

“It’s a Journey”

A Qualitative Case Study of How Local Municipalities in
Skåne Mobilise towards EU Opportunities



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Abstract

This thesis aims to explore and provide answer to how local municipalities in Skåne mobilise towards EU opportunities following a *reorganisation of the state* which has shifted responsibilities closer to an empowered subnational level, honouring the EU principles of subsidiarity and partnership. Using a case study design and a method of semi-structured interviews the thesis identifies that internal municipal factors as well as regional factors must not impede mobilisation but rather shape differentiated strategies. The main findings include that local mobilisation is highly dependent on driven individuals and an ability to identify opportunities and match them with the own needs, further many of the strategies are found directly resource-based as the municipalities use strategic measures to answer to limited administrative capacities. The thesis concludes by answering to the theoretical ambition of building theory, constructing a typology of mobilisation types distinguishing six interconnected though specific strategies; *'the coordinator'*, the *'expert help'*, the *'network approach'*, the *'strength in numbers'*, the *'sector specific and individualistic'*, and finally, *'proactive and integrated'* mobilisation.

Key words: EU, Regional Policy, Local Mobilisation, Internal Factors, Qualitative study

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1. Introduction

One of the most important consequences of European integration is the multiplication of extra-national channels for subnational political activity. Territorial relations are being transformed: national states are losing control over important areas of decision making, a variety of new channels have been created for regional mobilization, and subnational governments are engaged in innovative, transnational, patterns of interaction. Regions, however, do not engage in these activities equally. There is no congruence in the political role of cities, municipalities, and regions in the European Union. On the contrary, there are enormous differences in the level of organization, financial resources, political autonomy, and political influence of subnational governments across Europe. (Hooghe and Marks 1996: 73).

We have a responsibility in our EU work towards our citizens. This is perhaps not discussed that often but if we contribute with taxpayer's money we should also want to get a piece of the pie back. (Henriksson 2015, own translation).

Central state governments throughout Europe have increasingly come to share the role as intermediary between the subnational and supranational level with local governments as the latter have come to develop direct linkages with the European Union (EU) (Zerbinati 2012: 577). However, rather than challenging the other in a zero-sum game of political power these processes are increasingly discussed in terms of a multiplication of actors mirroring the 'Europe with the Regions' thesis of forming cooperative relations rather than strengthening the locality at the expense of the state (Gidlund and Jerneck 2001: 68). During the last 30 years institutional developments on behalf of the EU have empowered the subnational level and brought both responsibilities and opportunities within reach of local governments. A process which has often been paralleled with regionalisation tendencies within the member states, forming new regions and decentralising responsibilities to the subnational levels. Skåne, the case of the study being one. This study uses the framework of a *reorganisation of the state* to encompass these shifts of responsibilities and creation of new opportunity structures emphasising *denationalisation*, *destatisation* and *internationalisation* (Jessop 1997).

Against this background the study sets out to investigate the role of local governments – municipalities – within the reorganisation of the state, an area that has received limited attention within a field of research characterised by vast and ample academic debate. This is interesting as local actors show a great degree of variation their engagement in and mobilisation towards the EU, giving rise to statements such as "bright stars and black holes" (Rees and Farrows 1999: 8). This is found true for the region in question as well, however, this thesis argues that local mobilisation can best be described as a journey on behalf the local municipalities all travelling at different pace, resulting in a 'multi-speed Skåne' drawing inspiration from the debate of a

two-speed Europe¹. Given the high degree of variation among the regions and not the least *within* the regions the internal regional and municipal characteristics are deemed important factors as mobilisation cannot be seen in isolation or unaffected by such. Consequently, the area of interest is hence found in investigating the uneven or differentiated local mobilisation, which internal factors shape and drive it and importantly which form or strategy it takes on.

1.1 Background to the Case: Why Skåne?

Skåne is interesting from the perspective of how the region early showed a proactive, outward looking behaviour. Lind shows that politicians used their international networks to gain information, and to create substance for the own region formation. Understanding how regions were seen within the EU and placing the own region within a larger process of enhanced regional responsibilities were therefore seen as vital for the political drive at home (2010: 12). The region was early in establishing a representation in Brussels, actually already before Sweden joined the EU (Gidlund and Jerneck 2001: 60-62). Today the region is characterised by its strategic position and multimodal accessibility, not the least by the Öresund cooperation, and deemed an ‘innovation leader’ among the European regions by the European Commission (European Commission 2013: 62).

The region of Skåne began as experiment following a proposition by the Swedish Government in 1996, which was later passed the same year (Rosén 2012). The decision meant that Skåne along with three other counties would conduct an experimental, trial operation with changed regional division of responsibilities starting the first of January 1997 (Rosén 2002: 11-12). For Skåne this meant an additional change as the region’s previous county division between Malmö in the south-west and Kristianstad in the north-east was abolished and the two counties “amalgated” (Ibid; Johansson 2000: 140). Decentralisation from the state to the regional level meant that the new region formations assumed responsibilities over a number of issues from the state. The strong orientation towards regional development further meant that these issues received a central role, placing responsibility of producing a strategy for the county’s long-term development on the region. As described by Malena Rosén Sundström, the responsibility of regional development was hence transferred from the County Administrative Boards to elected political represents, forming *Region Skåne* (2002).

The change is principally important in two aspects. It entails a certain decentralisation of the regional development responsibilities *from the state to the municipal self-government*. The responsibility is further transferred *from a civil servant dominated authority to a politically governed forum* (Rosén 2002: 12, own translation).

¹ The notion of a ‘multi-speed Skåne’ in relation to the ‘two-speed Europe’ debate is in turn inspired by a statement of a civil-servant working with regional development within the region.

There existed at the same time a strong will among a number of central, state politicians to push for increased decentralisation (Lind 2010). Stegmann Mccallion argues that this can be directly linked to the new EU membership in 1995 which created a “window of opportunity” for the state to utilise the new funding opportunities provided by foremost the Structural Funds to decrease state expenses (in Lind 2010: 14). Patrik Lind argues that the region formation and shifted responsibilities in Skåne is also attributed with strong regionalism tendencies, indicating that the drive to form a region in Skåne is not found stemming from the state alone but is highly connected to the actions of regional actors (2010). Within his study on region formation Lind finds that the drive among politicians and other key actors in Skåne is constituted by several different explanatory factors (Ibid). The division over two separate counties acted to create a “regional mess” with both internal and external magnitude (Ibid: 6). Internally the two-county structure fostered administrative as well as structural problems, externally increasing internationalisation and strengthened international ties, not the least with the EU-membership, all created a strive and need for better unity (Ibid: 7). Through the formation of a region regionalists hoped to strengthen the ability to act, and compete, nationally as well as internationally (Ibid). As argued by Lind, it was first when a sufficient number of actors, both at state and county level, saw the shared opportunities provided by the new structure that the regional formation gained a foothold (Ibid: 12).

1.2 Problem formulation, Aim and Research question

The reorganisation of the state has resulted in that responsibilities traditionally tied to the state is decentralised to the subnational level, to the region and to the local municipalities *within* the region. This means that the local governments increasingly act as providers of growth and development. Additionally, processes of centralisation have established a new opportunity structure as the local municipalities are invited to take part in the opportunities provided by EU-membership. The involvement of the municipalities is seen as an attempt to increase the efficiency of EU Regional Policy as the local level is assumed most familiar with the priorities and problems at hand. The capacity of subnational actors to cultivate and mobilise upon obtained responsibilities and seek to reap the opportunities provided in parallel hence places weight on internal factors and prerequisites of the municipality. Though much attention has been given the processes of state reorganisation research of how local municipalities mobilises upon and towards mentioned responsibilities and opportunities have largely been left in the dark. The aim of the study is therefore to increase the empirical as well as the theoretical understanding by mapping the strategies used by local municipalities. The ambition of the study is to potentially develop theory and construct a typology over local mobilisation strategies. This has in turn come to foster below research question(s):

How are local municipalities in the region of Skåne mobilising towards EU opportunities stemming from a reorganisation of the state?

- Which factors constitute the differentiated mobilisation strategies?

1.3 Previous Research

As seen above the relationship between the EU the state and the regions as in the ‘Europe of the regions’ and later ‘Europe with the Regions’ thesis have been extensively covered by academic contributions (e.g. Keating 1998; Gidlund and Sörlin 1993), here often in terms of *regionalisation*, *regionalism* and *multilevel governance*. Although the particular debate is perhaps of less academic interest nowadays the question of regional engagement in the European dimension continues to attract attention, both among scholars and politicians. A particularly strong academic current is for example seen in regional positioning, bargaining and lobbying. Here foremost in terms of establishment in Brussels and the strengthening of power vis-à-vis the state which has given rise to a number of scholarly publications (Fernandez 1998; Gidlund and Jerneck 2001). This is also seen in an increasing amount of publications concerning regionalisation trends, among others the regional experiment in Sweden (e.g. Rosén 2002; Stegmann Mccallion 2007; Johansson 2000). Another, budding trend within academia is that of ‘entrepreneurial cities’ where attention is given the increasingly affluent role of major cities and city regions in the EU and where Dannestam provides an interesting study on the Swedish city Malmö (2009).

While, these contributions can be said tying into the class of phenomena of state reorganisation and are therefore of use for the study at hand, the role of the local level in these processes has in general received less focus. One area where the local level is more often brought in is in the research field of multi-level governance. Examples include Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks who discuss how the EU Cohesion Policy and here in particular the Structural Funds have come to involve and mobilise the local municipalities towards the EU (1996; 2001). Unfortunately, the studies are less revealing in how such mobilisation is structured. Although the multiplication of actors are a natural theme of the field of research the study at hand aims at going deeper and investigate *how* the municipalities act. A recent and highly applicable study is therefore ‘Multi-level Governance and EU Structural Funds: An Entrepreneurial Local Government Perspective’ by Stefania Zerbinati (2012).

Zerbinati uses an entrepreneurial angle of research and looks specifically on the participation of local governments in EU funding and the underlying forces that initiate such participation (2012). The study argues that central governments have seen a reduction in their role as intermediary between the subnational and the supranational levels as local governments have increasingly developed direct linkages to the EU (Ibid). Asking “how is the European funding process structured and who are the main actors behind this process?” Zerbinati looked at how eight local councils in the two European regions Piedmont, Italy and Yorkshire and Humber, England went about in their application for EU Structural Funds using interviews and document analysis (2012: 580-581). The study concludes that the process was led by “risk-taking, proactive, innovative agents” who saw an opportunity in the EU funds to develop the own local area (Ibid: 578). Following a definition of entrepreneurship provided by Stevenson et. al (1989) Zerbinati describes the local actors as highly “opportunity driven” in how they use networks at

local, regional and EU level to increase their leverage and access to the funding opportunities provided by the EU (2012: 578).

Looking at Swedish examples one must once again take a wider perspective in order to find a connection between the European and local dimension. Two scholars who has contributed much to the field are Linda Berg and Rutger Lindahl. Studying internationalisation processes in West-Swedish municipalities Berg and Lindahl discuss the application and use of international strategies on behalf of the municipalities and distinguish two main factors steering the adoption of a strategy; resources and interest (2003). In connection to the importance of interest as a driving factor to municipal mobilisation an earlier report Berg should also be mentioned. In her study from 1999, Berg argues that the interest expressed by individual politicians and officials directly affect the degree of engagement and EU activity by the municipality in question.

1.1.1 Relevance and Contribution of this Thesis

As seen in the outline of previous research limited attention is given the local level or municipalities in general and few academic contributions is seen in the field of local mobilisation. It becomes clear that many of the studies resolve around the relationship between the state and the region or regional position and lobbying in Brussels. Areas which touches upon the aspect of local mobilisation and in some instances can provide insight into the phenomena of reorganisation and the ensuing local mobilisation. However, there seems to be a lack of deeper consideration for *how* local governments go about in optimising the opportunities stemming from these processes. Though the studies by Zerbinati (2012) and Berg and Lindahl (2003; 1999) provide good example from which this study can draw valuable knowledge no previous studies of the type are found on the case at hand. Further, given the fluidity of the studied phenomena the older studies, though providing a good foundation for comparison, risk being outdated. This thesis will therefore attempt to fill a gap in previous literature by providing empirical examples of local mobilisation strategies. Given the theory-building ambition of the study the aim and hope is to make a valuable contribution from where theory can be developed and generalisations can be drawn.

