern is how to remove systematic blockages in the development and execution of joint action (Crozier, 2007, s. 6). Interaction that generates mutual trust is often regarded as being crucial for lowering transaction costs (Crozier, 2007, s. 6).

Eva Sørensen and Jacob Torfing (2007) present a definition that includes the key elements of the definitions of networks outlined above. In doing so, they offer an inclusive approach to governance networks. In their work a governance network is described as: (1) A relatively stable horizontal articulation of interdependent but operationally autonomous actors; (2) Who interact through negotiations; (3) Which take place within a regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework; (4) That is self-regulating within limits set by external agencies; and (5) Which contributes to the production of public purpose (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 9).

Distinctions between networks may be made based on what constitutes actors’ ties, boundaries, and internal and external dynamics. Dependent on the country, the level of governance and policy area governance networks may be formal or informal, open and closed, short and long lived, bottom-up initiated and top down-designed, and sector and policy specific (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009, p. 237). Formal, top-down networks are usually closed and preoccupied with decision making over policies, while bottom-up networks participate more in policy implementation (Rhodes, 1997).

A collective form of organization that is synonymous to governance network is that of *partnership*. It describes collaboration between private and public organizations and institutions. Although being closely related to the notion of governance networks, partnership is different at the point of mutual obligation between the private and the public institutions. While governance networks can flourish solely due to the need to legitimize and enrich policy making by deliberative forums, partnerships are often initiated by the desire to deliver public service. Often, partnerships include financial contract between public institutions and a private stakeholders. The contracts in partnerships often

involve financing, while networks can rely on voluntarily engagement and a broader base (Lewis 2005:10, Greve, 2003).

Sørensen's and Torfing's (2007) definition represents an overarching and meticulous characterization of governance networks. As such it is helpful in identifying whether the networks I study indeed function according to characteristics of a governance network. I adopt Sørensen's and Torfing's network definition as a starting point to select criteria by which the empirical analysis will be guided.

The first important consideration to be made is to ask whether all the above criteria need to be fulfilled to understand a certain organizing form as a governance network. Or, is it reasonable to label a network a governance network if only a few criteria are met? I argue that the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> criteria are fundamentally crucial without which the idea of governance network dissolves. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> criteria can, in principle, matter for hierarchical institutions. The notion of interdependence, relative autonomy, negotiations and self regulation are in no sense given. These values need to be achieved through network processes. To what extent and how these characteristics of a governance network are articulated in practice, and nonetheless what their dynamical relationship implies for the processes of coordination inside the governance network is the task for empirical analysis.

The second crucial consideration in determining a governance network is how autonomous and self-governed actors in the network are. Jan Kooiman claims that self-governance is when a network has the capacity to develop its own identity and show a high degree of political autonomy (Kooiman, 1993, p. 79). Self-governing networks develop, most likely, in civil society, voluntary, where top down is less effective (Kooiman, 2003, p. 83) or in relation to service delivery difficult to substitute. Governance networks hold a *self-governing* attributes: the stronger aspiration in the network to develop independence from the political system is the greater challenge becomes to govern it (Kooiman, 1993, p. 81).

These attributes are important because only a well-functioning governance network can achieve coordination with the lowest external cost (Scharpf and Mohr 1994). Even the most technical acts of coordination of public policy are happening within frameworks of political, democratic institutions (Peters 2006). The trade off between concern for budgetary efficiency and democratic values such as legitimacy, accountability and transparency are continuously considered by decision makers (Börzel and Panke 2007).

The end of this chapter elaborates the criteria to analyse the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and the 4<sup>th</sup> dimensions of governance network, while the methods chapter describes how concretely the data is collected to conduct an empirical analysis of the three criteria.

## **1.2 Institutional and organizational aspect in a governance network**

The claims made about public governing in the past two decades point at a few central tendencies: central government shares the public service delivery performance to prolific sub-groups,

institutions, which take the form of self-organizing interrelations, including multiplicity of actors from public, private, voluntary organizations, who cherish interests to the specific policy area. Since it becomes impossible for the sovereign to control massy and complex policy processes, a new 'softer' action forms based on interdependence rather than control, and soft steering instruments, are used for inducement (Rhodes 1997:51). When scholars study governance networks they focus not only on self-organizing form also how networks are initiated top-down initiated. The empirical outlining of governance networks encompasses therefore a broad variety of networks ranging from loosely coupled interlinks among organizations to constitutionally grounded and institutionalized arenas of coordination and decision making as is case with coordination counseling committees (e.g. Andersen and Torfing 2004).

"Like organizations themselves implementation networks are intended to be used as instruments for mobilizing the energies and efforts of individual actors to deal with the problem at hand" (O'Toole, 2007, p. 139).

The organizing characteristics of a network are different from an organization because it misses a unifying objective and leadership capable of imposing sanctions and control over the participants by the chain of command. The networks actors' autonomy and independence prevent the exercise of hierarchical monitoring and control. A governance network can barely be defined as an institution either in a sense of well integrated system of social interactions based on fixed rules, norms and procedures and therefore governance networks are marked by ambiguity: Informal types of network have, in the beginning, no clearly defined or commonly accepted rules. Interactions inside the networks may take a form of uncertainty, ambiguity and conflicts. Although governance networks, particularly formal networks, may be institutionalized but due the continuous possibilities of conflicts and lack of sanction, it is rather useful to reflect on how they produce stable social patterns of interaction, roles and identities of the actors. Order and stability in the network may only be partial and interactions contingent. As many governance networks are established with a short horizon related to certain issue networks, they have less possibility of institutionalizing particular norms and values (Sørensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 26).

As is described in the literature on policy and public administration, network coordination is conceptualized and developed in relation to market and hierarchical coordination. The following section discusses the main theoretical contributions to defining a concept of network coordination.

### **1.3 Coordination**

Coordination is a somewhat elusive and contested concept. In Latin, to coordinate means 'to bring together'. Scholars of public administration use different labels for coordination: positive and negative coordination, vertical and horizontal coordination, external and indirect coordination, interactive and non-interactive, self-coordination; pluricentric coordination (Peters, 2006; Scharpf 1978; Sørensen, Pedersen, & Sehested, 2009, p. 11). The discussion about network coordination has unfolded in parallel to the one on coordination qua market and hierarchy and it is synonymous with self-coordination and poly-centric coordination.

While the central feature of market coordination is the demand and supply of goods and services, hierarchical coordination is about executing sovereign control and sanctions on upbringing legislation and delivering services to citizens. While market coordination is based on exit and exchange, hierarchical coordination is achieved qua the vertical chain of command in which higher level executive command the employer below. Supporters of *laissez faire* politics would favour market coordination due to its self-regulating mechanisms in achieving a balance in production and service of welfare goods. Given that market coordination can produce undesirable externalities, it is used with precaution in public policies as a solo coordination instrument. The hierarchical coordination form(s) has been the most extensively applied in public institutions due to the idea that the government is mandated for developing structures, as rules and procedures which ensure legitimacy, transparency, responsibility and accountability (Peters, 2006, pp. 116-117, Kooiman, 1993, p. 75, Scharpf F. W., 1993, p. 147). The acts of coordination are indisputably bounded by these democratic values.

Numerous empirical studies made during the 1980 and 1990 claimed to show government failure and thereby challenged the idea of sovereign and ubiquitous hierarchical coordination (Lipsky, Pressman and Wildawsky 1973, Kaufmann, Majone and Ostrom 1986; Hjern and Hull 1984). Recognizing that hierarchical coordination *alone* is inadequate, the researchers and practitioners<sup>4</sup> began to consider other coordination possibilities that may help in resolving the challenges of increased societal complexity and dynamics<sup>5</sup>. Governments' concrete response involved establishing network-organizing forms such as coordination committees, coordination boards, and administrative coordination unites, all of which specifically were designed to coordinate certain policies (e.g. Andersen and Torfing 2004).

If governance networks represent neither hierarchy nor market but mixes components of the two, it becomes relevant to ask: which aspects of an institution or an organization a governance network possess?

The core ideas of network-coordination trace its historical roots, among others, in Charles Lindblom's work published in 1965. Including experiences from market coordination Lindblom reflected on how actors in public institutions can realize a form of self-coordination. He meant that in order to coordinate among actors, not always a central agent needs to steer them (Lindblom, 1965, pp. 3, 25). Actors can simply adjust to each other in that they take each other's ideas, and suggestions into consideration (Lindblom, 1965, p. 24). Mutual adjustment can be illustrated as: X considers Y's ideas and Y considers X's.

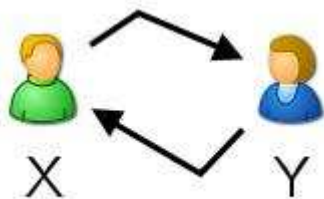
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4 In studies of design and establishing governance networks Peter Triantafillou argues how the researchers ideas influence practitioner's perceptions of how to steer public policy (Triantafillou 2007:183-196).

5 Kooiman thinks that hierarchy is not shrinking but changing: from command to regulation, from procuring to unable from benevolence to activation (Kooiman, 1993, p. 116). Steering implies directed governing; the governor has a general idea where to go, An image of a future the society ought to develop (Kooiman, 1993, p. 117). Hierarchy uses regulation instead of command; enabling instead of procuring and activation rather than benevolence. Hierarchical regulation is present in almost every policy area but the sensitive ones are exposed more to control.



### Two-actor mutual adjustment:



### Multiple actors' adjustment:

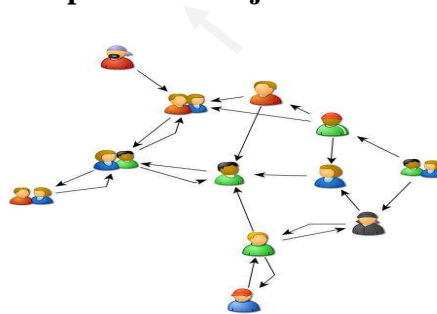


Figure 5: Illustration of a Two-actor mutual adjustment and a Network adjustment

In a governance network many actors need to adjust to each other, and the characteristic of actors relations may differ as well: some actors may be tightly linked, while others communicate randomly. To coordinate all actors' ideas at all issues may be demanding, if not an impossible, task. The important goal of coordination is to provide room for interaction so everybody feels they have an opportunity to participate in that coordination.

Why do actors need to adjust? Because according to Lindblom they are dependent on each other, not only due the need to exchange resources in decision making but also due to the principles of democracy, namely that many actors are included and heard (Lindblom, 1965). The question is when an act of mutual adjustment is coordinated?

Decisions are coordinated "... if each decision is adapted to the others in such a way that for each adjusted decision the adjustment is thought to be better than no adjustment in the eyes of at least one decision maker" (Lindblom, 1965, p. 24). Not all decision makers can be included, and coordination does not always go smoothly. Even in hierarchical organizational forms, actors strive for strategies that optimize their own view. Therefore Lindblom proposes a series of interaction approaches to achieve mutual adjustments: reciprocity, bargaining, calculation, and authoritative persuasion which then may serve to the supreme purpose of coordination, namely to disperse power while making wise policy decisions (Lindblom, 1965, p. intro, p.329). Lindblom's theory parallels current theories of coordination. Actors can decide to coordinate policies, or to avoid coordination. In the literature this is termed positive and negative coordination.

Positive coordination means to maximize effectiveness and efficiency by exploring and utilizing the joint strategy of several actors, or organizational units. Negative coordination is associated with limited objectives: any new initiative taken by one specialized sub-unit will not interfere with the established policy and interest of other units (Scharpf F. W., 1993, p. 143). Negative coordination is about bilateral negotiations and clearing out policy options. If successful, negative coordination can dramatically reduce complexity and the transaction costs of self regulation. However, negative coordination may result in loss of welfare, especially if the actors boycott important relations. Positive coordination, on the other hand, is associated with multi lateral negotiations between all involved units which want to share expertise. Scharpf claims that positive coordination will balance

externalities associated with the policy options of several units and thereby increase the possibility of an overall welfare optimum (Scharpf F. W., 1993, p. 143). Positive coordination implies that participants "...simultaneously solve production problems and resolve conflicts over distribution" (Scharpf & Mohr, 1994, s. 19). For an even more optimal outcome Scharpf proposes a combination of negative and positive self-coordination, or simply to use the one that is most appropriate in a particular situation (Scharpf F. W., 1993, p. 144).

Positive and negative coordination are still forms of self-coordination, in which the idea is that actors coordinate on own premises without interference of central government.

The concept of positive and negative coordination, as defined by Fritz Scharpf, is based on the notions of Game theory. According to the main principles of Game Theory coordination is about maximizing the benefit of partners involved in coordination problems. All actors involved in 'coordination games' can achieve mutual benefit, only if they choose consistent strategies. Game theory offers relatively simple ideas and advocates for the profitable and effective outcomes of human relations of which reason it appears as a reasonable ontology of human behavior.

The coordination of simple activities in everyday life can indeed be explained as a search for an optimal solution. For example, when two drivers meet on a narrow road, giving space to each other to pass is an optimal coordination choice: they pass without collision. Suppose a traffic jam embracing cars whose drivers are enthusiastic to be the first to reach their destination. They argue and disagree on ways to decide the priorities of passing, while they feel they are equally ranked to influence the decision. This is a simplified illustration of political life in a governance network. Obviously, the coordination games in complex conditions become remarkably complicated. How can political actors take advantage of Game Theory to solve their disputes? How does Game Theory explain actors' reasoning for deciding in accordance with the best coordination outcome? Even if we explain complex coordination activities as a consequence of rational calculations for self-profit maximizing, rationalistic game theory does not tell us *why* actors may express different rationalities. Explanations become a metaphor of universal rationality which underestimates the importance of interaction processes on the actors' view. Although the core claims of Game Theory about actors self-maximizing behavior still remains in many theories of public administration, scholars had to supplement rationalistic explanations with key arguments from new institutionalism, developing thereby rational choice new-institutionalism which today is weaved into some of the most prominent studies of governance networks (for example, Klijn, Koppenjan, O'Toole, Schneider).

This leads to the ideas of coordination which see coordination as a process of making compatibility among diverse aspirations. If coordination is perceived as the consequence of the demand for compatibility and making order in otherwise chaotic policy world then coordination is about "...bringing into a relationship otherwise disparate activities or events and making them compatible" (Thompson, Frances, Levacic, & Mitchell, 1991, p. 3). It is also about "... (re)integration of separated but interdependent actors who somehow need to adapt to each other, while there is always a degree of antagonism among them, based on the different and specialised tasks they perform within an organisation or between them" (Kooiman, 2003, pp. 72-73). While making compatibility possible, coordination takes shape of a *process*.

Linking coordination to the notion of interdependence, Kooiman points to a positive correlation between the actors' interdependence and their need for coordination: stronger interdependence urges a stronger need for coordination and vice versa (Kooiman, 2003, p. 73). This is a further step in defining the network coordination.

In accomplishing the notion of network coordination I combine previously described positive self-coordination with the main organizing characteristics of governance networks. Thus, a more apt description of coordination-characteristics in a governance network can be achieved.

#### 1.4 Defining network coordination<sup>6</sup>

Previously, I have pointed out that the aspects of interdependence, negotiation, as well as self-regulation are absolutely crucial for a governance network to be a network. In a network there will be no control in a strict sense because actors are relatively autonomous and they can leave the network at any time they want without being sanctioned. Characteristics of relations are the most crucial parameter when one wants to determine whether a certain organizational form is a network. The more multilateral and dense the relations, the more likely it is a network-organizing form. The description I presented previously is an ideal typical form of governance network. Bottom-up initiated informal networks can be more open to including new actors. However, the issue of criteria for inclusion and exclusion of actors in informal networks is very important. Whether a network allows open deliberation and the production of common values is a matter of how relational processes unfold in praxis. In order to achieve success, a governance network has to balance consensus and conflict, openness and closure, flexibility and stability. For example, networks established by legislation are usually closed for new members. Internal exchange of information and open dialogue are crucial for successful joint task accomplishment (Sørensen & Torfing 2007, p. 9; Scharpf & Mohr, 1994, s. 20), Schaap L 2007, Koppenjan 2007).

Given that the purpose of governance networks is to foster and not avoid corporation, the positive coordination form as described by Scharpf is crucial for defining network coordination. One possibility to define *network coordination* is by synthesizing ideas of positive coordination with definition of governance network:

Network Coordination  $\Leftrightarrow$  Positive Coordination + Governance Network

If positive coordination is defined as:

Positive coordination implies that participants "...simultaneously solve production problems and resolve conflicts over distribution" (Scharpf & Mohr, 1994, s. 19)

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<sup>6</sup> Fritz Scharpf, Renate Mayntz, and Jan Kooiman have made significant contributions to the issue of coordination related to governance networks. Scharpf, Mayntz and Kooiman's theoretical ideas are therefore the starting point for farther developing the notion of network coordination.

If a governance network is characterized by:

A relatively stable set of interdependent but operationally autonomous and negotiating actors, who engage in joint problem solving of public policies by taking advantage of intercultural collaboration and resource-diversity (inspired by Sørensen & Torfing, 2005, s. 15) ...

... then network coordination can globally be defined as:

Processes of production and distribution of public goods by means of joint collaboration achieved upon web of relations.

Notably, the dimension of conflict is left out, and the idea of coordination as a process is brought in. The underlying reasoning for this is, given that network coordination unfolds as a process, the conflicts, even being immanent, are expected to be resolved during that process. Resolving conflict and achieving collaboration is merely implicit condition of any network process, and thereby network coordination. Also, it is important to emphasise the complexity and *multitude of relations* that often characterise governance networks and that coordination ideally should *reduce* that complexity. Network coordination is labelled as 'a process' simply because coordination is 'to be achieved' over time and in parallel with the network process.

The 'distribution of public goods' is the crucial point on which network members may disagree simply because it concerns the issue of who will benefit when taking a particular decision. To accept decisions which do not directly benefit own aspirations, an actor needs to hold a belief that either s/he will profit next time or simply s/he need being committed to the network as whole. Developing the network relations in which actors want to participate even if they do not gain an immediate profit is particularly important for governance networks which deal with abstract collective policies like regional development.

In a policy area that brings no immediate gains to the actors involved influencing actors' perceptions of connectedness and common reasoning is a crucial approach to coordinate. One tool in creating common meaning is to tell a story that affects and may even change actor's current perceptions. Story-telling is recognized as a powerful and desired steering approach in coordinating diverse kind of networks (Bevir 2003, Reff-Pedersen 2010).

The crucial question then is: How does the defying network coordination unfold when the dimension of story-telling is encountered?

## **1.5 Network Coordination as story telling**

Telling stories is used in organisational contexts to influence actors' perceptions and agency. Once a story is told and it receives resonance it may influence actors' beliefs, self perceptions and practices. These practices may turn over time into tradition, forming the background for actors'

utterance(s), while social structure forms the background of their action (Yanow, 2000, Bevir & Rhodes, 2006, p. 77). However, the content of utterance does not arise from the social, political conditions alone but from the way the actors develop and change the traditions (Bevir 2004:614). Value-change and rethinking ought to happen in a *continuous* dialog with all the network actors. To be involved in developing values and to feel accepted despite having different beliefs increases the probability that actors will act according to those values. Focusing on value-creation, story-telling and contingency of meaning and practice counts within an interpretive approach. When following the logics of the interpretive approach to understand coordination implies to describe how perceptions, traditions, and beliefs re-shape the process of resolving and distributing public assets, joint strategies, visions and courses of action; and how those beliefs are modelled, and reshaped by the web of actors' relations within and outside the governance network.

How does story telling influence coordination?

As a starting point, story-telling can help actors from different positions to comprehend the need to coordinate (Reff-Pedersen 2009). Thus, story-telling is a mean, an instrument to achieve a goal of coordination, although this instrument is not given at hand but need to be created. If a story shall have an effect to couple diverse actors it needs being recognized by them, and that means the story needs broad phrase. This is called story-line. I will explain the meaning of story-line in a moment.

## 1.6 Story-line

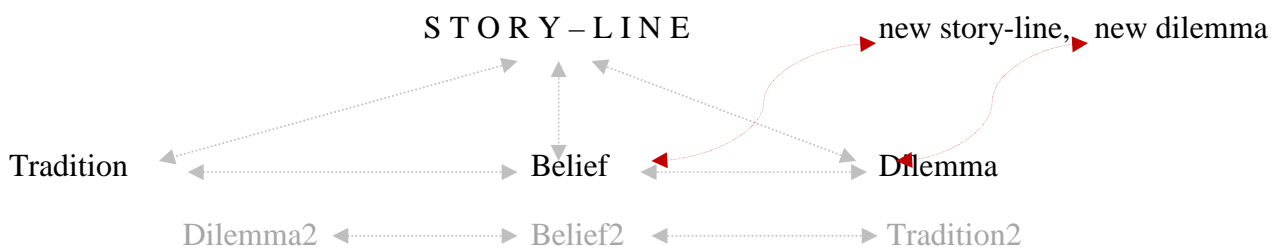
A story line is defined as 'narrative on social reality through which elements from many different domains are combined to provide actors with a set of symbolic references that suggest a common understanding' (Hajer M. A., 1995, s. 62). Story lines, according to Hajer aid in overcoming fragmentation. By uttering a specific element the sender effectively re-invokes the story-line as a whole (Hajer M. A., 1995, s. 62). It works as a metaphor that keeps actors together (Hajer M. A., 1995, s. 65). A story-line suggests unity in perplexing variety of separate discursive components of parts for a particular problem like Regional Development (Hajer M. A., 1995, s. 56).

A story-line gets its power when actors think the story sounds right (Hajer M. A., 1995, s. 67), not necessary because it sounds logical, or in accordance to their knowledge. Once taking a position as its own person constantly seeks to express the world from that position. A person's images, metaphors, conduct towards others takes departure point from that story (Hajer M. A., 1995, s. 56).

The story-line can provide actors with a feeling of stability and comfort as the story line represents a cognitive frame, 'this is the way we used to speak'. As cognitive structuring force story-lines can include and in some cases also marginalize certain perceptions, ideas and values, in tune with whom, where, and when it promotes them.

Not all stories are compatible enough to become a story-line, simply as network members may not find all articulated stories meaningful or legitimate (Reff-Pedersen 2009). Not all beliefs actors hold can be related to one story line and neither can a single story-line necessarily embrace relevant

beliefs an actor holds. It is possible that actors hold beliefs that are related to different story lines that in some instances may even collide<sup>7</sup>. *Traditions* as institutionalised belief-system influence how actors think, which experiences they have from the past that may influence the present, and so on. Thus traditions can be perceived as one constitutive part of the story-line. To matter, a tradition needs being constantly articulated (Hajer M. A., 1995, s. 55). During the process of re-articulation, actors may reflexively create a new story-line. *Dilemmas*, as a consequence of contesting beliefs may enforce the initiation of the change and thereby lead to a new story-line. Dilemmas may furthermore show which aspects of a particular story-line the actors agree or disagree about. This process of mutual influence between the concepts is illustrated in the Figure 6:



**Figure 6: Constitutive process of relationship between story-line, traditions, beliefs and dilemmas**

The creation of story-lines by story-telling is thus linked to the question of how a story of network identity is developed. It is also linked to how identities influence network coordination.

While scholars such as Lindblom and Scharpf are occupied by how a network may coordinate by achieving a perception of resource-bounded interdependence among its members, and Kooiman (concentrates on how interdependence (what he also calls a strong coordination) can be steered from within and outside the network the scholars advocating interpretive approach, Bevir and Rhodes, recall the complexity of perceptions and the importance to congruent them. Figure 7 summarizes the main points.

COORDINATION	COORDINATION IS	GOVERNING TOOLS
Lindblom	Mutual adjustment, perception of interdependence	Bargaining, reciprocity, and persuasion
Scharpf	Joint strategy, Interdependence, making diverse, interest-conflicting relations compatible,	Trust, institutionalized incitement structures
Kooiman	Interdependence (strong coordination), making desperate , antagonistic relations compatible	Governing on distance, opening for stories, tackling antagonisms
Bever and Rhodes	Navigating between and linking web of beliefs, ideas, and values	Telling stories that can link different belief systems and actor's values

**Figure 7: Positive and negative Network Coordination viewed from Game theory and Interpretive Theory**

<sup>7</sup> Examples are administrator's dilemma when perceiving itself as an administrative servant, who obeying to politician's political ideology, and then being cut in situation in which s/he is enforced to dispute that politics (Poulsen 2005)

Bevir and Rhodes' approaches complement the contemporary notion of network coordination. System of beliefs indicates that aside material insensitivity it is very important how network actors view themselves and the interrelations they are part of.

If the description of network coordination as related above includes story-telling and a story-line those would function as a means by which the web of relations and their complexity is influenced. If story lines can contribute to joint action than it may simplify diversity and reduce complexity and costs of network undertaken decisions. However, depending on the content of the story-line a new linking or new coordination need may exist. The key question that needs answering by the empirical work is:

How does the content of a particular story-line influence the process of coordination?

As explained in the introduction, the chief argument of this thesis is that telling stories that build network identity is the one that may help providing network coordination as well. Story-telling may be only one initiative in the process of developing network identity. In the next chapter I discuss the ontological content of network identity and after that I concentrate on what network leader(s) need to do in developing network identity.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

In this chapter I have searched to understand and define the challenges of coordination that take place through a governance network. On the ground of current theories of governance network and the public administration theories of coordination I have concluded that network coordination is a *process* that unfolds in parallel with network processes that aim to achieve joint decisions about the production and distribution of public goods that are related in the network. The path of the network coordination is dependent on the *internal* processes of the network, and is thereby linked to the issue of management (which will be addressed in chapter 3).

Network theory's claim about the necessity to collaborate at network level is synonymous to the idea of network identity. Fritz Scharpf has, in recent years, moved toward the idea that organizations can develop their own identities, enhancing the ability of organizational members to reduce complexity and contingency in decision making (Scharpf 2006:116-121).

However, the network theory needs to clarify how network identity impacts network actors, how network identity develops and changes over time. Situations in which neither self-interest nor normative role expectations provide clear orientation may be an opportunity to enforce identity development at network level.

Once a governance network is established it is unlikely that the actors share a common understanding of the problem. This is due the initial condition of multi-significance, and for the sake of maintaining dynamics. If a governance network fails to offer actors obvious incentives (e.g. profit, reputation, influence), a network needs to substitute this lack with *values* actors may generate

motivation for, to engage enthusiastically even during situations that may compromise their goal-orientation. Those *values* are developed and linked to the network's organizing, collective level in a way that ascribes networks a distinctive profile. I have termed this identity form a *network identity*.

Next chapter elaborates the notion of network identity.





## Chapter 2 Network identity: a distinctive form of identity

In the introduction I stressed that developing a network identity may enable joint problem solving and network coordination. I have claimed that network identity is a distinctive form of identity as it is constituted on the principles of difference and tolerance rather than similarity and solidarity. To underpin this claim, the present chapter combines three sets of theories, namely network theory, identity theory, and organizational identity theory. These theories are compatible as their ontology and epistemology on identity lies within the interpretive tradition. To accomplish the task of defining network identity as a distinctive form of identity this chapter proceeds in three steps. Firstly, the existing and relevant definitions of network identity are reviewed. I discuss the main features of individual, collective and organizational identity to compare and define network identity as a distinguishing identity form. Secondly, the conditions and restraints relating to development of a network identity and its change are discussed. Thirdly, the chapter concludes by presenting a set of criteria for examining a network identity through the empirical analysis.

### 2.1 What is a network identity?

An obvious place to search for a definition of network identity is within network theory.

Network theorists who have explicitly worked on the issue of network coordination have not yet conceptualized the development of a network identity with network coordination (Fritz Scharpf 1997, 2004, Renate Mayntz 1993, 2003 and Jan Kooiman 2003). These scholars' main preoccupation is to examine how actors during network games change their orientations towards common approach in solving policy problems (Scharpf 1978, 1994). Identity is merely a capacity actors may develop if they cooperate for a common good: "Where actors agree on rules to restrict arbitrary decisions and self-interests, mutually accepted organizational identities, competences and spheres of interest may emerge" (Mayntz 2003:13). Scholars who relate to governance networks and had also worked with the notion of identity are neo-institutionalists James G. March and Johannes Olsen (Sørensen and Torfing 2007). March and Olsen define identity as the foundation of self-perception. Identity is a source of beliefs, values, and affections actors mobilize in dealing with a certain situation (March and Olsen 1995:50). March and Olsen's identity-perception is linked primarily to political identities within public institutions that regulate and institutionalize behavior of citizens and public servants by mean of a public ethos. How is March and Olsen's idea useful in conceptualizing network identity?

To define network identity and show how it is different from other forms of identity, it is necessary first to rememorize the main characteristics of a governance network discussed in chapter two and then discuss it in relation to theories of collective and organizational identities.

## 2.2 The main characteristics of a governance network

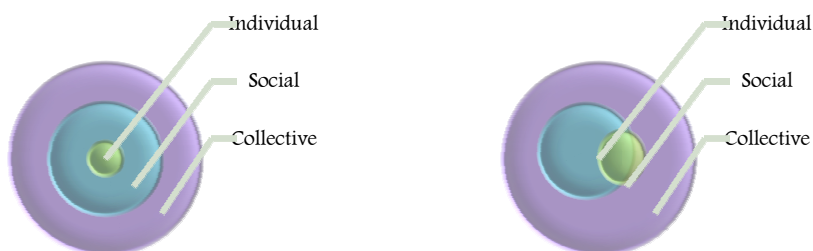
In chapter on network coordination the main characteristics of a governance network which distinguishes it from other organizing forms were discussed. Those are:

- relative autonomy of actors and self-regulation
- interdependent and trustful actor-relations
- Joint problem solving through interorganizational collaboration (diversity)

Network identity will need to embrace the values and main feature of a governance network, namely interdependence and joint problem solving, while maintaining difference and diversity. At the same time, network identity needs to link these attributes of a governance network with the ontological grounds of a collective and organizational identity. As the governance network embraces individuals, elements of an organisation and a collective, it is necessary to review individual-, collective- and organizational identity. To insure consistence with the meta-theoretical approach of the thesis only identity theories that are grounded on the interpretive tradition, are selected to use.

### 2.2.1 Individual, collective, and organisational identity

*Individual identity* brings the “self” into a social common-unity and represents depersonalized elements in individual’s self-perception (Jørgensen 2008:39, 40). Given that individual identity becomes through interaction with/within groups, individual identity is mutually constitutive of collective identity. However, while collective identity, speaking in an analytical- ontological sense, refers primarily to group-values (a Dane, Protestant), individual identity can embrace larger value-systems given that individual identity is created in an institutional context (family, working place). If we accept the claim that individual identity structures to what degree and how an individual adopts the other identities (collective, social and organizational), then individual identity can be perceived as a primacy in an individual’s identity. In that case, a personal, I-identity would be the core identity including its nominal and qualitative attributes, while social, collective and organizational identities are broader. These identity-layers and how their position may change during an articulation are illustrated in the Figure 8:



- a) Identity layers in status quo      b) Identity in move

**Figure 8: Analytical representation of identity-layers a), and how the structure may change when those layers are in use b)**

It is a matter of concrete empirical investigation to know which layer seems the most important in a given situation. Contemporary socio-psychological identity studies have represented the idea that an individual's identity is created within a social time and space context. For example, C.H. Cooley stated that social dimensions of an individual's identity is intrinsically bounded to the self of a human being : "If you go alone into the wilderness you take with you a mind formed in society, and you continue social intercourse in your memory and imagination" (C.H. Cooley, quoted in Hatch and Schultz 2004:19). Also Erikson (1959) stated, somewhat metaphorically, that identity is never something static, never fully established, and never something an individual can possess: identity is located within the flow of practice and reflexivity (Jørgensen 2008:31-32, ref. Erikson 1959 and Jenkins 1996:4).

If an individual's identity is constructed due to social contexts and groups than both social and collective identity constitute an individual's identity (Jørgensen 2008:38, 40,58). This constitution is shown in Figure 8.

**Collective identity** comprises what an individual has in common as a member of a particular group or community, and at the same what differentiates that group from other groups. Collective identity is about traditions, roles, social behavior, expectations that support an individual's identity-development and its competence to interact within the social. It refers to a subjective experience of an individual of who she/he is and with whom other she/he perceives important similarities and differences with (Jørgensen 2008:50). Socio-psychological studies of identity formation highlight the relation between identity and belonging. When individuals identify with a group of a political, ethnic or religious community they become connected to that community. Collective identity becomes a cognitive and emotional bias for an individual's behaviour. Identities accentuate distinctions and they frame cognitions and actions. Individuals develop solidarity and cohesion with others similar to themselves (Turner et al 1987; also March and Olsen 1995:74). However, collective identity serves also as a mean of *exclusion* of those who don't share the values of the reference group (e.g. Connolly 1991). National, ethnic and religious identities are among the most common examples of collective identities, and they not only build on practices such as rituals, symbols or narrated memories, collective identities are to a high degree developed by means of *imagining* that when coming together with this particular group an individual possesses and communicates this group's values even though she/he does not know all members directly. It is precisely due to the role of imagining, stories, symbols, and belief in a common faith that collective identities can persist and rearticulate over time (e.g. Anderson 1991). Scholars claim that collective identity ought to be perceived as a frame, a feeling of community for social and personal identity. At the same time, collective identities may constitute and are constituted by the individual's personal and individual identity (Jørgensen 2008:39). A collective identity is maintained first of all by intergroup comparison. A group seeks position differences between themselves and other reference groups as a way of enhancing their own self-esteem (Gioia and Thomas 1998:19, ref.

Tajfel 1982). The following section will show that the ground element, a collective sense of ‘we’ is at the heart of organizational identity as well.

**Organizational identity**<sup>8</sup> is defined by the scholars as a silent composite of norms and values inside a particular organization, which structures the individual’s perceptions, translating them into concrete products, visions, and services (Haslam 2003). Scholars consider organisational identity as

“... self-definition or cognitive self-representation adopted by organizational members that is ‘generally embedded in deeply ingrained and hidden assumptions (...) and refers to these features that are perceived as ostensibly central, enduring and distinctive in character (and) that contribute to how they define the organization and their identification with it” (Gioia and Thomas 1998:372; Fiol and Huuff 1992:278, Gioia, Schultz & Corley 2004:351).

Organizational identity contains a collective sense of ‘we’ as well as representing a unique description which members identify (Huemer 2004:251-259). However, some scholars comprehend organizational identity as a *culture* that “... comprises the recognition of the binary inseparability of ‘together and apart’, general and unique, structures and agents, organizations and identities” (Parker 2000:1). Culture is ‘us and them’ a boundary construction that suggests that an individual is like A, but not like B (Parker 2000:3). An organization’s employees engage in a continuous process of identification (Parker 1997:118). Hence, it is unlikely that employees hold one congruent identity; rather they activate different aspects of an identity appropriate to the situations they find themselves in. However, an individual identity can be grounded in organizational group membership and hence be an organisational identity, and organizational identity can relate to a corporate entity and inform the perceptions and interaction of stakeholders. While organisational identity is created for internal identification of employees and it captures their beliefs, conversations, and everyday processes of verbal mode, *corporate identity* relates rather to visual symbols of differentiation that target towards external visibility and recognition of the organisation (Bouchikhi, et.al. 1998:48). External images affect internal self-perception and thereby highlight the interplay between organizational (internal) and corporative (external) identity (ibid. 51). Interwoven social practices in organizations shape and reshape organizational identities (Czarniawska 2004, p. 168).

To sum up, organizational identity captures what is perceived by members as being central to the organization, it captures what makes an organization distinctive from other organizations (in the eyes of members, stakeholders), it captures what is perceived by members to be an enduring or continuing feature linking the present organization with the past and the future (Gioia & Thomas 1998:21).

Collective and organizational identities comprise elements of social and personal identities. While personal identity represents an individual’s convictions, political values, choices, emotions, past and present experiences and visions of the future, an individual identity represents roles an individual

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<sup>8</sup> While the *organizational* identity is collective, *internalized* sets of values the employees of particular organization carry, the *corporate* identity is a brand, logo and images which distinguishes a particular organization from competing organisations in the eyes of customers, and stakeholders (Hatch and Schultz 2002).

performs through everyday experiences. “In principle a human identity develops through the whole life” (Jørgensen 2008:53). An interpretive approach to identity perceives an individual identity as consisting of many selves appropriate for audience who recognizes these selves and thereby constitutes a multiplicity of identifications (Gioia & Thomas 1998:20).

Whether it is collective, social, or personal dimensions of an individual’s identity that plays crucial role in certain decisions depend moreover on how deeply the respective identity layers are rooted. The social context/location, the identity boundary permeability and flexibility, and the way an individual interprets the situation they are in, demonstrates a crucial role (Poulsen 2005).

What can be extracted from the above described into conceptualizing network identity?

### **2.3 Network identity: why is it a distinctive identity form?**

A governance network involves actors who bring individual identities in the network process. By some scholars this condition is called *multi-signification* and it particularly happens in newly established governance networks (Hajer 2005:342:344). Network theorists propose that differences in actors identities, namely reasoning, political experiences, and interest-orientations are crucial for the network to realise innovative solutions, and even to keep actors motivated so they feel they have space to maintain their ideas and interests and at the same time are challenged by others in the network. After all, actor’s different competences and capacities are the reason they are involved in the network. Difference is fundamentally important to maintain. Consequentially, network identity fundamentally consists of individual identities. However, if wicked conflicts are produced, the presence of different identities can jeopardize and prevent networks from functioning well. The question which then arises is: how can *multi-significance* change into the *unifying multi-significance*? Unifying multi-significance is a label for a network dynamic in which actors develop a meaning structure that inspires them to recognize the importance of developing common goals, while they still cherish differences among themselves. Such a meaning structure must be embedded in members’ actions, at the same time providing the space for being different and acting in accordance with their individual convictions, or the position/role they perform while representing own organization.

As described earlier, collective/group identity provides its members with a sense of sameness: ‘we are the same’. A sense of belonging is an important element in collective identity that a network identity could benefit from, given that sense of belonging drives from motivation. Motivation is necessary not alone to participate in the network but it can help building relations of interdependence, trust and joint problem solving. Nevertheless, two organisational particularities in the governance networks make it problematic to directly transplant ideas from collective identity into network identity. Firstly, the idea of sameness and similarity is inconsistent with the nature of governance networks, which forges the reflection on how a network can create meaning structures that, at some point, merge differences and build the platform for identification. Shaping a sense of *solidarity within the difference* allows network actors to develop and interpret meaning structures

and internal bonds. Internal bonds may help resolve conflicts among identities in the network (March & Olsen, 1995, pp. 49-50). Secondly, while collective identities are created and reproduced based upon more or less crystallized long traditions, most governance networks flourish on a diffuse tradition and have to develop their own tradition over a comparably short time.

While the idea-platform of collective identity is arguably *incompatible* with the governance network as an organizing form, organizational identity, on the other hand, has more to offer.

Most scholars agree that an organisational identity implies norms and values that structure the actors' perception which the organization can then turn into concrete visions, products and services. Similarly, governance networks are often established with an aim to produce a vision, approach a problem or produce a public product. An organizational identity stimulates the actor's to identify with a distinctive organization's values: this builds a layer upon actor's other personal identities. If an employee disagrees with the organizational identity of the organisation he is employed at the person can exit that organisation. The exit possibility is less likely at the level of collective identity, as the socialization of individuals who inevitably are born into particular national and religious tradition is much deeper. As personal competences are often networks' only resource, it is vital for the sake of networks' well functioning that its members participate proactively. Precisely at this point, a network identity can play an important role in preventing members giving up on the network, but rather turning discrepancies between individual and network's identity into a positive synergy. Thus a governance network may resolve the issue of motivation among its members by developing value(s) that structures the perceptions of its members to identify with the network.

How can a network achieve interdependence, and joint problem solving by means of developing network identity? And what can identity theory help with in resolving the two challenges?

As for the issue of interdependence between network actors - the content of network identity ought to represent a value that everybody in the network can contribute with important views and competences. Incorporating the value of mutual interdependence does not simply mean adding a new layer of identification, but it can change actors' existing identity-value. Changing foundational values can be a long and emotional process as it concerns the core of individual's being.

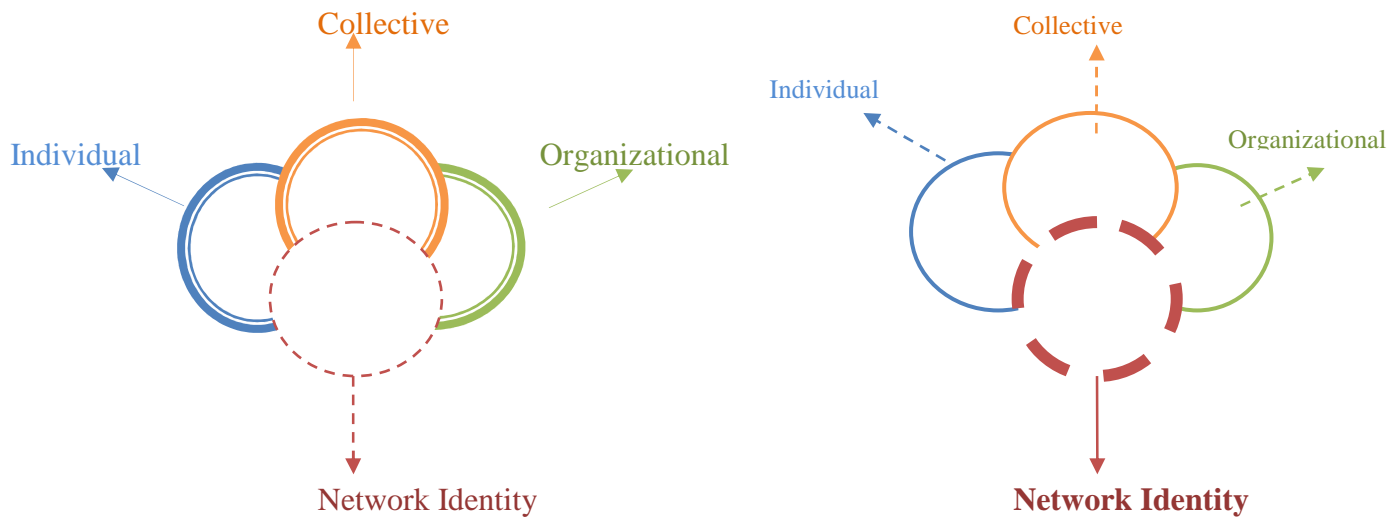
As described in chapter 2, mutual interdependence is a precondition of joint problem solving. While collaboration may be enforced in an organisation, in a governance network it must be voluntary. The content of network identity ought to propose powerful and appealing values to members so they identify with it. In other words, a network identity must be internalised in that members identify with it and their identification is a platform for future decisions on trust, interdependence and mutual collaboration. How such identity content can be developed concerns identity management, a theme that is discussed in chapter 4.