1.2 Definitions and Delimitations

Deemed by Michael Keating as the “elusive space” (1998: 9) the concept of *region* covers a wide variety of territorial levels and societal contents. The definitions of region are abundant and some authors argue that a “narrow definition” of the term is on the contrary not likely to be productive (Warleigh-Lack 2006: 758). For the purpose of clarification of the somewhat elusive nature of *region* the concept is in the study primary conceptualised along the lines of scale and function (Schmitt-Egner 2002). The regional aspect is in the study exemplified by the South-Swedish region Skåne, where scale refer to the intermediate, subnational description, placed

between the local- and national level. Here, the functionalistic aspect is important in terms of the administrative capacity, or tutelage over smaller administrative units, which is of particular relevance for the chosen direction of the study.

Just as in the case of the primary concept of *region* the entailing theoretical concepts of *regionalisation* and *regionalism* imply a complex ‘class of phenomena’ or ‘fuzziness’ (Keating 1998; Legendijk 2003). Regionalisation can according to Bogdanor be a mean of the state to “accommodate” a strong regionalism movement by shifting responsibilities and capabilities to the regional level (in Schrijver 2006: 57). However, regionalism can also grow from regionalisation processes and after the “implementation of regionalisation policies” (Ibid: 65). “Territorial politics” have often been marked by a “top-down character” which has extendedly been conceptualised or theorised in the form of regionalisation (Johansson 2000: 131). Following Petschen;

regionalization implies a territorial planning based on already existing state powers. Thus, its main characteristics are economic and administrative, and it comes from the central power base that devolves power quotas for a more efficient and re-distributive and re-distributive management (in 2010: 5).

Incorporating these considerations into the study, the concept is interpreted as the transfer or shift of administrative capabilities and political power – *responsibilities* – to subnational authorities and actors, *decentralisation* as well as a *centralisation* towards the supranational EU level (Schrijver 2006: 39).

Regionalism can on the contrary be found ascending in nature, representing a “bottom-up process, ideology or movement” (Ibid: 40). It must however be noted that regionalism as a concept or “political phenomenon” is highly heterogeneous which has sparked both ambiguity and controversy (Johansson 2000: 131). It is not the intention of the study to pursue any deeper discussion on the merits or downfalls of the multiple conceptual framings, but as clarity is sought after some demarcations are needed. As argued by Alex Warleigh-Lack the distinction between ‘old’ and ‘new’ regionalism is not only overstated but also obstructing research and theory building (2006). The study will make use of the bottom-up perspective offered by the concept in theorising upon the subnational level as active, mobilising actors rather than solely passive benefactors of opportunities arising from reorganisation processes. As a result, the study conceptualises regionalism as “the attempts of regional actors to exploit those new opportunities” (Schrijver 2006: 26).

A required delimitation of the study regards the aim of such, that is to say what the direction of the study is and the elements which are of interest for the analysis. Extensive studies have been published that discuss the relation between the regional and national level and the potential of furthered regionalisation. The mobilisation of the subnational level towards Brussels in terms of positioning, bargaining and lobbying or the establishment of representation is another area that has seen vast academic and scholarly contribution, not the least in a number of recent dissertations and thesis’s. This thesis will therefore not place extensive focus on neither of these,

though both hold elements which are of interest for the study a deeper incorporation of one or both would diverge from the set aim and purpose of research. Instead focus is placed on the internal regional and municipal workings.

1.3 Disposition

This thesis sets out in the first chapter with the research problem, putting forward the aim of the study and the questions which will be answered, in addition to definitions and delimitations. The second chapter presents the theoretical framework of state reorganisation. The chapter ends with an operationalisation using the notion of uneven local mobilisation which will guide the analysis incorporating two models. The ensuing, third, chapter outlines the methodological approach in research design, method and material. Fourth, a brief chapter introduces EU regional policy. Together, the fifth and sixth chapters constitute the analysis, the former highlighting key findings which are summarised in the latter, aiming to answer to the stated research questions. The seventh and final chapter concludes the thesis, provides an outlook and reflection on the theoretical and empirical material and its future potentials and brings forward a typology of mobilisation strategies in the region.

2. Theoretical framework

This thesis uses the theoretical discussion related to the idea and notion of a 'Europe with the Regions' thesis as its point of departure. The theoretical ambition of the study is to develop and build upon limited theoretical contributions. Thus the study aims at transcending a mere theory-testing purpose but rather to aim to develop theory, building a typology drawing from the observations arising from an analysis of the collected material. The theoretical framework is structured under the frame of a reorganisation of the state as presented by Bob Jessop to which the notion of uneven mobilisation is then added. The former highlighting the notions of responsibilities and opportunities, showing a process of restructuring on behalf of the nation-state. In final, the notion of uneven local mobilisation is used to operationalise the study placing focus on internal factors and prerequisites, building a foundation from where the analysis can take shape.

2.1 Reorganisation of the State: Shifted Responsibilities and new Opportunities

Though the “Europe of the Regions” thesis which proclaimed the prevailing of the regions on behalf of obsolete nation-states has been superseded by a less dramatic “Europe *with* the Regions” approach the subnational level has become increasingly important within the European Union (EU) (Johansson 2000: 125; Deas and Lord 2006: 1849). The ‘Europe *with* the Regions’ approach encompasses processes of both regionalisation and regionalism highlighting a cooperative and enabling relationship rather than a zero-sum game between the subnational, national and supranational levels (Ibid). However, there is still much ambiguity and conflicting views in the literature when attempting to define regionalisation and regionalism. One way to conceptualise the processes is through the notion of *responsibilities* and *opportunities*. Here does Bob Jessop’s work on the *reorganisation of the state* provides a helpful theoretical approach from which to examine and frame the two notions (1997).

Jessop frames regionalisation and regionalism developments as a restructuring of the state along three interdependent processes. Presented as a reorganisation of state responsibilities and activities. Firstly, Jessop suggests that the “*denationalization of the state*” is far from a simple scalar process of decentralisation, a downward movement of state power, but that these movements has both upward and sideway dimensions (in Gibbs et al 2000: 105). This movement or shift of state power towards the subnational, and supranational, levels does however not equal to a loss of power by the nation-state but is, rather, discussed as a “hollowing-

out” of state responsibilities and activities (Ibid). The denationalisation of the state is a continuing movement as actors of different territorial scale attempt to enhance their strategic capacities and operational autonomy. The process is summarised by Brenner as below:

transformations in the state form have entailed not the withering away of the state but, rather, the re-territorialization of state sociospatial organization as a means to promote profitability and competitive advantage in the intensified interspatial competition ... The state [thus] continues to play a central role in the ongoing struggle to command, control, refigure and transform social space, even as the scales on which this struggle is organized has been significantly denationalized (in McLeod 2001: 813).

State denationalisation thus follows the same line of argument outlined above in relation to the Europe with the regions thesis and describes, not the withering away of the state but rather the “*re-structuring* of its functions” (Jerneck 2000a: 29). The argument is supported by Michael Keating among others who argues that though the “nation state is here to stay” it has been, and continues to be, eroded by economic and social change driven by European integration and internationalisation which is in turn leading to a functional- and institutional restructuring of the nation-states (Keating 1998: 184-185).

Secondly, restructuring processes is also discussed in the form of “the *destatization of the political system*” (Gibbs et al 2000: 105). Here Jessop refers to the relative decline of the state’s “direct management and sponsorship of social and economic projects”, in political science widely acknowledged as a shift from government to governance bringing in a wider set of actors (Ibid; Jessop 1997). Destatisation hence proclaims a movement from state hegemony towards a broadening of state activity and responsibilities, with emphasis on forming partnerships between the state and non-state actors. Coming back to the notion of a zero-sum game the theoretical reasoning found in relation to processes of re-structuring of state responsibilities lifts the ambition to form “co-operative relations and alliances” rather than a “strengthening of the local authority’s position solely at the expense of the existing state functions” (Jerneck 2000a: 29-30).

Third, the “*internationalization of policy regimes*” is the final restructuring process of “key importance for local and regional governance” (Gibbs et al. 2000: 105). At this juncture Jessop draws upon the growing significance of the international scale in providing policy areas for actors beyond the national borders. Largely, Jessop “posits a shift from a focus upon simply domestic performance of the economy to a concern with its competitiveness internationally” (Ibid). The international context hence increases the significance of strategies that transcends the domestic sphere, for state, regional and local actors alike. Jerneck argues that the central state authorities within Europe has “been obliged” to adapt, becoming more flexible and build their own strategies in acceptance with that “central state authority is only one of a number of political reference points” (2000a: 29). If failing to do so the state would become obsolete in an increasingly international fora with a multiplication of actors and decision-makers. European regionalisation is thus met positively by “responsible and *co-operating and negotiating* state[s]” (Ibid: 29-30).

Given the aim of the study it is important to mention the second dimension of state reorganisation – namely the extended set of *opportunities* made available for local and regional actors by the shifted responsibilities. As made evident by the works of Jessop the reorganisation of the state stretches beyond the boundaries of the nation-state and encompasses a highly international fora. The EU could therefore be seen as a “point of access” for local governments to foster certain interests outside the respective state and importantly to attract external means to foster growth and development (Keating 1999).

Integration within the EU has acted to provide increased opportunities for subnational mobilisation through a hollowing-out of state sovereignty (Jerneck 2000a: 29). Additionally, regionalisation can in itself be regarded as a “force of integration” which presses the interests of the local and regional levels upwards from the national to the supranational level (Ibid). Acquiring influence at the supranational, EU level, local and regional actors have shown prepared to “take greater responsibility” in the implementation of their respective interests and regional questions (Ibid). The political arena constituted by the EU thus comes to act as an “opportunity structure” for subnational actors to foster certain interests in policy-making, becoming independent political actors outside the frame of their state (Tömmel 2007: 15; Keating 1998). The regions and their local municipalities as a result become global players along-side and together with the states. The EU as a point of access for subnational interests is formalised under the Treaty on EU (Maastricht Treaty) and the establishment of the Committee of the Regions which “gives regional and local governments a formal consultative role” permitting them to comment on European Commission (EC) proposals and Council deliberations (Keating 1999: 6). Importantly, local actors have as discussed above “identified a new opportunity” in the EU to foster local and regional development by actively seeking external finances in the form of EU funding (Zerbinati 2012: 585). Meaning, that local actors and governments can in many regards bypass the national level and directly target the EU level as a strategic option to obtain funds and support for the own priorities.

By applying the theoretical notions of responsibilities and opportunities to an empirical case clarification can be provided to the otherwise highly theoretical and elusive discussion. Results which will be able to provide systematic knowledge of the implications of state reorganisation.

2.2 Operationalisation: Uneven Local Mobilisation

After introducing a theoretical framework for the key notions of responsibilities and opportunities within the reorganisation theory brought forward by Jessop this thesis picks up on the notion of *uneven local mobilisation*, operationalising differentiated mobilisation following a theory-building ambition.

The notion of local mobilisation comes to play a major role within this study and has previously been defined as “the growing engagement of sub-national governmental actors”

(Jeffery 2000: 1). Jeffrey’s definition is however rather broad and a narrower definition is therefore used in the study;

Mobilisation is portrayed as the growing engagement of local municipalities towards the EU in order to strategically optimise the opportunity structure provided by new responsibilities.

Defining mobilisation as above further connects to the theoretical framework in how reorganisation processes of the state can instil a strategic interpretation of the opportunities provided by the EU (Lagendijk 2003).

The theoretical framework has so far highlighted that a shift is visible in how responsibilities that used to be connected to the individual nation state is increasingly being decentralised towards the subnational level and simultaneously centralised towards the supranational, EU level. This has in turn given rise to a new structure of opportunities for local and regional actors, as illustrated by figure 1.

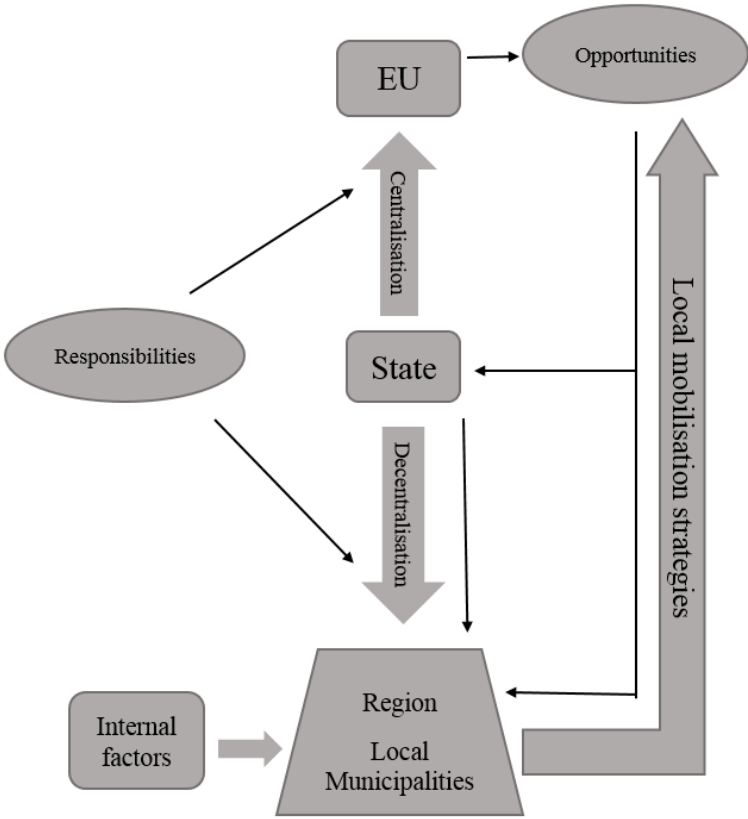


Figure 1: State reorganisation processes.

As made evident by the posed research question a certain degree of differentiation is nonetheless expected among the local actors’ engagement in and utilisation of this opportunity structure. The reorganisation of the state has increasingly brought local and regional actors closer to the supranational level constituted by the EU. This has entailed that local authorities

have come to develop a “greater awareness of the EU and of its impact on their daily work” (Rees and Farrows 1999: 8). However, as pointed out by Rees and Farrows the degree of awareness and involvement forms a highly uneven pattern with some local authorities and actors being far more aware of, and prepared to make use of the opportunities than others (Ibid). One quite telling quote portrays the unevenness of the local actors as “there are some bright stars but many black holes” (Ibid).

This suggests, in line with the Europe with the regions approach, that it is not the nation-states that set barriers to closer involvement at the EU level but rather that local authorities sometimes “lacks the ability to fully engage European matters” (Ibid). Moreover, this increasingly accentuates regions specific internal factors and prerequisites for growth and development. Further, this shift can lead to a better insight in the great variation of such factors among the regions and *within* the regions.

The unevenness in local engagement is often connected to the variation among the European regions in terms of resources, these can be economic, political, and structural (as in internal administration and organisation) but should also be regarded as competences and knowledge (Johansson 2000: 134; Jerneck 2000b: 202-203). Lorvi’s study on Estonian municipalities’ management of EU Structural Funds is an example of this regional unevenness were it was shown that administrative capacity was low within the smaller municipalities, negatively affecting their involvement and engagement in the provided funding opportunity (2013). This would entail that local mobilisation is directly dependent on resources and that resource scarcity would impede on mobilisation. However, as pointed put by Jerneck the “resources notwithstanding, political mobilisation and strategic positioning are absolutely necessary if the desired effects are to materialise” (2000b: 204). The latter is interesting for the study as it shows that uneven resource distribution must not hinder local engagement but could instead foster different forms of mobilisation strategies. This is further seen in the study on local engagement in EU processes by Zerbinati who portrays the opportunity driven local actors as “entrepreneurial”, representing specific ways of “thinking, reasoning and acting” which is fostering strategic mobilisation to overcome factors such as limited resources (2012: 585).

Lastly, the uneven mobilisation pattern gives rise to different interpretation of the roles local actors come to take within the larger regional setting. This is portrayed differentially among scholars, Jerneck uses the framework of *pro-active*, *reactive* and *responsive* local governments (2000b; see also Holm-Hansen 2000) while Schmidt describes this along the lines of *innovators*, *adaptors* and *hesitators* (1986). Both descriptions and framings are interesting for the study and share common denominators in how the proactive or innovative actors are found having a forward looking, problem solving orientation aiming to actively seek innovative solutions for early identified opportunities as well as challenges. Connections could therefore be seen to the entrepreneurial behaviour presented by Zerbinati (2012). Moreover, as argued by Schmidt, an innovative solution or approach by one actor increases the possibility of others following suit, instilling a diffusion among adoptive actors (1986). This entails that the subnational actors are

not acting in a ‘vacuum’ but are receptive to their immediate surroundings, in this case the neighbouring municipalities within the same region.

In operationalising the framework of a reorganisation of the state and the theoretical contributions seen in relation to uneven and differentiated mobilisation it becomes clear that a number of factors should be taken into consideration. As figure 2 attempts to show the municipality is subject to *external factors*, the processes of reorganisation, as well as both *internal municipal factors* and *internal regional factors* as discussed in relation to resources and role within the region.

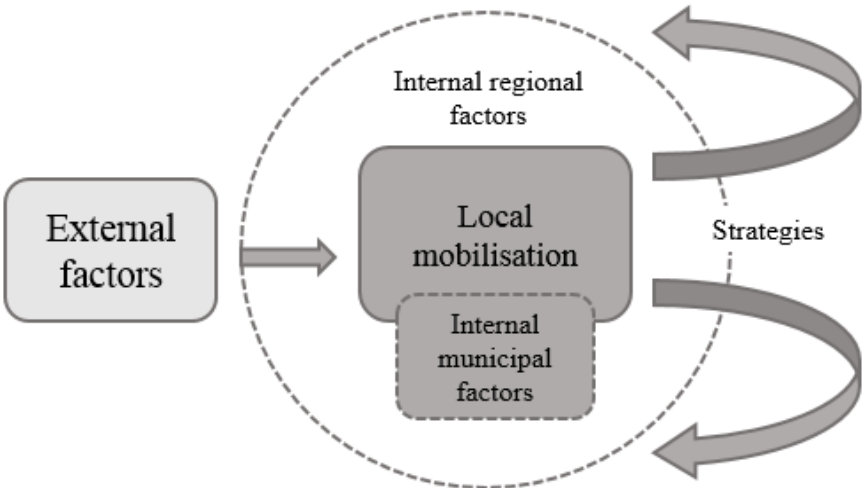


Figure 2: Relationship external and internal factors for local mobilisation strategies

The internal factors of the municipality and the within the region, i.e. between the municipalities of the region, is represented as a central element in the model following the theoretical reasoning above. The central aim is hence to present ways of mobilisation on behalf of the municipalities, the local actors of the study, and moreover to establish a causal relationship between such strategies and the factors that influence them. Findings that can potentially be used to build a typology of strategies. The use of a model and the building of a typology is like the use of theory to simplify and structure complex realities in a more manageable and understandable form. As such the typology is not a precise reflection of a reality but rather an idealised representation of the studied case.

[A typology or model] is a representation of reality made sufficiently explicit for one to be able to examine the assumptions embodied within it, to manipulate it and experiment with it, and, most important of all, to draw references from it which can be applied to reality (Tate and Jones 1975).

3. Methodological Approach: How to Study Local Mobilisation Strategies?

Making methodological choices mean that you by effect exclude other alternatives. This thesis will analyse local mobilisation strategies in Skåne by applying a qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews. In order to utilise the theoretical framework in relation to the analytical material an embedded single-case study design with multiple sub-units and theory building ambitions is adopted.

3.1 Case Study as a Research Design

The case study design has traditionally been commended by social science for its applicability and strength in testing and building complex theories (George and Bennet 2005; Yin 2009). The research design allows for in-depth analyses of one or multiple cases which enables the researcher to investigate complex social phenomena and use their findings to develop theory. The research strategy is described by Dooley as below;

“The researcher who embarks on case study research is usually interested in a specific phenomenon and wishes to understand it completely, not by controlling variables but rather by observing all of the variables and their interacting relationships. From this single observation, the start of a theory may be formed, and this may provoke the researcher to study the same phenomenon within the boundaries of another case, and then another, and another, or between individual cases as the theory begins to take shape” (2002, p. 336).

The case study design could therefore act to represent a certain ‘class of phenomena’, providing structure and analytical frame “within which the study is conducted and which the case illuminates and explicates” (Thomas, 2011: 512-513). In this study the class of phenomena is *local mobilisation stemming from a reorganisation of the state*, as seen in the stated research question, which is framed by Skåne hence resulting in a single-case study.

Choosing a single-case design has its challenges, especially in terms of a presumed lack of generalisation possibilities (George and Bennet 2005: 19) as comparison between cases is recommended in order to strengthen the validity of the findings (Bryman 2008: 437). Though this critique has to a large extent been overcome it stresses the need of setting the case within the right research design. This study uses an embedded single-case design following the type presented by Yin (2009). The embedded single-case design incorporates one or more units of analysis occurring when attention is given to a subunit or a number of subunits within the case (Ibid: 42). From this perspective the case, the region of Skåne, is studied as the frame for a

number of sub-units of analysis represented the selected municipalities. The case is thus placed within a larger class of phenomena allowing for local mobilisation being studied from a number of analytical sources, answering part of the methodological challenges. For an overview of such sub-units see *interview material*.

Linking method with the theoretical ambition of building theory it is important to establish how the methodological choice can contribute to the aim of developing theoretical knowledge on the object or phenomena of investigation. Of the six distinct objectives of theory building designs identified by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett (2005: 75-76) the “building-block” design is found most suitable for the specific study. Utilizing the building-block approach fits well with the study as it can be described as a study of “particular types or subtypes of a phenomena”, identifying common patterns serving a heuristic purpose (Ibid). Local mobilisation in relation to state reorganisation is a field of research that has not been extensively covered and is rather subject to differentiated theorising than a generally accepted theory. The building-block approach is therefore found useful in how each case contributes in building theory, here also in terms of typological theory (Ibid: 78). As such operationalising the findings of the study in the format of a typology is clearly connectable to the methodological design.

The relevance of the case is closely tied to the validity and merit of the research and motivations of the choice is thus needed. Though the aim of the study is to develop theory rather than to test it George and Bennett settle that departing from a certain angle or theoretical discussion determines the use of data or case selection of interest to the researcher (2005: 18). Given the theoretical framework provided it was of weight that the case showed tendencies of both state reorganisation and uneven mobilisation. The case selection was therefore much guided by these principles. Skåne is one of three in total experimental regional set-ups in Sweden following a trial operation stemming from the 1990s equipping the region with competences exceeding that of the previous county-structure (Rosén 2002). This has entailed that responsibility for regional development has been decentralised from the state towards the sub-national level indicative of the reorganisation theory (Ibid: 12). Further, the case should provide for interesting findings given its highly diverse make up of municipalities forming stronger urban centres in the west (the Malmö-Lund area and Helsingborg) and in the north-east (Hässleholm-Kristianstad), and a multitude of smaller rural municipalities. In this aspect the case selection is found well suited for the analysis at hand and should provide both better knowledge of the reorganisation processes but importantly also provide the researcher with empirical evidence from where theory can be built.

3.2 Method and Material

This thesis builds on a qualitative and heuristic approach using semi-structured interviews as its research method of choice in order to outweigh the weaknesses of relying simply of textual and statistical sources of material. Interviews with personnel working with EU related

questions, funding and projects within local municipalities represent the primary source of the analytical material from which the final findings are drawn.