While network identity may emerge as a collectively accepted value a network members identify with a network identity leaves a space for individual identities to flourish too. The individual- and organisational identities best fit with the ontological nature of the governance network and thereby best help in developing the concept of network identity. Given the structures of governance

network, individual and organizational and collective identities are strongest because the network to provide space for those identities. This situation is at time 1. Governance network needs than to change these identities into network identity, a situation at time 2. This process of identity-change and development can be illustrated as following:

a) Time 1: weak network identity

b) Time 2: strong network identity



**Figure 9: Network identity at initial stage (time 1) and after it has been developed and temporary stabilized (time 2)**

Obviously, the thickness of the network identity, in the sense of members' identification with the network, in the sense of organizational practices and values that bind them as a collective actor, is expected to increase at time 2. Time 1 and time 2 are hypothetical. The answer as to how long it takes to develop a network identity rests on empirical investigation.

To sum up, from the theory of individual identity, the message is that actors hold values, experiences, views that structure how they think and what they do. Those values are a consequence of socialisation processes as an individual had acquired them by moving through different (social, political, etc.) positions from which the individual internalises different values and experiences. Some of those values may be deeply grounded, and some may even conflict (Jørgensen 2008:40-41). Altogether they point at the radical importance of individual identity as a condition to take into consideration when intending to develop a network identity.

From organisational identity theory, the ground message is that network identity provisionally represents norms and values members of the network recognize as part of their own individual identification-layer. In organizations it is expected that employees identify with the organization which means that the organization fits their sense of self (Ashforth 213).

Going one step closer in clarifying criteria for the content of network identity means ascribing what norms and values a network identity should represent in the governance network in order to serve its purpose, namely to help realise motivation, trust and interdependence and following the joint



problem solving. To free its potentials and achieve joint problem solving in the governance network which values ought the network identity to embrace? This is the theme for the following section.

## 2.4 Defining the value-set of a network identity

Given that governance networks are often founded on diversity and difference, their identity form needs to rely on that difference. While collective and organizational identities call for *sameness* a network identity calls for *difference*. The most important basis for a network's identity is difference. Such an identity holds a story that symbolizes how the network celebrates difference: "This network is strong because we celebrate difference we manage to achieve the best out of difference". This is often achieved by the governance networks, established by a government, which are entitled to decide the distribution of relatively scarce public goods, these inevitably exclude members' interests. Which value in a governance network can provide the acceptance of unpopular decisions? In a collective and organizational identity it is solidarity that binds members and ensures acceptance of conflicting decisions. Solidarity here implies a sympathy for and willingness to give psychological and/or material support to a member of group who is in a difficult position (Collins Dictionary of Sociology, p. 621).

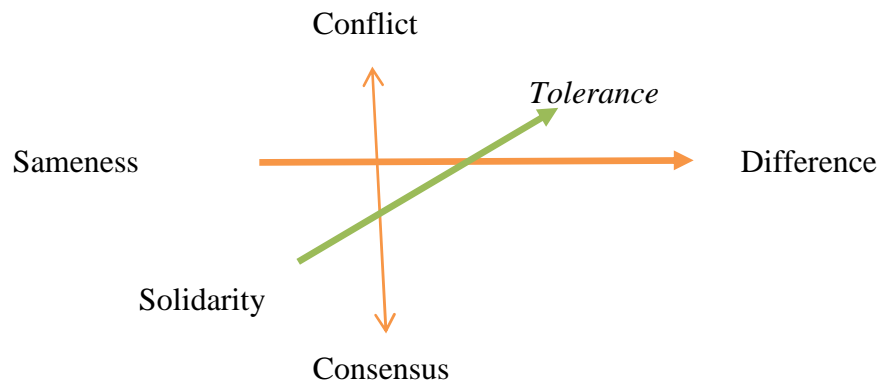
Psychology studies and studies of organizational identity claim that organizational identity shapes a sense of solidarity among actors and between actors and their organisation (Hatch and Schultz 2004, Cornellies 2007). Also in institutional studies, solidarity is emphasized as part of institutionalised logic of behaviour that provides a framework within which a sense of collective solidarity can be sustained as vital, particularly in the context of diverse identities (March & Olsen, 1995). Solidarity encompasses a sense of community, affective bonds.

Since a network relies on the value of difference and not sameness what kind of solidarity can/must be developed? To cope with difference(s) a network identity needs to develop tolerance for difference as a value to respond to spaces of conflict. Due to its relatively shorter lifetime a governance network would represent less institutionalized identity comparing to organizational- or collective identities. A value that generates actors' capacity to develop solidarity with decisions they don't favor can be labeled *tolerance* ([wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn](http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)).

While Solidarity, in its mainstream sense, is about showing sympathy with members of the group one shares collective identity with, tolerance is about recognizing and allowing for difference, it is about willingness to respect the beliefs and practices of different others. Tolerance is also associated with broad-mindedness, and openness for deviating political opinions. The value that 'tolerance' represents in common sense can perhaps better illustrate the content of network identity and the condition of difference it has to help out. In the network tolerance is developed between network members to recognize each other's difference and to tolerate decisions unfavorable to one self.

What is the instrument by which a network can achieve tolerance?

‘Dialog’ is asserted as a means to achieve collaboration among actors with different interests and a history of conflicts. Authentic dialog that scholars perceive as a means of including those who disagrees with own ideas (Hajer and Wagenaar 2003:37). And dialog as well is a mean to construct identity (Charles Taylor 1995:230). The green line in the coordinate scheme below represents a dialog:



**Figure 10: Dialog representation in the light of network identity**

Henceforth, a network identity emphasizes:

- a story about cherishing difference, for example, “We, in this network, are strong because we manage to achieve the best out of different identities and values”
- a dialog of tolerance toward difference, for example, “We, network members, tolerate decisions that are not necessary in our own benefit“

The two value sets are clearly the core of network identity as an ontological entity/construction. A story about cherishing difference can be perceived as an overarching metaphor, a symbol of the network that members have in mind, while a dialog of tolerance is what happens continuously embodied in the network’s casual practices and what supports the metaphor of difference.

In Figure 9 I have illustrated network identity as an analog to collective identity with aspects of organizational and individual identity. To conceptualize development and changes in network identity, it is obvious to search for suggestions through the same identity theory that has earlier been applied in developing the notion of network identity. The development of network identity is perceived as a relational an open-ended process that happens over time, and is prone to internal and external factors (Hatch and Schultz 2004:379, Ashforth 1998:221; Albert and Whetten 1985:273, Erikson 1959:17, Mead 2004).

The following section describes the theoretical assumption regarding the processes of development of network identity.

## 2.5 Network identity development as an open-ended process

Organizational identity is the basis for the development and projection of images, which are received by outsiders, given their own interpretation. Some theorists perceive organizational image as the way organization's actors believe stakeholders view the organization image is created due to how top managers promote the image of the organization to the world outside, and finally organizational image refers to public perceptions, reputations, a global assessment over time (Gioia, Schultz & Corley 2004, 349, 353, 354,376). Mary J. Hatch and Majken Schultz (2004) have elaborated a model to show how the process of identity develops:

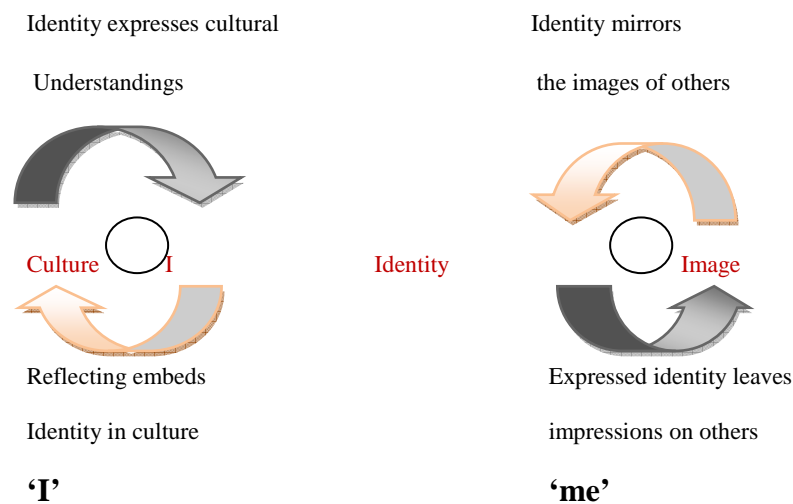


Figure 11: The organizational Identity Dynamics model (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 379), p. 382

Identity is constructed in relation to the culture inside the organization, and in response to images the organization produces in relation to the world outside.

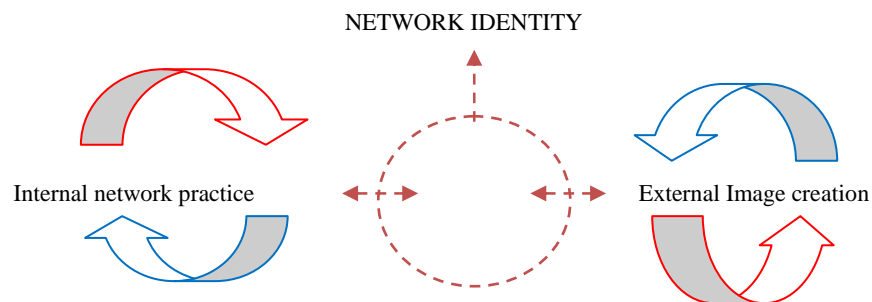
The model does not express how the culture and image actually influence identity, or whether internally practiced culture has a greater impact on identity than the opinion of the stakeholders, and vice versa. Although culture and identity resemble each other, there is a slight difference between the two concepts: culture is relatively easier to place in the conceptual domains of tacit while identity is more explicit and instrumental (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 384).

Hatch and Schultz's model shows a recursive process of dynamic, without which an organization would find itself in stagnant identity. A stagnant identity imposes the risk of being unprepared to deal with demands and existential crises (Gioia, Schultz & Corley 2004, 366). In other words, the continuous dynamic and change is the core of an organization's survival (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 400).

If we translate Hatch and Schultz's ideas about creating an organizational identity to a governance network context, network identity creation would be about appointing unique and authentic attributes to characterize the organization and then rethinking how to project this appealing image into the hearts and minds of the network members and to the world outside the network (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 1). In an organizational context, identity is constructed through language rhetoric, myths, narratives and stories, but also interior-culture. Translated from Hatch's and Schultz's model

(Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 379), a network identity development and change would happen in 1) a process of reflecting on the network's culture and 2) in response to images of the world outside. While responding to demands from its members and stakeholders from outside the network, a network mirrors images of others but it also leaves an impression on others.

Already at the core of the definition we meet a challenge. First of all, many networks initially experience no distinctive culture, or image, simply because they may exist too briefly. Secondly, evidence in relation to governance networks shows the problem of transparency: many networks would simply be anonymous to broader public than to organizations stakeholders represent. Although a network may not be directly evaluated by the general public or organizations, its members may contribute to evaluation. The idea that a network identity may be created in an interaction between internal and external factors and conditions is in itself useful, simply as it approaches the study of the network identity as an open and interrelated process. Hatch's and Schultz's circular model-driven explanation of identity constitution in organizations is a useful starting point for a dynamic description of identity developing in a governance network. If adjusting the model in accordance with the network theory, the adjusted model would contain the following:



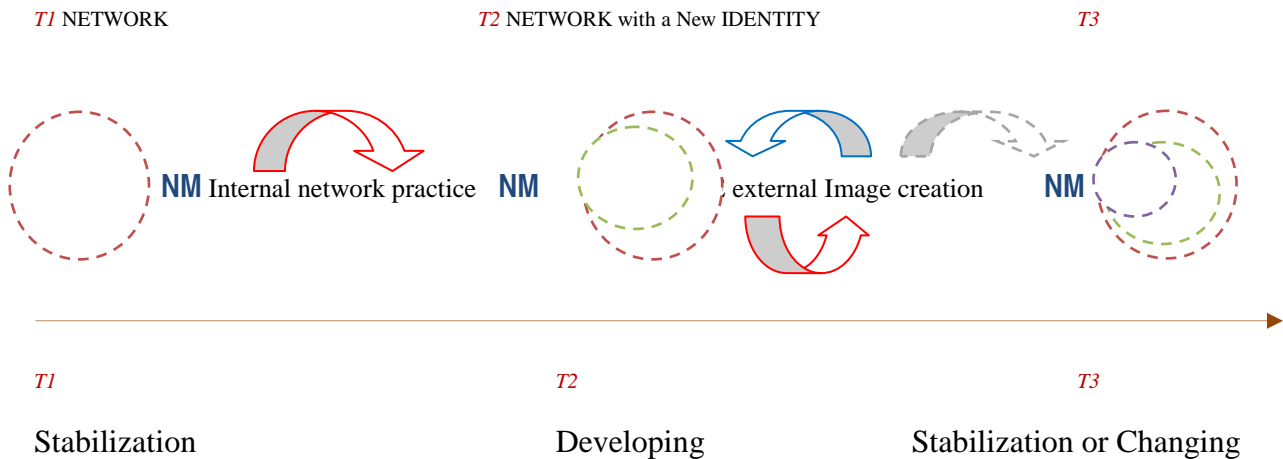
**Figure 12: A segment of identity in governance network elaborated on the basis Hatch's and Schultz's model (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 379)**

Compared with Hatch's and Schultz's model presented earlier, I have changed *Culture* into Network Practice which relates to the networks performance internally. *Image* into Responses which is about suggestions, critique, ideas expressed by external stakeholders, collaborative organization, related political-administrative entities, citizens, or any actor network may be influenced by.

I have added 'Managing' to show that a responsive network leader would initiate management strategies that correspond to the feedback he receives from stakeholders and which aim to change the undesirable situation in the network.

I have *not* added a micro-level meaning structure, expressed through societal discourses. If macro discourses influence concrete processes of the network identity development it is likely that they would be discovered during the analysis of the network-actors' perceptions and beliefs. It is furthermore possible that the network develops an institutional level of discourse which serves to build network identity. In the model, external responses and reactions seem to play an important

role in developing the network identity. However, this may not happen in practice: the more closed and isolated a governance network is the less impact external factors will have on its internal practice. Developing network identity is an open-ended, continuous process that, with help of network management (NM), can be designed to fit the network’s policy purpose. The Figure 13 below illustrates the process of network identity development and change over time. Loops show that the processes of identity change and new-development is a result of continuous internal practice that responds to external impacts which than calls for network management:



**Figure 13: The process of network identity development and change over time**

The process unfolds between temporary stabilization, development and change. Temporary stabilization gives a space to reflect upon learning and thinking whether existing identity is sufficient or a new identity-dimension should be developed in the network. Network Management is initiated once a network is established and is applied continuously to develop network identity and to respond to the needs of possible identity change (See also Ashforth 1998:217). Changes in an identity occur not only due to conflicts, but also due to new demands, unexpected crises, significant events, and similar. Congruent aspects of the identity may be integrated, while other excluded due to inconsistency (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006, pp. 1322-1323).

Now that the content and the process of construction of network identity have been clarified by theoretical framework the following task is to extrapolate the main elements that will be identified and analyzed through the empirical data.

## 2.6 Concept extrapolation to empirical analysis

Network identity refers to:

“... A shared sense of purpose on the network level which cherishes the value of difference and promotes the dialog and stories that transforms difference and diversity into valuable collaboration” (own definition)

and

“... a distinctive story-lines that colors and broadens the grand value of difference and tolerance stimulating the proliferation of interaction and collaboration forms among network actors and the world outside “(own definition)

The core elements to be searched of in the empirical analysis are:

**Sense of shared purpose:**

Which stories indicate that the network members share a sense of common purpose? And how does it support the rhetoric of the network-level “We”?

**Value of difference:**

Which stories indicate that the network in question promotes the value of difference and which alternative stories to difference are present?

How does dialog inside the network help to realizing the value of difference?

**Development and change in network identity**

Which internal network practices e.g. network management, and which relevant practices external to the network contribute to development network identity?

Which stories are related to the construction/stabilizing/change in the network identity?

**2.7 Conclusion**

This chapter has clarified the notion of network identity and has proposed ideas on how to study its development and change. I have stated that network identity is a distinctive form of identity which cherishes a value of difference. A value of difference can be cherished through a dialog of tolerance that can be exerted in network’s internal practices. By promoting differences in members’ identities as an advantage rather than an obstacle, a governance network may help resolve the challenges of joint problem solving. A network’s identity may function as a source of motivation and it influences the individual’s action and interaction with other actors in the network. It may diminish (through not erase) conflicts and stabilize relations and provide motivation and mutual interdependence precisely by not erasing but transcending diversity and difference. A network identity includes two

levels: the ontological that distinguishes it from other identity-forms and the situational that is contested and sensitive to the developing a peculiar attributes in the given institutional circumstances.

Creating network identity is a continuous, open-ended and interchangeable process. For that reason network identity should not be perceived as an entity, or one moment of common identity, but as a series of consisting moments which relate to an overarching, network-level 'we', a community which most actors recognize as important and distinctive for that particular network. However, a network identity does not become by chance: developing network identity demands active network management.

The next chapter deals with the management of network identity.

# Chapter 3 Managing network identity

## 3.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to review the existing literature on network management and identify management strategies that can help developing a network identity. The management strategies will be confronted with the empirical data in order to produce knowledge about whether and how these strategies have produced network identities within two newly formed and different governance networks. Given that the development and change of a network identity is intertwined by instability, managing a development of network identity is about promoting and stabilizing values of difference and tolerance under conditions of continuous relative instability.

The definitions and the main management strategies are reviewed on the basis of network theory literature constitute the first section of this chapter. The potentials of network management in bringing core values of difference and tolerance as well as how to deal with the condition of instability are described in the second section. How to develop and stabilize network identity and by which management strategies? What are the competences the manager needs to acquire and apply while managing?

Final section describes how management strategies will be analyzed through the empirical data.

## 3.2 How to manage a governance network?

Network theorists have recognized that governance networks need to be managed given that networks are characterised by weak bonds and remarkable degree of self-governance. How governance networks should be steered depends on whether we speak from theories that price the importance of micro actor-relations, negotiation games, and institutionalised culture; whether theories support in the possibility of direct steering; or whether theories advocate steering from the distance.<sup>9</sup> Scholars who offer concrete proposals on how to steer governance networks are of the particular interest in this chapter.

‘Network management’ and ‘meta-governance’ are the dominate labels used by scholars who advocate the necessity to manage governance networks. While network management takes its departure in steering governance network directly, from within, meta-governance encompasses also the idea of steering from a distance, from the outside (Jessop 1997, 2002, Sørensen 2003, Sørensen and Torfing 2009). Although the notions of network management and meta-governance may seem

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<sup>9</sup> Sørensen and Torfing have made a useful overview in which they classify theories into theories as interdependency theory, governability theory, integration and governmentality theory (Sørensen and Torfing 2007:169:181, in ‘Theoretical approaches to metagovernance’. I have searched through the mentioned theories to find the most adequate, concrete proposal for managing network identity.



different the management strategies those advocate are rather complementary regarding the steering of governance networks so that they function well.

*Network management* aims at governing “coordination activities, exchange of information and policy proposals by means of initiating and facilitating, creating and changing network arrangements (interactions between actors) for a better coordination” (Klijn, 2005, pp. 330-331). Managing a governance network means guiding, persuading, stimulating and facilitating processes in a network in order to achieve a better coordination, or simply to influence network’s functioning in the direction the manager, or an authority wants (Klijn and Edelenbos 2007:200, Kickert et.al. 1997, ref. Mandell 1990, Rogers and Whetten 1982). Coordination of actors requires ‘active and deliberate managerial strategies’ which at the same time ought to leave ‘some scope of self steering within interaction processes’ (Klijn and Edelenbos 2007:200).

The pioneers of network management identify two management lines of thought: process design and institutional design (Kooppenjan &Klijn 2004, Klijn & Edelenbos 2007).

*Managing processes* in a governance network is about facilitating and guiding participation processes in the network. But it is also about establishing rules that structure ‘the game of interactions’. Klijn and Edelenbos (2007) propose diverse strategies to make a good process design. For example, if a network faces stagnation regarding enthusiasm or interests, the manger must look into the content of interactions, provide an interesting agenda, make social arrangements, introduce new actors, or consult experts to qualify the discussions. The manger can also engage actors who are interested in creating energies. In the case of conflicting interests in the network, a manager needs to clarify perceptions, seek goal congruence, combine different package solutions, in which reciprocity, compensations and substitutes, are an important dimension in process management. Even more important is that network members participate in shaping network’s institutionalization of common ground norms and values (Klijn and Edelenbos 2007:203,206; (Klijn, 2005, p. 335). Managing network-processes may influence the content of the self-regulation and promote networks’ collective negotiation capacity.

*Managing institutional design* in is about changing network’s formal and informal rules. The underlying idea is that institutional characteristics influence how actors act and which strategies of process design are more likely to be implemented (ibid. 2007:207, ref. DiMaggio and Powel 1983). Institutions guide, limit and structure the course of action. Klijn and Edelenbos (2007) point out that each network has its own history (of relations) which influences how relations in the future may take form. It is unclear whether they think only about the history of relations inside the network (the game structures), or also the history of relations actors have had before coming into the network. Path-dependence and present institutional characteristics

Examples of institutional design are: changing network composition (bring new actors); changing procedures (introduce new procedures, fix certain relations); and changing pay-off structures (professional codes and evaluation standards). To design and change institutions takes time and even more important it demands for considerations about how to design norms, rules, procedures, pay off structures, etc. which are likely to be accepted and followed by the actors. To achieve an

effective institutional design the new institutions needs to be in line with the existing, and different to the extent that they actually have a desired effect on the network's functioning process (Healey 1997:268). Considering that changing institutional design means deeper interference in networks' organizing structures, it also concerns the issue of legitimacy. For example, in a formal governance network the actor composition can change only if the legislation that has established it, changes as well. National authorities, and not the network itself, are eligible to change the legislation. For this reason, in a formal network, altering the actors 'in and out' rather happens on the voluntary basis.

*Metagovernance* is synonymous with 'governing of self-governance' and thereby is associated with steering from outside. Metagovernance is first and foremost related to the governing relationship between the network and formal authority: how can government manage a governance network when intending to achieve the desired behaviour of the network, for example, to secure an effective and legitimate outcome (Bob Jessop 1998, Kooiman 2003, Sørensen and Jæger 2003:54-60, Klijn and Koppenjan 2004, Sørensen and Torfing 2009)? Scholars who use the notion of metagovernance offer a variety of definitions from abstract to fairly concrete ones. Jan Kooiman considers metagovernance as macro-governing processes, an approach that can be compared to the role of societal discourses in creating system of values that indirectly would govern governance networks (Kooiman, 2003, p. 171). Sørensen and Torfing (2009) propose, on the other hand, concrete strategies that metagovernance must engage in including *network design, network framing, network management and network participation* (Sørensen & Torfing, 2009, pp. 246-247). Apart from process and institutional design metagovernance forges for network participation of democratically elected representatives who advocates that governance networks qua strengthening representative links also strengthen legitimacy and effectiveness of political decisions (Sørensen and Torfing 2009).

All together, advocates of network management and meta-governance agree that network management can work out the uncertainties during interactions, conflicts of goal orientation, and even stimulate joint problem solving. Scholars also agree that the success of a governance network depends on actors' capacity to act collectively, to create identity that cherish solidarity, forges new and specialized knowledge, creates the perception of mutual interdependence, etc (March and Olsen 1995, Sørensen and Torfing 2007:175). The success of metagovernance / network management can be evaluated regarding to whether it had helped developing these values. The chief dilemma is how far and how deeply to manage the network and to interfere with the personal identities of its members. While extensive management may jeopardize the innovative potentials of the network and drain the synergies and the incentive to participate, too little management may lead to malfunctioning. The objective of discussion is to identify and implement appropriate management strategies to given purpose: for example, how to provide a space in the network for diverse ideas, and at the same time decide a common goal (Klijn 2005, Scharpf 1978:356).

The content of network management and metagovernance approaches is described briefly in the Figure 14 below. I use the notion *hands off and hands on* (e.g. Sørensen 2003) to distinguish between steering directly and steering from the distance:

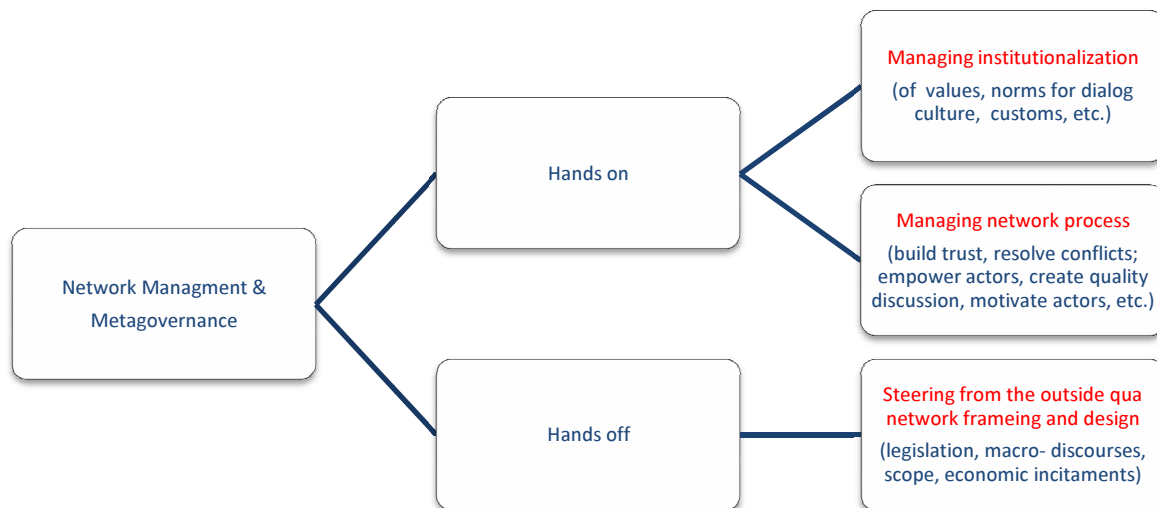


Figure 14: A chief content and strategies within network management and metagovernance (inspired by Klijn 2005, Klijn and Edelenbos 2007, and Sørensen & Torfing, 2009)

The particular management strategies may resolve a few issues at a time. For example, trust is both important in preventing conflicts, decreasing uncertainty and fostering motivation. Apart from managing core values of a network identity, namely the values of difference and tolerance, management strategies ought to focus on managing boundaries within and outside the network as well as between the network and members’ individual identities. Conflicts, dilemmas and questioning by network members or outside the network may lead to instability, which than may lead to revising and changing present into new values and practices within the network. Particularly in the condition of instability a governance network needs to be managed.

The following section concentrates on the personal skills and the role network manger.

### 3.3 Network manager: a sin qua non of successful management

The management literature describes the network manager as a person, or group of persons who ought to possess legal, organizational and personal resources to carry out network management (Kickert 1997:168). A network manger ought to posses crucial abilities such as:

- a substantive knowledge of the issues the network is dealing with
- an ability to identify explicit and implicit rules, interaction patterns among members and their mutual dynamics

- analytic and negotiation skills to estimate, decide and implement new strategies of interactions, and connect various actors
- creativity and courage to try new ideas but at the same time create a feeling that things run as usual (regularity, safety) (Koppenjan & Klijn, 2004) (Klijn, 2005) Klijn and Edelenbos 2007)

Although scholars argue in favour of an independent process manager for the best suited to perform process design, there can be reasons to involve a network member in management, a person who is interested in achieving success; a person who knows members and how to balance their aspirations (Hanf & Scharpf, 1978, Klijn, 2005, p. 335). Governance networks *are* linked to the political a system in which values of legitimacy, accountability and transparency are deeply rooted. Introducing an external manager permanently into the network could spurge political disputes or resistance. A network manager, single actor or few actors ought to fulfill a role being:

- analytical (prioritizing issue, sensing the relationships among actors, having deep knowledge of the network)
- empathic in his/her dialog and understanding of actors' dilemmas
- charismatic in his/her efforts to introduce radically new and constructive initiatives and ideas
- a primus motor in promoting and encouraging stories, visions and ideas that creates distinctive features (dynamics, visibility, common imaginaries) to the network

As shown by now, a network manager needs to master several qualities of which some may appear more prominent and may be needed more extensively than others.

The following section assembles and appoints concrete initiatives for managing the development of network identity, and in parallel reflects upon the competences the network manager needs to apply when utilizing different management initiatives.

### **3.4 Which management strategies may enable the development of a network identity?**

Before proceeding to identify concrete management strategies that may enable the development of a network identity, it is necessary to look back and recapture the point made in the theory chapter on network identity. I have defined a value set of network identity as:

- a story about cherishing difference, for example, “We, in this network, are strong because we manage to achieve best out different identities and values”
- a dialog of tolerance toward difference, for example, “We, networks members, tolerate decisions that are not always in own favor“
- a specific value that both network members and external stakeholders may recognize and identify with

Network identity does not imply that *everybody* in the network thinks or agrees to the same values; it does not close a window of further development and change. It rather means that a *sufficient majority* of network members cherishes and identifies with the idea of difference and tolerance

towards each other. The important question henceforth is how these core values of a network identity, as well as the specific values of the network as political /ideological / administrative entity may be developed in concrete policy processes. The response to this question replies on the premise that the strategies which unable governance network to function well may also unable developing the core values of network identity. All things considered, developing a network identity goes hand in hand with the well-functioning governance network. It is reasonable to claim that is a necessary foundation of the well-functioning network and the coordination activities the network performs. Once the core values of a network identity are developed they may be utilised by the network manger or network leadership to keep maintaining stability, collaboration, coordination and desired output.

In the table below I identify and explain what different management initiatives may effectuate regarding to achieving a well functioning governance network that is aware of importance of network identity as a steering instrument. The purpose is to examine those strategies through the empirical analysis.

Value of difference and tolerance can be managed through following strategies:

MANAGEMENT TARGETS	Proposal for specific initiatives	What the initiatives effectuate?	Needed competences
PROCESS WITHIN THE GOVERNANCE NETWORK	<p>a) Involve actors in discussing and building the story-line about cherishing difference and tolerance</p> <p>b) Raise questions to clarify expectations, standpoints, and proposals for solutions (193)</p> <p>c) challenge taken for granted by introducing qualified knowledge, new methods, events (207)</p> <p>d) bring experts in; conflict management, goal attainment (2004:220)</p> <p>e) Arrange social events</p>	<p>a) gives actors a moral understanding of how difference is important; it gives them the possibility to feel they are involved and can exercise influence on important value</p> <p>b) +c) it can prevent misunderstandings, creation perception of being heard and acknowledge as important</p> <p>e) can help actors acquire each other, develop trust, better climate of interaction</p>	<p>Political Sense Charisma Empathy Negotiation skills New thinking and creativity Not behaving as an expert Not judging Not imposing explicit solutions (2004: 209)</p>

<p>INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF AGREED RULES, NORMS, DIALOG, ETC.</p>	<p>f) adjust procedures for agenda (giving right to be heard)</p> <p>g) implement the rule that everyone shall profit once a while, network follows principle of benefit on shift</p>	<p>f) if network members affect the content of agenda it may motivate and oblige them to participate</p> <p>g) actors may think they are better off</p>	<p>Not only manager but network's leadership plays important role in institutionalization of e.g. new norms for dialog, in that positive ideas are being emphasized as the standard for collaboration</p>
<p>NETWORK'S LEGISLATION, EXTERNAL FRAMES AND CONDITIONS OF GOVERNANCE</p>	<p>h) ensure budget for management (244)</p> <p>i) Loose idea of goal-attainment</p>	<p>h) provides financial resources to invest in improving network process, functioning</p> <p>i) in top-down established networks this may help directing actors' orientation</p>	<p>Meta-governor – state, national legislation, etc. may impose frames and external conditions for the network</p>

The content of the table, second column explains how the proposed management-action may impact the developing of an identity in the bottom-up and the top-down governance networks (Koppenjan & Klijn 2004:186-209; Klijn 2005, Klijn and E. 2007 and Sørensen and Torfing 2009).

If the proposed management strategies are related to the flow of policy process at least three phases are needed to be closer reviewed.

The beginning phase in which a governance network, particularly, top-down established network is managed according to legislation, e.g. rules for how many actors may participate, how often they meet in formal arena, what the networks' purpose is, and so on. These initial conditions which are labeled formal frames of governance influence the application and results of both process and institutional management. Given that the most governance networks operate under relative self-governance (relative autonomy), it is feasible to claim that proactive *process* management may lead to a well functioning governance network. Following it is to expect a moments of fixation and stability of MTI (motivation, trust and interdependence) as well as grounding the story-line that symbolized network identity (story line of difference and tolerance). Depending on which stories are told a network may develop additional values (or reputation) that will provide it specific features and confirm its distinguishing identity (ref. identity theory).

Altogether those can be institutionalized creating thereby platform for network's future functioning. However, it can happen that the network needs to keep doing process management, and that the external manager (what scholars label), meta-governor (e.g. Sørensen 2003) imposes a new regulation, for example, if the meta-governor (often a state authority).

The Figure 15 below illustrates the interchange between process management and internalization.

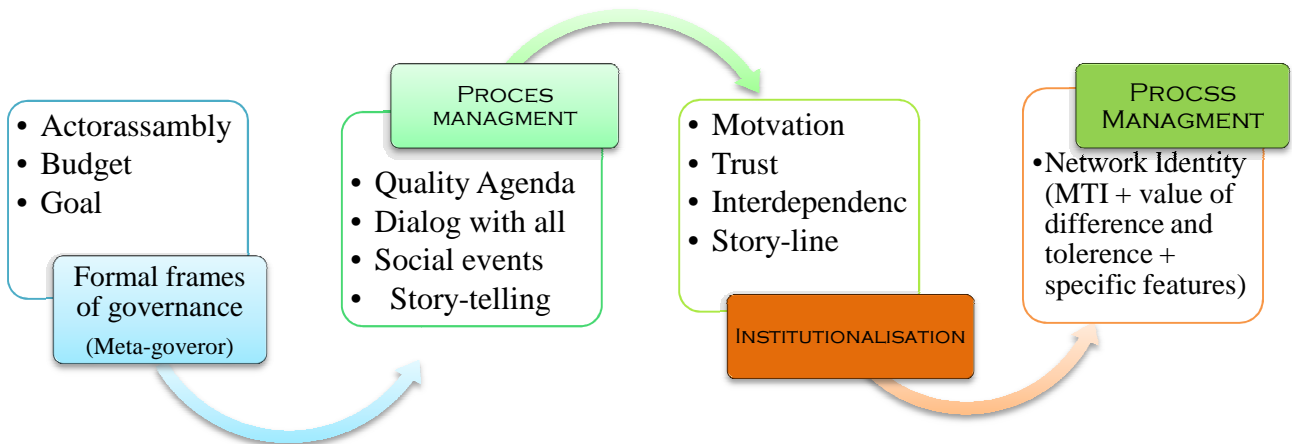


Figure 15: Time and effects of the process matter (see also Koppenjan and Klijn 2004:230,240)

Second, due to ongoing interpretation processes the impact and the output of management action depends much on these processes (Koppenjan and Klijn 2004:229). Crucially it is not what actors tell each other but what they get out of that which is said.

Once the main dimensions of the network identity are created the manager (or the meta-governor) may decide which aspects of network identity, or which identity-values and attitudes that the governance network has created, to keep and which ones to change (ref. to the strategies cherry picking and sorting and owning). A network manager or networks' leadership may try to merge, or combine dimensions of network identity not only from own, but also from other networks that is linked to.

At this point, the crucial question is how to recognize management strategies in the empirical analysis; and how to know whether concrete management action had lead to purpose, namely, developing a network identity.

### 3.4.1 How to analyse the impact of management strategies in praxis?

How to recognize management strategies in praxis?

- Through observations and interviews I have paid attention to which of the described strategies has been applied
- Through internal documents (evaluations) I analyze what network members think about social events
- Through interviews with the network managers I ask respondents to take a stance on management
- I allow respondents self to define management
- I pay attention to administrative story- telling, and story-lines on script

Whether and how does concrete management action had led to developing a network identity?

- By following a particular management strategy to watch for its outcome
- Through single examples we can have an idea of which strategies had which effects
- Some strategies (e.g. a particular speech) can be complicated to trace and therefore its effects may remain unknown

As described in the method chapter this thesis shows the effects of management on development of a network identity through *single* examples. Thus, single examples can provide explanations on, for example, what management strategies lead to development of network identity. As methodological tool they are suitable in generating ground ideas on theory of network identity. However, in order to construct a solid foundation for such theory it would be necessary to map representativeness of management strategies which can be done by means of survey.

### 3.5 Summery

Scholars of governance networks and organizational identity propose diverse strategies to manage governance networks and develop network identity. Even through all management strategies may have an impact on the development of network identity, processes management seems the most crucial undertaking in shaping actors' perceptions and nonetheless in providing a foundation for institutionalization of norms and values, created during the network's lifetime.

The instruments the network manager applies ought to be developed in the dialog with network members, taking into consideration the background which lays behind the ideas and beliefs each member bring into the network. By proactive involving of all network-members it is more likely that process management may succeed in its aim, as actors may feel ownership and a common purpose. Ownership-feeling can partially motivate them to participate in the forthcoming meetings and to stick to the agreed norms and values. Consequentially, this may bring a moment of stabilization. Inside a network there would be intertwining between process management, institutionalization, self-management, new process management, and so on.

To perform a management role successfully a network manager needs to act as a charismatic, analytical, visionary and open minded leader who first of all listens to everybody and then coordinate solution-proposals that may be accepted by the most. Under no circumstance must a network manager put own ideas to the forefront.

How management strategies unfold in praxis and which impact they have on developing network identity the empirical analysis shows in chapters six and seven.



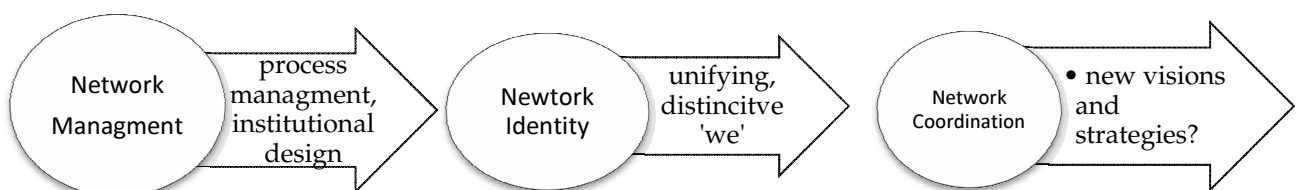
## Summary of theories

The past three chapters have contained a theoretical discussion and development of the concepts of network coordination, network identity and network management. These concepts are connected to the main research question which is: how can management promote the development of a network identity in the pursuit of network coordination? I have argued that these concepts are connected in that managing governance networks may help to develop a network identity which may enrich a governance network in terms of its coordination capacity. As a symbolic reference of shared meaning, a network identity may help motivate actors to joint problem solving and thereby enhance coordination in governance networks in a positive way. To examine this claim in empirical studies, it was necessary to elaborate the notion of a network identity and identify management tools that may be suitable for managing/guiding the network processes in the direction of developing network identity. It was also necessary to discuss the notion of a network coordination which will be used in the empirical data to help analyze how a network identity (or lack of such) impacts the coordination of a governance network.

The first section summarizes the content of the main concepts and how they relate to each other while the second section describes how the concepts will be mapped in empirical data and analyzed.

### 3.6 Connection between main concepts

In the introduction and throughout the theoretical discussion I have claimed that there is interconnectedness between network identity and network coordination. Network identity may enhance the network capacity to coordinate, while network management is a means to ensure this relationship. When considering the connection between network management, identity and coordination along a time line it is reasonable to assume that network management enables the development of a network identity while network identity enables network coordination. This claim is first and foremost theoretical and serves to highlight the departure point for the empirical analysis. Given that a governance network due to its involvement in policy processes from the initial day exercises coordination it is reasonable to claim that the network coordination takes place in parallel with network management and that developing network identity is nevertheless an intentional act. A governance network may manage its functional processes and processes of coordination without deliberate attempt to institutionalize the value of difference and tolerance.



Now it is the moment to review the content of each concept and the questions that will be answered during the empirical analysis.

*Network identity* contains two main factors that need to be traced in the empirical data. These two elements are:

- Value of difference
- Sense of shared purpose

As the first step in the chapters containing the empirical analysis these two elements that illustrate network identity needs to be traced. Questions that will help identifying the two factors are:

Which stories indicate that the members of the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee share a sense of common purpose and how do those stories affect a network-level “We”?

Which stories refer to difference as a central value of the network?

*The development of a network identity* is the second step in analysing the empirical data. The theory suggests that network identity develops as a process over time and is exposed to internal and external impacts of proactive network management. Several management strategies were identified as being those that may promote the development of a network identity in a given governance network. The question concerning the empirical analysis therefore is:

Which management strategies (and how) had enabled the development of a network identity in the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee?

*The relationship and impact of the developed network identity on network coordination* is the third and final level of analysing the empirical data. Network coordination is described as a process of production and distribution of public goods by means of joint collaboration pursued among web of relations.

How has the development of network identity in the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee influenced the processes of coordination that unfolded throughout these two networks?

For the analytical clarity the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee are analyzed in two separate chapters seven and eight, while the results from these two cases are compared in the chapter nine.

The case of the Growth Forum

Questions: a) + b) +c) +d) +e)

The case of the Municipal Contact Council

Questions: a) + b) +c) +d) +e)

Case comparing

a) Growth Forum vs. a) The Municipal Contact Council

b) Growth Forum vs. b) The Municipal Contact Council

...

...

Finally, I identify, select and label the content of what belongs inside and what outside of story line or statement that is interpreted as the one which supports or does not support the development of network identity. How this interpretation has unfolded, how the empirical data is mapped and selected, as well as other important methodological themes are described in the following chapter.

## METHOD AND ANALYTICAL APPROACH

Designing methodological and analytical strategy in accordance with the research question is an important condition of the production of valid knowledge. Considering that the main research question focuses on the development of a network identity within a governance network the interpretive approach is suitable in analysing such processes of value-construction. Advocates of interpretive approach rely primarily on the ontological and epistemological ground of social constructionism and they apply predominantly qualitative methods. Given that the interpretive approach highlights the importance of beliefs, self-perceptions, images, and stories in understanding social and political behaviour, it is an adequate meta-approach to apply in studying a cognitive meaning structure such as a network identity. How the main claims of interpretative approach intertwines each step in designing the methods for this thesis comes forward through the following chapter.

Firstly, I argue that the case study is the best option for answering empirically the main research question as the case study advocates the triangulation of qualitative techniques, namely observations, interviews, and document studies. I describe meticulously how these three techniques help to gather important data and how they complement each other.

Secondly, I describe the analytical strategy embracing the following questions: How have I interpreted the data? How did I investigate the concept of network identity in practice? What do I exclude from the analysis? And which critique stands in the way of the concept application?