Analysis of both primary and secondary sources is effected in order to find recurrent themes. Textual sources are used to supplement the interview material, but also to provide an understanding of the phenomena at hand before conducting interviews. The textual sources are gathered from academic and scholarly debate on themes such as regionalisation, regionalism, and multi-level governance that is to say the connection between the state and subnational actors. Information is also gathered directly from publications stemming from the municipalities, the region, Swedish associations and organisations and the EU. However, it should be noted that this material, often found on their respective websites, do not inevitably achieve the same reliability and accuracy which is often attributed more traditional sources. However, this material cannot be ignored as it often provide a more exhaustive source of information than printed publications. Though, following Bryman, the complicated issue of these sources is that they sometimes display the “desired” rather than a reality, meaning that potential challenges and shortcomings can be softened, something that needs to be accounted for (2008: 521).

3.2.1 Semi-structured Interviews

Given the aim of the study qualitative interviews can be conducted in a number of ways, Esiasson et al. present two approaches to how interviews can be used as *informant* or as *respondent surveys* (Esiasson et al 2004: 253-254). This study can be said holding aspects of both. The informant survey is used where the access to and gaining of information would be hard to obtain if relying on other types of material. The interviewees thus acting as informants of how certain aspects of reality is constructed (Ibid). As information on how the local municipalities mobilise towards EU opportunities such as co-funding and development of the own organisation in their ordinary work is often hard to access or not published at all and the academic literature is very limited. The interviewees therefore represent important sources of information. However, as the interviewees without doubt take part in the in the object of investigation the study is also indicative of a respondent survey incorporating the perceptions, opinions, beliefs and ideas of the interviewed persons (Ibid). The latter can also act to capture the interviewed persons views and thoughts on the studied phenomena (Ibid).

Qualitative interviews hence provides a good method of research into an area where material would be hard to find solely in academia and other textual sources. Further, the interview method is highly adaptive and can be very well matched with the stated research question. As it is not aim of the thesis to compare statistical information between the local municipalities but rather to show their respective strategies of mobilisation and the factors forming such results and strategic choices interviews can provide insights which would not be found in reports and official statements.

Semi-structured interviews was chosen as a guiding technique which is characterised by the use of “list of questions or fairly specific topics to be covered, often referred to as an *interview guide*” (Bryman 2008: 437-438). The technique is chosen as it gives the interviewer a certain amount of flexibility, enabling follow-up questions and asking the questions in a less structured order (Ibid). As referred to an interview guide was used (see Appendix), the guide was set up in advance to the interviews and built on a number of themes observed either in the theoretical framework or when researching EU work within the region. Though the guide was rather strictly followed the interviews sometimes took other directions following interesting statements where additional questions were formed. All seven interviews were performed in person and lasted between 30 and 45 minutes, the interview with Agneta Nilsson was however longer as it was preceded by a presentation and finalised by a tour of the port of Trelleborg. Personal interviews was favoured over other forms as they often allow for other insights as the interviewer can also respond to body language (Bryman 2008: 457). For facilitating a more natural flow without interruptions, for note taking, all interviews were recorded and transcribed afterwards in agreement with the interviewees. Using recordings was found beneficial from the point of assurance as well as that the statements could be transcribed in their entirety rather than substituted with own interpretations. Statements was sent to all participating interviewees before publication, this was requested by a number of the participants, and moreover, it validates the correctness of such statements. As the interviews was conducted and transcribed in Swedish the latter was found important as there is always a risk of losing the essence of the statement in translation.

3.2.2 Interview Material: Selection of Municipalities

The region of Skåne is made up of 33 local municipalities exercising self-government, meaning that they are responsible for areas of local nature among others infrastructure such as roads and water services, education facilities and health care. The municipalities are highly diverse in their size, ranging between approximately 7000 inhabitants in the smallest (Perstorp) to little above 300 000 in the largest (Malmö), aspects that is also reflected in their organisational scope. Moreover, the region can be divided into four corners, south-west, north-west, north-east and south-east with diverging degrees of formalised cooperation.

The interview selection is based on an ambition to interview representatives from a broad set of uptake among the municipalities. An initial plan in the interview selection was to look at statistical measures of the use of EU funding and number of projects. However such data is not only near to impossible to access, both from the information provided directly by municipalities themselves and project banks by responsible authorities and bodies². Rather than leaving the selection to chance a number of criteria for selection was therefore set up. The interviewees

² The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth (*Tillväxtverket*) provides a ‘project bank’ on their website however it does unfortunately not allow for searches on individual municipalities.

should represent both smaller and larger municipalities mirroring the theoretical arguments surrounding differentiated resources. Further, the municipalities should be selected from all of the four corners representing a wide geographical spread as well as differentiated prerequisites, for example rural or inland municipalities and municipalities with sea ports. Finally, the selected municipalities should reflect a varied degree of demonstrated activity, namely mobilisation, towards the EU. The latter is harder to concretely formalise, but factors such as organisation of EU work and project participation was used. The interviewees are civil servants which are all working directly with EU questions in one form another in the municipalities, often in a coordinating role.



Figure 3: Skåne, participating municipalities marked in red. Source: (The County Administrative Board of Skåne).

Though the persons interviewed are seen as representatives of the different municipalities their answers are rather personal views and reflections and cannot be seen as official statements. However, as such is formed by direct experience of working with the municipalities' EU related tasks the information is formed in a working context and therefore valuable for the thesis at hand. The interview selection is as follows:

Helsingborg – Located in the north-west of Skåne Helsingborg is the second largest of the municipalities with approximately 135 000 inhabitants, which of 90 000 live in or around the city itself (City of Helsingborg). Helsingborg is characterised by a long tradition of international cooperation within the Öresund region where it aims at taking on a leading role (Smith and Lantz 2014). The municipality employs a full-time international coordinator and have since 2012 deployed a central strategy for international project work and cooperation (Ibid). Moreover, the city is active in a number of networks but has also established an internal 'EU network' with department representatives.

Hässleholm – The municipality is located in the north-east corner and is the fifth largest in the region with its approximately 50 000 inhabitants, land area wise it is the largest (Municipality of Hässleholm 2015). The municipality has during the last decade actively pursued a profile as an expert in EU questions, and now stands host for the corner's EU-office, Europe Direct Office and the yearly event Europaforum Hässleholm³. The municipality employs a full-time EU coordinator and have implemented a strategy as a guiding and overarching document for the EU related work.

Malmö – The southern city has a growing population above 300 000, making it the third largest in Sweden and decidedly different in size from the remainder of the municipalities in the region. Malmö early showed an international outlook which is now visible in a highly integrated cooperation within the Öresund region and active mobilisation towards the EU with 100-150 EU projects yearly. Apart from a central coordinator the organisation has an EU-coordinator within each department making up the 'Malmö City EU-network'. It is represented in a number of networks, among them Eurocities (since 1997) and since of 1999 it has its own representation office in Brussels.

Perstorp – With approximately 7000 inhabitants the municipality is the smallest in the region (Municipality of Perstorp). Located in the northern inland Perstorp is placed between the north-east and north-west corners and participates mainly in the western cooperation, within the EU area it has however chosen to stay within the north-eastern EU partnership. The municipality has no official post but has delegated responsibility of their EU/international work two persons, municipally employed though mainly concerned with different tasks. EU work in the form of projects has been initiated quite recently.

Sjöbo – Sjöbo acts to represent the south-eastern corner of the region and participates with its three neighbours in the partnership *Southeast Skåne Committee of Cooperation* (SÖSK) who has put forward a common EU strategy. The municipality of 18 000 inhabitants is placed in the rural inland and has a larger agricultural sector (Municipality of Sjöbo). Apart from the services of a half-time employed EU coordinator the municipality stand host for the Europe Direct Skåne Southeast office which assists the owner municipalities with EU project development. However, in terms of project work EU activity would rank as rather low among the selected municipalities.

Trelleborg – Trelleborg, the southernmost town and municipality of Sweden is strategically located in the two expansive regions of Öresund and the South Baltic and its port holds the status of a Trans- European Transport Network (TENT-T) *Core Sea Port*. The municipality's approximately 43,000 inhabitants make it the sixth largest in the region (Municipality of Trelleborg). The municipality shows a highly uneven pattern of activity,

³ The event is the largest of its kind in Sweden and collects top names among Swedish and EU politicians, MEPs and Commissioners for seminars and debates, it is open for the public and will this year be held in August.

certain sectors such as the Port of Trelleborg, managed as a municipally owned company, indicating a high degree of mobilisation. The municipality as of last year employed an EU strategist on full-time, an entirely new post within the municipality. Given the high activity on behalf of the Port of Trelleborg, which is seen during a period of more than ten years, interviews was conducted with both the centrally employed EU strategist and the EU coordinator of Port of Trelleborg.

3.3 Reflections on the Research design and Method

It always important to reflect over the methodological choices and their impact on the research. This study builds its analysis upon semi-structured interviews which are supported by the theoretical framework at hand as well as secondary sources. Using interviews as a primary source of information entails both risk and limitations. Firstly, the small amount of interviews can be problematic as they represent limited insight into the phenomena of local mobilisation in the region. The main constraint here was resources and time. A broader set of interviews would potentially provide a stronger analytical set of sub-units and more variation in the analysis and resulting typology. Secondly, though the chosen municipalities match the presented selection criteria it should be seen as a representation of the class of phenomena investigated rather than a complete overview, the latter was however neither the aim of the study. I am therefore aware that the results of the analysis might not be sufficient for generalisation, nonetheless I am certain that the participant interviewees should provide an important contribution to the understanding of local mobilisation in regard to reorganisation processes. The results of the embedded case study and the ensuing typology could therefore very well hold the potential of building theory.

4. EU *with* the Regions: Opportunities and Responsibilities in EU Regional Policy

The following section outlines EU Regional Policy, its development and function and the importance and gradual growth of the Cohesion Policy, the main instrument for regional development. The discussion is thereafter brought back to the case, outlining EU Regional Policy in Skåne.

The founding principle for EU regional policy is solidarity, meaning the contribution to, and support of weaker regions economic and social development (Berg 2003:23). Regional policy targets regions, municipalities and cities in all of the member states with the objectives of ensuring regional development and growth through job creation and competitiveness, acting to improve the lives of its citizens. The European Commission (EC) has arguably been one of the most significant of the main institutions for the European regions since the regional question began to receive attention in the 1980's and 1990's and is largely seen as the main contributor to the growing importance and leverage of regional actors (Berg 2003:22). The main objectives of the EC are twofold; economic and political (Bachtler and Turok 1997: 28). Economically, the EC aims to bridge the large disparities between weaker and stronger regions (Ibid: 29). Politically, the EC encourages subnational actors to become "active partners" in the European policy process, thus bringing decisions and influence closer to the citizens (Jacques Delors in Mcleod 1999: 232).

In order to contribute to the development and growth of the regions EU regional policy established the Cohesion Policy, the union's strategy to promote and encourage an inclusive and harmonious development of its member states, their regions and within such regions. As the main focus of this thesis is to map local mobilisation strategies the following section acts to introduce an outline of how regional policy within the EU has come bring opportunities closer to the local actors.

4.1 EU Cohesion Policy

The Cohesion Policy is of utmost importance when discussing the responsibilities and opportunities arising from a reorganisation of the state as;

[m]ore than any other EU policy, the cohesion policy reaches directly into the member states, engaging subnational governments and private actors with the Commission and member-state governments (Hooghe and Marks 1996: 78).

The cohesion policy functions as a multiannual framework running for a period of seven years, the current being 2014-2020. The total budget accounts for close to a third of the total EU expenditure, for the on-going period totalling to a sum over € 350 billion (European Commission 2015a). These are distributed over its main financial instruments – the Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) consisting of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), the European Social Fund (ESF), the Cohesion Fund (CF) and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF), the former two, the so called Structural Funds, being of most importance (European Commission 2015b). The funds are furthermore aided by the varied Sectors Programmes managed by the EC as well as the Community Initiatives, a mechanism promoting transnational and cross-border cooperation, the best known of the instruments probably being the various Interreg programmes (European Commission 2015c)⁴.

According to Hooghe and Marks the cohesion policy brings in an enormous variation in actors as the policy has given rise to a “highly uneven pattern of subnational mobilization across the EU” (1996: 78). A partial explanation to this can be found in the 1988 reform of the Structural Funds. The reform entailed a significant increase in budget and changes in the function of the policy but is important foremost in terms of the Framework Regulation adopted by the Council of Ministers which meant that the new Principle of Partnership was adopted (Bache and Jones 2000: 1). The principle was primary an attempt to increase efficiency in regional policy by “involving formally the local and regional (sub-central) actors most familiar with the problems and priorities of targeted regions” (Ibid). The new Framework for the Structural Funds therefore meant that partnerships including the local, regional, national and EU-levels should be active in the monitoring, design and implementation of projects, formally defined below;

close consultation between the Commission, the member states concerned and the competent authorities designated by the latter at national, regional, local or other level, with each party acting as a partner in pursuit of a common goal (Regulation (EEC) 2052/88 in Bache and Jones 2000:1).

Up until the reform subnational actor involvement had been largely absent in most of the member states, the partnership principle therefore meant that regional policy would be “a policy not just for the regions, but also by the regions” (Ibid). For the Commission the partnership provided a concrete example of putting the principle of subsidiarity into practise, for this reason the reform can be seen as a watershed in the history of regional policy, specifically aiming at “empowering sub-central actors within the regional policy process”(Ibid).

Building on this Brigid Laffan argues that the 1988 reform has come to erode the role of the national states as “gatekeeper”:

Although the overall structure of power has not shifted decisively, cohesion policy has "disturbed" relations between national and local actors. Local community groups have been mobilized; local

⁴ EU Community initiative which aims to stimulate interregional cooperation

input into national government policy has been enhanced; local actors have sought greater control over local economic development (in Hooghe and Marks 1996: 79).

The cohesion policy has been subject to gradual developments and change over the last two decades but the framework laid down by the partnership reform has come to pass the test of time. Decentralisation in the late 1990's and beginning of 2000's is however visible. This can be seen in the light of the Commission wishing to strengthen the application of the principle of subsidiarity further. However, the guiding principles of the partnership framework remains largely intact, where the process of outlining new operational programmes for each multiannual framework is characterised by a process of consultation between the member state, their sub-national actors, and the Commission. Moreover, a shift is visible in the last two multiannual frameworks towards a growing importance of competitiveness, in relation to convergence, something that can be attributed to the cohesion policy's connection to both the Lisbon Strategy and the later Europe 2020 goals.

4.2 Skåne and EU Regional Policy

Connecting these opportunities to the selected case it becomes clear that the region has ample opportunity to make use of EU regional policy through a variety of instruments. Internal differentiation is however high which results in a varied pattern of mobilisation strategies.

Sweden's southern region of Skåne is highly benefitted by its geographically strategic position which is characterised in many ways. Primarily, the position provides a natural and close connection to the European continent, ties which have continually been strengthened by multiple cross-border cooperation. Among the noteworthy is the strong regionalisation process driven by the Öresund cooperation and the many opportunities for transnational collaboration and projects through the varied Interreg programmes. For the latter a telling example is in how "main political figures of Malmö and Copenhagen" with good connections were successful in validating funding for Öresund as a Interreg II programme even though lacking land borders (Jerneck 2000a: 206). The multimodality of the region is further acknowledged by its TEN-T corridor status of *Core Sea Port* (the Port of Trelleborg and the Port of Malmö). The main strengths of the region is apart from its advantageous position a nuanced economy, its strong knowledge base of varied education providers and universities, the developed infrastructure and large investments in research and development⁵ (Socialfondens Övervakningskommitté 2015: 24).

Skåne forms part of the South-Sweden division under the eight ERDF programmes, the NUTS II-region⁶ is made up by Skåne together with the smaller county of Blekinge. Apart from the ERDF Skåne is also contributing from the ESF, the region being additionally encompassed

⁵ Notable developments are the MAX IV laboratory and the European Spallation Source (ESS) which are developed in the region, just outside of the Skåne city of Lund.

⁶ Nomenclature d'Unités Territoriales Statistiques (nomenclature of territorial units for statistics).

under the funding provided by the so called Youth Employment Initiative (YEI). The initiative is integrated into the scope of the ESF programme and adds a third priority of combating high unemployment among young people with YEI targeting regions experiencing youth unemployment above 25 % (European Commission 2012). Apart from the Structural Funds the region is also available to seek funding within the varied Sectors programmes. These are differentiated from the ESIF as they are managed directly at EU level by the EC rather than in partnership with the member states. As the name lets on the programmes are sector specific and ranges from ‘soft policy’ such as health, social inclusion and citizenship towards the more technical issues of energy, research and innovation and transport.

However, though the region arguably has good prerequisites for enabling local and regional development through the opportunities provided by the EU a number of challenges still remain. The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth presents the main challenges being low productivity and low employment which is in turn negatively affecting the development of the region (Socialfondens Övervakningskommitté 2015: 15). Additionally, the internal regional differences are large. The western part of the region is highly characterised by growing employment and population while the eastern part is found under the national average. However, the south-west corner of Skåne has experienced problems of matching the growing population with the labour market resulting in some of the lowest employment figures in the country (Ibid). The next, analytical, section brings about empirical evidence of how these opportunities are used within the region.

5. Local Mobilisation Strategies in Skåne

The analysis is structured under six sub-sections presenting key findings in the local municipalities' mobilisation and the factors shaping the form and outcome of such mobilisation strategies. The theoretical framework is strengthened in how differentiated prerequisites must not mean that local actors are discouraged from actively mobilising upon the opportunities provided by EU membership but rather that variation can be seen in the strategies deployed. What is interesting in the findings is furthermore the role played by the different local actors, some showing a driving, proactive role setting precedence, pushing mobilisation and initiative on the more adaptive or reactive actors. Although the differentiated forms of mobilisation and internal factors are found highly interlinked it is found that some of these can act both as an enabling force as well as a benchmark for where to strive.

5.1 Administrative Capacity

One of the clearest examples of local mobilisation is arguably for the municipalities to invest in resources such as personnel actively working with EU questions. Among the chosen municipalities all but one (Perstorp) has one or more designated posts for their international and EU related work, nevertheless, the amount of time and resources set aside within the administrative organisation differ greatly among the municipalities. The interviews confirm that the mobilisation of- or investment in the internal organisation by strengthening the administrative capacity is a strategically important choice on behalf of the municipalities. As pointed out by Caroline Jacobsson, the fact that the municipality has an EU coordinator at all, something that is rather rare among the smaller municipalities, “is a great advantage” (2015, own translation). A fact that is strengthened when talking to the other municipalities as well.

We [Hässleholm and Kristianstad] are the two largest municipalities up here, with the largest organisations and the only ones of the municipalities that has EU coordinators employed full-time. You do not have that in the other municipalities which makes a huge difference in what you can do (Almqvist 2015, own translation).

The question of time as a resource, as in being assigned time for EU related tasks, is shown to be a crucial factor for mobilisation through the internal organisation, either by having a coordinator⁷ or having delegated part of the work to a specific person. This becomes clear especially for Perstorp which current organisation does not have any time specified for EU and

⁷ ‘Coordinator’ is used as an overarching description of having set aside a specific post for EU/international questions.

international work. Indicative of the findings of Lorvi, small municipalities is therefore arguably placed with a dilemma, the municipality has great incentives of using EU funding given an often limited amount of resources, but are however held back from doing so by the exact reason same reason (2013).

I think that one first needs to come to terms with that you should set aside time for an EU-coordinator or someone to work with these questions, it does not need to be full-time but say that you set aside 30 %. If you do this you can put forward a policy for international work, in doing so the person has something more concrete to work along with and to have available when working with the municipal administrations. As long you do not set aside time and resources for someone to work with the question it becomes quite hard (Håkansson 2015, own translation).

I would also wish that we had the competency of an EU coordinator in order to not only focus on projects and securing external funding but that you actually increase the competency and knowledge of the EU in general (Henriksson 2015, own translation).

When discussing the role of the coordinator with the municipalities in this work a quite differentiated picture emerged. This must however be seen in connection to the need of the municipal departments and the overall organisation of EU associated work. Further, it becomes clear that the role of the coordinator often evolves and matures with time.

Given that the post is new it is not carved in stone what my role entails, we have so far been testing different things. My main function is to support the municipality and its different parts in applying for external funding. My assignment is so far only to make sure that the municipality receives more funding in order to support development. This consists of different parts, such as the network, but on the whole I act to make the municipality more responsive for project work (Skantze-Nyberg 2015, own translation).

The supportive role of the coordinator is a recurrent theme in all interviews though the larger municipalities indicate a more coordinating, over-seeing role. Here the coordinators indicate that their role is perhaps more as initiator and support for the municipal departments, ‘a spider in the web’, and less of concrete application writing and project steering though they can assist the respective administration in this work. In Malmö which is arguably different in administrative strength, each department has their own EU coordinator. When Ulrika Lagergren started in 2007 the helpdesk post she held was completely new and she explains that it was only about assisting projects and applications (Lagergren 2015). Since then the post has become increasingly complex and this work is only a small part of the international questions she works with, indicative of the both the processes of internationalisation the city has underwent but also an organisational learning and development on behalf of the departments (Ibid). Therese Almqvist touches upon the same question of maturity and evolution, but rather stresses the role of the coordinator in developing the municipalities’ long-term work;

Here we as EU coordinators has a challenge and major job in how to enhance the knowledge and understanding enough for the municipality and its respective administrations to work proactively rather than having us going in and supporting the processes (Almqvist 2015, own translation).

5.2 Even out the Playing Field

Mobilisation by using external assistance can be a strategic option for municipalities that experience tight resources in order to optimise on opportunities tied to the own priorities (Lorvi 2013; Zerbinati 2012).

In Trelleborg the decision of appointing the new post of an EU strategist is the direct outcome of assistance from the *Skåne Association of Local Authorities* (KFSK)⁸ (Skantze-Nyberg 2015). The association assists its members with analysing and matching the municipalities own priorities and development needs with opportunities provided by the EU, foremost the Structural Funds but also the more specific sectors programmes. The analysis, known as *EU-project analysis* or EPA⁹, indicated that in order to work more actively with EU questions and projects resources should be set aside for a new post (Ibid). KFSK has apart from Trelleborg provided EPA-assistance in both Sjöbo and in Helsingborg. The same type of assistance is also provided by the EU-office in Hässleholm whose assistance helped Perstorp start up their first major EU project and is currently working with a second analysis (Henriksson and Håkansson 2015).

This type of assistance could thus be seen somewhat as a kick-start for the municipalities, assisting in setting direction and importantly ties own development needs to concrete opportunities. As presented by Perstorp the EPA and the ensuing ESF project showed what is possible to do with own resources if assisted by the EU office.

If we want to do anything extra we need to seek external funding, we cannot carry through anything apart from the ordinary otherwise. But if you have got one [project] then you can get two (Håkansson 2015, own translation).

The external assistance can therefore be connected to a process of learning on behalf on the local actors. As the municipalities mature in their internal EU work external assistance such as the EPA becomes somewhat less strategically important, at least in the sense of initiator.

An EPA is perhaps not of immediate interest right now, it is much more about starting up projects and to show opportunities, and we have a lot of projects running. We are already in motion so to say (Qvarfordt 2015).

Though the assistance provided by the KFSK and the EU office in Hässleholm is just one of many resources available in terms of external assistance the two instances are the ones most prominently used among the contacted municipalities. The Port of Trelleborg indicates that they sometimes relies on external assistance and here foremost for lobbying purposes.

⁸ Skåne Association of Local Authorities (*Kommunförbundet Skåne*) is the the lead organisation for the region's 33 municipalities, it assists the municipalities with their activities, safeguard interests and promotes interaction between them.

⁹ EPA is an in-depth analysis of the municipalities' development needs and priotitees which are matched with EU funding opportunities. More information on the specific work can be found on the homepage.

We proceed a lot from the own business but sometimes we use assistance in order to find the right ways in and whom we should contact. Sure we use, and have used lobbyists but above all we want to be part of, and able to influence ourselves. Partly, because we want the contact but also since we believe that we are best suited to deliver our message (Nilsson 2015).