Finally, I summarise the method chapter.



# Chapter 4 Studying network identity by qualitative methods and interpretive analytical strategy

## 4.1 Research process - uncovered

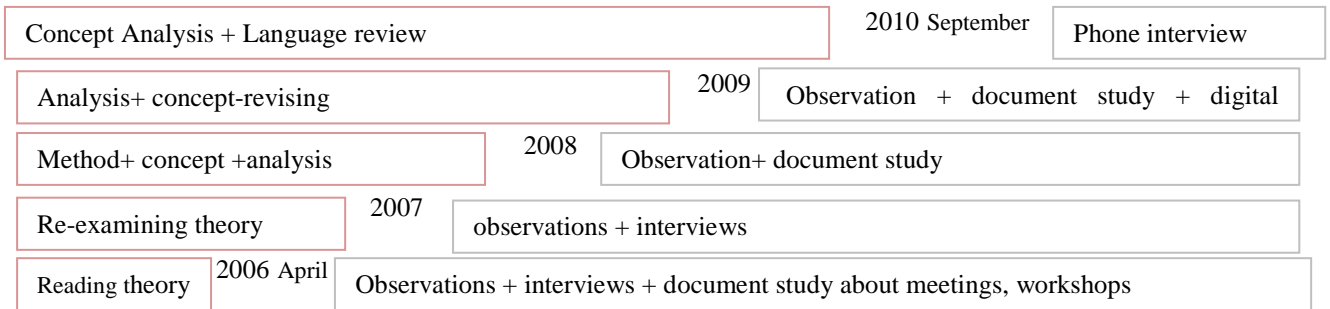
When researchers need to decide which methods to apply in order to answer the main research question they need to reflect on the advantages and disadvantages of applying a particular method technique (Bogason and Zølner 2007:1). An interpretive approach favours qualitative methods to provide in-depth descriptions. To provide an in- depth description, a solid body of empirical data needs to be sampled. The table below represents the techniques and analytical strategies I have applied to gather the empirical data and it shows which technique relates to the concepts of the main research question.

Concept	Analytical focus	Method technique	Analytical Strategy
Network Identity	To which extent has a governance network developed network identity?	Interviews Observations Documents	Story lines of difference, tolerance and sense of common 'we'
Management	Which management strategies and how has enabled developing network identity?	Policy documents web-pages, e-mails interviews	Which management strategies and how has enabled developing network identity?
Coordination	Does and how a storyline of network identity has influenced the network coordination?	Documents, interviews and observation	Has the GF/MCC developed a common policy, strategy, etc. as the consequence of identity story-line?

Table 1: Overview of applied techniques in empirical data gathering

Interviews, observations and document studies will be described in depth in the section later.

Another main claim by scholars of interpretation is that a valid knowledge is drawn from an experience. No theory shall be made for the sake of theorizing but in order to understand and take advantage of human experience (Bourdieu 1996, Yanow 2000, Stone 2002, Bevir 2003). With this in mind I describe the making of this thesis as an intermediation between empirical data gathering, theory reading, critical reflexions and preliminary analysis. I illustrate this process in the figure below:



**Figure 16: A cognition ladder: Intermediation between empirical and theoretical work**

During the first year of working with thesis, 2006, I was excessively engaged in gathering empirical data and reading the documents that might have helped to understand the role of governance networks in regional and municipal policy making of the Region Sealand. As my empirical work progressed I became aware that the conditions under which governance networks are exposed are uncertainty, dilemmas, path-dependence and work-overload. I wanted to know how it is possible to develop motivation and common ground under those contradictory conditions which imposed actors to coordinate and compete. When reviewing the literature on governance networks I realized that it lacked theorizing the relationship between actor's motivation and their ability to develop a common ground within the cognitive frames of the governance network. The concepts of identity (individual, collective, and organizational identity) were helpful to theorize the relationship between the motivation, identification and agency within/in relation to governance network. While gathering data at an early stage of the elaboration of the thesis it has helped me to identify the research question, and the theory-reading has convinced me to put forward that question within the scope of current research agenda.

What are the merits by approaching interchangeably theory and empirical data?

Going out to gather empirical data in the early stages of thesis writing informed the case studying. In particular the empirical observations made me aware of importance to investigate the relationship between policy-coordination processes and the development of a network identity<sup>10</sup>. The research problem is introduced on the ground of theoretical ambitions to develop the concept of network identity with the criteria of empirical relevance in mind. Considering that I have gathered the data and am informed about the happening in the two networks the empirical analysis is capable to describe the institutionalisation processes of identity development inside the two networks.

When working interchangeably with theory and empirical data, a researcher can achieve better understanding of the empirical field, simply because empirical/practical knowledge lights up the importance of a given theoretical explanation and thereby it helps to readjust the theoretical choices. The disadvantage of not holding a clearly defined concept while going out in the field was an overload of sampled data. I came home with plenty notes, interesting, but not all relevant. Despite

<sup>10</sup> One of the main issue regions deal with is how to coordinate regional development between the region and its municipalities.

challenges to sort out in huge scope of data analysis the final results are better qualified when the theory and empirical data is proceeded interchangeably.

As described earlier, a longitude case study and qualitative method techniques are applied to map the empirical data.

#### **4.2 Longitude case study as a data-mapping strategy**

Case study is an empirical enquiry form characterised by utilization of a variety of data that helps to examine a contemporary event. Case study can help developing theory as it can transcend the theoretical categories that provide thick description which bring answer on how and why a particular event or human behaviour has emerged (Yin 2003:8:28). For its relative open methodological approach, the triangulation of data and the possibility to bring in depth understanding I find case study appropriate in analysing the impact of management strategies in the process of construction of network identity.

I have conducted a longitude case study by following the policy making within two governance networks over a period of almost four years. I have followed two governance networks in Danish Region Sealand, namely Regional Growth Forum (GF) and Municipal Contact Committee (MCC), for the period between April 2006 and February 2010. In September 2010 I conducted a follow up interview and have read agendas, newsletters and other policy documents up to February 2011 monitoring major changes. GF and MCC are examples of local and regional governance in Denmark as they are structurally equivalent to the same types of networks in four other regions.

To acquire a picture of communication, perceptions and the behaviour of actors who are in the two networks I sequentially have observed meetings, seminars and conferences related to their work. One meeting I was in Growth Forum, the next in Municipal Contact Committee especially focusing on meetings with shared topics. Also I have carried out along and co-authored single and group interviews with the members of GF and MCC network as well as administrators who steer the two networks.

The empirical work had profited from the research group<sup>11</sup> and research fellows who had also carried out interviews and observations with relevant actors in governance networks in Region Zealand. Their interviews, notes from participant observations and discussions provided me with insights from field in the periods I was absent. Their empirical work is crucial contribution to this thesis. The appendix presents an overview of interviews, observations and document study that are ground for analysis 1.

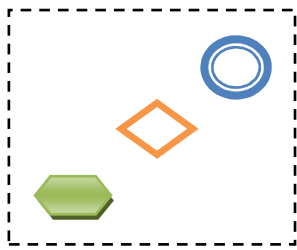
For 2 cases I follow replication logic which means I analyse each case through the lenses of the same analytical questions and theories. Chronological and comparative presentation of the 2 cases can be illustrated as following:

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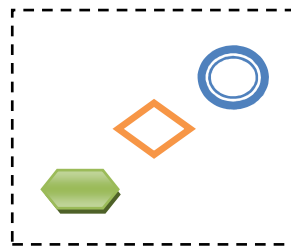
<sup>11</sup> It is my colleagues employed at the research project "Empowering Danish Regions".



Case 1: GF



Case 2: MCC



The three components symbolise three different analytical questions and levels of analysis according to which the data from each case is structured. External and internal validity is provided by asking the same people the same questions over time.

What can two cases tell about the empirical praxis? How valid and representative are these two cases in developing a concept of network identity?

As the most extensive and contentious political reform since the decentralization in 1970's, the Local Government Reform (LGR) 2007 is a significant case which offers the possibility of studying network identity and coordination. LGR 2007 is characterized by terminating existing networks and creating new network relations; by produced governing bodies that in its logic are ordered to simultaneously compete and collaborate; and by governing uncertainties that enforce politicians and administrators to adopt learning processes. The characteristics of the discursive logics of LGR are a significant example of how public networks and institutions are exposed to circumstances of conflicting logics of coordination and collaboration.

Had I conducted a quantitative study of the GF and MCC in all five Danish Regions the analysis would be representative for the regional and municipal networks in Denmark. Then, what about other kind of networks in other fields at other governing levels like citizen bottom-up, open networks, elite networks national and transnational? If stakeholders from different networks can recognize the conclusion from this thesis in their own practice and they can use this study to reflect on their practice then this thesis clearly contains the dimension of representativeness.

Although case studies do not tell us how broad explanatory power a theory has, case study is useful exactly at the point of challenging, widening, or constructing new theoretical claims. As such case study is a useful starting point for future studies to rearticulate the theory on a new way.

Given the impossibility to comprehend everything at every time and every place any type of study, even the largest surveys, would carry on rather a relative representation. Case study serves to generalize the theoretical propositions, and not the population. Although these have limits of representation in depth study is important for theory building as it generates a more holistic understanding of relations that constitute the examined practice.

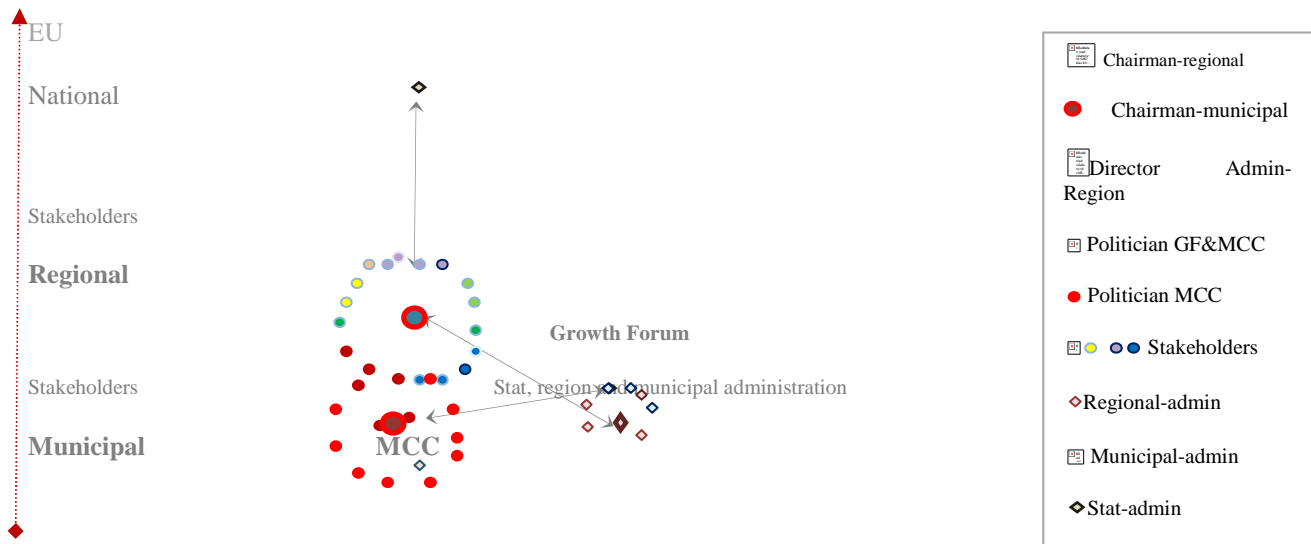
#### **4.2.1 What type of governance networks are the Growth Forum (GF) and the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC)?**

What are Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee cases of?

*The Growth Forum* is formally responsible for elaboration and implementation of the Regional Industrial Strategy. It embraces diversity of actors, three regional and six municipal politicians, representatives from the labour organizations, the Danish industry, knowledge and innovation organizations, as well as private companies. The temporary Growth Forum was established in 2005. Its actor composition changed slightly when the permanent Growth Forum was inaugurated in April 2006. The Growth Forum was established by the national legislation which prescribes the number and composition of networks members, and the network's main tasks, namely Regional Industrial Development and Development of peripheral areas. The GF decides which initiatives should receive funding and administrative support. The Growth Forum has a four year mandate. This is a top-down, formalized and closed network.

*The Municipal Contact Committee* is a rather bottom-up arisen network. It was created on the idea of municipal politicians and national association of municipalities (KL) to enrich municipalities' with an opportunity to collaborate. The Municipal Contact Committee discusses all kinds of issues which concern the municipalities' collaboration and task performance in the light of the Local Government Reform. It is homogenous in its actor-composition, and slightly more informal in the nature of relationships between the actors compared to the Growth Forum. The Municipal Committee embraces politicians from 17 municipalities of the Region Sealand. Five politicians from MCC are also members of the Growth Forum. Both networks have at least a four year mandate. Hence, it is expectable that the networks surpass certain degrees of institutionalisation and stability maintaining.

On the drawing below I illustrate how the two networks look like for the actor composition and how they are bounded.



I have studied the Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee for almost three years. The first year, April 2006 until April 2007 I have conducted a series of observations of the meetings, conferences, and workshops in both networks. I have also interviewed politicians and administrators (either members or observers) of the GF and the MCC. The following section will describe each method-technique regarding its contributions and disadvantages.

#### 4.3 Document study

Policy-documents are central data-material source in analysing policy and governance networks.

In the first phase of gathering and analyzing empirical data I paid attention to policy documents, agenda setting, meeting notes, public letters, press statements, pictures in publications, and any written artefact that describes the functioning of the Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee. An overview of documents used in the thesis is enclosed in the appendix.

The two networks have produced varying text amount which has to do with the networks' degree of institutionalization. While the GF was established by the legislation and it has to publicize about its work through its homepage, news articles, and barometers, the MCC is rather informal, anonymous for the larger public spotlight, and its documents are primarily agenda from meeting.

Documents can be interpreted from different angles and the same document can support the different aspects of the analysis (Esmark and Triantafillou 2007:100). For example, from written meeting agenda I have traced:

- member assembly and participation frequency
- policy issue debated
- task share between Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee
- activities regarded as network management
- communication with other networks
- tracing story lines rhetoric's of a collective actor
- stories about network identity

Policy documents are produced by many actors, and between political levels. In their travel between the different levels of governance documents become created and are co-creators of social and political praxis (Mik-Meyer 2005:195, Holstein and Gubrium 2000, Latour 1987). On the way to become the final statement documents are often rephrased and reduced. Given that policy documents often don't describe the relations and communication processes that unfolded during decision making, often document describe main conclusions.

From documents I analysed it was not plausible to trace the intensions or perceptions of single actors who participated in the decision making in the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee held. To grasp the dynamics of discussion, relations and the articulation of network identity I observed different events organized in relation to the two governance networks.

#### **4.4 Direct Observation**

Direct observation is another important technique a researcher can use when studying governance networks in action. By providing an opportunity to share experience about an event with those who are part of that event direct observation reduces the level of interpretation as the researcher holds the possibility of being in touch with the observed, and it thereby provides a deeper understanding of network relations and processes (Bogason and Zølner 2007, Järvingen Marharetha and Mik-Meyer 2005; Yanow 2000). Due to its advantage of giving a direct access to observe events, initiatives, or relations that constitute to network identity observation have been a central research technique employed in this thesis.

I have observed formal meetings, seminars, internal workshops, and conferences which were relevant to understanding how policy making and, simultaneously, network processes in the Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee unfold and how network identity in each network is being developed. For the most I was granted access to the formal meetings, social events and internal policy documents. However, there were meetings at which politicians decided to hold closed session explaining that the theme of the meeting was politically sensitive. For example, in April 2009 the national association of municipalities organized a seminar at which municipal

politicians from all five regions participated to evaluate the performance of all five Growth Forums. Although I have explained to the executive manager of this seminar how the content of the seminar was important for my empirical study and how I was already present in the Growth Forum of Region Sealand I was refused entrance<sup>12</sup>.

I paid attention to where actors meet, how long and how the dialog unfolds. These informal details are important as they symbolize the tones of communications. I also observed body language: how do members of the network react to particular questions or issues discussed: Is there an observable pattern in their reactions? What does their face expression tell us, for example, when do they laugh? Do they whisper to the person sitting next to them? Those questions and are also applied when using observations in studying governance networks (Sørensen and Torfing 2007:164)

I noted all statements as accurately as I understood. When I returned to the computer I rewrote the notes into digital form. Thereby I have recaptured the impressions and provided notes for the later use in analysing network identity. From these notes I could see who spoke and about what and how many times. Some statements are used as quotes in the analysis. From the observations I conclude that the dialog dynamics also depend on the political nature of the issue, especially the issues that concerns coordination of the tasks at which both regional and municipal politicians perceive to share a common interests e.g. implementing regional entrepreneurial development (Observation of meeting in the MCC 06<sup>th</sup> February 2008).

Once I observed a municipal politician who was positive about regional entrepreneurial development and strategy while he was holding a speech for the other politicians of the Municipal Contact Committee. I assumed for a moment that this municipal politician was identifying with the region, since his expressively positive attitude towards the Regional Growth Forum. When I confronted him during our interview, I asked what his enthusiasm of the Growth Forum was an expression of? And I told him how I suddenly began to think that he was adopting “a regional identification”, he explained: “No, no, I was not identifying with the region at all. I was only glad that we in Growth Forum did good work I was only enthusiastic about it. I am still representing municipal interests” (Interview Mayor, H. J. 2007). This is example of how fruitful it can be to combine observation with qualitative interviews.

Being present as observer imposes the risk of self-censure for those who are observed. Once, at a meeting in the MCC, a chairman announced my presence “Radmila is sitting in the corner and she writes down everything you say”. I did not notice any immediate reaction, to this announcement, nor change in the dynamics of the debate that day. It could be that the MCC’s members ‘got used to’ my presence given that I was present at the meetings a few times earlier. Nonetheless, being present and invisible I have experienced as an observer’s ongoing dilemma.

Altogether I have conducted 25 observations. The list of dates and events I have observed is attached in the appendix 2.

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<sup>12</sup> Phone conversation and e-mail correspondence with the executive administrator from KL April 2009.

## 4.5 Qualitative interviews

Whereas conducting an observation somehow implies an observer's one way passive interpretation conducting an interview is two- way, an inter-relational, more dynamic and more unpredictable situation that requires a particular skills and preparation to ensure its quality. A series of manuscripts have been written on how to gather useful material on the basis of qualitative interviews, and for this thesis the main source of inspiration has been Weiss (1995) and Kvale (1996) for the general introduction to interview as a technique; Zølner, Rasmussen and Hansen (2007) for thoughts on conducting an interview within a study of governance networks; and Gubrium and Holstein (2001) on conducting an interview within tradition of social constructivism and interpretation have been helpful. Altogether they provide advice when preparing and implementing interviews.

Considering that the main objective of the analysis is to empirically illustrate the development of a network identity whose core elements are the network participants' perception of 'difference and common sense' it appears obvious to apply explorative and semi-structured interviews.

The data embraces 26 interviews with members of the Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee and municipal and regional administrators and politicians who are directly related to the two governance networks. First-time interviews and follow-up interviews were conducted in period between June 2006 and September 2010 in order to map changes in respondents' perceptions. Interviewees embrace regional and municipal politicians, regional and municipal administrators, representatives of business life and knowledge institutions, vice-chairman of the Growth Forum and vice-chairman of the MCC, leader of Growth Secretary and leader of Regional Administration. The detailed information on the respondents as well as interview guide is enclosed in the appendix 2 and 3. Respondents were selected on three main criteria: a) that they are represent different positions such as private companies, the business world, regional and municipal politicians, b) those who seemed to supported the idea of developing network identity; and c) those who seemed to oppose or neglect the possibility of developing a network identity.

*Interview questions* were organized around the main topics (identity, network functioning, and management) and were relatively open to stimulate a conversation. The first question was open to grasp the particular area of the interviewees' experience. For example, I asked: "Can you tell me what the circumstances lead you to become a member of Growth Forum?" Then I asked: "How do you experience your participation in the Growth Forum? What are the possibilities of the Growth Forum to make difference in regional entrepreneurial development?" As the interview unfolded, the questions were more closed and concrete in mapping the development of network identity: "Do you think that the Growth Forum as a network has developed a sense of shared goals? If yes, how, if not, why not?"

Given that the notion of network identity was theoretically constructed, it was necessary to translate it to the meaning that the respondents would recognise as their everyday political experience.

Some questions were also phrased on the basis of observations notes conducted before the interview, and other questions appeared to me relevant during the interview. Thus it was possible to clarify and verify own interpretations of the events I observed, in the moment that those mattered for a better understanding of political praxis, and to enhance the understanding of the practical relationship between the concepts of network identity, network management and network coordination.

Before the interview, a respondent was given a letter that described the purpose of the interview and its main themes. Most respondents were familiar with the aim of the theses as my work was part of a research team that were investigating the same region.

During the interview the introspection was strived in order that the respondents felt the confidence to express their opinion even on the topics that were politically sensitive to the respondents. For example, during one interview I remember I mentioned: "Thinking about your job in the light of the local government reform, I imagine you have so many meetings, so many networks to participate in..." And then one respondent remarked in laughter: "Oh, you think about us... that's kind" (Group interview with mayors L.T. and H.J. 2007)

A common condition I have experienced through interviewing is that respondents expressed their opinion in general terms, not mentioning particular people (as they feel is inappropriate to personalize) or events. For example, a politician stated "I miss more getting together" (Mayor, MS 2009:10:3). The expression shows politicians' dissatisfaction with the network but it does not indicate the extent of the lack of common identity.

In one case of interview conducted by phone I sent the transcript to the respondent to verify. The other respondents have not required the transcription.

Given that the studying development of network identity is based on a longitudinal case study, interviews were carried out over a period of four years and some key respondents were re-interviewed.

A follow up interview was conducted in September 2010 with a municipal administrator, who had participated both in the Growth Forums and the MCC's political meetings as well as in administrative meetings with the Region Sealand and who holds a main position in the Regional - Municipal coordination of entrepreneurial development. The purpose of follow-up interview was to validate the results and conclusions of the thesis. In addition, I attempted to speak with two other members from the Growth Forum whose experience I found important, however, they were unable to meet as they were too busy. Time limits and busy schedules of respondents in the time of Local Government Reform imposed some limitations in gathering primary data e.g. interviews and survey.

As mentioned, in addition to individual interviews one group interview was carried out.

Conducting group interviews has two clear advantages: it saves time, it stimulates debate as respondents encourage each other to narrate even more than if they were alone faced with the

interviewee. However, refraining from discussion about sensitive issues may happen during group interviews due to social control among respondents. If we want to ensure full confidence with the respondent then single, face to face interviews are preferable.

A particular advantage is being able to understand the interviewee's unique experiences. Qualitative interviews help us to gain new knowledge as interviewees leave the space for surprise and novelty. Interviews help a researcher to ask what he/she initially would not know. The disadvantage is that the interviewer cannot know with certainty whether the interviewees do as they say they do. This would require closer observations of the each actor. I have, however, had the opportunity to observe actors' body language during the meeting sessions. Values which actors highlight in their speech are often the one which represent and frame group values: human behaviour is always inter-relational (Yanow, 2000, p. 11). The more people work together and help each other the more committed they become to each other and to their nominal goal (Stone 2001:30). From this point of explanation a qualitative interview single and group produces important knowledge of collective process, as the developing of a network identity is.

#### **4.6 Digital media**

Although being predominantly an entertainment media You Tube is a valuable source in mapping TV-news and documentaries as they may give access to interviews or press statements actors who are being studied have expressed to public.

I have browsed You Tube searching for press, documentary by local TV2-Øst to see whether they have broadcasted anything related to the work of the Regional Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee, or actors who are part of it.

I came across press statements expressed by mayors who are members of the GF and MMC regarding the Regional Policy. The source to these statements is listed with the other data in the bibliography. Press statements are first hand sources and their validity is the same as that of interviews. On the one hand they can contribute significant material as they are expressed in public. Due to the demands of responsibility and accountability public statements may be self-censored. In this thesis a few statements are selected, in the chapter five, to illustrate the political climate that regional governance networks are part of. This information is important to help understanding some disputes within the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee which are focussed upon in greater detail.

For a clearer overview a section that summarizes the method techniques follows.

##### **4.6.1 Method techniques - comparing strengths and weaknesses**

By combining observation and qualitative interviews I was able to investigate *action* in speech, discussions, perceptions, and take into account bodily reactions, humour, and the dynamic of



conversations that may contribute to a versatile comprehension of actors' behaviour and belief-grounds. Conducted observations, qualitative interviews and document studies have both complemented and substituted each others' lacks. For example, observation-notes and impressions I have experienced during meetings in the two networks had guided me in selecting respondents.

The table summarizes the strengths of each technique and it also describes briefly how the weaknesses of each technique can be mitigated when combined with other techniques.

<b>Data source</b>	<b>What has it captured?</b>	<b>What has it <i>not</i> captured?</b>
<b>Documents</b>	Decisions, events, participation activity, some management strategies being important for the development of network identity	Uneven access to documents in the two cases; selective, biased, filtered information, complemented by interviews
<b>Observations</b>	Personal experiencing of events, relations, viewpoints in the time as these are happening, and experiencing their interplay	Do not know the reasoning behind the relations, culture, etc. complemented by interviews uncertainty about how the observers (my) presence affects the discussion, in the network
<b>Interviews</b>	Motivation, self-perceptions and perceptions of others	The relationship between perceptions and changes in practice, their consequence on the future handling
<b>Digital media</b>	Opinion, values	Motivation and consequences of the opinion on the future handling

**Table 2: (Inspired by Yin 2003:86)**

Having outlined how the data was collected, the next step is to explain how the same is analysed.

What does the interpretive approach prescribe in terms of data analysis, making valid arguments and ensuring a scientific quality? These are the themes taken up in the following section.

#### **4.7 Interpretation as an analytical strategy**

While the verb *to interpret* in its original meaning implies to translate a script or oral language as authentically as possible, the task of interpretation in research activity implies *making sense of the world* (Yanow, 2000) (Bevir, 2006). All scientists interpret whether they interpret survey, qualitative data or quantitative interviews. While for example, Institutional Rational Choice approach focuses on the importance of rules in changing actors' goal and self-interest orientation, resource mobilization and exchange (e.g. Elinor Ostrom 2007:27) the interpretive approach to policy analysis focuses on the meaning of policies, on the values, beliefs and the processes by

which those meanings are created and read by various audiences (Yanow, 2000, p. 14). The interpretive approach claims how ideas, discourses, and values that sustain rational argument are defined in political struggles between multiple meanings (Stone 2001, and 2002:8).

Advocates of interpretive approach are committed to achieving in-depth understanding of actors' first order of interpretations (Heracleous, 2004, p. 187) (Bevir, 2006, p. 2). People as objects of study hold values, visions, and experiences, which in themselves contain levels of interpretation. When a researcher interviewees a politician about her/his perception of certain issue or event the researcher cannot expect to receive an authentic recounting of that event, but rather his/her interpretation of it, which is a blend of the facts that happened in the event and the values the interviewed is embodied and which influences how s/he looks at it. Consequentially this would mean that the researcher would receive different versions, explanations, and viewpoints. Differences in belief do not mean people cannot socialize and rethink personal ideas. To explain an action a researcher cannot correlate it to/with an isolated attitude. Action needs to be related and interpreted with the whole web of beliefs. And the researcher's previous experiences, theoretical orientations, and knowledge of the situation also influence the results of analysis (Yanow, 2000, Bourdieu 1993). Any analysed data contains at least a double level of interpretation. Mark Bevir and Rod Rhodes (2007) advocate an interpretive approach when studying governance networks and they engage in developing ontological and epistemological grounds for interpretive approach to social sciences. Despite the critique that can be raised of their theory, for example, for not distinguishing belief with action, I find Bevir's and Rhodes' contribution useful when analyzing identity processes in governance networks.

An interpretive approach based on socio-constructionism claim that scientific knowledge is historically and culturally created due to social interactions within and between scientific communities and as such the theoretical knowledge is contested (Vivian Burr 1995:4-5). The validity of the theory is bounded to its ability to grasp empirical processes of social world. Should a researcher decide from the point of significance of the change whether it is necessary to introduce a new concept? Or is the significance of the change crucial for changes in the theory? The particularity of the interpretive approach is exactly in its urging the theory development whenever a researcher observes a new empirically phenomenon, paradox, anomaly that cannot be explained by the existing theories. It is about retrospective work a researcher uses methods to maximize inputs from both theory and practical world (Olsen & Pedersen, 1997, pp. 188,201,359). The ontological, epistemological and methodological process of working on that concept is in accordance with the interpretation cycle, illustrated below:

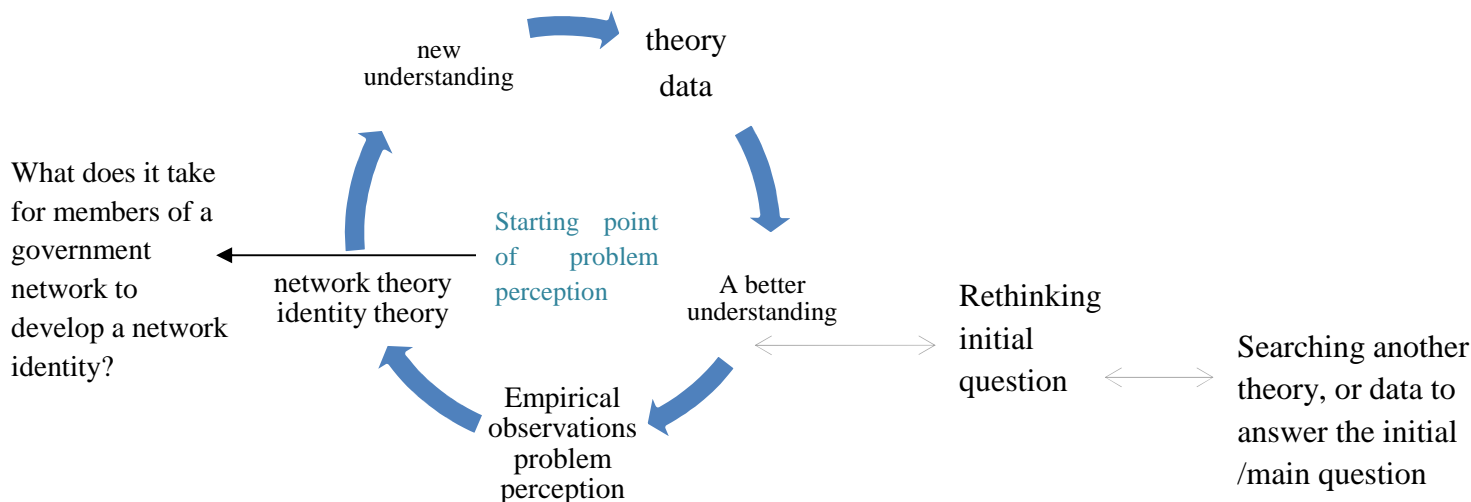


Figure 17: Interpretation cycle in crafting and responding to research question

#### 4.7.1 How have I interpreted the data?

This short section provides an example of how the metaphorical sentences in the text are interpreted. The following quote is from an interview with a politician who explains how he perceives the relationship between the regional and municipal governance network within the Growth Forum:

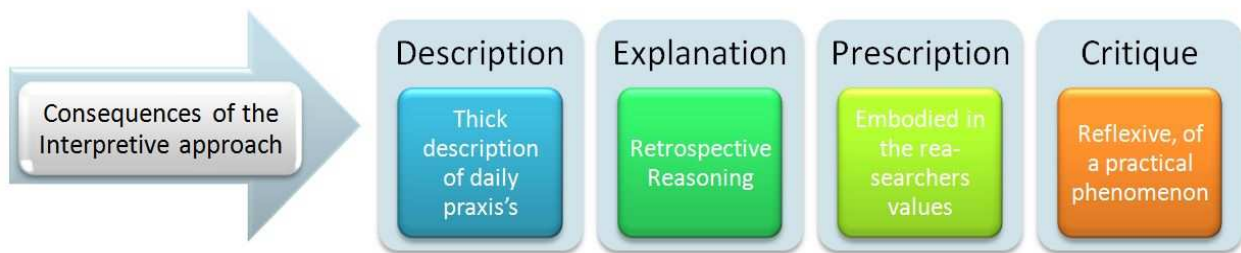
Quote: "... there will be a little war and I think it is still going on" (Mayor, member KKR and Growth Forum (2008: 86-87))

*Interpretation:* The respondent perceives there is wicked conflict between two parties. In this case the respondent was referring to regional and local administration. It is worth remarking that the respondent uses strong expression "a war" to illustrate relationship between regional and municipal governing agents. On the basis of two observed meetings where municipal and regional administrators discussed how to prepare the first seminar (august 2006) for Growth Forum, I had the impression that the collaboration was smooth with no particular conflicts. I conclude that, even if wicked conflicts between regional and municipal administrators happen, I could not generalise. An alternative conclusion was: perhaps due to different values we may have when making observations, the respondent sees regional-municipal collaboration as conflicting while I see it as peaceful, or rather, I do not understand the underlying disagreements and conflicts. Both interpretations may be right and wrong. To eliminate error-understanding and present a better explanation, it may help to ask the respondent: "what are your reasons for claiming war between local and regional administration?" If additional inquiry is impossible, than a researcher must examine the context and leave alternative explanations open.

### 4.7.2 Thick Description and Thin Explanation

In positivist tradition *explanation* is related to relationship between a two phenomenon we call A and B, where the first A can explain the later B. A is the explanandum and can be logically derived from B the explanans (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, pp. 21-22). Explanans is a particular account or set of conditions to be fulfilled. Explanans has a certain function: it explains deductively the event/fact/process. In interpretive approach *Explaining* is about locating beliefs in/with the other beliefs and locating traditions and dilemmas. Beliefs and desires constitute action. All action is intentional because it is “necessarily performed for reasons and believes” (Bevir 2003:15).

Researchers are seen as confirming rather than falsifying hypothesis. Glynos and Howard use the notion of retroductive reasoning (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 48). Retroduction is synonymous deduction and it is about studying facts and devising a theory to explain them (Glynos & Howarth, 2007, p. 2). The explanandum consists of polemic social phenomenon, mediated by existing theoretical structures, and social practices (ibid. 2007:47). The Figure 18 below presents how interpretive approach views ontological possibilities of description, explanation, and prescription:



**Figure 18: The interpretive approach views ontological possibilities of description, explanation, and prescription**

Given that the approach that this thesis has conducted contains a thicker theoretical and empirical description than explanations, a necessary reflection concerns scientific quality: how does this approach ensure scientific quality?

### 4.7.3 Interpretation and scientific quality

Using an interpretive approach does not set a researcher free of the demand on clearly argued and defined concepts, reflexively derived methods, reflexive choice of sources, clearly explained and feasible analysis, and available and exposed results to evaluation by experts and readers in the related field.

As for the demands a more similarities than differences are between interpretations and, for example, model based explanations: Sabatier writes how scientific work ought to be broad in scope, falsifiable, reach many levels, and variety of systems (Sabatier 2007:8). Propositions ought to be as general as possible and explicitly address relevant uncertainties, conflicts, and power structures. Interpretive scholars would seek some generality in their explanations well aware that these generalities are always and solely examples of a particular practice.

“Once performance deficits have been identified, empirical research will be able to concentrate its search on those structural and procedural aspects of policy formation and policy implementation which can explain such policy failures” (Scharpf 1978:350)

Blue print-advice is problematic although a few explicitly aim to change the conditions of social life they perceive as problematic (e.g. Bevir and Deborah Stone) conducting action research. While criteria for good theory (seeing from for example public choice theory would be to predict voter’s behaviour, protagonists of interpretation are restrained from claiming ability to predict and explain rigorously, simply as they acknowledge presence of societal change, contingency, uncertainties and unintended behavioural consequences. Traditions do not fix how people act. And change is a product of modifying traditions that ontologically are not amenable to prediction (Bevir 2003, 2004).

Another condition is the time and distance delay between the scientists and practitioners: research results are usually presented later on in the processes which are the subject of research: results when demanded by practitioners and the analysis must be precisely targeted towards solutions of the practical problems. When conducting theory driven analysis, as in this theses, there are usually concerns about theoretical issues that attempt to *understand* underlying problems in the first place and then to generate ideas on how to develop a network identity for the purpose of the achieving well functioning and coordination in future governance networks. Due the ongoing, changing, fluctuating nature of the practical problems researchers are dealing with, the methods they use are readjusted and combined in a ways that is estimated best to approach the problem. Inquiry has to be exposed to scrutiny, control by the community of researchers, practitioners, public for confirmation, correction of results, knowledge building a cognition ladder I have sketched in the beginning of this chapter.

#### **4.8 Conclusion**

The methods that are designed to answer the main research question are inspired by the interpretive approach to the social sciences. This philosophy of ideas provides a guideline for the use of case-study, the combination of qualitative method techniques and even more important for the epistemological premises the answering of main research question is based on.

While the idea behind the case study, namely studying the development of network identity in depth and over time, is the overall research approach, observations, interviews, document study and digital data are those that carry the mapping of the data. Similar to the logic of interpretation in which the knowledge is built, a circular interpretation the data mapping (document study, observations and interviews) were conducted to build up and understanding and thick description of how a network identity is being developed under different conditions of management within two different governance networks. Using a variety data sources and recognizing events and people has provided a basis for explanations of, for example, which management techniques contribute to the development of network identity.

As the major content of the local government reform started to be implemented in 2007, it presented the possibility of conducting a process study enabling to capture moments of coherence and disruption in identity development, and it helped to understand under which conditions and how coordinating policies are interrelated to the articulation of these. The chronological illustration of identity development contributes to studies of governance networks functioning in relation to policy coordination.

Whereas this chapter have described the methodological approach and analytical strategy that is utilized in analysing the empirical data the next three chapters present the results of the empirical analysis.

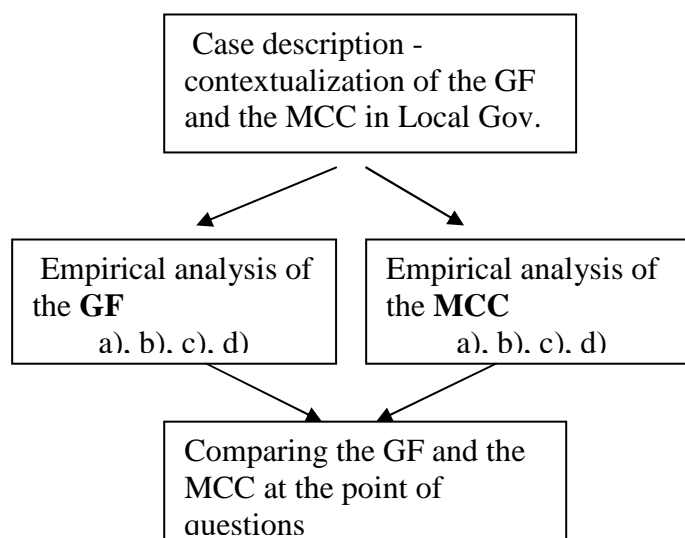
## EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS - INTRODUCTION

After having discussed and developed the concept of network identity, it is now the moment to confront theoretical claims with the empirical data. This will be done through a concept driven analysis of the Regional Growth Forum (the GF) and Municipal Contact Committee (the MCC) which are examples of a top-down and a bottom-up established types of governance network. The Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee are relevant cases not only because they are different in their institutional structure, but also because they are connected by the shared task of creating and coordinating regional entrepreneurial growth. The two networks are interconnected as they coordinate regional industrial policy through common representatives, a group of municipal politicians who both participate in the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC) and the Growth Forum and who report to the MCC about crucial decisions that have been taken in the Growth Forum (GF).

Given that the GF and the MCC are established as a result of the Local Government Reform (LGR 2007), it is important to explain the political and institutional environment that characterises at that time as it caused an institutional basis for developing network identity, as analysis will show. This is to show that even a newly established governance network builds on already existing meaning structures and institutional path-dependence. Chapter five describes each network regarding their relations to Danish Local Governance Reform (2007).

Chapters six and seven analyzes the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee through the optic of the main questions that I have clarified in the section 'Summery of the Theory' (questions a, b, c and d).

Chapter eight compares the results of the analysis from the two cases in order to achieve a deeper understanding, and learn about, the management strategies that help development of the network identity and enhance network coordination. Model for the analysis can be illustrated in following way:



## Chapter 5 Contextualisation of the cases

The Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee were established on the eve of the Local Government Reform 2007 which therefore represents the *external* political environment which impacts internal conditions of the two governance networks. On the ground of documents, interviews and observation-notes this chapter describes the most important characteristics of the political and institutional environment that had an impact on the developing network identity in the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee. The chapter contains a detailed description of the internal structures of these two networks and finally discusses their key network-aspects: why is it reasonable to perceive that the GF and the MCC are governance networks?

### 5.1 Introduction to the Local Government Reform 2007

When the LGR was adopted in 2007, the two major and parallel reforms were initiated. Firstly, to fuse 275 municipalities into 98 and to establish 5 regions that would replace 15<sup>13</sup> counties. Secondly, to reorganize the distribution of tasks, standardize and equalize financing of public service. Changing political map after 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 was grounded in the belief that larger municipalities tend to be more sustainable and can carry out welfare tasks and at the same time be the citizen's main access to public sector. Regions were entitled to be a strong basis of a 'world class health service' (Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Velfærdsministeriet, 2006, p. 1). Leading government figures claimed that large municipalities and regions can "... solve tasks efficiently and as close to the citizens as possible" (...) Citizens in Denmark will experience a better and even more consistent public service" (Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen (Velfærdsministeriet, 2006, p. 1). In line with the decentralisation that took place in 1970, this reform is unquestionably a continuous search to achieve effectiveness and democracy. The effects and the output of the LGR are still to be evaluated (Ejersbo 2005). The thesis only concentrates on events, intensions and viewpoints that witness the political climate and institutional settings in which the Growth Forum and Municipal Contact Committee were functioning. The three striking conditions I have identified and labelled are path-dependence, uncertainty, and task-overload. Each condition will be elucidated in the next section.

#### 5.1.1 Path-dependence, uncertainty and task-overload

Before LGR the counties had maintained a tax-system. Now the regions that have replaced the counties are dependent on income from the state and the income that comes from service municipalities' purchase from the region. While the regional governing level has declined in the

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<sup>13</sup>Bornholm County (16.) was after 2002-3 restructured into a unique construction a Region-Municipality.



scope of tasks mainly to govern the public hospitals and regional development, municipalities' task scope has increased now to include heavier tasks as training after injuries, coordination of health services, entrepreneurial development, and furthering local democracy.<sup>14</sup> Consequentially, the regional government has weakened, while municipal government has strengthened in terms of jurisdiction. This is important to note considering that both municipalities and regions have kept (though transferred) a huge number of its political and administrative personal (estimated 50 %).