While both instances of external assistance can be seen as a multiplication of actors or destatisation they differ somewhat from each other. The KFSK and EU office is perhaps best seen as a result of shifted responsibilities towards the subnational level resulting in a heightened need for assistance to adequately optimise upon the ensuing opportunities as the central role of the state has been hollowed-out (Gibbs et al. 2000). Here the external assistance is mainly used as an instrument to even out an uneven distribution of resources. The services used by the Port of Trelleborg is rather a sign of internationalisation of policy regimes, where the need and use of external assistance is driven by international competitiveness (Ibid).

5.3 Access to Information and Contacts

Networks and networking is another strategy that appear to be an important part of the municipalities' mobilisation. The participation in and building of networks is proven significant both as an outward channel for information and influence but importantly also as a mean of structuring internal competences and experiences of the municipalities in order to foster learning and exchange of practise. As made evident in the theoretical discussion the reorganisation of the state has not only entailed a shift in responsibilities but also a multiplication of actors, hence a shift from government to governance. Networking can therefore provide a strategic option for local actors to ensure participation through networks in order to optimise the opportunities provided by state reorganisation processes.

5.3.1 Internal Networks

The use of internal networks in the municipalities is recurrent theme in the interviews and something that was specifically asked about. It becomes evident that though the structure of the networks differ it is an important mean of mobilisation for a number of the municipalities. Of the six municipalities four has established internal networks between the coordinator and contact persons within the municipal departments and companies (Helsingborg, Hässleholm, Malmö and Trelleborg).

The main function of such networks is according to the interviews foremost to provide a platform for learning and exchange of information and 'best practise'. Further, the networks act to lock knowledge and experience within the municipality, resources which are otherwise easily lost given the rotation of personnel.

The idea with the network and here especially to organise meetings in person is that persons that has been involved [in EU projects] shall have a chance to meet – we have managed a project such as this before, we can help you get started. Becoming better in using these resources internally is important in order to not lose the competences that we gain. That we stick together and use it, there is a plan to use this better (Almqvist 2015, own translation).

Apart from competences information has shown to play a vital role in the EU related work. The networks act to provide a natural node of information exchange between the departments as well as the central coordinator, “the EU network is my main source in Malmö when it comes to international questions” (Lagergren 2015, own translation). The interviews indicate that access to good information is significant in order for the municipalities to plan for and set aside resources for EU related work, here primarily projects, in order to be successful in the allocation of EU funding. Further, this timing is important also on behalf of the coordinator in order to be updated on the internal work and priorities of the departments if to be able to lend support in matching these with potential external funding opportunities.

I need to know what is in motion and what is in the pipe-line. You need some planning in advance. You should preferably not have started construction before I have had the time to send an application, so it is important to constantly inform each other (Nilsson, own translation).

Lastly, the networks also form an important forum for mobilisation by acting to inspire the different parts of the municipal departments and administration to increasingly take part in the many opportunities provided by the EU and to better connect these to the own priorities and needs.

The idea is that it can inspire others to venture into this. To identify what your business needs are, where you are heading and where you would be able to use this in your own work (Skantze-Nyberg 2015, own translation).

5.3.2 Regional and International Networks

The use of external regional and international networks is a clear illustration of how subnational actors are becoming just one of many actors following processes of internationalisation and destatisation. The network strategy show that many of the local actors are tying direct contacts with other local, regional and international actors, in some regard bypassing the state and instead targeting specific groups dependent on the need and interest.

The importance placed on the participation in networks is lifted in a number of the internal municipal documents. Malmö is perhaps most explicit in stating the strategic strength of allying itself with varied networks. In their international strategy networks are stated strategically important for “generating project ideas and partners”, providing “an active exchange of knowledge, experience and cooperation” and to strengthen their international role by participation in various regional, national and international arenas (Malmö stad 2012).

Within the region the municipalities show active participation in a number of networks, here primarily the *Brussels network* and the *Strategic EU network*¹⁰ which are both provided by the KFSK. The interviews indicate that the local or regional networks are an important and “generous” node of information sharing (Jacobsson 2015). Sharing information is seen as an important form of mobilisation among the contacted municipalities where a number of the interviewees indicate that as they are often alone in working with EU related questions in the municipalities the networks act as an important platform not only to share information but also to find project partners. While the regional networks such as the Brussels network is encompassing all of the municipalities of the region the international ties are more often than not specified along the lines of specific questions or interests rather than geography. Here the relations and contacts that are gained within the networks is another important aspect.

As I have been working with these questions for a couple of years I have a lot of contacts in Brussels. You keep in contact with them. It is still the case that if you have a project running you have responsibilities to report back. We do normally have four projects running simultaneously which means quite some contact with Brussels. You create a network after a while. It is very helpful when you can just lift the phone and ask, especially when you know who to call. It helps (Nilsson 2015, own translation).

The contacts established within the networks is also highly beneficial for the municipalities’ access to information as well as to draw inspiration and learn from others.

You could say that you get inspired by knowing that others have worked very successfully with this and that we could also use it in our work. Malmö City has worked with a lot of projects and works very well with projects at the Environmental department for example. Here I find the Brussels network useful. How have you worked with the question? That you share your experiences (Almqvist 2015, own translation).

This form of learning or response to the action of other municipalities is highly indicative to the work of Schmidt (1986). Schmidt has shown with his study on municipalities that innovative solutions are often diffused among adoptive actors in its immediate surroundings, something that was proven an important driving factor for the own mobilisation – “It is important to speak of that too, that see how well it has worked for the neighbours and we can apply too” (Leijon 2015).

5.4 ‘Good neighbours’: Cooperation and Partnerships

Cooperation and partnerships with the immediate neighbours is seen throughout the region. The form and extent of the cooperation is however found to differ between the four corners of the region, most formalised in the east with the *Skåne North-east EU-office* (SkNo) and *Southeast Skåne Committee of Cooperation* (SÖSK)

¹⁰ Known as *Bryssel nätverket* and *Strategiskt EU-nätverk*

The strongest and most established form of EU cooperation within the region is arguably found in the north-east corner in the form of Skåne North-east EU-office (henceforth SkNo) which collects nine municipalities, among others Perstorp and Hässleholm. The latter functioning as host for the organisation's EU-office. The office acts as a common resource on behalf of the nine municipalities with the central aim of optimising the use of EU funding opportunities, apart from the EPA service discussed above the office provides assistance with project development and acts as a hub of knowledge. Its strategic weight as a form of mobilisation is stressed in the interviews with both Perstorp and Hässleholm.

North-west does not have an EU-office and hence not the services that north-east provides. This meant that when the municipality chose to take part of the north-western cooperation you still chose to stay with the EU-office and use their services (Håkansson 2015, own translation).

The EU-office is geographically based in the north-east in their work, however, that the office was placed exactly here [in Hässleholm] provides a lot of opportunities. We can help each other as colleagues. That has been a huge help for me. I would say that it has been crucial. Then it is not always as easy for the municipality to follow. The municipality is not as fast, it takes time to change structures and working methods. So it is a journey. But we have had, especially for our own part, an immense support in each other in these challenges (Almqvist 2015, own translation).

The strategic use of cooperation is mirrored in the interview with the municipality of Sjöbo as well who participates in the Southeast Skåne Committee of Cooperation (henceforth SÖSK) stating that "neighbours are essential, you cannot work alone in projects" (Jacobsson 2015, own translation), and opens up for further partnership building;

I think that you in the long run will find even more partners. Not the least that we on the eastern side will wed, forming a closer cooperation between Skåne north-east and SÖSK where we have more similar challenges in relation to the western side of Skåne, we discuss this more and more every time we meet. We need to do more together in order to counterbalance the current weight placed in the west of Skåne (Leijon 2015, own translation).

Though the organisation and resources of the two cooperation's differ both SÖSK and SkNo could be seen as a result of a strategic interpretation of a reorganisation of the state. In their respective strategies both organisations refer to the strong connection between the EU and the municipalities¹¹. Further, the partnerships stress the central role of the municipalities also within EU integration and in the work to fulfil the aims of the Europe 2020 Strategy, in turn resulting in a number of development- and funding opportunities, a potential that the municipalities "should make use of" (EU-kontor Skåne Nordost).

The cooperation is visible also on the western side of the region, though highly diverging in its form and extent, which could be tied to less of a formalised need as well as a result of not putting aside the needed resources.

¹¹ The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (2010: 1) claims that more than 60 percentage of the decision-making in the municipalities are directly affected by the EU in some way.

When it comes to EU related questions the cooperation does not work as it does with the EU-office north-east. However, we have built up a cooperation within the municipalities in the north-west with an office. I figure that it would be very beneficial to create a network between the EU-coordinators in the north-west (Qvarfordt 2015, own translation).

North-west is a type of cooperation aimed at strengthening the northern cooperation, we want to strengthen the northern part in order to make use of the development here too (Qvarfordt 2015, own translation).

In the south-west corner Malmö is known rather for its ties across the sound with Copenhagen than within the region or its immediate neighbours. The interviews indicating a rather weak, cooperation in the south-western corner;

... the EU question in our neighbouring municipalities is, for different reasons, not that visible. Often it is not depending on will but on manpower. But where should you draw the line between regional and international? That is an interesting question. Malmö-Copenhagen is a regional cooperation, though you would think that is international we have placed it within our regional work (Lagergren 2015, own translation).

Studying the role of the partnerships as a mobilisation strategy is additionally interesting in how such act to show the municipalities' different point of departures, as well as their respective inter-regional roles. As seen in the municipal studies by Stephen Schmidt different municipalities takes on different roles, some highly proactive, leading in the search of innovative solutions and others more reactive and adaptive in their approach (1986). Rees and Farrows bright stars and black holes if you so like (1999: 8). Relatable to how in the statements both Malmö and SkNo is viewed by others as good examples of cooperative solutions which have been strategically beneficial for the participating actors and which form is found attractive to replicate. Furthermore, given a quite uneven distribution of resources, partnerships can be found to be a crucial instrument on behalf of the smaller municipalities.

Well, I think it would had been favourable if we were to have a corner in some way down here as well as I believe that the other municipalities possibly are too small to be able to have a specific post set aside for this work (Skantze-Nyberg 2015, own translation).

There has been talks of joining forces with neighbouring small municipalities in sharing a full-time post, it was Ängelholm and Örkelljunga who took initiative but there is nothing decided (Håkansson 2015, own translation).

The choice of smaller, resource scarce municipalities to ally itself with partnerships such as the EU office and the resources it holds could therefore be seen as a direct outcome of "mobilisation and strategic positioning" (Jerneck 2000a: 204). For the larger municipality the partnership model is found useful as well but is rather used to strengthen an existing engagement. Lastly, as found in the case of Hässleholm acting as host for the SkNo EU-office proved a strategic choice in itself, something that will be further explored in the final section.

5.5 Sector-specific and Dependent on Individuals

Turning once again back to the specifics of the individual municipalities it becomes clear that the unevenness in mobilisation seen between the municipalities is also visible *within* the municipalities. Often the result of the prerequisites and strengths of the municipality itself but more importantly also due to specific resources and factors which can be traced to driven and competent individuals.

Some have been very good in seeing opportunities. The Labour Market department is one of them, quite natural since there are good funding opportunities within the ESF. They have been very successful in formulating good projects and they have been very driven in using this in their ordinary development work. It has been quite dependent on highly driven and motivated persons, among them their head of department, who has seen the opportunities in this work. Within the port this has been a more general approach which has been taken in order to pursue the business wanted. The motives behind the will to work with projects has been different, but, much of the work can be attributed Agneta [Nilsson] who works in the port. She has been extremely successful in this. The work has been dependent on someone who has been able to push the issue (Skantze-Nyberg 2015, own translation).

It is very bound to specific persons, if you have an executive director or head of department that do not consider EU projects something to pursue, well then you don't do that. On the other hand, at some departments you find it to be a great opportunity and really seizes it and has multiple projects, so it is very dependent on the person. It is the same if you have very capable persons in writing applications. You can clearly notice when someone moves department or job that you sometimes get a loss in activity (Lagergren 2015, own translation).