Changing the institutional frames in terms of decreasing region's formal power had a disempowering effect on quite a few actors. A politician who is a mayor in one of the municipalities and who also is a member of the Regional Committee explained in an interview that he observed many politicians losing connections and the authority as they were just a coordination actor after they had left the county and entered the regional Committee (Mayor P.H. 2006, s. 2, 25) Municipal politicians view the current regions as just one more 'big county', and as the municipal politician expresses, "we had enough of counties over the past 25-30 years" (Mayor P. H. 2006:5, 9).

The aspiration to diminish, and preferably avoid a regions' power over municipalities is related to the experiences and relationship the municipalities have had with the counties. In particular regional development is a sensitive topic for municipalities, as counties were framing the rules that municipalities perceived they needed to obey (Interview with regional and municipal politician P.H.2006, p. 6, 10-12). "I was at a kick-off conference for regional planning, and the moment the chairman started talking about the regional plan (...) much tasted of the old county" (Ibid. 2006 p, 6,18). Obviously, the municipal politician alludes to the region's policy making today with the policy making from the time when counties, as he perceives, had dominated the regional policy. On the other hand, when consulting scholars who had studied the relationship between the municipalities and the countries, the relationship is described as being:

"Nobody knew who the politicians in the county Committee were" (Regional politician K. D. 2007:254).

Scholars claim that although the former counties played the key role in the regional planning processes they often needed to rely on local government on the consent of those actors whose behaviour was to be governed by the regional plan, on bargaining different positions of local communities (Bogason, 1978, pp. 215-216). Scholars also describe the relationship between municipal and county level as cross functional, cross-district horizontal negotiations rather than hierarchical (Christensen, Christiansen and Ibsen 1999:74). Nonetheless, during interviews with municipal politicians and on the basis of the observations of their meetings, it became apparent that the sensitivity beneath earlier experiences had affected the present, in that many municipal politicians over again underline that the regional development is the municipalities' business and the region should stick to health policy (Mayor P.H.2006, p. 3&18).

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<sup>14</sup> Appendix 3 shows the shift in task force from before and after 2007 (Christensen, Christiansen and Ibsen 1999:60-61)

The second important condition refers to the ongoing public debate about whether regions have a future or will be closed down.<sup>15</sup> For example, the Prime Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, had in public stated the possibility that the regions can be closed down if they do not deliver desired health services. Those public stories impose the uncertainty of existence upon regional networks, such as the Growth Forum.

Third significant characteristic of LGR is *a work load*. Both politicians and administrators are experiencing a huge workload which brings them to a dilemma with regard to which events to prioritize and where to engage. A municipal politician described the work load in the following way:

“We attend many meetings (...) and conferences (...) where we have to have an opinion about everything, and a lot of people are close to breaking their necks. I don't think anybody can imagine what kind of burden this puts on the politicians and our employees. It is enormous” (Mayor L.T. 2008:192,210, 219 and 220).

The state-administration participates in regional networks, and the state makes partnerships with the regional networks. Consequentially, while decentralizing responsibility for diverse welfare tasks to regions and municipalities, the state administration/politicians had demonstrated more indicators of centralisation of control. For example, even though regions are allowed to work employing their own strategy, due to the agreement “Partnership” with the national government all regions must follow particular target-areas. Partnerships need to be in line with Globalization Strategy (national agreement) and Lisbon (EU agreement) agreements. LGR is an example of simultaneous processes of decentralization and centralization. The path-dependent experiences and municipalities desire to remain autonomous, and the jurisdictional responsibility to solve regional entrepreneurial development (e.g. qua Growth Forum) is an example of how the regional and municipal governing bodies are continuously put into competing and coordination logic.

The path-dependence, the discourse of uncertainty, work overload and the budgetary pressure are the conditions under which the both the Growth Forum and the MCC are exposed to. In chapters 6 and 7 where I analyse each case separately, those conditions will be presented. While the story told by now is a rather general and ‘external’ view on the political and the institutional environment, the following sections present the Regional Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee from the *within*.

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<sup>15</sup> Prime Minister Løkke Rasmussen's press conference, when he clearly stated that regions have no future unless they fulfill the demands and govern the public sector successfully, imposes a pressure and uncertainty on the regional governance. These moments of uncertainty are evident through the interviews with the regional politicians.

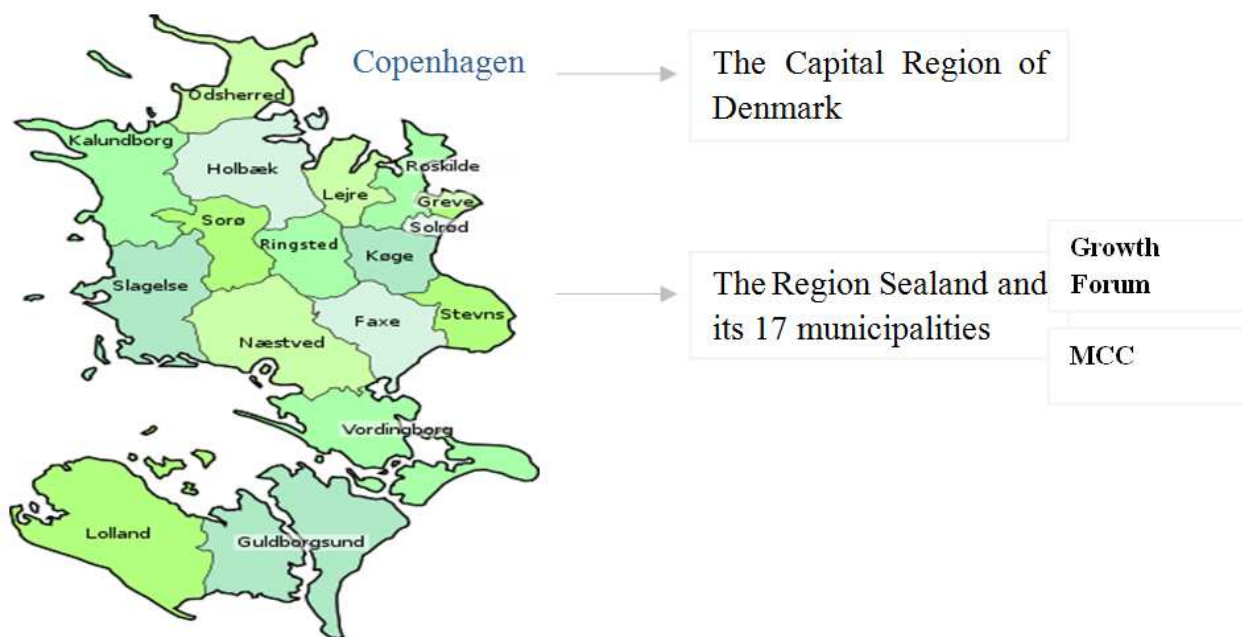


Figure 19 Map of Region Sealand and its municipalities. Source: <http://da.wikipedia.org>

Not only are municipalities of Region Sealand different in size and geographic distance to Capital City of Copenhagen. The differences in the employment rates, education levels, economic, demographic growth and changes are present are remarkable (<http://mapicture.regionsjaelland.dk/>).

The two networks need to deal with these differences and make policies that are all inclusive, and balance different needs.

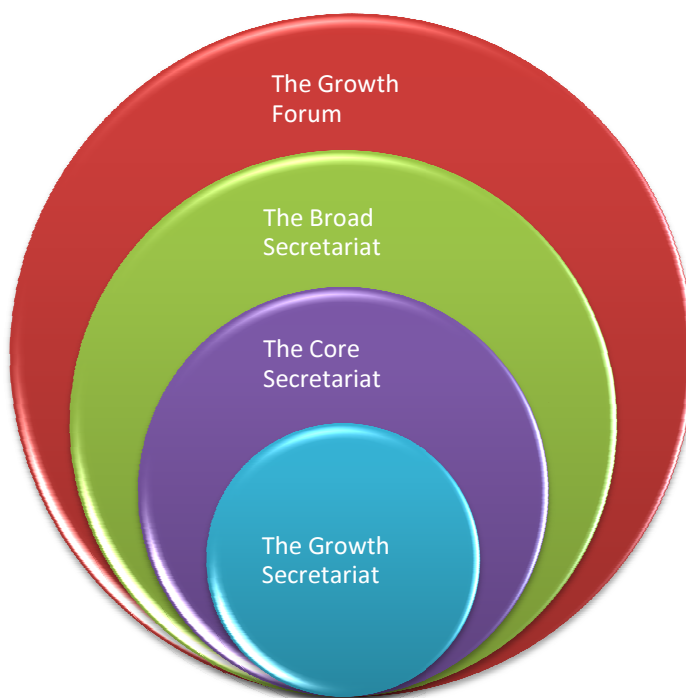
## 5.2 The Growth Forum Region Sealand (GF)

According to the national legislation all regions must elaborate *a strategy and plan* that neatly describes how the region will foster industrial growth and develop areas of the region that are concerned peripheral. The Growth Forum is the main political actor responsible for elaborating the industrial development strategy. The Growth Forum includes representatives from the Regional Committee (3), municipalities (6), knowledge institutions, (3), the Danish Labor Union and the Danish Employee's union, and industry organizations (6). It is a network that embraces actors across the region, municipalities, business life and civil society. The Growth Forum can also be characterized as a closed, formalized, long term network, as its membership and its overall political goals are instructed by the national legislation (Erhvervsfremmeloven L47, §10).

**Figure 20: The Political-administrative structures of the Growth Forum**

The Growth Forum of Region Sealand was established on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 for a mandate of four years. The Growth Forum's main task is to produce a policy strategy which is the platform for the annual plan of action that describes the concrete projects that will be implemented during the year. The Growth Forum is first of all a facilitator to make conditions and frames for the economic growth and welfare. Although the Growth Forum is not an authority it has the formal decision making authority over the administration as it can refuse (it did a couple of times) and request new drafts for the policy-strategies and visions.

In Figure 20 the circles show the formal political administrative organization which serves the Growth Forum. At least four levels need to be coordinated. All political ideas go through the administration: The Growth Secretary is the main administrative unit which is physically placed in the regional organization. It writes speeches, chooses people to participate in the workgroups and in general prepares the foundation for the political decision making in the Growth Forum (Observation Vækstsekretariatet28.06.06).



'The Core Secretariat' is an extension of the Growth Secretary. It includes the six administrators from the municipalities, and the National Agency for Enterprise and Construction. The Core Secretariat meets once a week with the Growth Secretary. The municipal administrators work on agenda setting and coordination with the Growth Forum. (s. 9, 31-05-2006, MCC).

At the same time, they are in contact and monitor the activities in the Growth Forum as well as the regional levels. Together, they refer to the broader construction called 'Broad Secretary' which, beside the region and the municipalities includes representatives from a variety of stakeholder organizations. This network holds weak ties to the Growth Secretary as they met every second month. Its justification for existence is to ensure that different voices are heard before the formal process of decision making takes place in the Growth Forum.

The Growth Forum is accountable for the budget and as such they decide which projects to finance, but they do not carry out the implementation. The implementation is commissioned to independent professional actors, and municipalities. The Growth Forums budget for 2008 was 144.5 million

DKK (Regional industrial budget was 72.5 million DKK and RU structural funds was 72 million DKK).

In 2009 the frequency of meetings was changed from 6 annually to 4. Two meetings have been replaced by a one day seminar, in spring, and a conference in the fall ([www.vfsj.dk](http://www.vfsj.dk)). On the seminar held in april 2009 , the issue was the strategy planning for 2011-2014. In a official agenda-statement it is expressed that the Growth Forum finds it satisfying to have the possiblity to talk about regional development strategy and for the Region Sealand 2011.

The purpose of the seminars is to have a common discussion about future strategy and to elaborate a postscript to the forthcoming mandate for the Growth Forum (2010-2014). Since the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010 the Growth Forum has had a member assembly.

The graph inserted in the appendix shows the meeting frequency for the period of the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 until 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010. The graph shows how meeting frequency was decreasing during 2009, for example, in February 6 members were absent while in May the 12 members were absent. The analysis will show the reasons for decline and its consequences for the possibility of developing the network identity.

The main research question, the selected theory and the empirical analysis are all based on the assumption that the organizational forms of the two cases I am analyzing, namely the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee, are governance networks. To check that assumption I will review, first, the Growth Forum and then the Municipal Contact Committee in relation to the five criteria I have highlighted in the chapter on network coordination.

### 5.3 What makes the Growth Forum a governance network?

The five key criteria for recognizing a governance network in an empirical policy process are:

1. Interdependent and operationally autonomous actors
2. Network members interact through negotiations
3. Interactions unfold within regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework
4. Network and actors are self regulating within limits set by external agencies
5. Network contributes to the production of public purpose

(from the theory chapter one, ref. Sørensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 9)

Let us have a look at each criterion:

#### 1. Interdependent and operationally autonomous actors

This criterion means that the network members need to perceive each other as mutually dependent, yet that they preserve positional independence towards the network. How are the members of the Growth Forum mutually *interdependent* and how do they maintain positional independency?

The Business Law imposes a certain element of institutional interdependence by regulating and prescribing the multilateral actor-assembly in the Growth Forum (GF). Whether and how members *perceive* each other equally interdependent can best be grasped through the analysis of member's opinion. The next chapter will present examples of how the Growth Forum's members perceive interdependence.

Although the Growth Forum's members are subject to the institutional interdependence they are at the same time given the status of positional autonomy. As there are no sanctions any members can withdraw from the Growth Forum. Nonetheless, when holding a mandate in the Growth Forum, the members are autonomous from the region's or municipalities' subjection.

## 2. Network members interact through negotiations

The dialog, presentation of views, workshops, and team work are the prevailing means of communication the Growth Forum utilizes. No actor, no authority can force the idea upon the GF's members'. But they can persuade each other.

## 3. Interactions unfold within a regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework

The Business Legislation frames the operational conditions for the Growth Forum such as assembly, meeting frequency, its operational purpose, and the budget; The Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs monitors its performance, and the Growth Secretary provides the administrative service, such as agenda setting, organizing workshops, conferences, presenting projects, applying funds to the Growth Forum.

## 4. Network and actors are self regulating within limits set by external agencies

The GF is regulated by legislation; it is monitored by the state, primarily rather Ministry of Entrepreneurial affaires. It is facilitated by own administration, Growth Secretary, and it operate under norms, norms for how to hold a meeting: what is appropriate, acceptable behaviour, as a start point.

## 5. The network contributes to the production of public purpose

By creating the political visions, project and by allocating the financial resources into projects that are supposed to contribute to the economic growth in the Region Sealand, the Growth Forum contributes clearly to public, collective purpose. The extent and the success of that contribution are debated. Recently, the Growth Forum has announced, in is newsletter, its satisfaction with the results it achieved during period 2006-2010. For example, the GF has supported projects relating to bio-energy, innovation and tourism, and those projects are running ([www.vfsj.dk](http://www.vfsj.dk)). Remarkably, the newsletter emphasizes the importance of collaborative partners, WOCO (Wonderful Copenhagen), Copenhagen Capacity, CAT, companies, in other words external actors who have been involved in fostering those projects.

This experience tells us that the ability and capacity to link relevant and diverse actors into the web of networks and relations<sup>16</sup> and with a purpose of achieving a policy goal, is also a vital dimension of a governance network. Perhaps can this dimension be considered as the 6<sup>th</sup> criterion?

The next section describes the Municipal Contact Committee through the same optic as applied in describing the Growth Forum.

#### **5.4 The Municipal Contact Committee- Region Sealand**

The Municipal Contact Committee (MCC) is a different network in its establishment, actor-composition and political goals comparing to the Growth Forum (GF). Whereas the Growth Forum is initiated and regulated to some degree by the state actors, the Ministry of Business Affairs, the MCC was established by the municipal politicians and is supported by the interest group and member authorities of Danish municipalities, Local Government Denmark (LGDK). The MCC is intended to perform a role of a regional link to the LGDK as the MCC includes mayors from the Regions 17 municipalities who initially are meant to discuss and coordinate common political guidelines of cross municipal and regional level.<sup>17</sup> The MCC highlights its purpose as a setting that works towards pursuing municipalities' interests in relation to the Region Sealand as well as cross-municipal policy making. This can be interpreted as the MCCs' intention to consolidate strong mutual relations internally by articulating regional governance as someone outside of the MCC's interest scope.

While the GF embraces actors with diverse organizational positions, mostly stakeholders from civil society, the MCC embraces solely municipal politicians and can immediately be perceived as a rather homogenous composition. However, its 30 members not only hold a diverse political-ideological background (17 mayors and 13 members of local Committees who are Social Democrats 10, Liberal Party 9, Danish Peoples Party 3, Radical Left 2 and Conservative Party 2); they represent municipalities which face significantly different socio economic challenges and hold different traditions of political dialog and collaboration, as described earlier. Considering those conditions the MCC is correspondingly a complex governance network. It was constituted on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006, approximately half a year later than the Temporary Growth Forum and it continues. Its leadership has altered slightly: the chairman left the MCC in 2010 and ran for the Presidency of the Regional Committee, while its vice-chairman has taken the position of the chairman since the 2010.

Members meet each second month for an hour of group meetings (only with political alliances) and two hours of regular meetings for all 30 members. Meetings are run by the chairman who performs the role of political moderator and administration that monitors and makes notes. Each meeting is held so that all municipalities have the possibility of hosting the meetings. Thereby, all members are

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<sup>16</sup> Chris Ansell (2000) terms a web of networks within, for example a region, the network polity.

<sup>17</sup> Source: <http://www.kl.dk/Om-KL/KKR--Kommunekontakttrad/>

given an opportunity to experience each municipality's geography and specific characteristics. Comparing to the Growth Forum the MCC is served by two administrators who polish the agenda, newsletters and other information regarding regular meetings. They are allocated close to the chairman and are directly linked to the LGDK from where they broadcast the news about the MCC through the main homepage [www.kl.dk](http://www.kl.dk). Not alone the little administration signals that the MCC is a quasi-formal network but the minor scope of publicity: the GF independent homepage offers many documents, statistics about its performance while the MCC is more sparingly in the media and though a little section on the [www.kl.dk](http://www.kl.dk) homepage offers a few documents own acts. Consequentially, the scope of policy documents available for studying the MCC is limited compared to those of the Growth Forum.

## 5.5 What makes the Municipal Contact Committee a governance network?

The five main criteria for recognizing a governance network in an empirical policy process are:

1. Interdependent and operationally autonomous actors
2. Network members interact through negotiations
3. Interactions unfold within regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework
4. Network and actors are self regulating within limits set by external agencies
5. Network contributes to the production of public purpose

(From the theory chapter one, ref. Sørensen & Torfing, 2007, p. 9)

Each criterion is discussed in the following:

### 1. Interdependent and operationally autonomous actors

The Growth Forum is established with the purpose of creating cross-municipal collaboration and the perception of mutual dependence among its members. This foundational condition may help develop a strong connectedness and thereby interdependence.

### 2. Network members interact through negotiations

Collaborative dialog is the means of communication during the meetings. The chairman who guides the discussions during meetings pays attention to tensions and underlying conflicts of interests that they do not escalate (Interview with M.S. 2009 and J. S. 2009). By balancing the tone of dialog the chairman helps creating perceptions among members that the meetings are unfolding under a friendly and relaxed atmosphere (Interviews with M.S. 2009, J.S. 2009, and S. V. 2008).

### 3. Interactions unfold within regulative, normative, cognitive and imaginary framework

All activities in the MCC are happening within the framework of storytelling and values that aim to continuously develop and strengthen the bonds among members regarding their perceptions of shared sense of purpose and their different political positions including all challenges those positions impose. These stories build on already existing norms and past experiences, for example, experiences with governing and power relations between municipalities and counties, at the time



many municipalities perceived that they were to some degree submitted to their county (Interview with P.H. 2007). Since its establishment the MCC has been building its own normative and cognitive framework in which, as previously described, a harmonizing of collaborative dialogue and story-telling of that members of the MCC shall stand together becomes crucial for the later development of strong imaginary framework.

#### 4. Network and actors are self regulating within limits set by external agencies

Although it is directly linked to interest-organization, Local Government Denmark, the MCC holds a high degree of self regulation.

#### 5. Network contributes to the production of public purpose

The issues that are discussed during MCC meetings concern predominantly municipalities' task-performance within health, environment, social help, etc. Although being locally anchored those tasks are indisputably of public interest.

When reviewing all the five criteria it becomes more obvious that the MCC holds attributes of a governance network. However, those descriptions and judgment can barely stand alone. Even more important is how relations inside the network unfold and whether its members perceive their own position and the functioning of the network as being part of a collective entity. It is those relations that create the grounds for motivation and for appreciating each others' differences. The cognitive and imaginary frameworks and how managing of those supports developing a network identity will meticulously be described in the chapters seven and eight.

Now that the institutional /organizational framework of the MCC and the GF is described the ground is provided to conclude how these two networks are good cases for making an empirical study of the development of a network identity.

## 5.6 Conclusion

The first and the most crucial criterion is that both the Growth Forum and the MCC are newly established networks and it was possible to study them from their early days of existence.

Newly established governance networks face conditions of absence of consensus about which rules to apply and having different perceptions of the problems which actors bring to the network (Hajer 2005:342, 344). Hence, a very crucial aspect of governance network is to develop a shared understanding, to work out the rules according to which decisions are to be made to develop these aspects that support the shared sense of destiny as being one of the main elements in network identity. To develop the second element, namely the values, stories and behavior that appreciate mutual difference and disagreements, it is necessary to perform what Hajer and other scholars call specified management strategies that aim to develop these values. The relative openness of

institutional conditions that Local Government Reform has produced has created space for reconstructing the existing and creating new network identities.

The second important property of both networks is their approximate time of existence and correlation; both have been established within the same year, have existed in parallel and are linked by at least one similar policy.

The third advantage is their organizational difference and purpose: while the GF is clearly a multi-level network the MCC is local governance network that possesses the quality to study a process of the development of a network identity.

Although the two networks are different, they are interconnected by the task of coordinating the regional entrepreneurial development. Given that this policy area is contested in terms of visions, strategies and discussions on how best to foster the economic growth it is exactly in such policy process that the space for development of network identity is suitable (Speech by Nørby (s) 25.08.06). The contestation is nonetheless the constitutive of the development of network identity in the processes of negotiation of who is responsible for what and how.

The following chapters (seven and eight) will concentrate on presenting what is the most crucial part of this thesis, namely, the *unfixed* conditions of the process of developing a network identity in the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee.



# Chapter 6 The Growth Forum: from a fragmented to fragile network identity

## 6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has described the Growth Forum (GF) in the light of political and administrative conditions within which it has been established, and the chapter explained why it is reasonable to perceive the GF a governance network, when analyzing its organizational structures. This chapter presents the empirical analysis regarding the development of a network identity in the MCC. The empirical analysis is structured around three analytical questions which have already been posed in the introduction and the summary of the theory part. The three questions are:

1. What characterizes the network identity developed in the Growth Forum?
2. How has the process of creating a network identity taken place in the Growth Forum, and which management strategies have enabled the development of the network identity
3. How has that network identity enhanced the process of network coordination?

## 6.2 The Development of a Network Identity

Chapter two argued that a network's identity develops in relation to its external image which is then processed internally within the network. Developing network identity is an open-ended, continuous process that with the help of network management (NM) can be altered to fit the network's policy purpose. Figure illustrates the process:

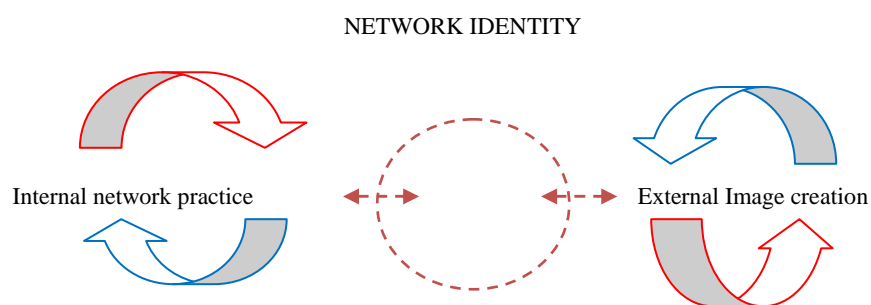


Figure 21: Dynamics in the development of a network identity. The figure is based on Hatch's and Schultz (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 379)

Network identity is constructed in the interplay of making internal values and interpretation of the responses it receives from the stakeholders and external other actors relevant to the network. A double dimension of interpretation is present in the relational dynamics: the interpretation of the network's image by external stakeholders, and the interpretation of the external inputs, and

responses by networks members and leadership. This process is continuous and it varies between the temporary stabilization and change.

Temporary stabilization provides a space to reflect upon learning and think about whether the existing identity is adequate, or a new dimension of identity-needs to be developed in the network. Changes in an identity occur not only due to conflicts, but also due to new demands, unexpected crises, significant events, and so forth. Congruent aspects of identity may be integrated, while other excluded due to inconsistency (Kreiner, Hollensbe, & Sheep, 2006, pp. 1322-1323). The following section will illustrate how this process of temporary stabilization and change has happened in the Growth Forum.

As concluded in the theoretical session the degree to which a network identity exists depends on the presence of a shared sense of purpose and appreciating the differences in value expressed among network members. Two central components need to be examined: a) *valuing difference and mutual tolerance* and b) *a sense of shared purpose*. The following section describes how a sense of shared purpose among members of the Growth Forum is more fragmented than unified and strong.

### **6.2.1 Promotion of difference**

Though the theory I have specified that promotion of difference in a governance network implies that the network members experience the strength of the network in its ability to cope with differences in goal orientations, ideas, interests that actors bring into the network. As explained in theory chapters 2 and 3, the function of promoting difference is partially to achieve the interdependence, and partially to maintain the dynamics within the governance network. Promoting the value of difference can take diverse forms: it can be expressed through telling a story that the strength of the network, the Growth Forum, lays in its ability to *utilize* the difference; or it can happen by solely accommodating the difference, for example, by giving space to actors to express their opinion, without being marginalized.

Promoting the value of difference is nonetheless about minimizing the impacts of exclusions that immanently follows any decision. Being established and formalized by the legislation the Growth Forum had provided formal representation to organizations, institutions, municipalities, and the region, and thereby it signals that all these actor-groups are important in achieving a better strategy for regional development.

On its homepage the expression *Achieving growth by new-thinking and collaboration*, appears as the main story-line ([www.vfsj.dk](http://www.vfsj.dk)). The story line of joint collaboration and new-thinking is coupled to the discourse of globalization as a new challenge and a threat to the national business competence capacity. In the policy document *Strategy 2007-2010* the Growth Forum expresses:

Collaboration between organizations and people is therefore of central premise for developing processes and the ability to be in global concurrence. (...) Collaboration is encouraged by being stimulated to meet those we normally do not collaborate with (Growth Forum 2007:6).

Two core values are denoted: firstly, the idea that growth can and ought to be achieved through innovation, creative solutions, alternative thinking and research; and secondly, that innovative thinking is indisputably bounded to 'working together', finding solutions by establishing collaborative relations with many important actors (Growth Forum 2006, Strategy 2007-2010; Plan of Action 2008:5). When studying more meticulously the story line of *Achieving growth by new-thinking and collaboration* in the context of the policy process, policy documents and even the actors' perceptions, it is evident that collaboration and new thinking addresses what can be named external interdependence. The Growth Forum as a collective decision maker promotes the idea that the politics in the regional development can only succeed if the Growth Forum continuously collaborates with all who are perceived as the contributors to the new-thinking. Both, the way of thinking about and practicing policy ought to be changed towards more networking, according to the Growth Forums official policy resolution.

When studying the normative foundation of the Growth Forum it is clear that this network promotes the value of difference both in public and by inviting different actors to participate in its policy processes. Network identity, however, refers not alone to the institutional foundation of a governance network, even more crucially, it refers to how the members who hold and articulate values, decides and coordinate, think about the network identity.

Members valorize the difference in the Growth Forum by emphasizing its strength that lies exactly in its network-like characteristics, namely being a place that gathers actors with many different views. A municipal politician states:

The Growth Forum is an excellent place to meet many different opinions  
(Mayor H.J 2007).

Another member who represents municipalities perceives the Growth Forum a place the municipal and regional interests can be discussed and decided which projects for fund. Thereby, implicitly the value of difference is articulated:

The collaboration between the Region and the municipalities is best expressed within the Growth Forum in which we share common interests, and we decide which project ought to be supported (Mayor J.S. 5.1. 2009, p. 14).

While, as shown, some municipal politicians perceive the Growth Forum due to its network-like characteristics that enhances the quality of its performance by embracing differences, other members are immediately ambiguous about the potentials of incorporating different views equally and taking an advantage of differences. A municipal politician explains it:

I do not think we have a common identity. We participate in meetings in peace and order, and there is no problem. But we do not really feel that a common identity is established. Even though we have elaborated a good ten stage program. It still is far from us and our municipal collaboration (Mayor S.V. 207-211).

Also among regional politicians in the Growth Forum a minor enthusiasm about the collaboration in the network is evident. This member thinks that one of the main problems is the limited finance the Growth Forum possesses, while all members want a share of it. This underlying concurrence makes this member feel that the advantages of the Growth Forum as a network, with different qualifications the members bring in, is not sufficiently taken an advantage of to develop into joint collaboration:

I have been with the Growth Forum and the first months I thought: "What in the World?" It demands a lot to read and understand things (...) and try to initiate collaboration. But in the moment we are luring at each other, a bit. Because a limited amount of money we deal with and everybody wants to have a share of it (Regional politician K.D. 2007: 1083-86, 1190-1198).

A member who represents business life states in an interview that the Growth Forum provides an opportunity to involve new viewpoints, new companies, and new project applicants (Interview J.S.N. 2008:9).

A member who represents knowledge institutions emphasises that the Growth Forum an important initiator in fostering regional collaboration within the field of education:

If the Growth Forum was not there we would invent it. Growth Forum has meant a collaboration that we had not before - also a less formal collaboration, which is very positive (Member U.K. interview in GF 2010:8).

A member who represents Labour Movement perceives the Growth Forum as an important arena in which members can discuss the future of education and business growth in the Region. By possessing financial means that allow to invest in long term projects a Growth Forum opens new opportunities. This member highlights how different views and interests are expressed during decision making, however:

(...) Members perceive that one shall have the ability to raise up in the helicopter perspective and assess what in overall best serves the development. And I don't remember one single case in the Growth Forum that has prioritised the concern for local and not regional (Member F. L., interview in GF 2010:11).

From the statement it can be reasoned that the funded projects had altogether regional perspective while single cases were not favored. This perception is remarkable when comparing to the other members' perceptions that state the opposite: namely that some of the challenges for the Growth

Forum in the beginning years was to go away from prioritizing single, part regional projects to larger projects that would involve many actors (GF 2010:6).

The next section describes the development of shared sense of purpose.

### 6.3 Sense of shared purpose

The Growth Forum's members may embrace various stories related to what they perceive as a sense of shared purpose. The key task is to identify those stories that, in particular, indicate how the members subscribe to a sense of shared purpose and those stories that undermine the existence of it. Through interviews with the members and through participant observations of meetings in the Growth Forum I have identified two major axioms around which member's beliefs, stories, and ideas that relate to a sense of purpose. These are grouped according to actors' representative positions. The first axiom is termed 'municipal versus regional' as it shows the reasoning and even dilemmas the GF's members were expressing. A sense of shared sense of purpose was *hampered* by the competing views on what belongs to the regional and what to the municipal regime of governance.

- 'Municipal versus regional'

*Municipal politicians* have expressed positive as well as skeptical views regarding the role of the Growth Forum in regional-municipal collaboration. An example of a positive view on the Growth Forum is expressed by a municipal politician who, also through formal meetings, has repeatedly emphasized that the members of the GF must try to develop a common platform of collaboration and that the Growth Forum is an excellent arena in which this collaboration can unfold. In the interview, the politician states:

I am happy with the regions. We need regions and regional collaboration. The Growth Forum is an excellent place to bring together many different opinions (Interview with Mayor H.J 2007).

Another municipal representative emphasizes how the region and municipalities share a common interest and decide which regional projects to support, precisely within the arena of the Growth Forum:

The collaboration between the Region and the municipalities is best expressed within the Growth Forum in which we share common interests, and we decide which project ought to be supported (Interview with Mayor J.S. 5.1. 2009, p. 14).



One municipal politician holds an ambiguous perception of the Growth Forum. On the one hand this politician considers the Growth Forum to be a network that holds great potential to bring a positive change, and growth to the Region:

The strength of the Growth Forum is that it mixes politicians, business people, educational institutions, and I have seen in other contexts that those are the one who collectively can 'get things to move' in Sealand. If things don't move we have failed altogether (Interview with Mayor, L.T. 2007:52-54).

On the other hand the same politician has doubts about the role of region in relation to the municipalities:

It is discussed whether it is the municipalities' region, or the regions' municipalities, and I think it is the municipalities' region (Interview with Mayor, L.T. 2007:52-54).

Tension concerning the regional government in relation to the demarcation and distinction of responsibilities between the two governing levels is present as well in this politician's narrative:

The region tries to take too much honor for this (regional development); it is not the chairman for the Regional Committee alone, it is many others who had lifted it up (Interview with Mayor L. T. 2007: 88-94)

Another municipal politician emphasizes the lack of what he describes as real collaboration between the Region, municipalities and business life, and that this lack may be an expression of underlying contestation which nonetheless makes participation in the Growth Forum challenging and confusing:

I think it has been a difficult beginning to the year. It is quite confusing being a member. (...) It seems as we miss the real collaboration between the region, the private and municipalities. (...) I do not know if this (lack of real collaboration) is because they want to mark their territory but that is what it seems to me (Interview with Mayor S. V. 2008:37:55:56).

This respondent concludes that the Growth Forum is far from having developed a shared sense of purpose, a collective *we*:

We discuss and we have dialogs, but being one, unified network with an identity: I do not think we have that (Interview with Mayor S.V. 2008).

Importantly, these statements come from the period 2006-8 and for this period their views range on a scale from being positive to being frustrated. A chronological analysis presented later illustrates on politician's change in view from frustration to satisfaction. Now, the text will disclose how the other members of the Growth Forum have perceived its dynamics regarding the internal collaboration and sense of common and shared values.

A *Regional politician in the Growth Forum* who represents Region Sealand perceives the relationship between the region and its municipalities as a topic that immanently appears in meetings of the Growth Forum:

If you are part of municipal and regional politics or a Committee then you are forced to discuss whether the region is the municipalities' or municipalities are regions (Regional politician K. D. 2007, l. 59).

Furthermore, this regional politician illustrates how she perceives the relationship between the regional and municipal representatives unfolded during the meetings in the Growth Forum, specifically in the first and second year after its establishment:

Joining the Growth Forum is an ambiguous pleasure. Many mayors are there and we are only three from the Region, so we are a minority, and that means, and we can propose issues that the Regional Committee has delegated to us; however when we are in the Growth Forum mayors can say: "That one? Forget about it, we are not going to support your proposal". It is not an egalitarian relationship, it is actually seldom, and one can feel that it lurks all the time: Are we imposing something on the municipalities, or are we taking something back that municipalities wanted us to take back? I think it is a bit tough to participate there (Interview with regional politician K. D. 2007, 368-377).

This statement is a clear example that highlights the dilemmas the regional politician experiences but also the dilemmas that were appearing during my observations of meetings and other events in the Growth Forum. While some municipal politicians, as described in the previous quote, have perceived that the Region dominates the agenda and aspires to steer too much, a regional politician perceives that it is municipal politicians who have the final say, and that the regional representatives in the Growth Forum are underrepresented (three regional versus six municipal politicians).

As an observer of, from time to other, tangled dialog processes in the Growth Forum, it is inevitable to reflect on how those can be understood and explained. Why did municipal and regional politicians react the way they did? The articulated views can be understood as a consequence and combination of path-dependence, which takes a form of memory from the time upon the Local Governance Reform (2007) and the mutual relationship between the regional and municipal governing levels. As described in the previous chapter, in an interview a municipal politician, who both performs the role of Mayor and was a member of the Regional Committee and possesses therefore knowledge on both governing levels, stressed that municipalities perceive new regions as a length arm of old counties and therefore are attentive on the regions governing behavior (Interview with mayor P.H. December 2007). The authority of the Region Sealand is significantly weakened and it holds no jurisdiction to govern municipalities in any policy field. The insecurity among municipal politicians about being overruled by the Region can be perceived in the context of mechanisms of Local Government Reform which from its initial days (from 2002) was led by ambiguous political discussions, reasoning and even explicit skepticism prior to the establishment of the new Danish Regions (from 2002-2007) (Sørensen 2005). The insecurity and the feeling of being dominated

among regional politicians can be understood in the light of their weakened political and organizational position and capabilities particularly during the first years (Sørensen and Christensen 2011).

To further illustrate a moment of tension and sensitivity in the dialog among, particularly municipal and regional representatives an example from my field notes is provided below. It was a formal meeting in the Growth Forum, December 2006, held in a prominent building of Holmegaard Glasværk, Næstved Municipality. The overall purpose of meeting was to adopt a RED-strategy for the period 1. January 2007-1. January 2010. The meeting began in a good atmosphere. After comments about the REDS-document came to a close, the chairman moved to the next case. The East Danish Tourism Fund has requested Region Sealand to appoint two members to the Fund's board. The chairman suggested that one representative ought to be appointed by the Growth Forum and one by the Regional Committee. Immediately, a discussion unfolded:

*Mayor H.J.:* Given that we finance it we should also be able to follow up on how things are going. I suggest we give priority to the three regional representatives who already are in the Growth Forum.

*Business Life representative M.:* The key to success is that we create a relationship with Business life and therefore we ought to have an external representative from Business Life.

*Business Life representative H.H. to the Chairman:* It is impossible to hear what you are saying.

*Mayor L.T.:* We can try to push and impact those places where it is possible to do it.

*Chairman K. E.:* I have those I represent to deal with. The Regional Council must therefore appoint one member.

*Mayor J.S. to Chairman:* What you are saying doesn't make sense.

*Mayor O.L.:* the legislation ought to be clarified

(... Long silence...)

*Mayor H.J.:* The Region is a 'rescue solution'.

*Chairman:* Somebody here knows how the political system works.

This conversation shows a bias in negotiations between the chairman and members of the Growth Forum, in particular municipal representatives. A bias seems to be a consequence of some underlying contestation of the political practice: while the municipal representative claims to know the truth about the rules of political practice, the chairman claims to possess an ambiguous knowledge on these rules. Given that the chairman is the political leader who at any time needs to appear consistent in his arguments a rhetoric response to member's doubts seemed to be a move to disarm those doubts and reconfirm stability. In an interview the chairman has highlighted an ambiguity, he perceived municipalities had towards the region, namely that there has been

resistance towards the region from the beginning, but that municipalities after time will have realized the need to work together:

It can be said that a number of mayors, they did not seem in principle to think that the region is necessary to realize collaboration. But the most will also accept that they can't figure out things by themselves (Interview with the Growth Forum's chairman 2007:1172).

Because the chairman of the Growth Forum, who also is a chairman of the Regional Committee, considers regions' collaboration with the municipalities crucial for the success of the region he tries to maintain a good dialog with the chairman of the Municipalities Contact Committee:

Yes, I try to have a reasonable collaboration and a good dialog with the chairman of the MCC. Somehow he has the same problems. It is also a prerequisite for the success of the Region that municipalities support it (ibid. 2007:1178).

At the Growth Forum's conference in April 2007, the chairman has concluded his speech calling for close collaboration:

It is very important that we achieve a close collaboration and not stand in the way of each other. Let us have a common goal and initiate it (Observation note, 30 April 2007).

From the statements above and the situations they are related to we can see that the shared sense of purpose was disturbed by disagreements between some members and the chairman but aside of conflicts a wish that municipalities support the region was expressed as well by the chairman. Though, the appeal for collaboration has predominantly been expressed outside of the Growth Forum's meetings.

Another regional representative in the Growth Forum views the Growth Forum as an important dialog-forum in particular, for the representatives of the private sector, to share their experiences which on long term may become the one that the future of the GF will be depend on (Regional politician B.N.O. 2006, 641-642).

*Private companies and business life representatives* have expressed how they met and noticed the peculiar characteristics of political rhetoric and the dialog-culture which they had not experienced in the communicative practices within private companies:

We the entrepreneurs are used to shouting out and say what we think. Rectors have also their way of saying things (...) Mayors have to defend their city, to be re-elected; they have many reasons to say what they say. (...) Sometimes mayors are fighting their own war, and it is not always possible to see through what the war is about (Interview with J.S.N. 2008/9).

The representative of the private sector emphasizes the concern that making subgroups in the Growth Forum may lead to fragmentation of this network and consequentially block the development of a network identity. “While I am at home I think: Are we being fractioned? The next step is that we work across” (Interview with J.S.N. 2008/9).

An empathic understanding of each other’s position and challenges during the first years of the Growth Forum’s existence may have helped to dissolve these tensions. However, it is remarkable that those tensions occurred within the institutional framework that facilitates communication. For example, mayors of all municipalities of the Region Sealand were invited to participate in the Growth Forum’s conferences, in summer 2006 and spring 2008, as well as in workshops that concerned the elaboration of political strategy for economic growth in the Region Sealand. Considering that the administrative secretary unite which services the Growth Forum has met every week with a group of appointed administrators who represents municipalities, and thus has held continuous consultations about the regional it is remarkable those tensions has happened.

Having passed through the debates and conflicts during the first two years, the members of the Growth Forum have begun to develop, more evidently, mutual trust and a sense of shared purpose. A municipal administrator who has observed the meetings in the Growth Forum and have participated in the administrative work of the Growth Forum’s administrative unite explains in an interview some reasons for why the GF has functioned the way it did:

The strength of the Growth Forum is that partners who otherwise were not used to collaborate now have created a network. They learned to know and to come across each other; they learned to respect the differences, and to work together. A greater trust is developed between the region and municipalities, although the underlying conflict has not disappeared yet. Tough, the conflict was greatest in the beginning, while it seems more stable in the past years. Members show more confidence in each other and are focused on how best to resolve the task rather than who holds the power to decide. It has existed all the time and to some degree it is healthy: competition is healthy; it holds us sharp on what is happening and how we can make things better. In the beginning the competition was the dominate dimension but the last couple of years it is kept behind (Interview with the municipal administrator J.A. 16.9. 2010).

Beside the time-dimension and internal experiences that has helped generating more mutual trust it is important to pay attention to conditions external to the GF. The theory on identity development has namely pointed at relations that are external to network- members but nonetheless articulated by them are crucial to the constitution of internal relations. Stories that have played a role in a constitution of the development of a network identity inside the Growth Forum concern the rule of the state and the Region Sealand’s relation to the Capital Region of Denmark. This axiom is labeled ‘demarcation to the state and the Capital Region of Denmark’.

- The state

The state is present in the Growth Forum by the delegated administrator from the Ministry of Economy and Business Affairs and who used to participate weekly in meetings within the Core Secretariat where six municipal administrators meet regional administrators from the Growth Secretary and discuss the agenda. The administrator who represents the state has both the possibility to discuss, inspire, coordinate and monitor the work of the Growth Secretary. Another level the state is present is through the Partnership Agreement between the Ministry of Business affairs and the Growth Forum which is made every third year and revised annually<sup>18</sup>.

Apart from being the coordinating and monitoring instance, the state is present as an authoritative power out there that potentially can threaten the self-governance of both municipalities and the region. The most explicit moment this threat is articulated is at the Growth Forums Conference in 2007 in the speech of chairman of the Municipal Contact Committee:

We should become more visible and create results. We have exercised collaboration qua the Growth Forum" (...) "If we do not deliver visible and convincing results, there is a risk that the state takes over governing (Observation note: a conference speech by J.S chairman of Municipal Contact Committee, 30. 04. 2007).

Here, the chairman clearly expresses to the conference audience that municipalities and the region should stay alert; to highlight in public their success stories in that they prevent centralization of their jurisdiction. Region Sealand (together with other four regions) have been exposed repeatedly to the stories that 'if region doesn't do what is supposed to do successfully it will be closed down (Prime Minister Løkke-Rasmussen 2010). In recent times, the Liberal Alliance and the Conservative Party have suggested closing down Regions as an initiative in reducing the scope of public expense (Garby 03.02.2011)<sup>19</sup>. The support that the Social Democratic Party used to express toward regions seems to fade, for example, by not longer insisting that regions should have a right to tax-income as counties did (2010). The external threat to the municipalities' and region's self-governance has helped creating a perception of mutual interdependence between the two governing levels which is expressed, as we saw, through the Growth Forum where they meet.

Another actor that is frequently referred to in the debates of the Growth Forum is the Capital region of Denmark and Copenhagen which is the nearby metropolis of Region Sealand.

- The Capital Region of Denmark

The geographical and political space of the Region Sealand marks its border to the Capital Region of Denmark and its metropolis, the city of Copenhagen. By many occasions, during the debates in

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<sup>18</sup> <http://www.vfsj.dk/Partnerskabsaftale/HvordanArbejderVi/Sider/default.aspx>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.dansk-politik.dk/blog/2011/02/liberal-alliance-vil-nedl%C3%A6gge-regionerne/> Garby D. Troels "Liberal Alliance vil nedlægge Regionerne"

the Growth Forum the Capital Region, and the Copenhagen City was regarded as an obvious partner' to collaborate with in order to increase the growth in the Region Sealand self:

The Capital Region of Denmark is not a concurrent but an important partner, but collaboration must also happen on the premises of the Region Sealand (The chairman's speech, observation note, 30<sup>th</sup> April 2007).

At the same time members accentuate that the Growth Forum and the Region need to first and foremost mobilize their own resources, because only united the politicians, stakeholders, and private companies can bring the development to the Region:

If we can identify the projects which all of us can support, then for the first time, Zealand has an opportunity to make a difference compared to the rest of Denmark (Interview with Mayor, L.T. 2007: 80-82).

The joint solutions on regional are necessary simply as, the way actors pointed, it is not logical to expect stakeholders from Copenhagen to do efforts for /in Region Sealand. A representative of business life expresses this view in the following way:

It is difficult to get one congress-participant from Copenhagen to believe that (Copenhagen) should promote a summer-holiday in West Sealand. It is really good to have the Growth Forum (Leader, business life, J.S.N. 2008).

Collaboration between actors in Region Sealand and the Capital Region of Denmark already exists in the field of tourism, for example, between Wonderful Copenhagen and East Danish Tourism. However, this skepticism seems to function as a co-creator of this member's positive orientation towards the Growth Forum.

While the dispute on what is regional and what municipal jurisdiction causes fragmentations of views, the members' concern to elaborate a strategy for fostering entrepreneurial growth in the region, helps holding those fragmentations coexist.

By now the perceptions and the situations that seem important in the constitution of shared sense of purpose are described. These were views and debates that happened *within* the Growth Forums meetings and conferences. The following section will describe views and images *outside* the Growth Forum which through still shape its. In the identity theory this dimension was described as a role of image in the development of a network identity. The most important of such debates are happening within the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC). The Municipal Contact Committee (MCC) is the most relevant external actor to the Growth Forum not only because the two networks are linked by the overlapping membership of six mayors, who participate in both. They are also linked by the interest in development and coordination of regional entrepreneurial development policy. The section shows the articulation of the Growth Forum's image in a particular moment, within the MCC, and then the focus of the analysis searches to explain the impact that the articulation of the GF in the MCC has on developing network identity within the GF.

### 6.3.1.1 Growth Forum articulated in the MCC - an external image

From my observation notes written about the meeting in the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC), February 2008, I have extracted a debate concerning the question of how the Growth Secretary that services the Growth Forum can be linked to the Growth House, which is shared authority between the Region Sealand and its municipalities (Figure 18). The discussion by the members of the Municipal Contact Committee that concerns the role and the functioning of the Growth Forum is described in following:

Member E.S.: Nobody in my City Council knows anything about the Growth Forum. How can anyone be interested in the Growth Forum if they even don't know it exists? It is unprofessional, if they think they are so clever they can do it themselves alone. We have to create jobs that we will live the next 10-15 years of. We need to create enthusiasm and stakeholders among citizens so they feel they own it.

Mayor N.U.H.: The Region interferes increasingly into tasks which are municipalities' responsibility to solve. The Region wants to take over new policy areas. There is no clear-cut in the regime-responsibility: What do we do, and what does Region do? I can't really ask my administrators to show interest in the Growth Forum<sup>1</sup>.

Mayor P. H.: We have to speak clearly. We have to show that we are strong and deterrent. What is this kind of construction? There need to be significantly better collaboration if the Region shall follow with<sup>1</sup>.

Mayor S.V.: The members of my county council know nothing about the Growth Forum.

Mayor S.V.: If somebody shall say it (what P.H. suggests), is the MCC's chairman. He has spoiled the good humor of the presidency in the Growth Forum.

Mayor E.S.: We want to see more results!

Mayor F.M.: I support the regional collaboration. We have to as a community have a good collaboration and strong platforms. The Growth Forum should be equally important as the municipal representation. Can we realize that?<sup>1</sup>

(Observation notes, the CC meeting, 06. 02. 2008)

Four out of five views expressed by the members of the MCC are critical towards the Growth Forum. The main critique contains claims that the GF is invisible to the municipal politicians and their local Committees.

By expressing that none of local politicians in their own municipally have enough knowledge about the Growth Forum's activities or achievement, mayors regret the insufficient connection between the GF and their local government. Given that the Growth Forum decides which projects, in the regional context, to support and which to reject, the municipalities have an obvious incentive to follow up and exercise an influence on the policy visions and financial priorities the GF conducts (Interview with P.H. 2006, p. 18:14:17, p. 19:6).



Seeing from the organizing level, the Growth Forum *is* already connected and coordinates its policy with the municipalities of the Region Sealand. It does so through political representation within the Growth Forum, namely the six mayors from all parts of the Region; it does so by formally involving five municipal administrators within the Core Secretary (graph in Figure 18) who meets once a week and discusses agenda-setting. The Growth Forum and the regional entrepreneurial policy appears frequently on the agenda within the Municipal Contact Committee, and the mayor H.J. who also is a member of the Growth Forum holds information providing speeches to the MCC about the work of the GF and latest events.

Municipal administrators and politicians *do* coordinate regional entrepreneurial policy; however, the scope of that coordination seems insufficient to ensure the complete legitimacy towards the municipal local government. Both through the political and the administrative representation and through the national legislation, The Entrepreneur Law, the Growth Forum are already sharing responsibility for the regional entrepreneurial development, with the region's municipalities (Law nr. 602 AF 24.juni 2005).

Yet another point of dissatisfaction among members of the MCC concerns how the Growth Forum decides to fund the projects. Some members think that the Growth Forum is prioritizing too many small projects and should rather focus on big projects that produce success (Observation notes, the CC meeting, 06. 02. 2008).

As the leader of the Growth Forum's says that the Growth Forum has in the first two years prioritized many smaller projects. During 2008 the focus changed to prioritize larger projects. The decisions about funding-projects was placed to the second part of agenda meetings, in that the principal political debates are given space in the first part.

While some politicians in the Municipal Contact Committee hold a predominantly critical view on the GF, others consider the GF as an important arena to achieve a municipal-regional collaboration, to meet with private companies and to make a difference for the benefit of the municipalities as well (e.g. Mayors H.J., J.S., and F.M.).

The remarkable experience from those debates is how they vary in the scope of disagreements, in the tone of conflicts and compliance. Some meetings are solely informative concerning the work of the Growth Forum, for example, in which one of the mayors would inform the other members about happenings in the GF. Other meetings lift up dilemmas, and frustrations. The question becomes: which happenings from which meetings influence the development of a network identity in the Growth Forum mostly? The following section brings some examples that support and those examples that questions the theoretical assumption that the image created externally to the network influences identity development within that network.

### **6.3.1.2 Growth Forum - responses to external image**

The debates described above that took place in February 2008 have been echoed in the Growth Forum too. The administrator who had participated in each GF-meeting and who was responsible for the agenda setting explained during the interview:

It was here in December where the Local Government Denmark had a strategy that municipalities should have a critical attitude towards the regions. It is possible to feel that. Now municipalities proclaim that they want to see visible results, just as the other members of Growth Forum wants (Administrator D.M. 2008: 305-308).

The administrator explains that, what is debated within the Local Government Denmark municipalities' interest organization it can directly affect the debates inside the Growth Forum. Municipalities want to see concrete results produced by the projects that the Growth Forum is supporting, but, as the administrator explains, it is challenging to document results as many projects are in their initial stage:

Right now the Growth Forum wants to see a good outcome, but it is difficult to highlight success. Even though projects are funded there are still in the initial stage and have not really created visible results (Administrator D.M. 2008: 57-58).

What does the Growth Secretary do to respond to those demands? Dissatisfaction concerning lack of results and visibility had lead to a series of new practices: the style of the agenda-discussions was changed; focus and priority was given to larger projects while the numbers of smaller project applications were reduced; the idea-inspiration workshops were introduced; and new dialog groups were established at an earlier stage. Administration attempted to strengthen the information flow about the Growth Forum, for example, by making press releases, and engaging a business-journalist to report interesting stories from the G.F. They also focused on highlighting successful projects. The opinion of the stakeholders, partner-organizations, and media influence processes between the external imputes, and the internal practices (Administrator D.M. 2008:58-60,331,335,338).

Although the scope of effects of the debates within the LGDK and the MCC on development of network identity within the Growth Forum is debatable, it is certain that the municipal representatives in the Growth Forum were interested in discussing experiences with the work of the Growth Forum as well as how municipalities can enhance their role in it. The Local Government Denmark has hosted meeting for municipal members of all five Regional Growth Forums, in April 2009 and April 2010.<sup>20</sup> The outcome of the meeting was a publication "New Growth Forums - a strong role to municipalities" (9<sup>th</sup> April 2010) in which municipal representatives clearly urge for a closer coordination of the Regional Entrepreneurial Development Policy between the Growth Forum (GF) and the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC). This coordination should happen through a series of initiatives: for example, the MCC should have the possibility to debate and be heard regarding the political visions it wishes to include in the Growth Forums strategy; partnership

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20 www.kl.dk 23.april 2009: Seminar about the Growth Forum, Mette Rasmussen MEN@kl.dk

agreement between the GF and the State should include the local perspectives, and challenges municipalities deal with (KL 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010:3-8).

Considering that municipalities already have double as many representatives in the GF comparing to region and other stakeholders, and that the MCC through these representatives and the delegated administrators in Core Secretary is informed about the content of the Growth Forums regional entrepreneurial policy, it is remarkable that municipalities look for more influence on this policy.

One explanation is that the general perception among municipalities that they had a little says in the first period of the Growth Forums work and they want to enhance their importance. In the strategy (2010) they state:

Collaboration functions well in the most cases. It was a difficult beginning. The reason for that was the overload of material we received, and the region which in the beginning was very controlling while the municipalities lacked the necessary administrative expertise (KL 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010:3).

Another explanation concerns the economic benefits: the GF possesses a solid budget and they wish to utilize that for the purpose of local development. The municipal members of the Growth Forums pointed out that there are a lot of money in growth forum. Municipalities should be even more active in relation to benefit from these funds through grant applications

The representatives of municipalities pointed that a lot of money is on disposition in the Growth Forum. Municipalities should be even more active in relation to benefit from these funds through grant applications (KL 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010:3).

The example illustrated above shows that the creation of networks' external image may impact happenings inside the network the image is created about.

At the same time it is important to hold an eye open that among municipal politician's different views: two politicians articulated a positive view from the beginning, while the others held ambiguous and even negative view on the work of the Growth Forum. This tells that the collective process of image-creation does not affect all members in the same way, as it does not seem to have changed the perception of these actors. Of this reason the role of image in construction of a network identity has its limits when it comes to explaining why some actors of the governance network are not directly influenced by the value-set of a certain image imposed to that network. To uncover reasons why external image of a governance network changes some actors' but does not others' perception of the network analyzing the individual actors' life-stories would be necessary: those would provide a deeper understanding of why actors think the way they do.

Another story line that has been present in the discussions during the meetings is about the necessity to make the results of the Growth Forum visible.

- “Through visibility to the public we can achieve success”

The idea that the Growth Forum’s work needs to be visible to stakeholders in the Region as well as to wider public has been present already in the initial discussions of prospects for the future business strategy (Interview, administrator D. M. 2007: 782- 4). Moreover, during meetings members raised the issue of how to make the GF more visible to public media, to stakeholders and the citizens of the Region Sealand. An example is a meeting where a member proposed to the chairman that the administration makes a press-letter to highlight that the Growth Forum *united* supports building of the Fehmarn Belt Bridge:

We shall make a press-statement that the united Growth Forum supports building of the Fehmarn Belt connection (Member H.J., observation note 2008).

The proposal about making a press-statement insinuate the aspiration some members have towards creating a strong “We”. Remarkably the proposal was uttered by the same member who perceives the Growth Forum as being an excellent platform for creating a strong shared sense of purpose (Mayor H.J.). By being visible to the world outside the Growth Forum may strengthen its coherence inside. An immediate question is how visibility and publicity affected Growth Forum’s process of identity development?

The GF has released a series of press-statements which are available on the homepage [www.vfsj.dk](http://www.vfsj.dk) together with the key information about GF’s activities and updates on the latest events. Besides the electronic media, the GF has utilized printed media and has periodically published the magazine *Vækstbarometer*. Every third month the GF invites stakeholders and citizens to participate in the so-called idea-generating seminar which provides them an opportunity to initiate and follow up the implementation of the new projects concerning regional growth and entrepreneurial development. Whether and how the scope of the GF’s publicity had a boomerang effect on the development of network identity is no clear conclusion on. On one hand, the administration of the Growth Forum have strived to make its work available to stakeholders and broader public, in hope that publicity would lead to more satisfaction among the members, internally. On the other hand, no visible co-relation between these efforts and their outcome was to trace in the period 2007-2008: the critique of the Growth Forum by its municipal representatives continued (Interview with administrator D. M. 2007, and observation of the MCC-meeting 2008). Despite the limited impact of external publicity on the development of shared sense of purpose internally in the Growth Forum its Secretary continued to rapport in the local newspapers (TV-ØST). Regarding the years 2009 and 2010 the source of changes in members’ perceptions is to trace, not in the media, rather in economic incitements, in the experience of influence, and increased mutual trust.

The next section will show the changes in members’ perceptions *that happened over time*. Bringing those changes into the analysis is in the line with the theory of identity which stresses the importance of changes in *individual* perceptions as a way to understand nuances in the network identity. The section will first show changes in *single* members’ perceptions and then the focus will shift to the network-level discussion.

### 6.3.1.3 Time dimension and source of change

The empirical analysis has brought an insight that positive experiences inspire actors to change their perceptions. A member, municipal politician who in the 2007 perceived skepticism about the network, for example by stating that Growth Forum has been conflicting and holds no shared sense of purpose, has in 2010 stated that “It actually pays off to stick together” (Member S.V., interview in GF 2010:24). A company located in the municipality this member represents, has received financial grand. Also, the Growth Forum has supported the branding of this municipality as a “green municipality”. After having experienced understanding by fellow-members and receiving financial and political support this member expresses that it is important to continue progressive collaboration with many different stakeholders in the Region. Actors with different expertise can help attracting companies to the municipality which would generate the business growth within climate- and sustainable environment industry (ibid. 2010:24).

Another example is the representative of business life who in the beginning perceived the GF being fragmented by different cultures of dialog and political struggles between politicians that made a feeling of uncertainly at his member about the GF’s role-performance. After four years of participation in the Growth Forum this member expresses how it is:

(...) simply fantastic to participate in the Growth Forum, where one has a direct influence on the regional business development (Member J.S., interview in GF 2010:14).

Why this enthusiasm? First of all, because this member has experienced changes in the other members’ attitude towards collaboration: from focusing on own city they now focus on the entire Region:

I have seen many signs of a positive change in views in these four years I have been member. We shall have ambitions and be proud to develop the whole region. (...) The good atmosphere and will to work together for the whole regional development, is very encouraging (Ibid. 2010:15).

Attention on the regional pursuit of interests is thus a crucial dimension for this member to nourish a positive experience with the capacities different actors bring in the performance of the Growth Forum.

A member who represents knowledge institutions emphasis how the beginning was challenging, in terms of defining the roles, which projects to support and how to make a satisfying political-strategic decision making. The moments of chaos, as this member describes them, have been an important learning experience in bringing the Growth Forum on the track to function well:

I have experienced the start of the Growth Forum as testing of a new construction - in the beginning one is always a bit fumbling. Everybody wants to do the best. (...) Projects arrived from East and West. It was hard to see whether we will reach the right place comparing to our strategies. It can be that a project makes a difference in local community, but can it be implemented other places? But I definitely have not perceived the chaotic part of that process as negative (Member U.K., interview in GF 2010:8).

The chairman of the GF (2006-2010) has expressed in the interview in 2006 how he was aware about the conflicts. In the interview 2010 to the administrators of the Growth Secretary he expressed that although the beginning was challenging the Growth Forum succeeded in identifying an approach that would incorporate both particular and common interests. This was necessary for the perception of success:

We found quickly a model which respects different interests being articulated, regardless of if a member comes from a municipality, business, an organisation, or a knowledge institution. In my view, maintaining own interests must not uphold a bias for maintaining interests of the totality. I am proud to say that this concern has succeeded in the Growth Forum (Chairman K.E., interview in GF 2010:4).

Balancing members' individual orientations with the Regions interests is perceived an important parameter of success. According to the chairman it is crucial to identify the research and innovation institutions in the Region Sealand who wants to contribute to its development. In this light the Growth Forum perceives itself as the one who facilitates their work by, for example, granting them financial resources. The articulation of belonging with the Region among the most crucial actors in regional development leads to the perception of success, as well. It is remarkable that the perception of the Growth Forum's success is again related to actors external to it, and not necessary to the relations within the Growth Forum.

These examples tell us that even actors who has experienced odds in his/her participation and odds in the relations among members at the network level can change under the circumstances that they receive a personal reward or see positive development in the way the network function.

#### *How do changes look like seen from a network-level perspective?*

On the basis of observations of meetings in the Growth Forum and the follow up-interviews it can be resonated that the changes in the dialog during the Growth Forum's first four years of existence can be illustrated as an undulating process. By undulating process it is meant that members of the Growth Forum in some moments seemed being closer to achieving the development of a network identity, while in other moments they seemed to be more fare away from it. For example: On a meeting in April 2006 the dialog among members seemed insecure when they had to create the REDs-document. On the meeting in December 2006 (2.12.2006) the disagreement among the municipals and the regional politicians about maintaining the border between what is regional and what is the municipal jurisdiction continued. During the 2008 the Growth Forum goes through a

period of positive atmosphere of dialog and also some moments of discussions that demonstrate dissatisfaction with the Growth Forums' achievements. During 2009 the relations of its members seems more network-like. During 2010 the dialog seemed relaxed, constructive, and characterized by increased mutual trust (Interview with administrators J.A., September 2010).

In the following illustration I have set up a time line showing the changes in practice:

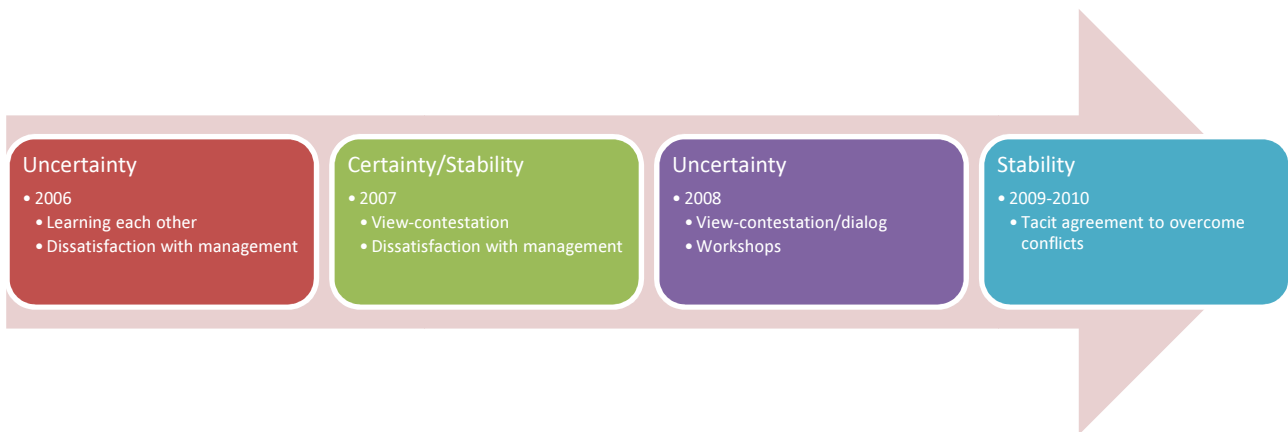


Figure 22: The internal dynamics in dialog within the GF

The internal dynamic and changes of practice are related to the opinions about the Growth Forum which are articulated by related actors and events outside of this network. If illustrated by the graph, the scale and the process of development of network identity for period 2006 till 2010 the graph-line would take an upward-undulating shape:

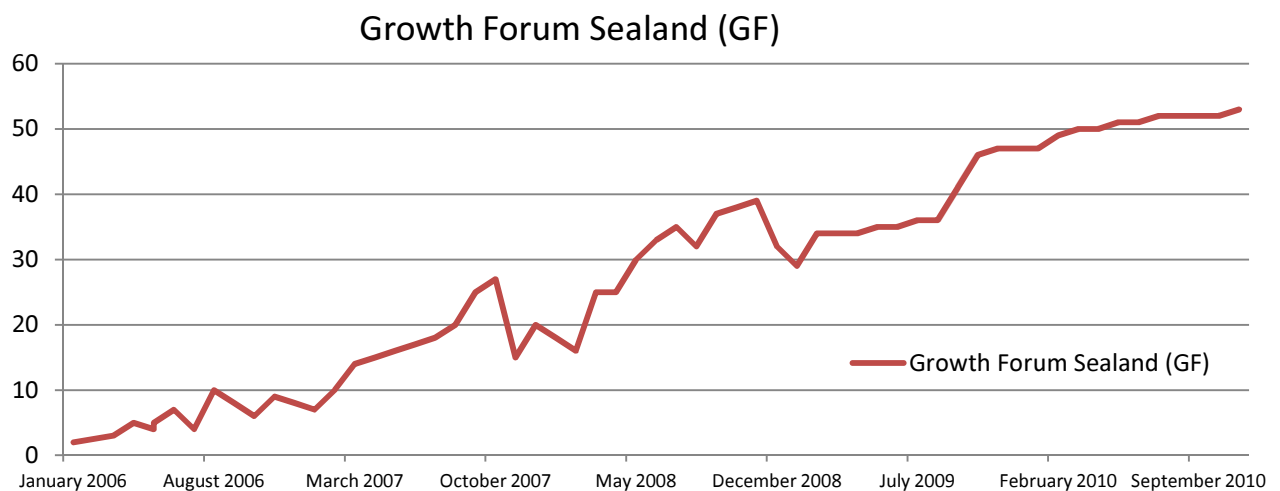


Figure 23: A free and approximate illustration, note downfall decreases strength of the network identity

Identity scale in the graph represents first of all the strength of network level 'we'. From the visualizing view the Growth Forum has reached a relatively *weak* 'we'. Downfalls represent actors' perceptions that have questioned the existence of a shared purpose, and they also represent the

moments in which the impact from the outside has biased development of a shared sense of purpose. The downfalls in the graph help explaining why ought to be concluded that the network identity is relatively weak.

From the observations it can be induced that the dialog-dynamics also depends on the political nature of the issue, especially the issues that concern coordination of the tasks at which both regional and municipal politicians perceive to share a common interests e.g. implementing regional entrepreneurial development (Observation in the MCC February 2008). In the dispute upon the role and influence of the Region Sealand's *authority* in making REDS-strategy, the Growth Forum is facing a weak, even fragmented collective "we", while in situations that are about development of the Region Sealand as *geographic and economic space* the members achieved consensus. This is because, in the discussion about the Region as a geographic and economic space non-regional actors feel excluded and are thereby motivated to participate proactively. As the following chapter that analysis the Municipal Contact Committee will show, the contestation among actors becomes blurred and replaced by a shared sense of purpose and goals once the story line of concern for the Regions' economy and industrial developed is activated. The broader prospect that such a story line offers seems furthermore to have an effect of inclusion and thus to attract actors to perceive enthusiasm for the network they participate in.

The promotion of the value of difference has happened through the story-line and also through concrete involvement of hundred actors who participated in the policy process in which the Growth Forum members have participated too (Observation 25 august 2006). In that way, the GF-members have met and included different actors in dialog. The inclusion of actors external to the GF has however not directly impacted its internal network processes.

Within the internal processes of the Growth Forum, a space for difference has been provided by supporting the representatives of private companies to speak up (Interview J. S. 2008:9). Though, the story of necessity to cherish the differences within the GF was not articulated explicitly during the meetings. The Growth Forum's members have achieved periods of indisputable agreements and for a moment have demonstrated the strong "we". Despite the moments of consensus, if a global judgment about the shared sense of purpose is to be concluded then I will still argue that the Growth Forum has, over time, developed a *weaker* sense of shared purpose and appreciation of differences: therefore a weaker network identity, comparing to the Municipal Contact Committee.<sup>21</sup> Although the Growth Forum's members hold a weaker shared sense of purpose, and the network level 'we' is punctuated by reemerging conflicts, the desire to develop the region holds members together.

Altogether a mixed perceptions are outthere: some members clearly perceive the GF and the differences it brings important. Others are more sceptical because they have experienced the moments of concurrence as disturbing. No empirical ground is there to unequivocally state that one group of actors are more positive than others. Those that seem to hold least belief in that the GF can

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<sup>21</sup> The notion 'a sense of shared purpose' is analog to the notion of 'belonging' which is a core of any identification. When, for example, a mayor, member of the GF expresses "it is municipalities' region" this tells about mayor's little, or non-belonging with the region, as an authority.



utilize and valorize the value of difference are representatives of the Region. This may not be coincidence as the regional politicians perceive that the voices of the regional representatives are least articulated. On that ground some correlation between the perception of influence, the satisfaction with the Growth Forum as a network and its ability to develop a network identity can be concluded.

Regarding to story-line *Achieving growth by new-thinking and collaboration* rich evidence on how the Secretary Unite of the Growth Forum has organized and involved a range of actors through all period of elaboration and implementation of the Regional Development Strategy (REDS 2006-2010) can be brought forward. For example, during a policy process of elaboration of REDS, for a conference in August 2006, about 150 stakeholders from the Region Zealand who were perceived as important contributors in making the best possible REDS-strategy in terms of bringing vital knowledge (e.g. education institutions), in terms of making strategic alliances (e.g. The Region of Capital City) and in terms of bringing legitimacy and effectiveness of policy implementation (municipalities and business life) were invited to join the conference (Observation and Document *Invitation list*, June 2006).

This example shows correlation between the story line that implies involvement of different actors in the policy process and the way the policy processes have happened within the Growth Forum. At the same time, the effects of the involvement of many stakeholders seemed limited regarding development of the network identity itself. As stated earlier, conflicts occurred during 2007 and 2008, two years after the involvement of huge actor groups.

The understanding of previously described process of development of network identity is related to the theme of network management. Theory chapter three has argued that diverse management strategies may support the development of network identity. The following part of this chapter describes how different management strategies within the GF contributed to this goal, and it discusses their limits.

#### **6.4 Which management strategies had enabled the emerging of a network identity in the Growth Forum?**

In the theory chapter three it is argued that managing institutional design and processes within a governance network may play an important role in creating conditions for development of a network identity. Given that meetings and agenda setting is part of a network's institution, these can be considered management of institutional design since their content and form is partially fixed and partially open to changes. Under the process- management a social events are identified. Throughout interviews it appeared that the management competences of the network manager, in this case, the chairman of the Growth Forum were important. The following section presents examples of each form of management and how they have influenced the scope of network identity.

### 6.4.1 Applied Management strategies

The table below is identical to one drawn in the theory chapter in that it gives an exact overview of the management strategies that were proposed and those that were actually applied by the leadership of the Growth Forum.

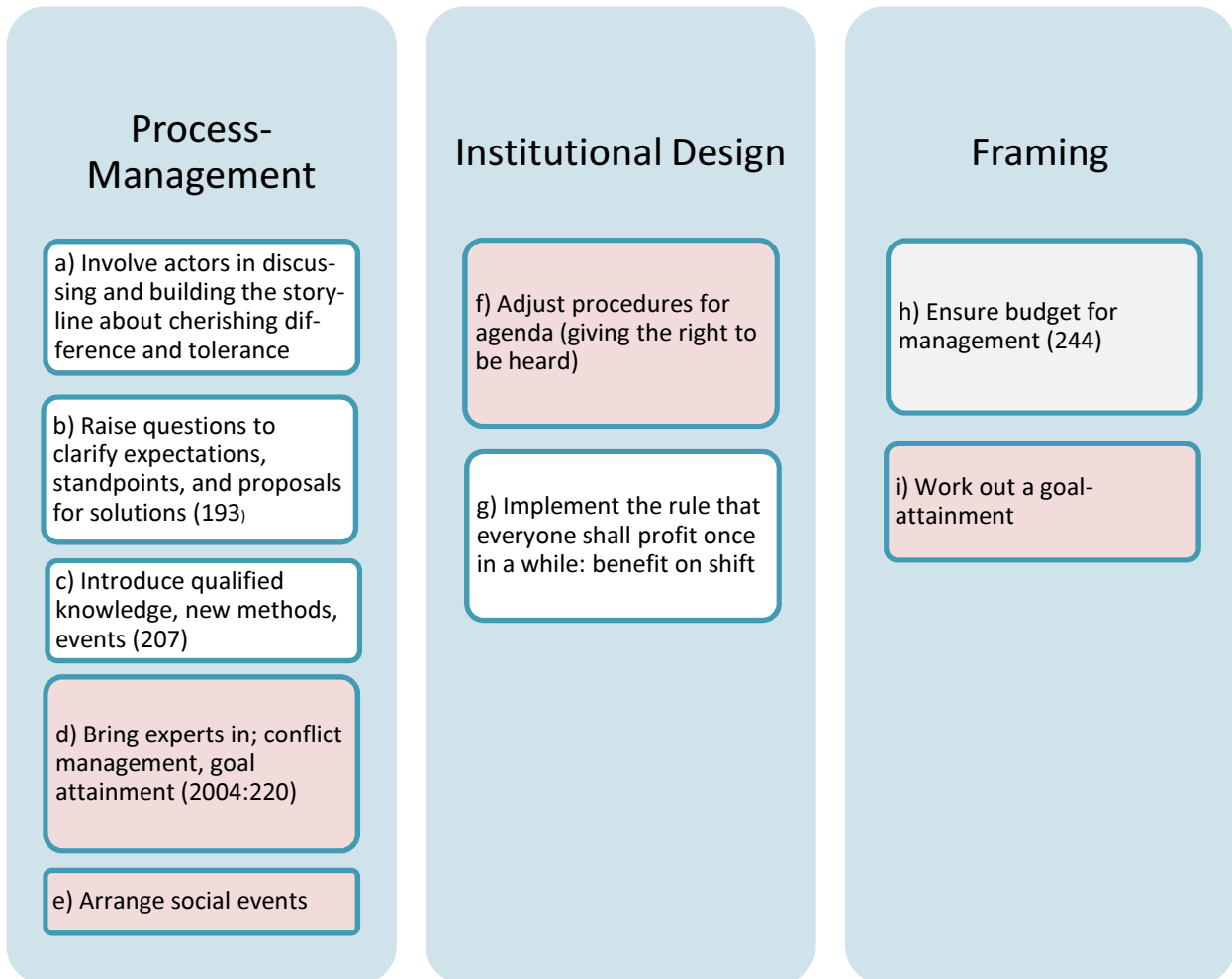


Figure 24: a, b, c, g represents strategies being used, h has not been clarified and d, e, f and i were not applied

Five out of eight management strategies has been applied in managing the Growth Forum. It is relevant now to describe, partially, how the five strategies I've identified mattered in the process of developing the network identity in the Growth Forum. It is relevant to reflect on why the other suggested strategies had not been utilized, as well as it is important to investigate whether the Growth Forum's leadership has applied strategies that I have not encountered through the theory.

#### a) Involve actors in discussing and building the story-line about cherishing difference and tolerance

The Growth Forum has published a story-line on its internet site [www.vfsj.dk](http://www.vfsj.dk) that have served as a metaphor for involving actors with different expertise and experiences as the key in achieving success. Also, as earlier described, various actors, outside the growth forum have been involved.

The chairman of the Growth Forum has on few occasions in the public pointed out how the Growth Forum opens the door to everybody, in particular business life, who wishes to contribute to the development of the Region Sealand (Conferences 25. 08. 2006, 30. 04.2008). Given that the Growth Forum is closed for new actors and the participation of a larger stakeholder-groups have predominantly happened outside the Growth Forum, and given the internal circumstances of division and fragmentation, the story-line and story-telling has played a minor effect in developing the network identity. However, the positive effects of linking difference with the success ought not being neglected.

The administration unit Growth Secretariat has performed the managing role. They identified and invited stakeholders to workshops, organized the content and the procedure of the workshop, and sorted the proposed ideas out in terms of formulating the main milestones for the policy of the regional entrepreneurial development. The content of discussions and formulated milestones is predominantly about ideas that would best qualify political content of the entrepreneurial development strategy (Observation notes 2006, 2010)

Although, both members of the Growth Forum and the external stakeholders have participated in these workshops the effect of developing a network identity inside the Growth Forum has been limited. The inclusion of external stakeholders provided the ground for strengthening the legitimacy and ownership of the policy process which the Growth Forum was formally responsible for. It also paved the way for an abstract appreciation of the value of difference, as the stakeholders were invited exactly due to their differences, competences and capital. Regarding the development of the sense of shared purpose it has limited effects.

**b) Raise questions to clarify expectations, standpoints, and proposals for solutions**

During formal meetings the network members are given hearing-time to discuss each case on the agenda. After the case is presented by the chairman everybody is allowed to comment, criticise, or reject the case-proposal. The constitution that regulates the procedures of the meeting clearly provides the space for proposing ideas. However, the constitution does not guarantee members *active participation*.

Why is active participation important? The data indicates that those actors who frequently participate in discussions view the Growth Forum network as a space of shared values and engage about developing a strong “We”, whereas those actors who don’t comment the agenda feel less satisfaction with being a member of the Growth Forum and also believe less in a common “we”.

Viewing from the internal optic of a network manager the crucial task is to involve all (present) members at some point during the meeting or at every second meeting in that everybody feels heard. To achieve the goal of active participation the conventional structures of meetings have to change.

**f) Adjust procedures for agenda giving space to be heard**

The chairman of the Growth Forum has led the meetings while the administrative Growth Secretariat has worked out the agenda setting. An appropriate management of the meetings influences the participant's enthusiasm for the network and the participation degree (administrative leader, T.K. 575-579).

A couple of days before each meeting in the Growth Forum the chairman and the delegation (of five) evaluates and sort out the projects they find interesting to support. Also each actor-group (e.g. municipal politicians within the same political party) held an internal meeting immediately before the Growth Forums meeting, to clarify and agree on their standpoints. Pre-meetings impact the atmosphere in the Growth Forum in a sense that they prevent wicket conflicts. As the representatives of the different actor-groups discuss and clarify their interests and perceptions, the meetings are rather an exchange of views, to express their ideas, or solution proposals (Administrator D. M. 290-298).

The chief executive of the Growth Secretariat describes the managing agenda for the Growth forums meetings as a continuous performance that involves many competent administrators who work to ensure its quality. Quality is important not only to satisfy the expectations of the GF's chairman but also to make it interesting for attracting the members attending the meeting.

Our task is to make the GF function as an entity, not solely that actors are having fun but that everything functions all the time; that they become visible and think it is a serious work they are performing and at each meeting they feel they made a difference (...) Members actually attend the meetings. While other places only a half or even less of the population attends (Administrative chief executor T.K. 2007).

I asked: *So you think that a part of explanation concerning the common "we" in the Growth Forum is to search in the administration, in your skills to make the meetings interesting?*

My respondent confirmed: "Yes, no doubt about it" (Ibid. 2007)

While the participation frequency at the period I conducted the interview 2007, was relative high (five members approximately was missing at each meeting), the agenda per se did not have any direct effect on developing a strong "we". However, analysis of participation frequency for period 2007-2010 which is attached in the appendix shows a permanent absence by 20 % with an increase to 50 % during 2009 (Appendix 1). In 2008, quite a few members have expressed dissatisfaction with the Growth Forum (e.g. mayor S.V., regional politician, K.D.). The members have evaluated the agenda, the written text, and requested to include more political principal debates. Changing the agenda has generated more satisfaction (Observation in the MCC 2008, Interview with administrator T.K. 2007 and 2011). Managing and adjusting the agenda is important, through not the very crucial instrument in development of network identity.

**i) Loose idea of goal-attainment**

For the governance network to develop a network identity, the space in which network members can inspire, influence and even change each other's opinion to constitute the goal of the network they are part of, in that they develop an ownership to it. Although the Business Law has already prescribed the chief goals for the GF, the formal meetings, seminars and conferences has provided members the opportunity to specify the main goals. And although the discussion-arenas has helped GF-members to know each other and simultaneously to work together on given assignment, those processes had not affected everybody to think in terms of shared value, nor a strong "we".

### **c) Introduce qualified knowledge, new methods, and events**

Considering that no formal prescriptions of how to make a regional entrepreneurial policy, the choice of policy tools had been adjusted according to past experiences and current goals. The Growth Forum had applied several approaches in the policy making: idea-seminars, networks, projects, and conferences ([www.vfsj.dk](http://www.vfsj.dk)). Breaking the monotony of regular meetings, those diverse activities may boost dynamic and innovation into policy making, thereby making participation in the Growth Forum more interesting and motivating. Those arrangements have been an important channel to involve many actors in policy making, and to engage the members of the Growth Forum in managing the seminars (Observation 19. 09. 2006).

### **g) Implement the rule that everyone shall profit once in a while**

In single case, a research institution whose leader is a member of the GF received funds from the Growth Forum<sup>22</sup>. For other members the incitement to participate is rather bounded in political-ideological and professional reasoning: they want to contribute to development of the municipality and the region they live in. Considering that the financial means the GF grants to companies who are not, in most cases, directly represented in the GF. It is first of all the members' professional ethics and personal will that is the driving force for active participation and contribution to developing a strong network-level 'we'. As previous analysis has shown that kind of incitement is not in all situations sufficient. Therefore a management that provides best conditions of participation and influence during meetings needs to be designed.

*Which of selected management strategies the GF had not applied?*

### **d) Bring a conflict-manager in the network process**

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<sup>22</sup> <http://www.regionsjaelland.dk/Dagsordener/Dagsordener2011/Documents/979/1219235.PDF> Bilagssag til kontraktsag: Grønt Center, Region Sjælland, 1. februar 2011, s. 2.

Consultants were only invited to qualify the REDS-document, for example, to hold a speech, to examine the Region Sealand strengths and weaknesses, and to inform about the state of the art within the field of regional entrepreneurial development in other successful Nordic regions (observation, April 2006, April 2008). To my knowledge, no external consultancy was invited directly to the Growth Forums meetings to facilitate the discussions and to bring new interaction forms. No consultancies from the Growth Secretariat or external actors were engaged in creating identity stories.

#### **e) Arrange social events**

Events (none social) that solely had the purpose to provide space for informal interactions were organized during the Growth Forums first mandate 2006-2010. Getting to know each other has happened instead in parallel with regular meetings, conferences and seminars. This can be explained due to that the Growth Forum is governed by the regulation which prescribes its meetings and activities. Organizing social events with the primarily purpose to socialize members mutually would not necessary lead to the development of network identity, e.g. shared sense of purpose or strong interconnectedness, but it could increase this possibility, as members would have chance to explain and debate aspects of their political interests related to the work of the Growth Forum in a more relaxed atmosphere.

While management strategies implemented were crucial for the Growth Forums functioning per se the rule of manager, in this case, the chairman of the GF and administrative leadership within the Growth Secretariat were equally important.

Network theory emphasises that managing a governance networks calls for a number of general and specific manager-competences. Specific competences are those that would be adjusted to the type of network and situation a manager is part of. In the forthcoming section I'll take a look at how the chairman describes his own role and see how the administration perceives his skills. Some members of the Growth Forum have commented on chairman's leadership style; however they did not wish their comments included in the interview-record. Thus, the analysis of chairman's management skills is merely one-sided. It does not explain whether members think that discussions they had with the chairman had contributed to development of a network identity within the Growth Forum.

#### **6.4.2 Manger's management skills**

The Growth Forums chairman is the manger of the meetings. The leading administrator from the Growth Secretariat who accompanies each meeting at the Growth Forum is convinced that the chairman's leading style is very important in creating attractive meetings for the members. About the chairman's leadership style he expresses:

I am really impressed by chairman's executive approach; it is really, really a fantastic political craftsmanship the chairman demonstrates, I have to say that (Leader of the Growth Forum's administration T.K. 2007:583-585).

And my respondent has highlighted how the GF's chairman has changed the leading style, after facing conflicts with the members.

The next step now is that we ensure the dialog in the Growth Forum and avoid confrontations targeted towards the chairman. ... I believe and feel that things are changing to the better, because influential people are attending the meeting and I do not think they want to spend all their time disputing the chairman, rather, they want to talk with each other (ibid. 2007:620-624).