As illustrated by the quotes, mobilisation on behalf of the municipalities can often be tied to specific needs. Yet what makes some sectors more distinct in their engagement, even leaders in their field, is having the resources to tie and match these needs with opportunities. As in the case of Trelleborg who has been prominent in quite specific sectors it shall be interesting to see the future development of the municipality's EU work given the decision to 'gear up' and coordinate the activities under a central post. This acts to show also the importance of meeting the drive and enthusiasm with an enabling organisational structure.

Mobilisation is found to be a bottom-up process more often than taking a top-down, political direction and driven civil servants could therefore provide a strong mobilising resource. Though the interviews at times stress the challenge of gaining political approval and support within the home organisation the bottom-up perspective is found to be important. That the ideas originate from the civil servants working closest to the question is found sound by Ulrika Lagergren as "it can be hard to see the most basic needs when you are not working with the question yourself, the personnel who works in the area or with the problem often having better knowledge" (Lagergren 2015, own translation). However, given the importance of an enabling and supportive municipal organisation you can clearly see an interdependence between the political and civil servant levels. One of the factors behind the prominent position seen in Malmö is arguably an early and strong political will to engage in EU related work.

A contributing factor is our previous Deputy Mayor Ilmar Reepalu who was very interested in international questions and early understood that this was an opportunity (Lagergren 2015, own translation).

Having driven individuals within the municipality, either in civil servants which are met with adequate support or direct in the political leadership is therefore seen as important, especially in terms of initiating mobilisation. As indicated above the engagement in EU questions is often attributed with gradual learning but also as a maturing process where the question normalises.

There has been enthusiasts, they were the ones who initiated this and there is a number of individuals who has meant a great deal for their region or municipality among them Nils Arvid in Vellinge, Thomas in Svalöv and Ola Nord in Malmö. They have been the forerunners. Today this work becomes more and more a natural part as EU is increasingly normalised (Leijon 2015, own translation).

This process of maturation and how these early and proactive tendencies of mobilisation is further developed in the ensuing and final section.

5.6 Clear Linkages between *Need* and *Use*

The final form of mobilisation is clearly linked to the previous section of driven individuals and is strongly entrepreneurial in its identity. Mobilisation is here found to be stemming from a way of thinking fostering a specific mind-set among the municipalities, resulting in proactive strategic choices and positioning.

As argued all local mobilisation can be said wearing traces of entrepreneurial behaviour leading to different forms of mobilisation strategies (Zerbinati 2012). The entrepreneurial mind-set is however found to be stronger among some of the municipalities indicated by an innovative and proactive use of the outcomes of state reorganisation processes.

The EU engagement in Malmö is revealing a journey. A journey away from its previous industrial identity but also in how “the notion of *peripherality*” is redefined (Jerneck 2000a: 200). Rather than being seen as peripheral to the central steering of Stockholm the local leadership begins to look beyond the state, forming closer ties to Denmark and the continent (Ibid). Experiencing societal problems following a gradual scale back of its industrial production key figures within the city looked to the emerging “doctrine of regionalisation” as a “window of opportunity” (Ibid). Opportunity driven political leadership in the city could hence be said to identify solutions to the own needs early and acted proactively upon the newfound EU membership;

Both in implementing projects and collecting funding but also in order to promote Malmö. Malmö is today an important node on the map of Europe. We are known. We are known for being capable within a number of areas, here has he [Ilmar Reepalau] really contributed. He held the banner

high for Malmö. Here it becomes evident how important it is with colourful politicians that can speak for their cause (Lagergren 2015, own translation).

This is also visualised by the fact that the Malmö Brussels office, one of the older regional representation offices, was formed already in 1999. Today this has entailed not only a long experience of working with projects and actively towards the EU but also a strong mind-set of recognising the opportunities within it. The leadership has worked actively with making the EU question related work an integrated part of the ordinary activities but also to ensure that the knowledge gained from the experience is implemented. EU engagement should come naturally rather than being “placed on top of the ordinary work” (Lagergren 2015, own translation). EU projects is at large seen as a possibility to test new working methods and finding innovative solutions (Ibid). This has created a strong administrative and organisational structure but more importantly a specific way of thinking and acting.

There is an amazing entrepreneurial mind-set in Malmö, I think that is a contributing factor to why we have so many projects running. The city is curious and has drive and courage to do things. That is very special for Skåne and for Malmö, this drive and will to test EU projects. It is absolutely amazing (Lagergren 2015, own translation).

Hässleholm show similar tendencies of actively using the opportunities provided by the EU to alter the own profile and promoting the municipality beyond the national borders. As seen in the municipality’s EU strategy Hässleholm has “worked actively during the last decade to build a knowledge profile with focus on Europe and the EU”, primarily with Europaforum Hässleholm (Almqvist 2012:1). The municipality has later strengthened this profile further as host for the EU-office as well as a Europe Direct office;

The municipality had a political ambition to construct a knowledge profile, an EU profile, when the regiment closed and the leadership wanted to find a new profile for the municipality (Almqvist 2015, own translation).

Europaforum Hässleholm is the result of this, wanting to do something concrete with the new profile and preferably something related to the EU. No one else was doing that at the time and there was a discussion that we needed to stand out, we must find something where we could excel. At the same time the municipality wanted to create an organization that could bring home the EU funding that everyone was talking about and which you had been acquainted with but felt could be done to a larger extent (Ibid).

When discussing how the municipality’s EU related work functions today Therese Almqvist says that “the ambition is perhaps larger than the organisation, but we are working on finding balance” (Almqvist 2015, own translation). Interestingly, Malmö is used as the benchmark for where the organisation is aiming but as Almqvist points out the municipality cannot measure up to the resources of the much larger city;

They have a completely different organisation, other resources and muscles, it is more established and has been around much longer. It gives them completely different opportunities. They have implemented the question in a different way. We are not quite there yet, in that EU funding is to

be considered in every step, it is said to be done but it is not in practice. Malmö have municipal assembly decisions on this and it is formulated in their EU strategies. Our strategy says the same but is not fully implemented (Almqvist 2015, own translation).

As shown by the statements above finding a natural link between the municipalities' ordinary work and the opportunities offered by EU funds and programmes is found a crucial factor if such work is to be proactive rather than reactive. The international strategy put forward by Helsingborg frames this very well in terms of finding a connection between *needs* and *use* (Helsingborg Kommunstyrelsens Förvaltning 2012). This can be further illustrated by the work seen in the Port of Trelleborg, arguably subject to both the chances and challenges of internationalisation. The port being a municipal owned company makes it distinct in their function and dependency on turnaround if seen in relation to the municipal departments, the entrepreneurial identity is therefore perhaps more natural. However, in relation to the factor of being able to connect need with use and a proactive behaviour the actor provides an illustrative example.

The port of Trelleborg forms a vital node in the TENT-T and is given the status of "Core Port" in the Scandinavian-Mediterranean Corridor, one of the nine in total transport corridors that span across the EU (European Commission n.d.). The TENT-T core network corridors contribute to European cohesion and aim to strengthen the internal market through enhanced multimodality with better inland and maritime transport infrastructure (Ibid). The new policy for 2014-2020 triples EU financing for transport, in total € 26 billion, focusing financing on the defined core network (Ibid). For the port who have actively been seeking funding from TEN-T since 2005 in parallel to own infrastructure investments the 2013 status of core port further strengthens the opportunities of the municipality's maritime transport sector and was an important achievement which was proactively pursued (Port of Trelleborg).

We wanted to become a core port, we wanted the opportunity to seek funding. What we saw was a risk in that if we were not granted the core status we would lose the opportunity to seek such funding. In beginning no one knew but we went on our feeling and were proven right. What we anticipated was a future scenario were the strategic corridors, the most important ports, hubs and nodes would be given priority in the first step of seeking funding for infrastructure developments. As we can see now we were right as this is exactly what has happened (Nilsson 2015, own translation).

Proactively mobilising towards the opportunities seen in the EU hence also acts as evidence of local actors' tendencies to bypass the state and using the EU as a "point of access" to foster certain interests and attract funding (Keating 1999). As seen in regard to Malmö turning a national 'peripherality' into an advantage, actively looking beyond the national borders. This can be seen in the case of the Port of Trelleborg as well who as actively sought to be among the prioritised TEN-T core ports in order to seek co-funding for investments in often costly infrastructure developments. Working with EU projects and being able to extract funding¹² has

¹² For the period 2005-2014 the Port of Trelleborg has been granted 157 million SEK in co-funding for infrastructural developments (Nilsson 2015).

moreover placed Trelleborg on the map, enabling the organisation to build an important foundation of knowledge, expertise and contacts. As described by the Baltic Sea Unit at the Swedish International Development Authority (Sida) Trelleborg has moved from its previous beginner status to being the regional “expert in Baltic Sea cooperation” (Johansson n.d: 1).

This section has aimed at illustrating how some of the local actors have been highly successful in establishing a link between the own needs and the opportunities provided by the EU which has in turn enabled a more proactive behaviour. However, the proactive and entrepreneurial mobilisation needs resources, particularly in terms of courage and support from the political leadership. Interestingly, though all of the representations or forms of mobilisation are decidedly interlinked the final, highly entrepreneurial and proactive form of mobilisation can be seen both as an enabling force, pushing mobilisation through other means as well as a benchmark. The ensuing chapter acts to summarise the findings of the analytical chapter and provides answers to the stated research questions.

6. Summary of the Analysis: a Typology of Local Mobilisation Strategies

Bringing the analytical findings together it becomes clear that a number of representative types of mobilisation strategies can be discerned. These are 'the coordinator', 'expert help', 'network approach', 'strength in numbers', 'sector specific and individualistic' and 'proactive and integrated' mobilisation. The analysis show a clear connection between internal factors and the deployment and shaping of differentiated strategies. Within the municipality resource based factors as well as a highly driven and enthusiastic mind set proved important. Regional factors can be connected to the arguments of Schmidt (1986) in the municipalities being highly receptive to their surroundings.

Providing a discussion on the findings and outcome of the analysis it was seen that such benefitted clearly by a reshuffling of the research question and its sub-question, turning such structure on its head. This is due to the clear connection found between the internal factors and the degree and type of mobilisation, where the former are found to drive and shape the resulting strategies.

Which factors constitute the differentiated mobilisation strategies?

Internal municipal factors are to a large extent resource based, mirroring the previous theoretical contributions (Rees and Farrows 1999; Lorvi 2013; Jerneck 2000b: 202-203). The municipalities have to work from the conditions at hand which are found to diverge immensely. The ability to set aside resources, as in finances and personnel, within the own organisation is directly tied to the administrative capacity. It was found crucial to allocate time for the question within the ordinary work to engage in and pursue opportunities stemming from the EU. These resources are also important as the municipalities are most often asked to match EU input. Resources are also found important in terms of knowledge, competence and experience which proved favourable for the engagement in EU work. The results highlight a learning process where the local governments and the civil servants mature in their relation and ties to the EU meaning that though possibly hesitant in their initial engagement the more established the question becomes the higher the engagement.

Apart from the resources above another factor of weight was the mind-set of the civil servants and political leadership. Following Zerbinati local actors can be seen as opportunity driven and entrepreneurial in their behaviour (2012). A significant factor is therefore the interest and will among the municipal actors to pursue opportunities within reach, driven individuals hence

constitutes an important factor. Finally, establishing a link between need and use was found vital.

Internal regional factors are important drivers of mobilisation as it was found that the municipalities were in many instances highly receptive to their immediate surroundings. Indicative of the findings by Schmidt an important factor was diffusion of ideas among the municipalities. Given the differentiated roles, leading municipalities' act to inspire adaptive and hesitant neighbours (Schmidt 1986). Other regional factors include the access and availability of partnerships and external assistance.

As the most important internal factors of the municipality and region respectively have been outlined the discussion is turned back to the strategic outcome of such;

How are local municipalities in the region of Skåne mobilising towards EU opportunities stemming from a reorganisation of the state?