The leader of the Growth Secretariat explains how the chairman realized that he needed to change the attitude and the executive approach from previous experiences in leading a county to leading a multi-actor network. Adapting the rules as a leader of the network in which nobody is subordinated, the chairman had helped fostering a mutual dialog, and respect. After some time the critique has ceased and the focus on the policy has replaced the personal relations (ibid. 2007).

In an interview from 2010 the chairman expresses that it has been a challenge to lead the Growth Forum even though he had already experiences from leading similar network types, e.g. The Development Committee of the Capital City of Copenhagen:

It was a tough task. The beginning had its own difficulties; we needed to find positions and roles (Growth Forum 2010).

Second important manager is the administration of the Growth Secretariat. Managing meetings imposes strategic skills like knowing which issues would be of a particular interest to the members; which events require preparations, timing, etc. (Interview with the administrator D. M. 2007:15-16). The administration has coordinated and facilitated all the Growth Forums activities. The Administration is also as an important political-strategic balance-maker. The leading administrators explained to me how they need to know the 'political climate' within the Growth Forum; which actors wants what; which conflicts certain priorities would lead to, etc. Therefore, two-tree administrators from the Growth Secretariat are always present at GF's meetings in that way they can sense the situation and work for the best possible draft for the next agenda. Before landing on the GF's meeting-table this draft is revised by the chairman and the GF-Presidency meeting that always lies ahead of GF-s main meeting.

Third, indirect, what can be named a meta-manager is the state, in particular Ministry of Business and Economic Affairs. An administrator, as the representative for the Unite for Building and Entrepreneurship participates in weekly meetings with the Growth Forums' administrators and those from municipalities, qua previously described Core Secretary. Furthermore, a partnership-agreement is made between the state and the Growth Forum, on basis of which the state monitors whether the GF invests in projects which supports the National Globalization Strategy. Once submitted, the partnership agreement is reviewed by Ministry for Business and Economy, and

Ministry for Finance and it travels back and forth between the regional and central administration. The Growth Secretariat experiences this process as increasing centralization and monitoring:

This government holds to decision it has adopted. It is hard for the government to let regions alone considering that the government basically is not too keen on regions (ibid. 2007:325-327).

The first two manager-positions, chairman and GF-administration directly influenced the Growth Forums internal processes while the presence of the state 'in shadow' constitutes the governmental framework for those processes. On the basis of the previous description of management initiatives applied in network processes it can be concluded that management has played a minor role on the processes of development of network identity. Although members in the beginning have appreciated each other's differences the management of the GF has insufficiently concentrated on developing their relations to the degree where members would perceive shared sense of purpose. Instead, it has focused heavily on concerns to qualify contemporary aspects of policy making, in particular its political goals. Against this reasoning, it can be argued that the story-line of "Sealand as totality" is a perception all members share. After all, why should anyone in principle be against the development of the whole region? The role of the Growth Forum and its members implicitly is to work for the regional development and growth. When the administration organizes conferences, meetings and other events that qualify the political strategy and the ambitions of regional growth, members would only have reason to be content.

Considering that some members still felt excluded alongside those management strategies being implemented it is reasonable to point out that not only the scope but the actual content and direction of management matters. In that light a useful management strategy would be to focus on investigating how members felt about the Growth Forum, e.g. what did they dislike about the tone of discussions. And it would be useful to include telling the story that takes the appreciation of the difference from an abstract to an authentic dialog-form. An authentic dialog would include mutual clarifying of meanings, intensions, even emotions<sup>23</sup>. The case of the MCC will later exemplify how a story telling during meetings helps institutionalizing the perception of sense of shared purpose.

## **6.5 How has the developed network identity enhanced the processes of network coordination?**

In the introduction chapter it is emphasised that actors in a governance network develop network identity in parallel with coordination of policy processes that unfold within their network. The previous analysis has proved that network identity develops over time and in varying tempi: in some situations actors stick together while in others they seem to be in conflict. This creates a platform for posing a crucial question: which experiences in the Growth Forum during its first four

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<sup>23</sup> Innes and Booher (2003 and 2005) contribute with the idea of authentic collaborative dialog.



years illustrate that network identity enhances network coordination; and which experiences undermine that relation? The following section will analyse this key question.

### 6.5.1 Fragile Network identity and Coordination

The impact of identity on coordination can be analyzed in a narrow and in broader perspective. A narrow perspective implies coordination that is shaped by and with processes of the development of network identity, while a broader perspective reaches for the notion of identity that exceeds the immediate border of the governance network relations within the Growth Forum and dispense into the notion of ‘the regional’. The regional is represented through story lines resembling ‘concern for the development of the entire region’, ‘concern for totality’ and similar.

This discussion will interweave between the narrow and the broader perspective.

The 2010 evaluation report brought an article with the title *Network and coordinating efforts, Yes Thanks* (Growth Forum 2010) The article clearly states that since its establishment the Growth Forum has performed the coordinator role of the regional entrepreneurial development strategy (GF 2010:6). A gaze into the policy process of elaboration of that strategy and its annual plans reveals numerous sequences of coordination, and it also reveals moments that can be linked to the development of network identity. Herby a direct relation is revealed between network identity and network coordination. The following example supports this reasoning.

The Growth Forum’s entrepreneurial development strategy (2007-2010) is a result of administrative and political efforts as well as coordination practices that stretched over almost two years. The Growth Forum’s regular meetings, public seminars, brain storm workshops, and information exchange meetings are examples of events included in the policy process that needed to be linked and utilised for the final document of REDS.

The figure 21 illustrates important events that had influenced the content of making regional entrepreneurial development strategy for period 2007-2010, during policy process unfolded in 2006.

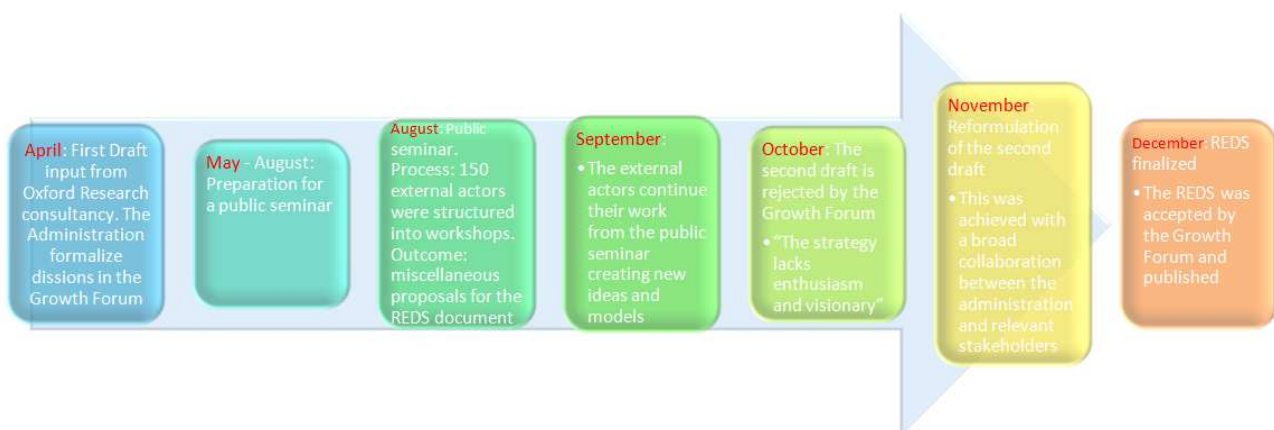


Figure 25 The 2006 development timeline for the Regional Entrepreneurial Development Strategy (REDS)

A series of informal, open, ad hoc, short term networks were established during coordination of this policy process. In all events an administrator from the administrative unit that services the Growth Forum participated around the table with a laptop and noted ideas that were proposed to be included in the strategy. After each event, the administrators met and elaborated a draft of the strategy which they afterwards presented to Growth Forum. The crucial role of administration in coordinating policy process had to some degree substituted the positive effects identity developing in Growth Forum would have because administration strategically selected out issues that might have led to conflicts (Observation, the Growth Secretariat, August 2006). The administrative chief executive who carried a formal responsibility over the administration during the policy process has emphasized the importance of involving ad hoc networks in an earlier stage of policy making as ad hoc networks may help preventing conflicts, by insuring both legitimacy and compliance with the implementation stages (Interview with the administrative leader of the Growth Secretariat J.P.S. 2006, 348, 352). In other words, *informal*, timely short term networks are withstanding positive coordination and compensating the lack of strong network identity inside the formal decision maker Growth Forum.

Another example in which the Growth Forum perceives its role as a key coordinator of regional collaboration is the so called ‘idea seminar’ (GF 2010:6). Idea-seminars were initiated in summer 2007 and since 14 idea- seminars were held. Those seminars embrace regional stakeholders who are interested in generating ideas for applications of EU-, national and regional funds regarding large projects that embrace climate change, innovation, tourism and other areas of regional development. Idea-seminars are a tool of coordinating ideas, knowledge and experiences which the actors share (Observation of Idea seminar 2010). This method of collaboration was invented as a result of the perception that the Growth Forum shall establish a broader regional collaboration that will pursue the development in the whole Region:

Projects that the Growth Forum has initiated in 2007 were limited to a few actors on a particular geographic area rather than the Region. The perception was that they were not coordinated appropriately and sufficient. A new method of coordination needed to be re-thought (GF 2010:6).

Thus, a story line of “concern for regional development” is linked to generation of new coordination paths. Although the story line seems to hold a broad perspective it also holds a narrow perspective, in that it functions as a mean of development of a shared sense of purpose. From the platform of this story-line the shared purpose for the Growth Forum would be to foster entrepreneurial growth in the entire Region Sealand. In this sense the *narrow and broader perspective* of meaning of network identity and its consequences on coordination *interweave*. The core question this thesis has posed in the introduction chapter is: How has developed network identity in the Growth Forum enhanced the process of network coordination?

The empirical analysis and a four-year study of the Growth Forums’ policy activity has not documented that GF’s *fragile* network identity weakens or decreases the scope of the network coordination. Even though the Growth Forum, the political formal decision maker and its 25 members have promoted an *abstract* appreciation of the differences the relative fragile coherence in

a 'shared sense of purpose' was achieved. In a fragile network identity, the scope of the network coordination *seems to remain neutral*. The main weigh of coordination processes, e.g. establishment of new networks, has happened *outside of the* arena of the Growth Forum but still within its formal mandate. Administration played a significant role in carrying out coordinating tasks: it gathered, it elaborated and selected ideas and solution proposals. The administration, concretely, Growth Secretariat has played therefore the role of main network coordinator.

## 6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented three interrelated analyses of the Growth Forum.

*The first analysis has examined the content and the scale of network identity in the GF, and it searched to highlight the process of network identity creation.*

The Growth Forum has developed a relative fragile network identity in its first four-year mandate. It succeeded to overcome major conflicts between regional and municipal representatives but it did not succeed to develop a perception among *all* its members that the Growth Forums strength relies on the appreciation and nourishing of the differences and that the Growth Forum as a network holds a strong sense of shared purpose. In single cases, members who initially did not perceive the Growth Forum to hold a potential to develop a network identity has changed their view to think that it is beneficial to collaborate. An example like this one showed that radical changes in the actors' perceptions are possible under given circumstances, here concretely, due to received economic and political pay offs.

Identity construction was an ongoing process of interchanging conflicts, resolutions, turbulence consensus, balance, conflicts, disturbance, and new practices. Just when the feeling of consensus-culture is achieved, it gets disturbed by a new event, which can appear both from the outside and within the network. The externally created image that articulated a story about the Growth Forum as being invisible to local governments of the Region has created the pressure on the Growth Forum to become monitored and closer connected to the municipal levels of governance. This can create dissatisfaction among regional representatives who already felt their political voice was marginalized. Thereby the external image contributed to slightly weakening internal coherence and the strength of the network identity.

*The second analysis has search to understand whether and how the implemented network management strategies have impacted on the creation of the network identity.*

The leadership of the Growth Forum which includes its chairman and administrative leadership from the Growth Secretariat have focused management strategies predominantly on the network processes: partially to attract and motivate members to attend meetings, though first and foremost to qualify the content of the policy process of making regional entrepreneurial development strategy

(REDS). While those management strategies had improved the conditions of meetings and dialog, they had less significant impact on a strong network identity.

The scope and characteristics of applied management strategies does not alone explain the dynamics. Experiences from past when there were counties the municipal politicians felt ‘too governed by the counties’ and have therefore opposed the regional governance with the intension to minimize its impact on the municipalities’ policy scope. This contradictory relation of contestation and collaboration has in particular been evident in the field of regional development policy.

Although they intended to achieve satisfaction among the members with the meeting and processes, the content of management strategies was not sufficiently focusing on dialog, in particular between the chairman and municipal representatives. For example, an open dialog about the persisting conflicts during 2006 and 2007 may have helped to clear views and diminish tensions.

*The third analysis targeted to examine the relationship between network identity and network coordination.*

No strong correlation between network identity and coordination can be concluded. This can be explained by the presence of filters, e.g. pre-meetings that selected out wicket conflicts and thereby compensated for the strong identity; and by presence of administration who selected and coordinated ideas from workshops and conferences.

Although, the main story-line ‘Achieving growth by new-thinking and collaboration’ have co-constituted the increasing amount of sub-networks and thereby had an indirect impact on network coordination, the same story-line had not increased nor decreased coordination within the Growth Form as such. This is due to the circumstance that the administration played a key-role of coordinator, while the Growth Forum rather operated on the ‘institutionally stabilized’ amount of coordination tasks.



# Chapter 7 The Municipal Contact Committee (MCC): from fragile to strong network identity

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the empirical analysis of emerging network identity with the case of Municipal Contact Committee. As with the previous empirical analysis of the Growth Forum, this chapter is structured around three analytical questions, namely:

What characterizes the network identity that has developed in the MCC?

How has the process of creating a network identity taken place in the MCC, and which management strategies have enabled the development of the network identity?

How has network identity improved the processes of network coordination?

## 7.2 Development of Network Identity

In the theory chapter I described how a network identity is developed in the process of interpretation of networks' external image and the practice that interpretation leads to within the network. That process is characterized by temporary stabilization and change. In chapter three it was illustrated by the following figure:

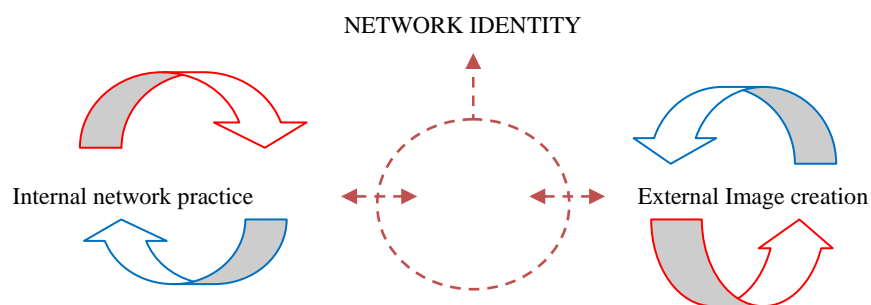


Figure 26: A dynamics of developing network identity in a governance network, elaborated on the basis of Hatch's and Schultz's model (Hatch & Schultz, 2004, p. 379)

The aim of this section is to identify and describe the main stakeholders who shape the image of the MCC and to show what this external image means for the constitution of network identity inside the MCC.

In contrast to the analysis of the Growth Forum this chapter will first analyze a) *a sense of shared purpose* and b) *a value of promoting difference and mutual tolerance* because the members

developed a sense of shared purpose while the appreciation of each other's differences was less present. Perspectives from *within* the network as well as from *inside out* of this network will be presented.

### 7.2.1 Sense of shared purpose

The Municipal Contact Committee has during the four years of its existence developed a strong sense of shared purpose. "We" is developed in a positive spirit as politicians express it, due to the network's ability to concentrate on the positive aspects of collaboration. During my first observation (May 2006) I noticed how the chairman of the MCC was appealing to the network-participants that the municipal collaboration and the concern for the regional balance were very crucial. By engaging in collaboration and maintaining the concern for industrial development in the whole region, all municipalities may have a long term benefit. The metaphor "concern for regional balance" has connected the municipalities even when they faced disagreements. The following quote underpins my observation:

It is about providing growth all the way around so none of the areas is left out (Mayor, Slagelse L.T. 2007: 24).

The sense of shared purpose is synonymous with sense of solidarity and concern for the economic growth in all areas of the Region Sealand. Another way the value of 'sense of shared purpose' comes to the light is through members experience of void of conflicts, mutual adjustment and support. A member illustrates this point in following way:

I don't feel that any members try to maintain their own interest by saying "it shall be us, or ". I think we respect and support each other. I feel I have received a great deal of support for my municipality Lolland in MCC (Mayor S.V. 2008:111-117).

Another member also claims that the MCC at a collective, network level searches to promote mutual interests before advocating their own, as they think they are bound by a community which flourishes from common interest in solving a concrete welfare task. Remarkably the lack of conflict is explained by the characteristics of the agenda. Issues that are discussed on the agenda are merely concrete policy problems rather than political-ideological debates, which therefore *diminish* the scope of conflicts and underpin the development of a shared sense of purpose:

I don't think we have power fights. We inform each other on what is going on and how far we have reached. (...) We have to collaborate because we are bounded together by the community. In municipal politics the concrete cases are in the center and not so much the policy (Mayor Kalundborg TD 2007).

The value of a shared sense of purpose is articulated by focusing on the strengths of the MCC as a network in which its members support each other. When receiving support from richer and bigger municipalities, representatives of smaller and peripheral municipalities perceive that they are more equally positioned than they were in time before the MCC:

In MCC we focus on what we can and are good to... We are good to help and support each other, in for example, sending applications in the system. We say "it is not meant that somebody should decide the distribution of all assets. In old times there were always 'big brothers': now we are a bit more [equal] again (Mayor, Lolland, S. V. 2008:68-72).

The perception of equality is expressed by the metaphor of 'fellowship' which another member of the MCC states:

It has occurred a sort of fellowship and things are increasingly smooth when we need to coordinate (Mayor Køge, M.S. 25. 2. 2009).

Maintaining the notion of common good and cross municipal collaboration is perceived as a necessary measure in order to surpass competence with other regions in bringing financial resources to the Region Sealand. The value of a shared sense of purpose is associated with the capacity to overcome external contestation. A member exemplifies this reasoning in the following way:

We have to do it for the common good and push for cross municipal collaboration. () it is important to bring as much money as possible to Sealand rather than they end up in Jutland, right? (Mayor, Vordingborg, H.H. 9. 1. 2009).

Yet another member holds the same view, namely that only by standing together the Region Sealand and its municipalities have best chances to develop:

It is agreed that the MCC is absolutely justified. We stand together and are glad when development is happening in our region, not North Italy, or Malmö, but in Ringsted (Mayor Køge, M.S. 25. 2. 2009).

The municipal level is in the last two quotes clearly associated with the larger perspective of the regional geographic and economic space.

The quotations show how a sense of shared purpose, a key element of the concept of network identity, is articulated by different story-lines and views that underpin its meaning. The most frequently expressed story lines that emerged are: 'concern for community', 'need and necessity to support all parts of the region', 'concern for regional balance', 'MCC a network of fellowship', 'MCC a place to unite resources, to receive and give support'.

The members from the MCC who were interviewed describe many positive experiences related to participation in the MCC. The interviewed members perceive that they get better acquainted at each meeting; that mayors help and support each other; that they relate to each other's challenges and to



the region as such. Participating in this network gives them the possibility to perceive themselves as part of the strong network.

To maintain the belief that the MCC is a strong network and that its members share a purpose is an ongoing effort: On one hand the members support the idea that the regional balance is important, while on the other hand, some members may face the dilemma which arises when municipality's and the region's interests are conflicting. The example below describes a concrete situation in which such dilemma is revealed.

- 'Municipal versus Regional Interests'

In an interview a member of the MCC expressed how one as municipal politician in a regional context always needs to reflect over when to maintain the interests of own municipality compared with the interests of other municipalities or the Region as the whole:

I have my municipal lenses on through which I am seeing things that are best for the municipality, but I also see things in relation to the regional perspective (Mayor L. T. 2007:182).

Another member of the MCC who is also represented in a Regional Committee expresses how opposing the Regional government from time to time has played a symbolic role in strengthening member's relations internally:

"... they do a lot in the forum to prove among themselves that they support each other and that it is not the region which should set the agenda" (Mayor P.H. 2006, p. 3, 29-30).

Some key decisions like decision on where in the region to allocate so called Growth House, a service company, were, according to this member "(...) a litmus test whether they can beat the distance" (Mayor, P.H. 2007, p. 3, 29-30). The distance here is used as a metaphor for conflicts in political interests, so by deciding not alone on the basis of rational or dominating interests in the region, the members of the MCC overcome political conflicts and support development of shared sense of common interests. The crucial moments in the development of network identity seem to be the political decisions that imply conflicts of interest: if members manage to overcome conflict they demonstrate they are able to tackle different interests and thereby they strengthen the sense of shared purpose and internal cohesion; if they don't it is likely that the conflict would contribute to the fragmentation and weakening of the network's identity.

During the first two years of Region Sealand's collaboration with its municipalities many MCC-members have expressed dissatisfaction with the region taking broad responsibility within policy of regional entrepreneurial development, this the municipalities perceive to be a municipal task. The MCC's vice chairman has expressed that conflicts have occurred between the two levels of government due to insufficient coordination in crucial aspects of policy, for example, when discussing the education establishment in the region, municipalities urge to be heard (MCC

chairman J.S. 2009, vice chairman H.H. 2008, observation notes 2008). MCC- members have also perceived these conflicts as power balancing, through acts of demarking what belongs inside and what the outside of their own jurisdiction (Mayor M. S. 25. February 2009).

The Region is unclear about task-distribution. And that is a pity. (...) If we protest we risk appearing as the ones who does not want development (The chairman of MCC, observation of meeting in the MCC 06. 02. 2008).

Another mayor and MCC-member expresses how he experiences the dilemma regarding the division of tasks between the municipal and regional governance, and how most members of the MCC agree that the scope of tasks Region shall maintain, according to the municipalities should be narrower than the Region want it to be:

We experience a dilemma: the region wants to maintain some task which we don't think is meant by the local government reform. And the chairman and the other mayors are skeptical about it (Interview, mayor PLN 2007).

The discussions about defining what is *in* and what *outside* of the Region's jurisdiction seems to influence the development of network identity in the MCC in a positive way, considering that its members agree and unify each time the coordination of entrepreneurial policy with the Region is discussed. Insecurity and uncertainty about the relationship with the Region have strengthened coherence and thereby the sense of shared purpose.

- Contestation to The Capital Region of Denmark and to the State Government

Geographic proximity to the Capital Region of Denmark and its metropolis Copenhagen matters for how municipalities perceive their position in the Region Sealand: The leaders of those close to Copenhagen have initially alluded that the economic benefit of being integrated in the political settings of the Capital Region is greater than being in the Region Sealand.

Køge Municipality is an example of being at the intersection between the Region Sealand and the Capital Region. Although being allocated in Region Sealand, Køge Municipality is subjected to the planning norms of the Capital Region. Its mayor expresses how the proximity to Copenhagen affects its political culture, and self-perception matters when networking with actors from other municipalities in Region Sealand (Mayor, Køge, and M.S. 25. 02.2009). This double orientation has delayed Køge Municipality in coordinating planning with other municipalities of the region; an administrator responsible for coordination of planning activities notes how Køge 'was out of collaboration' for a period (Administrator R.L. 2007). The representatives of the Køge Municipality in the MCC have been aware of this double orientation and have been sensitive to experiences that challenge the strong network identity which is developing within the MCC. The differences are articulated through the perceptions of how to approach challenges within business, education, and social welfare, through the understanding of internal challenges and through the disagreements about which areas of the Region should be prioritized financially.

If you just think about South Sealand regarding the age pregnancy and child birth, or the education level or the employment demography, comparing to for example, Køge or Roskilde, there is a wide, wide, wide difference. Those differences, I think, impact how we work. The interest-orientations diverge enormously (Mayor, Køge M.S., 25. 02. 2009).

Holding the view that the municipalities within Region Sealand exercise different cultures and traditions of collaboration has given the mayor the feeling that networking can be hampered under such conditions. Despite the initially perceived difficulties about the collaboration, this MCC-member concludes that the collaboration among municipalities is happening despite negative differences and welfare challenges the municipalities are facing.

### **7.2.2 From tolerating to valuing difference**

In the theory concerning network identity I have specified that promoting the difference in/within the network arena is the key when developing network identity. While the notion of difference refers to positive difference, namely actors' different capacities, resources, and ideas, in the concrete policy processes, the difference may be perceived as negative characteristics or problems that actors bring into the network, as illustrated in the previous example. Considering that the connotations to difference may include both negative and positive perceptions, the means of dealing with the difference may unfold on the continuum from purely tolerating to explicitly valuing the difference. To show how the perceptions of tolerance and appraisal of difference are expressed and how they matter in developing network identity within the MCC, this section puts forward a few examples that show how the MCC-members articulate the meaning of difference. In some moments valuing difference is explicitly articulated while in others the underlying meaning needs to be 'read between lines'. This section will show a variety of examples that can be interpreted on the scale from tolerating difference to cherishing it.

Some members ascribe an ambiguous meaning to difference. They perceive the difference as an advantage and disadvantage for the cross-municipal collaboration. The differences in the size, demography, economic growth and social issues impose a challenge to the cross-municipal collaboration, but the differences also benefit the development of network identity as it is easier to support each other because the member-municipalities have different needs (Mayor M.S. 2009).

Vice-chairman of the MCC emphasizes a third dimension in the development of a network identity, a dimension that is about common traits of human behavior:

Fundamentally we are the same even we have different views on life. As I learned from the world, just the fact that we have children makes it easier to speak with people with different views; to be together in the same room to speak with each other (The vice-chairman of the MCC Mayor H.H. 9.1. 2009).

Thus the vice-chairman reminds us that members of the MCC are humans who often can identify common personal interests that reach behind immediate public political interests, and that those informal traits help bridging members' views in the moment those views collide. Thereby, the recognition of underlying common human values helps the development of network identity as well.

Furthermore, the negative differences are turned into positive and valued through the story line that I have labeled "*Development through concern for Regional Balance*". When crucial decisions are made about financial and organizational resources in the Region, the chairman of MCC has insisted on how important for the MCC is to accentuate the periphery areas in the Region for the concern of maintaining, what chairman calls, the regional balance. The argument is that Regional development can best happen through regional balance. The story-line 'development through regional balance' supports the idea that the municipalities which face economic and social challenges or who are perceived as peripheral municipality, ought being prioritized. In that sense, the negative differences are transcended and integrated into a common attempt to work together for the best of the Region. And the idea which decisions of allocation of the resources are the best is negotiated as decision making unfolds. However, the negotiations are happening under the story-line of the necessity of concern for the regional balance (Observation notes of meetings in MCC)

A mayor who represents the municipality who is articulated as being in periphery expresses how his municipality has received much support from the other members in the MCC:

We like each other regardless of the political orientation. I am having great time with the Right Wing, the Social Democrat Party and other mayors. We are not divided. I feel I have received an incredible support to Lolland within the MCC. They know what problems we have. "Now that you are in the froth of climate politics and investments, we are going to back you up" (Mayor S.V. 2008: 113-114,147-148).

Feeling understood and showing understanding for the fellow-members helps making bonds among them. The mental support is expressed as channeling financial support. When transcending the negative differences into a positive notion, namely the concern, care, empathy for each other, then a step closer in developing the shared sense of purpose and valuing mutual differences, is achieved.

The key characteristics of the network identity in the MCC have now been described; the next task is to show the dynamics behind the creation of those characteristics.

### **7.2.3 The role of image in the process of building network identity**

The most important external stakeholder to the MCC is the Land Association of Municipalities (LGDK). The LGDK provides administrative service; it advises and, to an extent, monitors the work of the MCC. It does so by delegating own administrators to elaborate the agenda for the MCC

and participate in its meetings. It is the one whose voice is important in creating the external image and structuring the politics internally within the MCC.

The box below highlights an example of a speech held by a LGDK-representative at the seminar organized by the MCC, in June 2007. The speech illustrates how LGDK perceives the MCC's functional performance during the first two years of its existence. The talk contributes to the shaping a sense of shared purpose inside the MCC.

The representative from LGDK, N. evaluated the MCC:

- MCC is the best representative of the Municipalities. You are trying to solve the problem. My impression of the MCC is in particular positive.
- The work in the MCC is characterized by the trust in the Chairman and the Vice Chairman.
- The agenda during the first year was heavy.
- The participation frequency was impressive.
- You have invited people from the outside: the expectations about your work were huge, and you have lived up to the expectations.
- You ensure the professional standard in your work, despite the pressure, in particular within the Health Agreements.
- Now the task is: how do you make sure that your background is satisfied by what you are doing? The background, local councils, must have knowledge of what is going on.
- MCC is relatively new.
- The relationship with the Region was peaceful and the tone of dialog positive.
- ... Now, someone from RUC (ref. to me) is sitting here: it should be someone from the National Parliament.
- MCC does not play 'big brother' role.
- It is wise if you can keep decent dialog.
- The key issue is whether the 17 municipalities continue grouping in old alliances

*Than from audience, a MCC-member, mayor R.L. asked: How can MCC become **one**?*

- Stand together implies ... if you don't stand together, you won't be able overcome challenges.

(Observation notes from seminar in the MCC, June 2007)

The speech described above praises exactly those aspects that contribute to strengthening a common sense of purpose. Examples are statements: "The MCC is the best representative of the Municipalities; the participation frequency was impressive; and the relationship with the Region was peaceful and the tone of dialog positive". By focusing predominantly on positive aspects the LGDK- representative encourages and empowers the members of the MCC to continue creating success stories about the MCC.

At this occasion several complements to the leadership and the members of the MCC were expressed and members discussed with the LGDK representatives why it was important they identify common interests and develop a collective belief that they needed to stand together. They reached the conclusion that being unified may help municipalities deal more effectively with the economic and political challenges they face (Observation of the seminar in the MCC 15 Jun 2007).

Two years later, the LGDK undertook a new evaluation of the MCC's work for 2006-2009. At a one day-seminar in May 2009 the representative of Danish Local Government emphasized how the MCC had performed well and had become 'an ambassador' of the municipal interests in the Region Sealand. The evaluation rapport concluded that the cross municipal collaboration both among the politicians and administrators has been crucial for the MCC's dynamics and success because it led to a better task performance. The LGDK recommended that the political debates should be prioritized and the technical aspects and details downsized. To strengthen the legitimacy of the MCC's discussions and proposals local Committees needed to be involved and oriented frequently (Policy document, MCC- meeting 18/08/2009).

Those examples show how the LGDK contributes to development of a network identity by stressing that a shared sense of purpose among members within the MCC improves municipalities' ability to succeed in the long run. In chapter five I have described that municipalities' financial performance is monitored by the state and how in the public discourses municipalities are experiencing the potential threats of being re-centralized by the state (AKF 2010).

The second important actor is the local Committee of each municipality. In his speech the representative of the LGDK highlighted that the MCC must make sure that each member's background is satisfied through the initiations and concrete efforts within the MCC. The vice chairman and fellow members are aware of the importance of achieving consent in their own local Committees in order to implement the ideas and initiatives undertaken within the MCC. Given that members of the MCC are not formally alleged to decide though rather to consult each other about political strategies vital for their long term existence. As earlier mentioned, one clearly expressed goal the MCC has articulated is to make its work more visible among politicians in the municipal Committees.

- Relation to Municipal Committees

During the meetings throughout four years, the MCC has discussed a series of issues related to policy areas of health and regional development. A dialog and collaboration on the level of the administration and between all municipalities of Region Sealand has been established and it unfolds through the administrative network K17 (which is described in more detail in chapter five). While the MCC discusses the principal issues such as, for example, making common entrepreneurial strategy, K17 collaborates on clarifying and implementing concrete projects. Even though the dialog and collaboration that unfolds within the MCC and K17 informs the local Committees about

the happening on regional level, mayors still experience the concern that the politicians of local Committees are too far, and not sufficiently enriched by these regional collaboration networks.

Mayors experience that the politicians in their local Committees perceive the MCC as “Just a place where things are coordinated. “Ok, and so what?” Even it is necessary to coordinate regional at the regional level “We can do things by ourselves” (Mayor Køge M. S. 25.2.2009). Another example that illustrates the relationship between the MCC and local committees is expressed as follows:

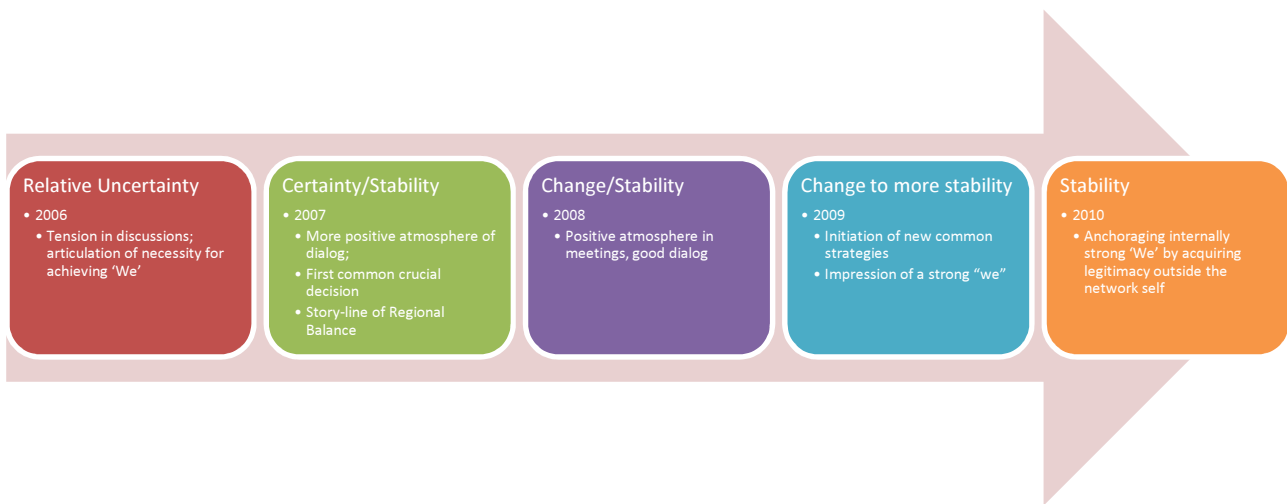
I sense that we have to create a more solid foundation out there in each municipality board and create enthusiasm (Vice chairman of the MCC, mayor H.H. February 2009).

The local politicians give the impression to their mayors that the MCC is justified in existing as a network that coordinates, consults and lifts the municipal politics to the regional level, though the MCC seems distant local politics making. The reason that the MCC needs to connect with the politicians of local Committees is to ensure democratic legitimacy of initiations and decisions undertaken by the MCC. Although the members of the MCC communicate on different occasions and get familiar with each other, the formal meetings are still the main arena for dialog; namely the arena from which decisions are directed to be addressed by the administration network K17, the one who bears the major impact at the municipal level policy (Mayor, Køge M.S. 2009). In other words, although local politicians of municipal Committees know members of the MCC (all of them are mayors) but local politicians need to be informed and somehow involved around the discussions on policy that is treated within the MCC. The issue of tightening links between the MCC and municipal Committee was increasingly discussed on the meetings during year 2010. For example, the MCC have launched public hearings among local municipal Committees regarding so called Sealand project “*Strukturbillede 2030: byudvikling og infrastruktur i Region Sjælland*” (Policy document, MCC-meeting 9.3.2010, p.7; 24.04.2010). It represents a new collaboration strategy among 17 municipalities in the MCC, the region Sealand, the Ministry of Business, Copenhagen and Oresund. By being involved in public hearing politicians of municipal Committees gained an opportunity to strengthen legitimacy of cross municipal collaboration that unfolds within the MCC. By strengthening that legitimacy, the MCC helps generating an image of it as being responsive and important regional actor. According to theory of organizational identity presented in chapter three, the image that stakeholders hold of the network they relate to, is crucial for whether and how that network will develop a network identity internally. Next section describes therefore how the MCC’s image is related to the development of its network identity, in particular sense of shared purpose.

#### ***7.2.4 Image and making the network identity within the MCC***

The following section illustrates how network process within the MCC, over time, is related to the creation of network identity. The main element of internal network process is dialog. It is exactly through the dialog and stories and the way that members and external stakeholders interpret and articulate those stories that the image becomes created. The table brings descriptions of how dialog

can be characterized for each year since April 2006 until May 2010. Those descriptions miss the dynamics and changes in dialog and negotiations that happened within each year and that would provide more accurate description of network process, if these dynamics were described as well. To illustrate the dynamics in the process unfolded over four year, of practical reasons, it is necessary to extract and illustrate *predominate* examples. When described, as for year 2006 that the dialog was ‘tense’ it means that the dialog predominantly was tense and that some meetings were happening in a relaxed atmosphere. The description brought in the table below is based, primarily on, personal observations. Interviews with members, chairman and vice-chairman of MCC, as well as statements from the LGDK correlate with those observations. The table below describes the atmosphere of dialog, the development of elements of network identity as ‘shared sense of purpose’. Each description is seen in the light of stability and change which are the underlying factors of any process.



**Figure 27: Relationship between network process and process of development of network identity within the MCC**

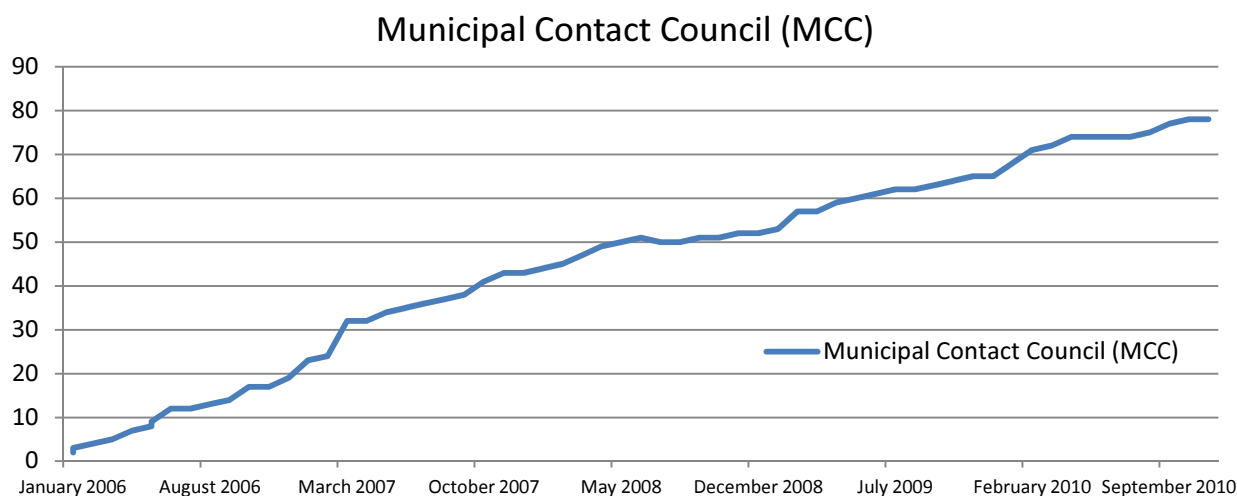
The establishment of the MCC and initial period during 2006 was characterized by relative uncertainty among its members about the role that the MCC plays in maintaining interests of their municipality. Although being less expressed, this uncertainty reappeared during 2007 as well. However, the leadership and administration of the MCC has initiated workshops and seminars that gave members an opportunity to evaluate its role-performance for the previous year. Here, the first ideas of development of sense of shared purpose were articulated. A decision about the distribution of resources among municipalities, which clearly has compromised interests, was made also in the 2007 and which was a ‘test’ of the MCC’s ability to act collectively, according to the principle of network identity (ref. case of Growth House-allocation). As shown earlier, the MCC has demonstrated an ability to make decision in step with the concern for regional and holistic perspective, though still had contained conflicts and dissatisfaction of single members for the reason that their municipality had not granted establishing the Growth House (dialog meeting with the chief administrator of the MCC, T.N. 2008). In 2008, a less conflicting remarks and positive atmosphere, through laughing and speaking in metaphors was evident. The presence of shared sense of purpose seemed more stabilized.



In interviews that were conducted during February 2009 members have expressed satisfaction with being part of the MCC as it experienced internal coherence. However, they noticed that the recognition from the outside was profoundly important. As described earlier, during the 2009 MCC initiates project, a public hearing about the cross-municipal strategy for how to develop Region Sealand to 2030, which was an initiative targeted to strengthen the MCC handling capacity in relation to the stakeholders from outside of this network. The external legitimacy has helped strengthening network identity internally.

In the theoretical discussion, chapter 2, I have described that changes in network identity occur not only due to conflicts, but also when to new demands, unexpected crises or significant events. Congruent aspects of the identity may be integrated, while other excluded due to inconsistency. This analysis shows that the agreements and consensus may also lead to changes in terms of development and strengthening the identity. The peaceful dialog and consensus making can be added to the group of factors that are driving forces behind the developing network identity.

If (approximately) illustrated in Figure 28, the scale and the process of development of network identity in the MCC for period between 2006 to April 2010 the line would take an *upward-straight* line:



**Figure 28: An approximate graphical illustration of network identity within the MCC**

Identity scale, in the graph, represents the extent and the strength of developed network identity, in particular the collective ‘we’. Even this network has experienced wicked conflicts over crucial decisions. Those conflicts have not compromised the process of network identity development. On the contrary, the conflicts turned out to confirm the strength of mutual coherence and dedication to develop strong ‘we’. Indeed, the leadership and members of MCC have succeeded in achieving consistent, stable and strong sense of shared purpose, a strong collective ‘we’. That sense of shared purpose holds the value of cross-municipal collaboration transcending thereby local differences into concern for the Region Sealand as socio-economic and political space. It is a self-reinforcing process in which the development of network identity both is the goal and a mean.

The immediate task now is to review and explain how network management has enabled the development of strong network identity within the MCC.

### 7.3 Which management strategies and how had enabled the emergence of a network identity in the MCC?

In chapter three I have argued that network management in the mode of institutional design and process management may play an important role in creating conditions for development of a network identity. As the chart below shows, the MCC's chairman, vice-chairman and administration together have applied all eight management strategies suggested in the theory chapter on management.

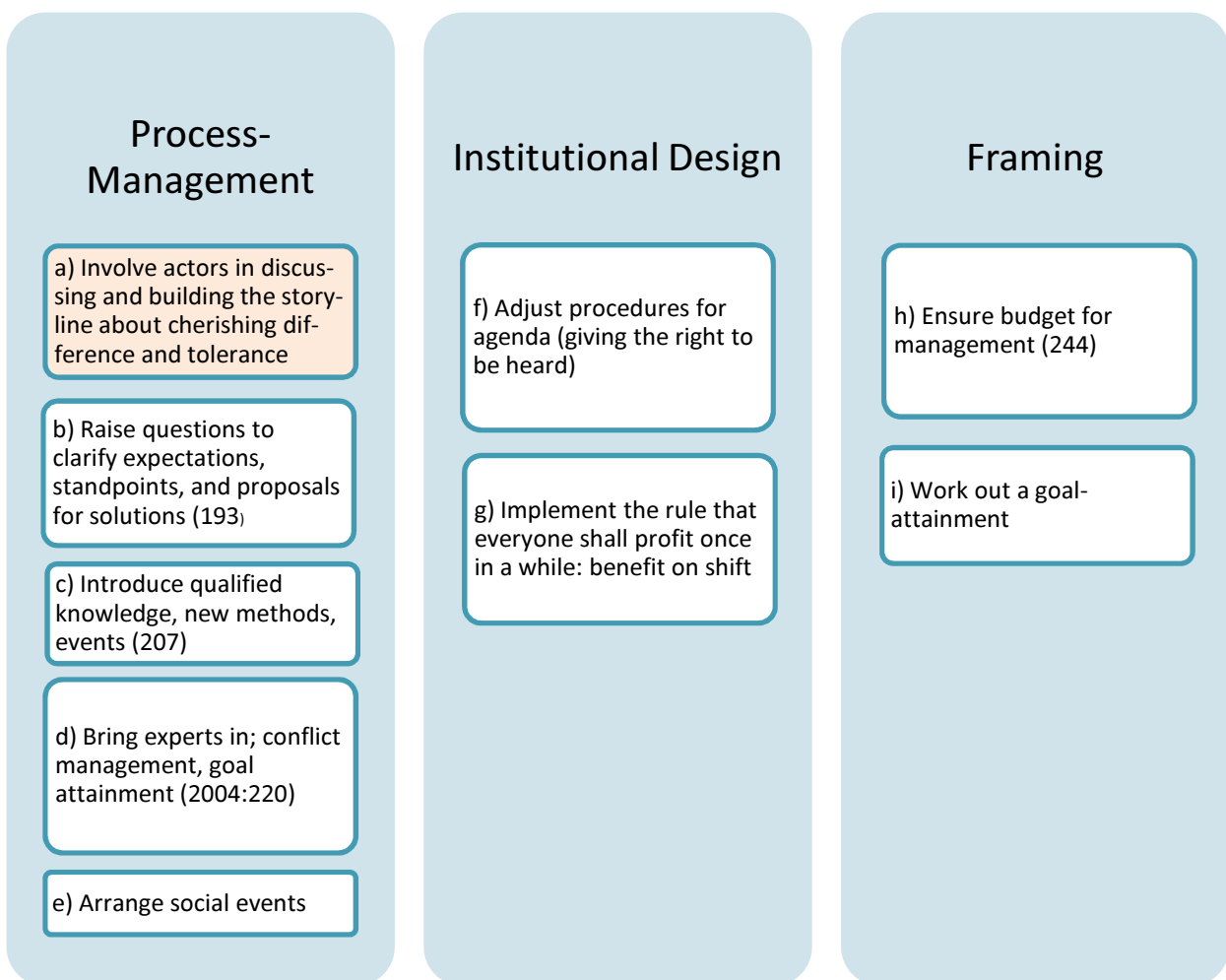


Figure 29: Applied management strategies within the MCC. Note a) has been partial used

Now it is important to discuss how each management strategy has mattered during the process of developing the network identity.

**a) Involve actors in discussing and building the story-line about cherishing difference and tolerance**

Each time the MCC was making decisions that seemed to impose conflicts of interests and potentially jeopardize the atmosphere of community the chairman emphasized how important it was to see those decisions through the optic of concern for ‘*the regional balance*’. By regional balance, the chairman explained that the MCC is responsible for allocating financial resources not alone to municipalities who already have the best potentials for achieving effectiveness and efficiency for the invested resources but the MCC must support the projects in less advanced parts of the region, acknowledging thereby the municipalities who are perceived as being on periphery (Observation notes, MCC meeting 2007). By inviting all members of the MCC to support those who are ‘more in need’ the chairman achieves positive effects on development of the network identity. The effects of this political-management strategy are higher degree of consensus, greater satisfaction with the participation in the network, and stronger ‘we’ because ‘we’ represents the value that members act when it is needed to resolve region’s collective problems, not only in particular municipality.

The story-line of ‘concern for regional balance’ does not mean that negative differences are irrelevant. Clearly, the story-line and the way it is articulated indicate that the strength of the MCC as network lies in its capability to deal with those negative differences in a way that they are not perceived as a problem. In that way, a *neutral* view on negative differences contributes to enhancing network identity.

Although the development of network identity in the MCC is clearly based on the notion of interdependence caught by the slogan ‘we need each other to work on challenges our municipalities face’, this form of interdependence is rather a political-strategic than rational-functional. While rational-functional interdependence, the one that scholar of network theories (e.g. Scharpf) asserts promise visible merits in the short or long terms, the political-strategic interdependence in the case of MCC holds rather a promise of discursive-symbolic<sup>24</sup> support and unclear economic gains, at least not for every actor in the network. This discursive-symbolic support plays an important role in empowering participants to believe that the social, economic, or financial challenges their municipality face are possible to overcome; that the influence of Regional Government is possible to decrease/neutralize; and nonetheless that each municipally stands better off when standing on common platform.

The shift from relatively fragile and clique-divided municipal collaboration towards a more cross-connected collaboration ought to be seen in the light of the re-enforcing effects of seven other management strategies as well as the very crucial role of MCC’s well-perceived chairman.

**b) Raise questions to clarify expectations, standpoints, and proposals for solutions**

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<sup>24</sup> The Discursive-symbolic support may lead to economic or political gains for which it should therefore not consequentially be separated from the economic interdependence. In this case, however, the story-line (which is discursive meaning structure), implies empathy and dialog as the most crucial means of the creation of interdependence and hence network identity within the MCC.

To clarify members' experiences with the functioning of and the conditions of participation in the MCC the administration conducted a survey. For example, after the seminar in June 2007 the members of MCC received a short questionnaire in which they were asked to evaluate whether the seminar had improved socializing and whether they have perceived the seminar has benefited the development of cross municipal collaboration. Also they were asked to propose changes for the future similar events. Considering that members were positive about this seminar, the administration and chairman initiated annual seminars, 2008 in April 2009 and May 2010 (policy documents, 19.08.2008, p. 14; 09.03.2010, p.13).

During formal meetings, the chairman addresses members to take stance about the events that the chairman-board proposes. For example, before organizing a conference about the infrastructure in the Region Sealand, the chairman asked members whether the MCC should invite regional politicians and administrators, and whether prominent stakeholders from the Capital Region of Denmark ought to be included to make new alliances (observation note 19. 08. 2007).

By consulting members about seminars, conferences and other events related to the MCC the chairman provides them an opportunity to influence and design the functioning and performance of the MCC. The pro-active participation results in members' satisfaction with own participation and influence-opportunities within the MCC.

The constitution that regulates the procedures of the meeting provides space to articulate to comment, criticise, or reject the case-proposal. However, the members are left to engage in discussions on their own initiative. This optional participation leads to uneven dynamics of discussions: some members speak less than others during the meetings. While the empirical analysis of the Growth Forum has shown that low engagement in discussion is connected with low satisfaction with the Growth Forum as a network, this is not so in the case of Municipal Contact Committee. Here, members perceive that they can achieve influence just by being present at the meetings physically. Being present, even if not being rhetorically active, has other side effects as well: networking and recognition. Before and after meeting, during coffee-break and lunchtime the members talk face to face and in small groups. The formal meetings provide members with an opportunity to get acquainted, and exchange views about the participation and functioning of the network MCC which of members is perceived as a way of being recognized (Interview with mayor, M.S. 2009 and personal observations, appendix).

The positive view on the participation in the MCC, the adjusting conditions for meeting and influencing the organization of political and social events helps members to see that they are acknowledged, and as an important contributor to the well- functioning of the MCC as a governance network. Those values are one important dimension of developing network identity; another important management strategy regards active involvement of members in agenda setting.

**f) Adjust procedures for agenda giving space to be heard**

In the management strategies *a)* and *c)* I have described how the members are being involved in organizing seminars and conferences. The administration of MCC (helped by the leaders of 17 Region's municipalities and LGDK) are responsible for the content of the agenda for each meeting, while its members can propose the issues to be discussed. And members can complain when they think the agenda does not match their expectations. The chairman and the representatives of Local Government Denmark have by now approved and complemented the way administration have involved them in making the agenda ahead of formal meetings.

**i) Involve members in defining goal-attainment**

For governance network to develop network identity it is important to provide the space in which network members can inspire, influence and even change each other's opinion to constitute shared goals. The MCC is an example of a network that was not established by predefined policy goal or desired outcome. It was based on the political-strategic concern for municipalities to possess an arena through which they can achieve greater influence in relation to the Region and regional policy issues. In this, relatively undefined space, any issue that concerns municipal-local jurisdiction could be put forward. Over time, the challenges within the policies of social, health and regional development were discussed and some of those issues have turned into cross-municipal collaboration, as the section three will describe. The story line that the MCC shall exercise influence towards the Region and defend its jurisdiction in order to develop an internal strong 'we' has been articulated in its early phase of functioning.

It is remarkable that the political dimension and the complexity of issues discussed at the meetings in the MCC are correlated to the degree of conflicts with that network: the more clearly defined and regulated by the legislation an issue on the agenda is, the fewer conflicts it causes. A member explains that one of the major reasons the MCC has not faced deeper conflicts is because issues it discusses are 'down to earth':

No, I don't experience grouping, I experience that we more or less agree without much difficulty, because the cases that we discuss (...) are for example social policy, the institutions we have got transferred from counties, and we have to run and manage it. How do we manage it in relation to the legislation? So, it is pretty down to earth specific (Interview with mayor P.A.N 2007)

In the same interview this politician explains how chief administrators in K17 work suggestions through and filter some potentials conflicts out. By doing so the administration not only performs a role of an important manager and coordinator of political decisions but it indirectly facilitates the development of a network identity: lack of wicked conflicts is related to members' perception that the MCC as a network holds its totality and not internal fragmentation and grouping.

**c) Challenge taken for granted by introducing new methods**

The evaluation of seminars and meetings is the most crucial method the MCC chairman and administration has introduced in order to respond to members' expectations. For example, after the seminar in June 2007 administrators who are directly linked to and service the MCC have elaborated a short survey in which they asked how members perceived the seminar and its different events and what they wish to change. By bringing knowledge about how members perceived the seminar administration possesses an experience by which the future seminars can be improved and a higher level of satisfaction created. Previously in this chapter examples of evaluation conducted by the administration of the MCC and the LGDK were described in relation to how these evaluations were crucial elements in developing a sense of shared purpose within the MCC. The ongoing discussions about political visions and internal dynamics of the MCC were put on the agenda during meetings (e.g. Agenda in MCC 1.03.2007, p.14). Altogether, the method of continuous evaluation of the MCC's work and the focus on cross-municipal collaboration within health and regional development has helped generate a shared sense of purpose among members of the MCC. Thereby it has contributed to the development of a network identity.

**d) Bring experts in to manage conflicts or to give other important advices**

At a seminar in November 2010 the MCC invited an expert who closely studied the Municipalities' collaboration with the Region. The speech by senior researcher K.S.<sup>25</sup> contained recommendations of what the MCC needs to focus on in its future work in order to function successfully. Among most the remarkable is the recommendation that the MCC can through policy, like regional traffic, work together to prevent recentralization. An earlier section has revealed that members of the MCC were aware about the possibility of the re-centralization of some tasks, e.g. health service, by the state and when a senior scientist pointed to that threat, the speech produced an echo. The chairman expressed that both politicians and the administration can use that advice in their future work (Note on the seminar in MCC 9. 02. 2011, p.1).

From data available currently it is uncertain to what extent that session has influenced the member's perceptions and further development of network identity. Effects of experts' recommendations can be examined in a future survey.

Arranging social events are very crucial strategy of process management. The next section describes the importance of social events in the process of development of network identity within the MCC.

**e) Arrange social events**

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<sup>25</sup> K.S. is a member of the research project "Empowering Danish Regions" this thesis is part of as well. We meet regularly within the research group and discussed each other's ideas, also the development of network identity within the MCC. The consequence of having dialog with the MCC is that we, as a research team, may have influenced the object we have studied. Considering that scholar K.S. were holding speech late in 2010 the impact is marginal, at least for the conclusion of the period studied in this thesis (2006-2010).

The Municipal Contact Committee had organized seminars for all the MCC-members during 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010. By arranging team work and role-playing they socialized and discussed weaknesses and strengths in the MCC network collaboration. Members have perceived those informal seminars as an excellent way to meet other fellow politicians, to work as a team and to get to know each other better (Interview with mayor P.A.N. 2007). The Vice Chairman explains how seminars have helped creating a positive atmosphere among members who before entering the MCC barely knew each other:

We had a one day-seminar last summer in the MCC where we spoke about how we have started, which things we want to use more time on and prioritize differently. Theme-oriented discussions were demanded. I have also experienced a reaction coming from members who say: "When we go to meetings we do it in order to decide something". In the beginning they thought: "Since we don't decide anything, why should we come to the MCC meeting?" Cultures opposed to each other in relation to understand what this forum is about, what we can work with comparing to what we are used to. I sense now that we have surpassed that. We witness high frequency of participation. Last meeting only one out of 32 busy people who come from the whole Region concealed. I think this is really good that people want to participate (The Vice-Chairman of the MCC, 9.1. 2009).

The seminar is obviously a good opportunity for members to express concerns, proposals for changes, and to negotiate new visions. As stated by the Vice Chairman, members have held different expectations to the way MCC functions. Clarifying dissatisfactions and expectations helps generate interest and engagement to participate regularly and proactively. Proactive participation helps creating an image of success in the MCC as a political and collective actor. Indirectly, though significantly, seminars generate platforms for the development of both elements of network identity. A shared sense of purpose was strengthened by building connectedness among members through off-record dialog, while appreciation of differences happened as a side effect. Following the ontology of network theory, the appreciation of difference is the primary and most important element in network identity and is the one that, under regular circumstances, would be developed first, while the second element, the shared sense of purpose would be built on the ground of appreciation of differences. The second element would be built on the ground of the first element. The above described process of socialization within the MCC shows the opposite, namely that it may be necessary first to develop sense of shared purpose and then it becomes 'easier' to tell stories that transform differences among members' interest orientations into positive views on those orientations and on each other. However, to sustain that positive view, scholars of network theory claim that all actors need to have reason to believe they will profit from participating in the network, at one or other time. Ideally, management conducted in the network should contribute to institutionalization of the role that ensures profit-on-shift. To what extent has such institutionalization happened in the MCC during 2006 until the end of 2010?

**g) Implement the rule that everyone shall profit once a while**

The story about 'Regional Balance' has implied that not only a particular but all municipalities in the Region ought to benefit from the cross-municipal collaboration and that the MCC will strive to achieve this goal. The policy means the MCC has at its disposal is the possibility to make political-strategic decisions that provide not necessarily immediate but long term benefits for municipalities represented in the MCC. For example, municipalities have estimated they can save money when purchasing some goods together. Cutting on expenses is an important enticement for municipalities which contribute also to development of strong "We", namely shared sense of purpose and thereby the network identity.

However, 'profiting-on-shift' can be barely institutionalized as a rule though rather can remain as a value that members and the chairman handle in accordance with. By giving a prospect of profiting in the long term such a value may contribute to upholding a network identity.

The excessiveness of applied management strategies is bound in the budget assigned to conduct these strategies, as it was described in the chapter on network management theory. The final section on this part of chapter describes briefly relationship between financial means the MCC posses and the management strategies it has implemented.

#### **h) Ensure budget for management**

Although the administration is small (two people) they collaborate with many and MCC are supported by LGDK and also paid by municipalities. They have organized both conferences and seminars during the four years. In strategy for 2011-2013 it is agreed that the MCC will arrange for conferences and workshops for that period that shall qualify future policy making (Meeting in the MCC 9.2.2011, note 3.2.B, and p.1). The budget seems sufficient and available for all management strategies the leadership of the MCC wishes to carry out.

However, what members have stated and the analysis of own data shows that the manager of the MCC, namely the chairman, has played a crucial role in initiating those diverse management strategies. The following section describes the most important management skills that became obvious conditions in development of network identity. Also, in the theory chapter on network management a few central skills that the manager of a governance networks needs to demonstrates, are emphasized: analytic and negotiation skills, creativity and courage, empathy and charisma, substantive and specific knowledge to the network, and an ability to connect actors. Which of those skills have managers of the MCC demonstrated consequentially, and what did they mean for the development of network identity? Following section answers this question.

### **7.3.1 Manager's management skills**

The main managers of the MCC are the chairman, vice-chairman and the MCC administration unit that consists of two administrators.



The chairman of the MCC is appreciated as a strategically and politically clever leader who influences other politicians to work together (Mayor S.V. 2007). Members emphasize that the chairman is well informed about the political agenda ahead of meetings:

The chairman knows what will be put forward on the agenda. Together with Holmer (vice-chairman) he consults the agenda including within party-groups. He contacts leaders of Social Democrat Party and Liberal Party in order to make an agreement. If a case 'goes completely wrong' there would still be time to pull it (the case) back on line or postpone it (Interview with mayor PAN 2007).

Translated in accordance with the theoretical glasses of network management, this quote indicates that the chairman of the MCC possesses substantive and specific knowledge about the network. He demonstrates that knowledge by actively involving in and steering political-power relations among members. Given its political characteristics, this management skill can be interpreted and labeled as *an ability to manage political relations*.

Once at a meeting the chairman provides thorough information about the background of the case and he strives to achieve collaboration in the network:

Jens is very instructive and he searches collaboration in the way works and he needs to be that way. He and vice chairman have been all the way through (Interview with mayor PAN 2007).

That the chairman is instructive and searches to achieve collaboration is synonymous to yet another important management skill, namely the ability to connect actors.

That the chairman is addressed by his name indicates a collegial tone of communication. Relationship between good atmosphere, community and a view on chairman's role is also rehearsed by another member:

In general I would say we have a good conversation within the MCC, we decide pragmatically upon the cases as they come to agenda, and, as I said earlier, we have a good chairman who listens (...) He listens and formulates often compromises and takes into consideration others' opinions (ibid. 2007).

An ability to listen and take others' opinions into consideration is synonymous with what scholars of management theory describe as empathic skills. This skill is connected with the ability to manage political relations.

Members express respect for the work of the chairman and vice-chairman regarding the way they manage meetings. Members describe the chairman as competent, the one who 'has the last word'; the one who is clear in his views and the one who respects the whole MCC and not only his own municipality (Mayor, M.S. 25. February 2009).

The vice-chairman who also participates in the management of the MCC argues that the most important skill a manager can perform is to listen to the reactions of on the case he/she presents to the network members:

The important role is to listen to the reactions that follow the case I present. Sometimes there are cases that don't demand an additional effort to present the case besides of what already is written in the agenda while other times there are cases for which I use time to present and explain the background so they know what they are saying "yes to". And so I have to listen to reactions and see what the common denominator is because we are a consensus organisation. What we conclude is what we recommend to our local Committee. It is that role a leader shall perform during meetings (Vice chairman of the MCC, 9.1. 2009).

An implicit management strategy lies in the act of listening and sending a message that the political leadership obey members' wishes. By doing so the leadership signals that they serve and not decide. This strategy can shape members perception that they equal in terms of sharing power to make decisions, as the mayor of Lolland Municipality earlier expressed.

To identify and establish a common platform, the MCC chairman and vice-chairman enquire about members' opinions ahead of formal meeting:

Sometimes we call members. Other times we leave the case on the agenda the way it is. In decisions where geographical or political differences matter we search not necessarily to diminish them, but to agree on how we can create a community (Vice chairman of the MCC, 9.1. 2009).

Through this statement the vice-chairman shows that he is aware of how important it is to search for a common ground among differences, in other words, to work for the development of a network identity in the MCC.

The chairman himself had highlighted how important it is to work for the idea that regions are municipalities', and to motivate other politicians to think regionally:

My task is to motivate my colleagues to think and take regional responsibility (MCC-chairman J.S. 2006:832-834).

I think regionally more than I did just half year ago (J.S. 2006:826).

Thinking regionally means thinking what is best for the region as a demographic-economic space, and not necessary identifying with the region as an authority. At the same time, the chairman spots a possibility that the mayors can dissolve the borders: they meet people, move across municipalities and are influenced by the issue of infrastructure, education, etc. "I believe that mayors can think regionally but it requires success stories" (ibid. 2006).

On the basis of previous statements it can be reasoned that very important management skills in addition to those that network theory (e.g. Klijn 2005) describes, are the:

- ability to tell convincing stories that unite different actors to articulate common value
- ability to motivate
- ability to convince members that common ideas are in one's own interest

The previous section has described management strategies by which the MCC as a governance network was managed during the first four years after its establishment.

The next and final part of this chapter examines the relationship between network identity and network coordination: how has the processes of development of network identity influenced network coordination in relation the MCC?

#### **7.4 How has developed network identity enhanced the processes of network coordination?**

The case of the MCC is slightly different compared to the case of the Growth Forum: it does not contain a single congruent policy process that can be benchmarked with the Regional Entrepreneurial Development Strategy, but a series of decisions within different policy areas. To provide clarity and compatibility to the case of the GF I have chosen examples of decisions concerning regional development, in particular those that show interplay between network identity and network coordination.

The chief point of interest for this analysis and what it distinguishes it from previous case is exactly the question of what *strong* network identity means for network coordination.

##### **7.4.1 Strong Network Identity and Network Coordination**

###### *Example 1: Allocation of the Growth House*

When the MCC in 2007 was deciding in which municipality to place entrepreneurial service institution, the Growth House, the MCC-chairman held a speech explaining the concerns members need to reflect on before deciding the location. Three cities were proposed: Roskilde (which has high concentration of knowledge and innovation know how), Slagelse (which has knowledge and geographically would balance the Region) and Vordingborg (which have already expertise in collaboration with the Lolland Municipality and the cluster South Sealand). The representatives of nominated municipalities expressed their opinion why exactly their particular municipality was the best to establish the Growth House in. The meeting took place and in the end members were unable to reach consensus. One representative asked for a vote. If members had followed the logic of competitiveness and efficiency than they would vote for Roskilde, considering that Roskilde possesses the highest innovation-capital in the Region. Instead, the large majority voted for

Vordingborg, primarily due to ‘concern for regional balance’. Vordingborg was considered part of South Sealand that is synonymous with the periphery and some of its municipalities, e.g. Lolland face huge demographic, educational, and entrepreneurial challenges. By locating the Growth House in Vordingborg, the development of this part of Region would be strengthened and polarization between richer North, and peripheral South Sealand would be diminished. Consciousness about the concern for regional balance had dominated most politicians’ perception of what was the best decision. A mayor whose town was a candidate for establishing the Growth House expressed, at that meeting, how important it was to decide what is the best for common good (Observation notes, MCC 2007). Later that year, in an interview I asked her to elaborate on what she said and why. She explained:

I have my municipal lens on through which I am seeing things that are best for the municipality, but I also see things in relation to the regional perspective (Mayor L. T. 2007:182).

Another mayor and member of the MCC explained how decisions that may impose conflict of interests, e.g. allocating the growth House, are ‘litmus test’ of whether members of the MCC can overcome the political distance:

They do much to document for each other that they can stand together and do not let the region set the agenda. (...) Only one politician has been bounded to his area, all others have agreed because they were aware of how important it is to foster the community (Interview with mayor P.H. 12. 2006, p. 3, 4, 29-30, 32).

These were the initial stages of the institutionalization of the efforts to make a shared sense of purpose and goals, and this experience imposes later consequences on the coordination. It prevented wicked disagreements (less coordination); it strengthened positive coordination (joint problem solving); it provided a positive experience (for most members) thereby increasing the probability that the future decisions are grounded on joint commitment; it increased the prospects of institutionalization of concern for the disadvantages cities; and it helped politicians who represents those cities feeling less marginalized (Observation of the MCC 2006). Earlier in this chapter, in an interview a politician who represents one of peripheral municipalities emphasizes how important is to feel equal and how he personally and his municipality received loads of support. Another example of how developing common network identity influences coordination inside the governance network is the case of establishing a cross-municipal entrepreneurial strategy in the MCC.

#### Example 2: Entrepreneurial common strategy for the MCC

At a regular meeting 6<sup>th</sup> February 2008 the MCC-chairman asked the members to take stance about the Growth Forum’s role and the role of Growth House in entrepreneurial development of the Region in order to clarify to which extent “we in MCC” must invest in cross-municipal

development and which initiatives the MCC should support (chairman J.S., observation notes 06. 02.2008). After a long debate primarily related to the Growth Forum, the chairman summed up and concluded that the content of common cross-municipal strategy. A few points can illustrate the impact on coordination:

- the MCC should strengthen the coupling of part-regional with the existing collaboration-agreements into a holistic approach
- in deep stakeholder-feeling in relation to local and regional entrepreneurial Committees
- we work out additional suggestions to the Growth Forum's plan
- we must ensure quality of local service by establishing entrepreneur-coordination network, the six administrators' works on behalf of the 17 municipalities

Making a common strategy for municipal cross-collaboration had influenced:

- new coordination network, a entrepreneur-coordination network
- new linking, collaboration-forms
- coupling MCC with GF, Growth House and Regional Entrepreneurial Committee (dialog across four networks)
- cross dialog and innovation of new standards to improve service quality in enabling local business growth

The strategy was approved on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2009 (MCC 18-08-2009, p.7). Making a common strategy and collaborating on the issues of regional growth municipalities *increased* the *number* of networks and coordination tasks. This is a promising and perhaps a necessary aspect of the network coordination as it links many actors and levels with an aim to produce a more qualified solution and strengthen the legitimacy of the policy process. At the same time, it increases the complexity of coordinating tasks. Members emphasize how regional collaboration has expanded after the implementation of Local Government Reform 2007. For example, the Mayor of Kalundborg municipality states:

In the old days I had no reason to call Ringsted and if I did it would be by a special occasion. We have with some of municipalities who are far away, and this is due to regional collaboration. It is a natural consequence of regional collaboration more than it is due to the MCC as such (Interview with mayor PAN 2007).

Also, the Mayor of Roskilde Municipality explained that his municipality makes new agreements with other municipalities represented in the MCC, agreements regarding the solving of tasks, in particular within social and health service (Interview with mayor PLN 2007).

The analysis has by now presented examples of how the network identity developed in the MCC has influenced network coordination: the scope of network coordination was increased during its process of development of a strong network identity.

Furthermore, the leadership of the MCC perceives coordination that happens through network as an important supplement to hierarchy that already exists in institutions the MCC operates within. Network coordination is, according to the chairman, effective because it happens faster and easier compared to hierarchy:

I am convinced that this form (network) is at least as effective. This means you can make a fair and more effective decision and make things happen faster and easier than if you make decision in hierarchy and want to implement it afterwards (A mayor, chairman of the MCC, JS 2009:5).

On the basis of chairman's statement the prospect for the continuous use of network-like coordination as well as continuous strengthening of network identity within the MCC seems high.

## 7.5 Conclusion

This chapter has presented three interrelated analyses of the case of the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC).

*The first analysis has examined the content of the network identity in the MCC, and highlighted the process of creation of network identity.*

The MCC has developed relative strong network identity in its first four-year mandate. The sense of shared purpose was first developed and in parallel with that mutual appreciation. It succeeded in overcoming local and part-regional<sup>26</sup> differences in administrative and political culture, as well as social and economic diversity. The MCC became an important arena for the representatives of municipalities, a place they can exchange views, express their dissatisfaction with the Region, the Local government reform, the national government, and other issues they find of mutual interest. 'Common destiny' is a denominator for how municipalities' representatives express they face the same challenges, despite the huge difference in their demography, growth, and tax income. Although the value of difference was not explicitly promoted it was obvious that members have accepted and appreciated differences in the others' individual identity and political orientation. The meaning of strong network identity within the MCC connotes first of all too strong a sense of shared purpose and an implicit appreciation of difference.

*The second analysis has searched to understand whether and how the implemented network management strategies have influenced the creation of network identity.*

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<sup>26</sup> Part-regional is about collaboration clustered into three main areas: Copenhagen South, Guldborgsund & Lolland, and North West Sealand (Speech Jens Peter Sørensen 2006)

All eight suggested management strategies were applied and had an effect on the development of network identity within the MCC. However, the story-telling of how important it was the concern for regional balance seemed to have the greatest influence on the development of shared sense of purpose and strong community within the MCC. As soon as the story-line ‘concern for regional balance’, or story that puts Region Sealand as a geographic, cultural and socioeconomic space in the centre, conflicts of interests diminished and members established consensus about a common purpose. And that common purpose is exactly the development of the Region in terms of growth, education, innovation, and other aspects of regional development.

The second important management strategy was organizing seminars that provided members space to get to know each others’ interest orientation, to clarify disagreements and to develop new common views on cross municipal collaboration. Those seminars were highly valued by members and were therefore arranged each year.

Third, and in parallel with designed and conducted management strategies, the chairman and vice-chairman have played a crucial role in providing clear information about ideas, strategic balancing of political views, and in pursuing members to connect. They were able to create a perception among members that the leadership of the MCC is listening and respecting member’s voices. Those perceptions have stimulated perception of success, community and shared sense of purpose, which altogether have contributed to the development of a network identity.

*The third analysis targeted to examine the relationship between network identity and network coordination.*

The correlation between network identity and coordination was evident. Network identity, in particular its element, ‘shared sense of purpose’ seem to expand the scope of coordination. After deciding to implement a common business strategy on the level of MCC the scope of coordination tasks have increased as well as new links of collaboration among municipalities have been established. On this ground it can be concluded that development of a strong network identity has positive effect on network coordination. From being initially a network arena whose members met to exchange views regarding municipalities’ position to the Regional Governance, the MCC developed to an institutionalized network capable of making new political strategies. Those new political strategies had forged new cross-municipal sub-network with new tasks of coordination.

At this point the MCC has undergone more profound change comparing to the Growth Forum. Why is this so? One crucial explanation is to search in the network-specific characteristics of these two governance networks. The next chapter will compare the MCC with the Growth Forum in the light and explain their different outcomes in relation to the development of network identity, management strategies and network coordination.

# Chapter 8 Case comparing

## 8.1 Introduction

This last chapter of the empirical analysis compares the findings from the analysis of the Growth Forum (GF) with those of the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC). The purpose is to identify the main differences in the dynamics of the development of the network identity and to describe the lesson learned from the differences in management strategies that were applied in the two cases. The discussion will be structured around the two main themes which guided the empirical analysis. Comparing the MCC and the GF was based on the following questions and themes:

1. The process of development of a network identity in the GF and the MCC and their main characteristics
2. A relationship between network identity and network coordination
3. Discussion: what are the main factors that explain the differences in the two governance networks?

## 8.2 Comparing the development process of a network identity in the GF and the MCC

The comparing of how network identity is being developed in the Growth Forum (GF) and the Municipal Contact Committee (MCC) was undertaken from an *inside* perspective which compares how members of the GF and the MCC promote the value of difference and sense of shared purpose; an *outside in* perspective which sheds light on how relevant stakeholders view the MCC and the GF; and a *network management* perspective regarding the strategies that have enabled the development of network identity and those strategies which had a minor impact.

### 8.2.1 An inside perspective

In the first two years, members of the Growth Forum have expressed ambiguous views about the role of the Growth Forum, appreciation of the differences, and shared sense of common values. In contrast, most members of the MCC had, from the beginning, expressed a predominantly positive view on the MCC and its internal collaboration.

The ambiguity in the GF is apparent in the views of those members who on one hand appreciated the GF as a place where they could meet stakeholders with different views and positions, and who at the same time perceived the discussions about the relationship between municipalities and the region as a challenge to the GF' internal network dynamics. The representatives of private companies sometimes felt outside of the scope of this political discussion. Although some members (both from municipalities and private companies) who were discontent in the beginning have



changed their perceptions and started to appreciate and believe in shared goals, others remained dissatisfied and out of scope of influence.

Over the period of four years in the Growth Forum a positive spirit to appreciate the differences and to build a shared sense of purpose have been changing, in an oscillating way from a relatively fragile start of a network identity, once the members seem to have developed a more mutual understanding and trust. The members of the MCC have, on the other hand, moved from some initial uncertainties to more confidence, mutual trust and fellowship. The dynamics inside the two networks have evidently varied and both networks have overcome some barriers and moved towards enhancing their network identity. While the GF have moved from a fragmented to fragile network identity, the MCC have developed a strong network identity. The Growth Forum focused extensively on the development of political REDS while MCC kept its focus on internal coherence. Stakeholders and interest organisations like LGDK have in different manners influenced the internal processes within the Growth Forum and the MCC have thereby contributed to development of network identity. In the MCC those impacts have strengthened, while in the GF they have weakened the development of network identity.

### **8.2.2 An *outside* in perspective**

The empirical analysis of the MCC and the GF has shown that both networks invited relevant stakeholders to workshops and conferences to present their ideas of how to foster growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the Region Sealand. Particularly in the first year, 2006, the Growth Forum involved hundreds of stakeholders to discuss ideas with the members. Accordingly, both networks were relative open to influence from the outside. Of all the stakeholders involved, the one which has played the most crucial role in influencing the processes of the network identity development in both governance networks is the municipalities' interest organization Local Government Denmark (LGDK). LGDK has facilitated the work of the administration who services the MCC; and it has urged and facilitated the development of a shared sense of community within the MCC. For example, at one of meetings in the MCC that I observed, I met an administrator, a delegate from the LGDK, who had visited the MCC in other Danish Regions and together with other colleges discussed how the LGDK best can facilitate cross-municipal collaboration.

While the LGDK's influence on development of a network identity within the MCC has been evidently productive, its impact on the Growth Forum (GF) seemed slightly at a distance, and first and foremost in terms of monitoring and evaluations of the GF's work. The role of the LGDK was perceived by the GF's administration as crucial in demanding the Growth Forum to become even more visible. It has raised discussions and even moments of dissatisfaction among its municipal representatives, which in some periods, e.g. the end of 2007 and beginning of 2008, destabilized the path of consolidation of shared sense of purpose among the GF's members. Furthermore, the LGDK organized meetings during 2009 and 2010 with all municipal representatives from five Regional Growth Forums with the purpose to discuss and evaluate the work of the Growth Forums; however, the content and outcome of these meetings were closed for public access. If available those

documents could more holistically highlight the role of the LGDK in the development of a network identity in the Growth Forum. Even the role of the LGDK, at this matter remains unclear, it is evident from the LGDKs homepage that the MCC' have accepted Growth Forums political strategy 2011-2014 which can be interpreted as a way of further strengthening coordination between the two the two governance networks.

From those experiences we can conclude that one stakeholder can affect the development of a network identify in a particular network in various ways depending on the characteristics of that relationship which can change over time from being biased to a positive-constitutive.

A stakeholder that would be expected to have an impact on internal processes of both networks is the Danish Government, in particular the Ministry of Economic and Business Affairs with whom the Growth Forum signed a partnership agreement.

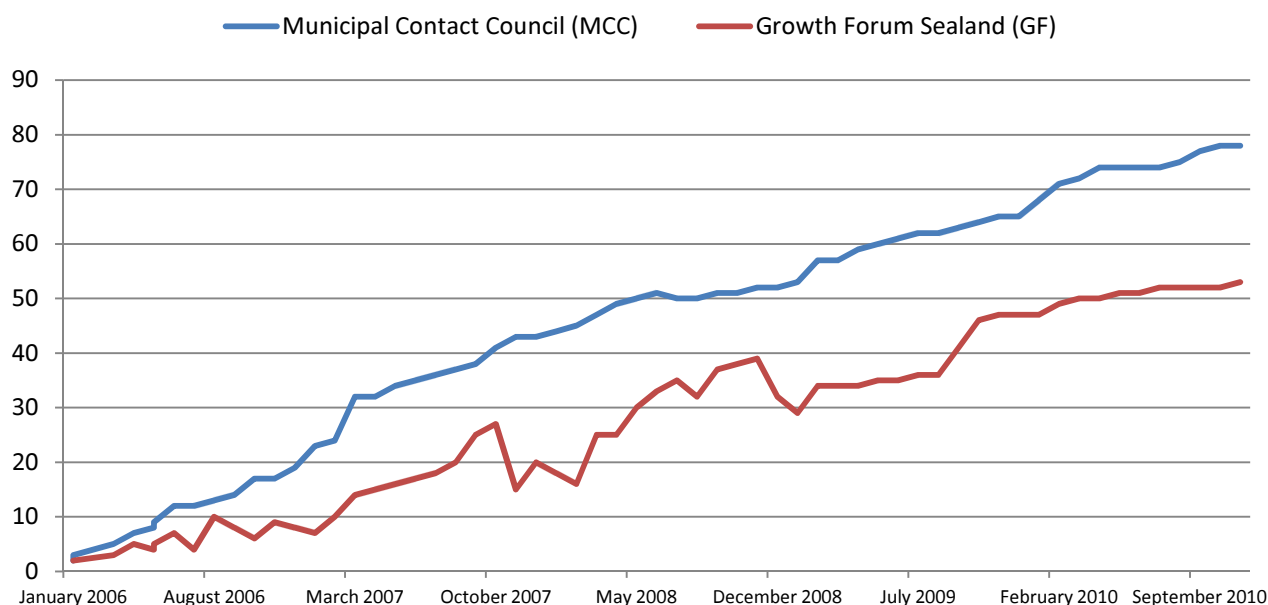
However, when observed from a micro perspective the member's perceptions of the national government's role seemed to be less present in their speech and articulation than closely related partners, in particular stakeholders from region, municipalities and entrepreneurs. Even though the government's role seemed less obvious, it still concerns both region and municipalities. An example is a public speech where the MCC-chairman on a conference in the Growth Forum called for a broad collaboration between the stakeholders in the region as a way to strengthen local and regional governance who were under pressure of being ruled back by the state. This gesture can be interpreted as an awareness of the possibility of centralization of the power which indirectly may have helped bringing the members of the MCC and the GF on the track of join forces on resolving the challenges of regional development.

### **8.2.3 A network management perspective**

The network management had selected eight different strategies anticipated to be useful in development of a network identity. After the empirical data was analyzed it become evident that the Municipal Contact Committee had incorporated all suggested strategies while the Growth Forum only used five out of eight. The main difference in how the two governance networks had been managed can be found in their purpose. While the Growth Forum invested much attention and organizational capacity to promote different methods of work, workshops, conferences, idea-seminars, etc, where the purpose was to qualify and legitimate the policy process of regional entrepreneurial development, the MCC had focused predominantly on nourishing and balancing the internal relations and political priorities among mayors and other municipal politicians. Even when the GF organized conferences and workshops for its members the content of these workshops were strictly focused on the policy making and less on social events.

Story-telling as the most important management tool in the development of a network identity was nonetheless practiced in different matters. The chairman of the MCC and the representatives of the LGDK had articulated stories, directly during the meetings and opened for debates about why it is important for the MCCs members to hold together, search to balance the trade-off between giving

and receiving in order to achieve a mutual satisfaction among the municipalities. The chairman of the Growth Forum had on the other hand told stories, during conferences, about how the Growth Forum wished many regional actors to be included in the regional policy making. However, stories that value difference were not articulated by the chairman during the MCC meetings (all observations of the GF). It is likely that if stories were told during the meetings within the Growth Forum, they would have a greater impact on overcoming the differences in interest-orientation and developing a shared sense of purpose, because such stories could help building mutual trust and thereby a platform for diminishing unpleasant conflicts.



**Figure 30: The process and dynamics of developing a network identity in the Growth Forum and the MCC for period 2006 to 2010**

The Growth Forum is illustrated as an *upward- down* and ongoing process of interchanging conflicts, consensus, dialog, conflicts, disturbance, and making of new practices. Just when a consensus-culture is starting to be achieved, it gets disturbed either by an internal or external event. This process was meticulously described in analysis chapter six. The MCC characterized by an *upward-straight process*: Members have experienced conflicts during making crucial decisions but those conflicts had not compromise the process of network identity development. On the contrary, instead the conflicts confirmed the strength of a mutual coherence which increased the dedication to develop a strong ‘we’.

The leadership and members of the MCC have succeeded in achieving consistent, stable and strong sense of shared purpose. That sense of shared purpose transcends local differences for the sake of developing and maintaining cross municipal collaboration. It is a self-reinforcing process in which the development of a network identity both is an instrument and a goal.

The impact of a network identity on network coordination was most evident to trace during the decision making in the MCC, and was less visible and measurable in the Growth Forum.

A particular example was the election of the city to hold the new Regional Growth House, a public service institution that advises private companies and citizens about the entrepreneurship. It was evident in this process that the initial institutionalization of a network identity affected the decision. Most politicians including those whose city was the candidate voted for the city in periphery because of a concern for regional balance. The decision can also be interrelated as concern to keep internal coherence in the MCC by showing good will<sup>27</sup> to the municipalities that lie in the periphery and who often deal with complex social and economic challenges.

Another example of how a relatively institutionalized sense of community in the MCC influenced the cross-municipal coordination was the making of a 'common business strategy for Region Sealand (MCC meeting 06. 02.2008). By making a common strategy on the issues of regional growth municipalities *increased* the number of networks and coordination tasks. This is a promising and perhaps a necessary aspect of the network coordination as many actors with an aim to produce a more qualified solution and strengthen the legitimacy of the policy process will be linked.

However, the case of the Growth Forum shows that coordination that unfolds within and outside the governance network is not a prerequisite for a strong network identity. The Growth Forum has coordinated all stakeholder involvement: the tasks of coordination were in this case to a high degree delegated to the administration which means that no direct or significant impact between network identity and network coordination within the Growth Forum as such can be concluded.

From these two cases it can be induced that the effects of a network identity on network coordination varies according to the institutionalization of political rules and protocols of decision making alongside of presence of network identity.

Now that the two networks have been compared it is turn to reflect on how the differences in network dynamics and the coordination can be explained.

### **8.3 Discussion**

When comparing the case of Growth Forum with the case of the MCC network management and the atmosphere of political relations, there are two major sets of conditions that appear as the chief explanatory of differences in the process of network identity development. Regarding the network management it became clear that designing management strategies for the purpose of development of network identity, as shown in the case of the MCC has lead to the development of strong network identity. While, the absence of management strategies that target development of network identity, as in the case of the Growth Forum, is correlated with fragile network identity. Now, the design and

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<sup>27</sup>A notion of 'good will' characterizes a situation in the MCC where municipalities' representatives hold no formal social responsibility for municipalities who are perceived as being in periphery, or economically disadvantages, comparing to the Growth Forum who exactly is imposed by the legislation the political responsibility to invest in periphery areas of Denmark.

implementation of network management is the important but not the only explanation of why the networks of Growth Forum and the MCC have developed different network identities.

Regarding the atmosphere of political relations has been another crucial condition when understanding the dynamics of relations within the Growth Forum. The institutional conditions of the Local Government Reform in terms of increased demands to deliver welfare service as well as the increased economic pressure became a crucial factor to understand mutual dependencies and collaborate on different issues. Alongside of the external conditions imposed by the reform, most municipalities in the Region Sealand are also dealing with a low growth rate, poorer industrial initiatives, relatively low education level, and emigration of high skilled workers to the capital city. All these conditions played a major role in the development of the initial strategy development for the perception of a “common destiny”:

Some sort of atmosphere has veiled this enormous challenge we have been given with this new local government reform (The chairman of MCC J.S. 2006:96-97).

This underlying story line of a common destiny and the need collaborate has helped overcome conflicts and develop the MCC into a relatively stable consensus oriented network.

The Growth Forum was, on the other hand, caught in the spirits from past, and consequentially the municipalities’ explicit desire to not being “too governed” by the Region. The Growth Forum tries to mediate between contradicting intensions and conditions, collaboration and competence which can explain why the internal coherence of the Growth Forum seemed more fragile and the development of a network identity delayed.

The Growth House has enabled fostering new entrepreneur in the Region and due to its important contributions in regional development. From 2010 the municipalities are financing the Growth House alone and will together with the Ministry of Economy and Business elaborate a partnership (Policy document, MCC 09.03.2010, p.10). Strengthening its influence on and connectedness with the Growth House, the MCC strengthens the municipalities’ vision of making an entrepreneurial development strategy on regional level/across municipalities which consequentially strengthens its coherence within.

A new strategy for cross-municipal collaboration of the regional industrial development has imposed a risk that the Growth Forum, even being formally responsible for the industrial development, reduces its political importance and influence to the role of a funding-provider. The MCC’s adoption of the Growth Forum’s 2011-2014 political strategy can be interpreted as strengthening of coordination channels between the municipal and the regional governing levels and it can on long term lead to strengthening of the network identity within the Growth Forum because the internal conflicts between the regional and municipal representatives would by time diminish.

This short chapter has by now presented the similarities and differences in the two cases, which has provided the most crucial dimensions in the development of network identity during concrete policy

processes. The next chapter will conclude on both the empirical analysis and on the theories regarding their relevance and prospects for the future research.



## Chapter 9 Conclusion and prospects for the future research

The purpose of this thesis was to generate knowledge about which management strategies enable the development of a network identity within different governance networks, and how network identity may enhance network coordination. This research objective is stated in the following research question:

**How can management promote the development of a network identity in the pursuit of network coordination?**

To accomplish the theoretical and analytical analysis that provide the ground for answering the main research question it was necessary to: a) develop the concept of network coordination and network identity, b) examine how network identity is developed in the field of a concrete policy process and in relation to two different governance networks; c) identify appropriate management strategies that enable the development of network identity; and d) examine and discuss whether and how the presence of a network identity enhance network coordination.

a) Regarding the development of a concept of network coordination, a work of contemporary scholars who treated the notion of network coordination was reviewed. The interpretive approach which prizes the role of story-telling as a means of coordination was introduced in addition to those mainstream works. While the approaches to network coordination that rely on social choice and game theory perceive network coordination as a matter of linking different governing levels to making joint decisions with the help of more or less clear incentives and promise of benefits that institution/management provide, an interpretive approach pointed the importance of making and sharing the meaning as a way of linking actors and achieving stronger connectedness. When combining the interpretive approach with social choice theories the definition of network coordination have shifted the focus slightly from being a matter of joint problem defining and solving to linking actors from different levels to develop and share beliefs. By treating network coordination in terms of developing shared beliefs it becomes meaningful to speak about incitement structures which not only bound in the economic, financial or even legislative frames, though rather about the one that arises from actor's political value-orientation.

Thereby, the concept of coordination became consistent with the ideas behind the concept of network identity, given that network identity accurately builds on the idea that actors are connected and coordinate on the basis of shared beliefs and values.

However, while the ontology of collective and organizational identity claims that actors are linked in terms of similarity and solidarity, the ontology of network identity clearly defines that actors are linked in terms of *difference*: the strength of actors' relations lies in their ability to, at the same time, *keep and overcome* the differences. Preserving the differences is of utmost importance for a governance network to be and function as a governance network, because without the difference the dynamics of the network would dissolve and so would its core purpose of better qualified decision



making. Without overcoming differences and developing a shared sense of purpose, a governance network would risk malfunctioning. By developing the two core elements, namely 1) a value of difference and 2) a shared sense of purpose, a network identity enhances governance network to function well and thereby to achieve its coordination potentials. None of the network identity elements are given in a new-established governance network and thus it is necessary to work on their development by means of purpose-designed management initiatives.

After having examined how the development of a network identity has unfolded through newly established governance networks of the Municipal Contact Committee and the Regional Growth Forum and over their first mandate of four years, the thesis concludes the following:

b) In overall terms, a network identity in the Growth Forum is characterized as a move from a *relative fragmented towards a fragile network identity*, while in the case of the Municipal Contact Committee a network identity is characterized as change from a *fragile towards a strong network identity*.

The members of the Growth Forum have initially appreciated its network potentials, in particular the diversity of actors and their different competences and views that were gathered to meet, discuss and decide upon the strategies for the regional business development. However, once they started to discuss where to allocate the financial means and which dimensions of business policy to prioritize, the conflicts began to arise. While the representatives of the region perceived that the debates were dominated by the representatives of municipalities, the municipal representatives perceived the opposite, namely that the regional representatives were taking too much space, and that the region was narrowing the municipalities' space of influence.

During the disputes among regional and municipal representatives, the other members, in particular representatives of private companies who for the first time were participating in the political debates felt sometimes being aside. Due to a lack of shared sense of purpose, an abstract appreciation of difference and varying competence among some members, this period of disputes that mostly took place during the first and second year of the Growth Forums' performance, can be described as a period of fragmented network identity. In the third and fourth years of its functioning, the Growth Forum as a collective actor experienced some moments of conflict that undermined the development of a network identity. During the fourth year, 2010, the majority of interviewed members express their opinion about the Growth Forum and some have even changed their view from not perceiving that the Growth Forum has a strong shared sense of purpose to believing that it is beneficial and important to develop one.

The story line of 'concern for the Region Sealand as totality' became the main narrative that provided members with shared understanding of the Growth Forum's goal. Thereby, this story line became an important means in developing a shared sense of purpose. The municipalities' resolution for closer coordinating of the entrepreneurial development policy with the Growth Forum has clearly dissolved some of the grounds for contestation that were biased in the meeting of intentions to be perceived important: the municipal representatives' aspiration to shake away past experiences of being steered by the counties, and the regional representatives' aspiration to become an important

collaborative and coordination partner. Considering the changes in the dialog and members' perceptions, the development in a network identity can be viewed as change from a relative fragmented to a first signs of network identity, though a fragile one. This is due to the analysis that the conflicts seem to not entirely have disappeared but remain beneath, and that the core elements of network identity - namely the appreciation of difference and shared sense of purpose - somehow remain abstract, anchored to story lines and purposes defined outside of this governance network. In addition, the participation rate was constantly swinging and at some meetings remarkably low. Altogether those conditions point at the presence of rather a fragile network identity.

The Municipal Contact Committee has passed through the opposite situation: its network identity is developed first of all in relation to the story line that concerns the relationship among members within the network. That story line narrates that it is important to develop a shared sense of purpose and sticking together in order to overcome challenges that municipalities are facing. Two common challenges municipalities face are to provide the best service for the least cost, and to stay alert on being recentralized by the state. Those two concerns are related. While advocating for cross municipal collaboration in order to achieve the goal "best for cheapest" municipal representatives hope they can perform welfare tasks so well that they prevent or decrease state interference in local self governance. Within this framework, members have experienced meeting an understanding and consult each other concerning how to deal with those challenges. These external conditions have co-constituted a perception among members that they are in the same shoe and therefore share the same faith. This perception has helped generating sense of shared purpose among the members, and remarkably it was developed before the value of difference. Given that the differences were perceived negatively, for example, as differences in the educational level of the population, economic growth rate and political culture in each municipality. The element of network identity, namely a shared sense of purpose was developed first and served as a platform that lead to overcoming perceptions of negative differences. Similar to the case of the Growth Forum, the story line of "concern for regional balance" has co-constructed the development of a shared sense of purpose, in that members felt included regardless of the weight of challenges (or negative differences) their municipality brought into cross-collaboration. The decisions on where to allocate organizational resources were faithful to this story line in that resources were distributed to municipalities in the periphery. The story line that implies the necessity to take regional balance into concern has performed as a constitutive of a network identity, political decisions and coordination as well. The predominant view among members of the MCC that they shared faith in encouraging and helping each other, the lack of tangled conflicts and uncertainty, as well as overcoming negative differences, leads to the conclusion that the MCC has developed from a relatively weak to strong network identity.

While the dynamics of the development of a network identity in the Growth Forum has unfolded as an ongoing process of interchange between conflicts - resolutions - consensus, the conflicts in the Municipal Contact Committee appeared less wicked and members dialog and relations more relaxed.

*How have the network management played a role in the development of a network identity in these two governance networks?*

c) The differences in the scope and characteristics of network management conducted in the two governance networks is one important circumstance that has influenced and lead to the differences in the dynamics in network identity in these two governance networks. While the leadership of the GF has conducted five management strategies, the MCC have conducted all eight strategies that were identified important in facilitating the developing of a network identity.

While all the management strategies the GF's leadership applied were targeted to qualify the content and outcome of the Regional Entrepreneurial Policy, the leadership of the MCC has targeted management towards creating coherence in the MCC. Against this background, the MCC has arranged events in order to socialize the member and facilitate narratives underlining the importance of collaboration between all municipalities of the Region. Although the leadership of the GF has articulated the stories about the shared goals and aspirations among different actors who participated in different events of the Growth Forum's policy processes, those stories were seldom articulated at the GF's regular meetings. Strengthening the relations among members within the GF has not been explicitly articulated by the leadership. Instead the performance of success was valued through the achievements of the GF funded projects.

The story-telling, has been more evident on meetings within the MCC, which engaged members and has helped developing the perception that they all together share the same destiny: the increasing the growth and the development of the Region Sealand. The MCC have therefore managed not only to realize the goal of cross-municipal collaboration, but nonetheless to develop a story-line that it is an important regional actor. It raised its perception from solely being municipal interest-oriented towards being a regional holder of interest.

The management efforts do not stay alone in understanding and explaining the process of network identity development: impulses that arrived from relevant stakeholders outside of the two networks are very important. The most important is, however, municipalities' interest organisation the Local Government Denmark (LGDK). The LGDK has continuously supported the creation of a shared sense of purpose in the MCC and at the same time it has monitored the processes in the GF.

The perception of the chairman's personality and charisma has shown to be important as a part of management approach: the higher the support to the way the chairman steers the meetings, the higher satisfaction and more favorable member's perception of the network as a collective, and consequentially towards the perception of shared network identity.

Organizing seminars that provided opportunity for social activities strengthened the development of a network identity within the MCC. Considering that the Growth Forum is a multi-level network that includes actors with various political, educational, and work backgrounds, the difference among its members become more apparent through the negotiations and the speeches, comparing to the MCC whose actors after all are from local political institutions and (despite the demographic and socio-economic differences in the municipalities they represent) all face one similarity, namely

the expansion of welfare tasks and economic pressure. By collaborating, and not competing, municipalities have achieved a strong network linked by the perception of a 'common faith'.

The platform for collaboration in the MCC has already relied on an underlying perception of common faith, which with the help of proper network management and the support of the LGDK has led to the development of a strong network identity.

Speaking of institutional conditions challenge to the Growth Forum have been precisely the path-dependent friction in tension of relation between municipal and county governing levels. Those tensions were transferred to the new established GF and have biased the development of a network identity significantly. Overcoming this bias by focusing on the successful stories with projects the GF granted has helped generating trust within the GF and among relevant stakeholders outside of it, here in particular municipalities and the MCC. Therefore, after four years, in 2010, the municipalities headed by the MCC adopted the GF's political strategy and today work in line with it.

That the MCC have finally adopted the GF's regional entrepreneurial development strategy for 2011-2014 policy strategy shows the benefits of the development of a network identity as the one that enhances coordination between the two governing levels, respectively municipal and regional.

d) The entire experiences with policy process and decision making in the MCC and the GF have shown that a developed network identity both can *increase* and *decrease* the scope of network coordination.

A strong network identity as in the case of the MCC has prevented further conflicts, enabled cross-collaboration and created an opening for new tasks and new relations among actors. While attributing a higher degree of acceptance of decisions made within such a network, it also produced a new task, e.g. cross-municipal business policy.

A fragile network identity, as in the case of the GF, had not directly conditioned or influenced network coordination, as gathering and selecting ideas that would qualify the regional entrepreneurial development strategy was executed by the administrative unit, Growth Secretary, who thereby has played a significant role in coordinating policy in- and outside of the GF.

If applied with a purpose to enhance coordination, developing of a network identity, including a shared sense of purpose and destiny) produces a new connectedness and new sub-networks of coordination with new tasks. The outcome of that is dependent on a calculation - a trade-off - between the complexity, the investments in these new sub-networks and the effectiveness of the tasks they perform. Regardless of what the outcome of that trade-off would be, this thesis has found that a network identity, once it is strong, not only motivates the members of a governance network to regularly and pro-actively participate but actually strengthens the legitimacy of the discussions and the decisions they made. This is particularly important in the new-established, informal type of governance network that needs to provide the internal coherence and purpose.

Now that the results of empirical analysis are described and conclusions about them drawn, it is time to look back and evaluate the utility of the applied theory: At which aspects has the theory played a significant role in answering the main research question?

## 9.1 Theory revised

The thesis has included network theory and theory of identity. Within the scope of theories of governance network a notion of network coordination and network management were worked out. While combining the theory of governance networks with theory of identity, a concept of network identity was developed. Those theories have first of all served to develop the content of the concept and to deduce dimensions of the concepts that would be investigated through the empirical analysis. In that light, the theories were used descriptively and as guideline to gather the data and build up the empirical analysis.

The results of the empirical analysis are in line with the interpretive approach that is described in chapter five. The interpretive approach emphasizes that the empirical data holds the primary power of explanation and adds new arguments to the theory. In line with this thought of interpretation each theory will be revised concerning the arguments from empirical results that will shed light on the need of rethinking the theory.

*Network theory* has helped to discuss the characteristics of the Growth Forum and the MCC in the light of five main criteria, in order to determine whether the Growth Forum and the MCC indeed possess the attributes inscribed in the five criteria. The analysis of network characteristics of the GF and the MCC has brought forward another criterion that can be phrased as ‘a network’s ability to create new networks. The case of the Growth Forum shows that a crucial ability of a network to function as a governance network is to help creating new networks and groups of collaboration. The ability of a governance network to create new networks and connect to them is important not only in defining the borders of that network but nonetheless its functionality and effects on coordination. For example, some of main political goals in the Regional Entrepreneurial Development Strategy (REDS) were initiated in working groups which existed in parallel with the Growth Forum. To illustrate the scope and characteristics of coordination in the policy process of making the REDS it was necessary to grasp those networks as well.

Regarding the theoretical discussion of *network coordination* the main theorists within the schools of Rational Choice, Game Theory and Neo-Institutionalism have contributed mostly in defining the content of network coordination. Interpretive approach that accentuates the importance of story-lines has instructed me to pay attention to stories that seemed important in discussions and decisions leading to coordination. The consequences of story-telling on network coordination were thereby uncovered.

Network theory, in particular, a subfield of theories of network management has enabled discussion of which strategies can enable development of a network identity within a governance network and has thereby filled the gap that identity theory leaves.

The most important management strategy in fostering the development of a network identity was creating and institutionalizing story lines.

Managing governance network has proved important even when applied management strategies have not had direct impact on development of a network identity, as in the case of the Growth Forum. By initiating diverse methods that would improve the outcome of Growth Forums policy, its members perceived that the functioning of the GF mattered and their participation in it as well. Although being important in creation of a network identity the management could not overcome all conflicts in dialog: some dimensions of conflict were bound to the past experiences, some to single actors performing.

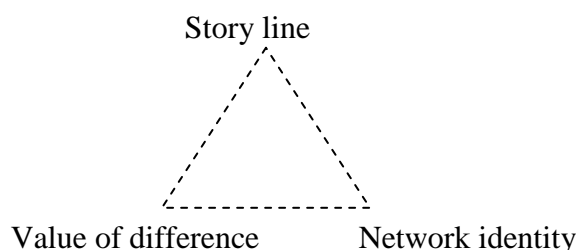
While scholars of network theory describe organizational and institutional aspects of a governance network, they spent less effort on theorizing the identity-dimension of a governance network. The concept of identity is useful in understanding actors' orientation and motivation to initiate certain behavior and reject other. The driving force to introduce the notion of identity in the theory field of governance network was the following question: if an organization can develop an organizational identity - can a governance network develop a network identity? How? And how can it be useful?

*Identity theory* was necessary to bring in to construct the notion of network identity. By combining with network theory, identity theory has guided the focus on the element of "shared sense of purpose"; while network theory helped understand that the dynamics of difference (and preserving difference) is a necessary condition for a governance network to function of its best.

Furthermore, identity theory was useful in bringing ideas on the dynamics of construction of network identity as a process that unfolds inside a governance network, but is related and influenced by the stakeholders from outside of the network. The mutual effects of network processes from inside of the Growth Forum with those from the outside, e.g. stakeholders' influence, was an important dimension in understanding the process of identity development.

Both cases demonstrate that appreciation is linked to story-line. Story-line has that power to surpass the actor's individual identities towards a collective network-level identity. The case of the MCC has shown that story lines of 'regional balance' have helped overcoming the perceptions of negative difference and encouraged members to achieve cross-collaboration.

The relationship between the core elements of a network identity and story-line can be illustrated in a triangle that symbolizes flow and mutual influence:



Considering that the analysis has shown, in the case of the MCC, that a network can develop a shared sense of purpose without directly appreciating difference, it urges us to think: what does the lack of explicit appreciation of difference mean for the concept of network identity?

The MCC was first of all based on the idea that the Regions' municipalities needed to establish their own network as counterpart to the Region, and not necessarily because they would contribute to the collaboration in the light of their differences. The MCC had even functioned without the initial appreciation of difference because the members were aware that the interests pursued by the different municipalities might be different and cause internal conflicts. Therefore the leadership needed to take these differences into account and identify a way to turn them into positive perceptions.

On the basis of these experiences it is meaningful to readjust the concept of network identity, compared to the way it was defined initially in the theory chapter. Network identity would be about a network's ability to both appreciate the positive differences and redefine negative differences into a positive experience of actors who then can develop a shared sense of purpose.

What has been left outside of the scope of the theories?

The analysis of the Growth Forum has uncovered how a fear among municipalities to become overruled by the Region due to earlier experiences can't be explained by network or identity theory as none of them have directly included institutional path-dependence. In addition, a gap between the theoretical ontology and the logics of practice will inevitably occur during empirical analysis, as the theories get confronted.

However, this is fully in line with the interpretive approach relying on hermeneutics and pragmatism. This line appreciates such gaps because they can be seen as a potential help in remodeling and further developing the theory. Innovation should come from theory in confrontation with the empirical findings. This is due the condition that researcher solely on the basis of the theory can not foresee in detail what is waiting in the field.

Altogether, this thesis has contributed to deepening the theories of governance network by bringing a new concept of network identity and by adjusting the concept of network coordination to the empirical conditions of unclear and contradictory conditions of participatory networked governance. It has also contributed to a deeper understanding of the functioning of new-established governance networks in the conditions of exigent structural reforms.

At the same time the thesis has left some deficiencies partially due to the choice of methods and partially due to the time scope that is assigned to the thesis which makes it necessary to limit the scope of investigation, and at the same time to search for new analytical steps. The additional methods that could be used to provide a more systematic knowledge on the topic will be described in the following section.

## 9.2 Prospects for supplementary empirical research

The thesis has succeeded in developing the core ideas about the network identity and in arguing how a network identity ought to be considered as a distinctive identity form. The case studies of the Growth Forum and the Municipal Contact Committee have also succeeded in mapping the conditions that can lead to the development of a network identity in two dissimilar governance networks. It has also succeeded in combining observations with interviews and document study. Triangulation of qualitative data has been an excellent source of data mapping. In particular the data that has been mapped over time have uncovered crucial changes in actors' reasoning and thereby helped portraying a more holistic picture of the content of network identity in the two networks as well as its relation to coordination processes.

However, this qualitative case study did not bridge the gap that qualitative methods left, namely the missing representativeness of actors' perceptions. From the thesis in its current form we do not know whether this weakens the validity of the findings, particularly in terms of measuring the strength and scope of the developed network identity in the investigated governance networks.

If more systematic and representative knowledge about the development of a network identity shall be generated, then the object of future studies ought to concentrate on:

- 1) Combining quantitative studies of all actors in the governance network with qualitative longitude case studies of a single actors change in identity-perceptions would provide a ground for better explanation of the conditions and the dynamics in the development of a network identity.

A quantitative measuring of identity development and change can be conducted by deploying survey to all members, every half year and with the same question. The survey would help appointing if and which actors have changed their perceptions. After the survey is conducted, a qualitative interview could be conducted to gain an insight into those actors' perceptions of change: for example, if an actor changes perception of the network, why does this person do so? This methodological approach would provide a more systematic approach to analyzing the development of a network identity within a particular governance network.

- 2) Multiple-case studies about how story-telling as a management strategy influences the development of a network identity in different types of governance, here in particular stories that promote the discourse of 'identification upon difference'. Such studies would help developing knowledge about a 'soft network management' in providing well functioning governance networks. They would also generate knowledge on which type of governance network where story-telling as a management strategy works, does not works, or works less efficiently. On the basis of the experience from this thesis, it can be presumed that a bottom-up created governance network founded on voluntary participation would be more prone. Similar studies that focus on the creation of 'shared sense of purpose' are conducted within a frame of participatory local democracy in Danish cities (e.g. Sørensen and Torfing 2000). However, an explicit focus on the management and promotion of value of difference is needed in order to evaluate whether a developed network identity increases a handling capacity of the network as a collective actor, or whether a network



identity enhances the networks decisions internally, and therefore, possibly generates a motivation among members to participate regularly and proactively.

3) Correlation and trade-off between network identity and coordination: does network identity lead to a more efficient coordination of policy processes? The thesis have brought solely examples of how the development of a network identity can generate a new coordination, and has not evaluated whether these new coordination tasks and links increase or decrease the effectiveness of public policy making and implementation. Actors, like the first chairman of the MCC (2006-2010) have expressed optimism in governance networks as a coordinating form because “(...) a fare more effective decision and make things happen faster and easier than if you make decision in hierarchy and want to implement it afterwards” (Interview with the first chairman of the MCC, JS 2009:5). Taking the experiences with the Growth Forum into consideration, an assumption that *not all* governance networks need to develop a network identity to be effective and legitimate shall stand open.

In the light of these proposals this PhD thesis is only a first step, nonetheless an important one.

## Chapter 10 Danish Summary

Titel: Styring af udviklingen af netværksidentitet og dets implikationer på netværkskoordination: et casestudie af Region Sjælland

Ph.d. afhandlingen har undersøgt hvordan udvikling af en netværksidentitet udfolder sig i et styringsnetværk og hvilken betydning netværksidentiteten har for de koordinationsprocesser der samtidigt sker i netværket. Denne problemstilling er sammenfattet i problemformuleringen: *Hvilke styringsstrategier faciliterer udviklingen af en netværksidentitet i konteksten af netværkskoordination?* Fem arbejdsspørgsmål er opstillet som guideline i analysen og besvare problemformuleringen. Det første og det andet arbejdsspørgsmål handler om at afklare begreberne netværks identitet og netværkskoordination, imens det tredje arbejdsspørgsmål handler om at identificere styringsstrategier der kan facilitere udviklingen af en netværksidentitet. Alle tre spørgsmål er belyst i afhandlingens teoridel. Det fjerde arbejdsspørgsmål retter sig til den empiriske analyse og er tredelt. Det handler om: dels at identificere tilstedeværelsen af netværksidentitet i Vækstforum og Kommunernes Kontakt Råd (KKR) i Region Sjælland, dels at forklare hvilke styringsstrategier Vækstforum og KKR har benyttet og hvordan disse har bidraget til udviklingen af netværksidentitet; og endeligt hvorledes netværksidentitet påvirker koordinationsprocesserne.

Femte arbejdsspørgsmål handler om sammenligning KKR og Vækstforum med henblik på at udtrække læringspotentialer for den fremtidige forskning.

Netværksidentitet er defineret i afhandlingen som en meningsramme der motiverer netværkets aktører til at formulere og realisere fælles mål på trods af forskellene i deres politiske værdier og interesser. Netværksidentitet adskiller sig fra andre kollektive identitetsformer ved at den valoriserer forskelligheden frem for ligheden og vi-følelsen er netop konstrueret på baggrund af forskellighederne som er nødvendig for at opretholde styringsnetværkets funktionalitet. Netværksidentitet består altså af to hovedelementer: a) valorisering af hinandens forskellighed og b) opfattelsen af at man deler fælles værdier. I nyetablerede styringsnetværk er de to elementer sjældent til stede og hvis man vil udvikle netværksidentitet må aktiv udøve en styringsindsats. Derfor har afhandlingens teoridel identificeret otte styringstiltag der kan føre til udviklingen af netværksidentitet, heriblandt historiefortælling som et af det vigtigste.

Udviklingen af identiteter forudsætter en længerevarende tidshorisont, og derfor er metoden designet som et fireårs casestudie der følger Vækstforum og Kommunernes Kontakt Råd (KKR) i Region Sjælland. De to fora kan betegnes som styringsnetværk i den forstand, at de begge er mødested for aktører fra forskellige typer af organisationer med hver deres formål, dagsordener og målsætninger, hvoraf ingen af disse er placeret i et hierarkisk forhold til hinanden. Mens ligheden

mellem de to netværk er deres netværkskarakter, består forskellen i deres tilblivelseshistorier: Vækstforum er blevet etableret ved erhvervsfremmeloven mens KKR er etableret på initiativ af lokale politikere og Kommunernes Landsforening (KL). Casestudie af de to netværk er baseret på en række interviews med netværkenes medlemmer, samt en række mødeobservationer og dokumentanalyser der er foretaget sekventielt i perioden april 2006 til december 2010.

Hvad konkluderer afhandlingen så?

Den samlede analyse peger på at både dynamikken i udviklingen af netværks identitet og dens konsekvenser på koordineringen af policy har udfoldet sig forskelligt i de to styringsnetværk. Vækstforum er kendetegnet ved en relativt svag netværksidentitet, der er ved at blive institutionaliseret som et boldværk mod konflikter, imens der i KKR er udviklet en stærk fællesskab der er med til at generere en stærk netværksidentitet. Imens Vækstforumets medlemmer fra starten udviste en abstrakt begejstring for hindens forskellighed og mente at forskelligheden var en styrke, demonstrerede KKR-s medlemmer bevidstheden om at kommunerne potentielt konkurrer om midlerne og deres forskeligheder, især de negative kunne udgøre en barriere for fællesskabet. Det bemærkelsesværdige spørgsmål er: Hvordan kan det være at Vækstforum som fra starten have en forudsætning for at udvikle en stabil og stærk netværksidentitet endte med en relativ skrøbelig netværksidentitet? Og ligeledes, hvordan er det lykkedes KKR at overkomme forskellighederne og udvikle et stærkt fællesskab som konstituerer netværksidentitet, i og med de negative forskelligheder er vendt til en positiv oplevelse af sammenhængskraft i netværket?

To hovedforklaringer er blevet identificeret igennem den empiriske analyse: styringen af netværket og de politisk-institutionelle vilkår hvor i de to netværk er etableret.

Vækstforumets ledelse har arbejdet med flere forskellige styringsmetoder der alle er blevet anvendt med det formål at kvalificere policy processen og udarbejde et fagligt og politisk set den bedst mulige Erhvervsudviklingsstrategi. Tanken var at ved at man bruger forskellige metoder og inddrager forskellige aktører ville man legitimere processen og gøre den mere spændende for Vækstforumets medlemmer. Ud af otte forskellige management strategier der blev identificeret i teoridelen i denne afhandling har Vækstforum anvendt 5 strategier. Fortælling af historier der værdsætter hinandens forskelligheder er *primært* blevet gjort ved eksterne begivenheder og i mindre grad ved selve møderne i Vækstforumet. I modsætning hertil blev KKR-s managements strategier designet med henblik på at skabe sammenhold og overbevise medlemmerne (borgmestrene og lokalpolitikere) at måden kommunerne kan overleve på er ved at stå sammen. Fortælling af historier om at KKR-s medlemmer skal tage hensyn til hinanden og til de kommuner der står svagest og dermed arbejde for 'den regionale balance' virkede fremtrædende når der skulle nås til konsensus. Netop derfor er der en særdeles positiv oplevelse af KKR iblandt de politikere der repræsenterer de kommuner der har de største udfordringer.

Hvad den politisk-institutionelle dimension angår, befandt Vækstforumet sig i krydsfeltet mellem konkurrence og samarbejdet der til dels har rødderne i Amternes tid. For eksempel i de første år var der flere kommunale politikere der følte at regionen mindede om amterne og de ønskede ikke at blive lagt under denne overstyring.

Konflikterne ved møderne i Vækstforumet blev opfattet som demarkering af grænsen mellem hvad der bør varetages af Regionen og hvad af kommunerne. Formanden blev således sat i en svær position til at balancere mellem interesserne, der til tider var i modstrid mod vedkommendes egen position. De regionale repræsentanter befandt sig i en relativ svag position, ikke alene pga. den store politiske omtale og usikkerhed om regionernes fremtid, men i og med regionen skulle vise at den er villig til at samarbejde og blot blive en koordinerende og ikke styrende politisk enhed. Disse medlemmer følte de også skulle give plads til andre med den følge at nogle af dem forblev utilfredse med egen position i Vækstforumet.

I KKR-s tilfældet virkede struktur- og kvalitetsreformen (2007) og opgavebyrden den førte med sig produktivt på udviklingen af netværksidentitet, i og med de fleste borgmestre indså de stod i 'samme position' hvor samarbejdet, frem for konkurrencen, virkede en langt bedre løsning. En vigtig ekstern aktør i skabelsen af det interne fællesskab i KKR er KL der både har administrativt facilitere og politisk opmuntrede KKR-s medlemmer til at stå sammen. Således har den empiriske analyse vist og bekræftet den anvendte teori om udviklingen af identiteter, at eksterne påvirkninger af partners kan have en stor betydning for de interne netværksprocesser.

Når nu Vækstforumet og KKR har udviklet forskellige netværksidentiteter hvordan har disse påvirket koordineringsprocesserne i de to netværk?

Som følge af et stræk fællesskab og implicit tillid og forestilling om gensidig afhængighed har KKR besluttet for at indarbejde en fælles erhvervsudviklingsstrategi, fælles tanker om sundhedsservice og placeret et Væksthus i periferiområdet. I Vækstforumet var sammenhængen mellem netværksidentitet og koordination mindre tydelig, hvilket blandt andet kan forklares ved at store dele af Vækstforumets arbejde handler om bevillinger til lokale erhvervsprojekter. De politiske diskussioner der føres og potentielle konflikter bliver til dels filtreret (før de kommer til dagsordenen) af administrationen (som tænker politisk strategisk) og dels af formandsgruppens formøder (der er forinden Vækstforumets møder). Motivationen om at stå sammen mod udefra kommende trusler m.m. synes at være betydeligt mindre end det er tilfældet med KKR.

En af sideeffekterne der ikke nødvendigvis er en direkte følge af fraværet af en netværksidentitet er deltagelsesfrekvensen. I KKR er den vedvarende høj stabil imens Vækstforum har haft en møde fraværspcent der har ligget i mellem 20 % og 50 %. Måske kunne en følelse af stærk sammenhold eller flere principielle politiske debatter hjælpe med til at mobilisere medlemmerne til at prioritere Vækstforumet højere end andre deltagelsesaktiviteter og netværk.

Samlet set konkluderer denne afhandling at den største effekt af managementtiltag på udviklingen af en netværksidentitet og den største påvirkning af netværksidentitet på koordineringsprocesser var

sket i KKR. Herfra kan man udlade den yderligere konklusion at det netop er nedefra etablerede styringsnetværk som har behov for udviklingen af en netværksidentitet.

Denne afhandling har bidraget med ideer til hvordan et velfungerende styringsnetværk kan realiseres ved hjælp af udviklingen af netværksidentitet, og dertil hvordan det kan bidrage til koordinering af samfundsopgaver. Som et led i denne diskussion er begrebet netværks identitet blevet udviklet teoretisk og undersøgt empirisk. Konklusionen er solid, men for at frembringe en systematisk viden der kan hjælpe til yderligere teori udviklingen, både om netværksidentitet, netværksmanagement og netværkskoordination, bør yderligere empiriske undersøgelser iværksattes.

Sådanne undersøgelser ville med fordel inddrage flere forskellige netværkstyper, især styringsnetværk opstået nedefra fordi afhandlingen peger på, at effekten af netværksidentitet på koordination er større i en nedefra etableret styringsnetværk. Ved at der bliver undersøgt hvordan netværksidentitet udvikles vha. management i forskellige typer af styringsnetværk kunne der derved indsamles en grundigere viden om hvilke managementstrategier, især historie-fortællinger virker bedst i praksis.

Set i lyset af ovenstående er denne afhandling et lille, dog et relevant bidrag i forskningen om styringsnetværk i offentlige institutioner i Danmark.

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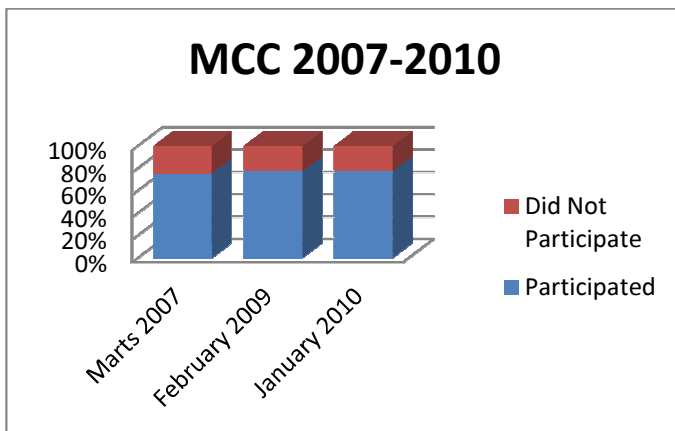
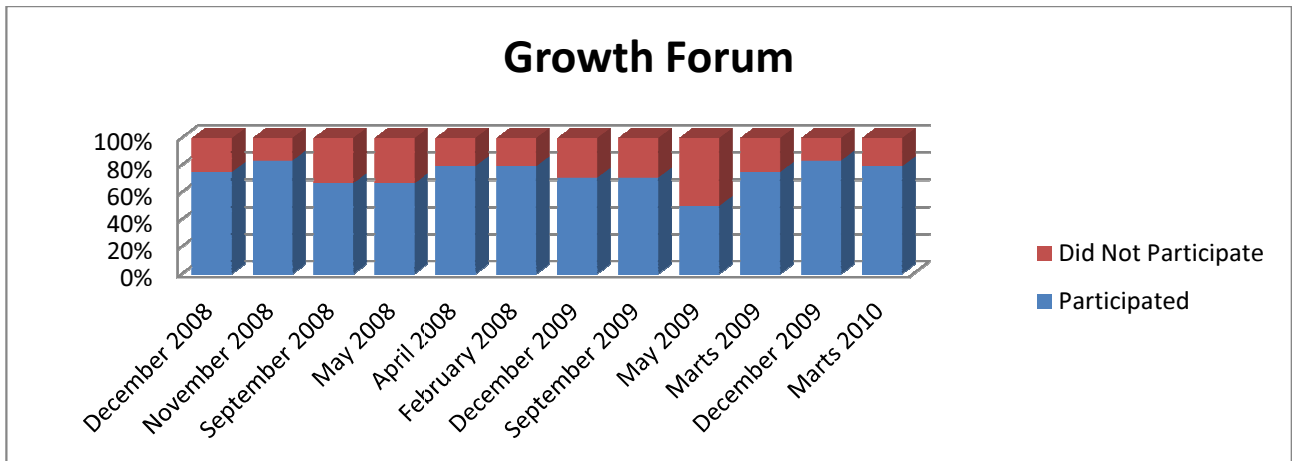
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# Chapter 11 Appendix

## 11.1 Meeting Frequency in the Growth Forum and the MCC



NOTICE: The data on MCC’s members’ participation is limited to (only available) three meetings, and is therefore *not* meant to *compare the two cases*, rather to illustrate, as for the MCC, the chairmans clam that members participate to high degree on a meeting; and as for the Growth Forum, to show that at some meetings almost 50% were absent e.g. May 2009. In its scope and characteristic this data helps illustrating *one aspect* of network-functioning in the two cases. To provide it an explanatory power this statistics need to be supplied with additional statistics and interviews that would ask for reasons behind members’ absence: are they absent because they prioritize other networks higher than the GF? If so, why do they do so? Would a strong sense of shared purpose with other members in the Growth Forum motivate single members who are absent to participate regularly? Such an investigation can be a follow up of the thesis.

## 11.2 Data-overview - interviews and observations

	GROWTH FORUM	MUNICIPAL COMMITTEE CONTACT	ADMINISTRATORS AND POLITICIANS FROM GROWTH SECRETARIAT, MUNICIPALITIES AND REGIONAL COMMITTEE
<b>Interviews</b>	<p>Kristian Ebbensgaard (Jul 2006 &amp; 2010)</p> <p>Bent Norman Olsen (21.06.2007)</p> <p>Kirsten Devantier (2007 (CH))</p> <p>Jane Strange (2006&amp;2010)</p> <p>Ulla Koch (2010 GF)</p> <p>Flemming Lassen (2010 GF)</p>	<p>Steen Bach Nielsen (14.11.06 (ES*))</p> <p>Per Hovmand (5.12.2006)</p> <p>Marie Stærke (Feb.2009) (KS&amp;KBN)</p> <p>Henrik Holmer (Feb. 2009 KS&amp;KBN)</p> <p>Poul Lindor Nielsen (2007 KS&amp;KBN)</p> <p>Poul Arne Nielsen (2007 KS&amp;KBN)</p>	<p><u>Administrators</u></p> <p>Per Bennetsen (2007)</p> <p>Dorthe Mac Kay (01.2008)</p> <p>René Lønne (30.05.2007)</p> <p>Tonni Kragh (11.07.2007&amp;2008)</p> <p>Jens Peter Sørensen (07.06.08).</p> <p>Flemming Nielsen (June 2006)</p> <p>Jens Andersen (August 2006)</p> <p>Jens Abildlund (16.09.2010)</p> <p><u>Politicians</u></p> <p>Henning Fougt (29.05.2006)</p> <p>Hans Jørgen Holm (29.05.2006)</p>
	<p><b>Members of both GF &amp; MCC</b></p> <p>Stig Vestergaard (01.2008 (TF), 2010 (GF))</p> <p>Henning Jensen &amp; Lis Tribler (28.03.2007)</p> <p>Jens Stenbæk (Jul 2006 &amp; Jan. 2009 (ES&amp; AR; KS&amp;KBN))</p>		
<b>Observations</b>	<p><b>2006</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting (9. 3).</li> <li>• Meeting (25. 8).</li> <li>• 'Strategy seminar' on Regional Entrepreneur policy (25.8).</li> <li>• Meeting in working group 'B' (RES) (19.9).</li> <li>• Meeting (30.10)</li> <li>• Meeting (20.12)</li> </ul> <p><b>2007</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting (28.03.07).</li> <li>• Conference held by Growth Forum (30.04.07).</li> </ul> <p><b>2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting (2. 09 2008)</li> </ul>	<p><b>KKR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KKR: mode (06.08.17)</li> <li>• KKR: mode (06. 05.31)</li> </ul> <p><b>2007</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KKR: Strategiseminar (07.06.07)</li> </ul> <p><b>2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting (06.02 2008)</li> </ul>	<p><b>2006</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth Secretariat &amp; Core Secretariat (28.06.) meeting</li> <li>• Growth Secretariat (3. 6. and the 5<sup>th</sup> 06.) meeting</li> <li>• Growth Secretariat &amp; Core Secretariat meets the 'Broad Secretariat (16.06).</li> <li>• Seminar in Danish network for Regional agencies on Growth affairs (6.9. 06)</li> <li>• Kick-off conference on Regional Development (30.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>2010</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Idea-generating seminar (September 2010)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting (19. 08. 2008)</li> </ul>	<p>11. 06)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting in Danish Network (V.S) (3.4.06)</li> <li>Seminar holed by regional administration (15.3.)</li> <li>Seminar for Regional Committee (all politicians) (20.4)</li> <li>Seminar held by Danish Regions (26-27.09)</li> </ul> <p><b>2008</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Observation and participation in a day-seminar (31. 01.08)</li> </ul>
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\*ES - Eva Sørensen- represents initials of research fellows who conducted interview

### 11.3 Interview Guide

The questions below represent the themes that were asked about during interviews, both those I conducted myself and those my research fellows have carried out. However, questions do not resemble word-by-word as it were posed during the interview; rather, they represent a guideline to the reader.

#### First and second round interviews during 2007, 2007, 2008 and 2008

1. How would you describe your participation in the MCC /Growth Forum by now?
2. For example, which possibilities do you have to influence discussions during the meeting?
3. Do you experience the Growth Forum /MCC a kind of governance network? Why?
4. Is and how the Growth Forum/MCC different comparing to other networks you have participate in?
5. How do you see the Growth Forum's/MCC's relationship with the Region Sealand/Local Government Denmark?
6. How is your relationship with the other members in the Growth Forum/MCC?
7. Do you experience that the Growth Forum /MCC have developed a shared sense of purpose? Or a strong community where everybody supports regarding certain issues?
8. What are, in your opinion, reasons for the way the Growth Forum/MCC functions the way it does?
9. What is the role of chairman and vice-chairman in during? And how do you experience their role being performed?
10. How do you see the future role of the Growth Forum/MCC in making regional development policy?

#### Follow-up interview in September 2010

1. On the basis of the analysis I have concluded that the Growth Forum has developed a relatively weak sense of shared purpose and community, a *weak* 'we'? To what extent do you agree with that conclusion?
2. Have any changes happened in the way the Growth Forum is governed during the past year? And have those changes affected the sense of 'we'?
3. Can you give an example on what changes happened during past year and how have they affected the development of stronger community within the Growth Forum?
4. How is coordination of regional entrepreneurial development happening today with the MCC and the Region?
5. In the light of the experiences during past three years: what do you think ought to be different in the way the Growth Forum is managed, in the way its members are communicating, or in any way you belief could lead it to even more well-functioning and effective policy making?