Firstly, one of the clearest examples of local mobilisation is arguably for the municipalities to invest in resources such as personnel actively working with EU questions. Following Lorvi it is also within the administrative capacity that challenges are found in regard to activity and mobilisation (2013). As both responsibilities and opportunities is shifted closer to the local level it has shown effective and strategically wise to have resources among the internal organisation that can coordinate such with own priorities and needs. The strength of mobilising through strategically setting aside resources for the internal organisation is found foremost in the structure and coordination provided, further 'the coordinator' has shown to be an effective mean of setting direction, acting as initiator for the municipal administrations. The coordinating strategy therefore adds momentum both in the day-to-day work but importantly also for the long-term strategic work of the municipalities. The form of mobilisation is therefore called '*the coordinator*'

Secondly, external assistance has been used by many of the Skåne municipalities, here foremost in association with the KFSK and the EU office in Hässleholm. As mentioned in the theoretical framework in relation to uneven mobilisation the lack of resources might very well hold local governments back from efficiently engaging in EU related questions (Rees and Farrows 1999). The use of external assistance is therefore a strategically beneficial form of mobilisation, especially for the smaller municipalities that does not hold the adequate resources but also for municipalities that are new in working with this type of questions. External assistance can provide initiative and drive acting to 'kick-start' the municipality. The municipalities could therefore be said getting '*expert help*'

Third, mobilisation through the use of networks is a well-established strategy among the municipalities in Skåne. Networks are used both internally as a structuring measure for the municipal EU work and as a mean of connecting the local municipality to regional and international forums. However the larger municipalities show a greater inclination to work with

internal networks, this can be tied to factors such as establishment and organisational resources or the pure size of the municipal organisation. The internal and external networks is useful for access to information, exchange of experience and contacts, with the internal networks providing structure to optimise and secure gained competences. Networks provide an important driving factor for mobilisation as it provide a platform for learning and diffusion of innovative solutions and actions mirroring the theoretical arguments of Schmidt (1986). The '*network approach*' is hence another important mean of mobilising.

Fourth, the clustering of neighbouring municipalities in stronger or looser forms of partnerships around questions concerning the EU is foremost a strategic way of pooling resources. The type of mobilisation is rather established in the region though a predominance is seen among the eastern municipalities, which could indicate a stronger need - lack of resources - or simply that such opportunity has been better operationalised (in the case of Hässleholm the mobilisation is clearly tied to the final strategy). The analysis indicates that the notion of '*strength in numbers*' is a strategic and tried form of mobilisation among the municipalities.

Fifth, local mobilisation has proven to be clearly sector specific with more distinct engagement within certain areas and departments of the municipalities. The internal differentiation can be tied to certain prerequisites of the individual municipality but is more importantly found dependent on individuals within the organisation. Having driven and enthusiastic individuals within the municipal organisation is foremost found an important mobilising influence in order to initiate engagement in EU questions and pursuit of opportunities matching the own needs. The type of mobilisation mirrors the bottom-up perspective often seen but can also be found among the political elite. If found at civil servant level the mobilisation is highly dependent on support from the political leadership and an enabling organisational structure that can pick up the initiatives. This is therefore called '*sector specific and individualistic*' local mobilisation

Sixth, and final, this proactive and entrepreneurial form of mobilisation can be seen both as an enabler and initiator for further mobilisation strategies and as an idealised form of organisation that local actors strive for and use as a benchmark for the own organisation. The strength is found in the establishment of strong linkages between need and use. The proactive, entrepreneurial actors are illustrated by an early identification of EU opportunities provided by a reorganisation of the state and closer ties to the EU and have actively sought to optimise the own gains. Though a specific entrepreneurial mind-set can be discerned the challenge lies in adequately integrating such within the own organisation, interest, courage and will on behalf of the political leadership is therefore seen as a crucial factor. The final strategy is therefore seen as '*proactive and integrated*' mobilisation.

It is important to mention that these are at best ideal representations of mobilisation strategies and it is important to keep in mind that the strategies do seldom function on their own but rather that clear synergies can be drawn between them. This is particularly true for the strongly interlinked final strategies, *sector specific and individualistic* and *proactive and integrated*

mobilisation which are both initiator and idealised benchmark. For an overview of the six forms of mobilisation and the connected driving factors see *table 1* below.

7. Conclusion and Outlook

The aim of this study has been to investigate how local governments, municipalities, in Sweden's southernmost region Skåne engage in, pursue and optimise EU opportunities in their ordinary work and which factors are of importance for shaping their strategic choices. Building on a qualitative case-study using interviews as its primary source of material the thesis answers *How are local municipalities in the region of Skåne mobilising towards EU opportunities stemming from a reorganisation of the state?* and *which factors constitute the differentiated mobilisation strategies?* Conceptualising mobilisation as a growing engagement of local municipalities towards the EU in order to strategically optimise the opportunity structure provided by new responsibilities.

Looking back at the thesis the municipalities' mobilisation towards the EU can best be described as a journey. From initial contact towards establishment and normalisation of the EU question the local actors show a process of gradual learning and maturation. Though the study nearly coincides with the commemoration of Sweden's twenty years of EU membership, two decades under which the regional question has grown, subnational mobilisation towards the Union is still highly uneven. Some municipalities saw the membership as an opportunity early on, arguably even before the ink on the 1994 Accession Agreement had set, whereas others even today remain rather hesitant in their stance towards EU related work. This study stresses that this is linked to the prerequisites of the individual municipality and constituted by internal municipal factors as well as regional factors as the local actors are directly influenced by their immediate surroundings.

The study acts to illustrate that independent of the resources at hand local municipalities in Skåne have found innovative ways of mobilising towards the EU. Using the theoretical framework of *state reorganisation* the study shows how shifted responsibilities, traditionally tied to the state, has resulted in a strategic interpretation of the new opportunity structure provided by the EU. Incorporating the notion of uneven local mobilisation the study sets out to contribute with empirical evidence in an area with limited previous research. Moreover, in answering *how* the local actors mobilise the question of *why* they chose to do so has been answered in part, shining light on the driving forces behind local strategies which range from the wish for development and competitive advantages to new ways to profile and market the municipality outwards. In the table below results from the analysis is presented from which generalisations and theory potentially can be built.

MOBILISATION STRATEGY	STRATEGY Specifics	INTERNAL MUNICIPAL FACTORS	INTERNAL REGIONAL FACTORS
<i>'The coordinator'</i>	- Administrative capacity ¹³	Primarily resource based: - Finances - Personnel - Knowledge - Competences - Experience - Maturity/normalisation	Interregional factors of importance: - Learning and diffusion of ideas were found an important driver for mobilisation, different roles (proactive, reactive) ¹⁴ . - Internal regional set-up and access to partnerships and platforms for cooperation. - Access to external help (partly connected to the above).
<i>'Extra help'</i>	- Administrative capacity - Initiative		
<i>'Network approach'</i>	- Access to information - Learning - Locking down knowledge		
<i>'Strength in numbers'</i>	- Pooling of resources		
<i>'Sector specific and individualistic'</i>	- Driven individuals	Primarily mind-set: - Opportunity driven/entrepreneurial ¹⁵ - Interest and will - Enabling organisation	
<i>'Proactive and integrated'</i>	- Clear linkage need – use - Political leadership		

Table 1: Typology over Local Mobilisation Strategies and Internal Factors.

It should not be denied that the study at hand is highly dependent on the chosen material. A different selection might very well give rise to another outcome. This is of course the case for all studies, however, a larger set of analytical units could potentially generate stronger results and a wider base for generalisation and theory-development. Moreover, given the fluidity of the phenomena at hand the study acts as a snap-shot of the current image of local mobilisation, as seen in the analysis many of the municipalities are gearing up and becoming more established in their EU work which could indicate a different outcome if to replicate the study. An interesting fact in itself, providing ample opportunity for comparative future studies.

¹³ See Lorvi 2013

¹⁴ See Schmidt 1986

¹⁵ See Zerbinati 2012

In conclusion, the study has been able to discern that the local municipalities in Skåne are using a variety of mobilisation strategies, building on and answering to their specific internal factors. Though the degree of engagement differs the author would nevertheless argue partly against the description of ‘bright stars and black holes’ and rather describe local mobilisation as a journey that the municipalities undertake, highly diverse in their point of departure, pace and direction.

8. Executive summary

This study takes its departure in the debate surrounding the ‘Europe of the Regions’ thesis. The theoretical reasoning used in the study does however agree with previous academic debate that part of the underlying rhetoric of such is arguably exaggerated (Johansson 2000: 125-126). Instead the thesis advocates a less dramatic ‘Europe *with* the Regions’ approach highlighting processes of reorganisation, decentralisation and multiplication of actors, shifting responsibilities and creating new opportunities for the regional and local levels (Johansson 2000: 125; Deas and Lord 2006: 1849). Independent of the approach used it is nonetheless clear that European central governments has increasingly come to share the role as intermediary between the subnational and supranational level with local governments as the latter has come to develop direct linkages with the EU (Zerbinati 2012: 577). A process much aided by institutional developments of the EU Regional Policy and Cohesion Policy which has empowered the subnational level and brought both responsibilities and opportunities within reach of the local municipalities. Against this point of departure the thesis set out to investigate the role of the local government within these processes, an area which has largely been kept in the dark. In concrete it asks; *How are local municipalities in the region of Skåne mobilising towards EU opportunities stemming from a reorganisation of the state?* which is followed by the sub-question *Which factors constitute the differentiated mobilisation strategies?* Conceptualising mobilisation as a growing engagement of local municipalities towards the EU in order to strategically optimise the opportunity structure provided by new responsibilities.

In seeking answer for the stated research questions the study uses Bob Jessop’s framework of a *reorganisation of the state* to encompass these shifts of responsibilities and creation of new opportunity structures emphasising *denationalisation*, *destatisation* and *internationalisation* (Jessop 1997; Gibbs et al. 2000). To this the notion of *uneven local mobilisation* is added. As pointed out by Rees and Farrows local involvement forms a highly uneven pattern with some local authorities being far more aware of, and prepared to make use of the opportunities than others, giving rise to the description “bright stars and black holes” (1999: 8). The unevenness in local engagement is often connected to the variation among the European regions in terms of resources, the internal regional and municipal characteristics were hence deemed important factors in shaping local mobilisation strategies. A qualitative case study design with theory-building ambition using the method of interviews was subsequently applied to the study, motivated by limited textual and statistical material and a wish to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena at hand. The region of Skåne was chosen by the clear connection to the theoretical framework. Seven semi-structured interviews was conducted with civil-servants from six municipalities in the region. The selection of municipalities were based on a threefold criteria structure; geography, size and degree of activity in EU work.

Prior to the analysis a brief outline of EU Regional Policy and the Cohesion Policy was incorporated, highlighting especially the gradual developments and change over the last two decades specifically aiming at “empowering sub-central actors within the regional policy process” (Bache and Jones 2000: 1). Following the theoretical framework the cohesion policy is found highly interesting as it reaches directly into the member states, engaging subnational governments and private actors with the Commission and member-state governments (Hooghe and Marks 1996: 78). Something that has shown to bring a great variation of actors and a “highly uneven pattern of subnational mobilization” (Ibid). Skåne is found to have ample opportunity to make use of EU regional policy through a variety of instruments. Opportunities could be tied to challenges such as low productivity, low employment and large internal regional differences which is negatively affecting the development of the region (Socialfondens Övervakningskommitté 2015: 15).

In summary of the analytical findings and in answering the stated research questions it is found that internal municipal factors are to a large extent resource based, mirroring partly the previous theoretical contributions (Rees and Farrows 1999; Lorvi 2013). The main resources were found to be personnel, finances, knowledge and experience. In addition municipalities with a higher degree of engagement were often found to share a specific mind-set, being opportunity-driven and entrepreneurial, this was also found in for of specific sectors of the municipalities which indicated a high dependency of enthusiastic and driven individuals. Internal regional factors did interestingly play a role as well, providing access to partnerships and external assistance and was an important source of inspiration as innovative solution was spread from leading municipalities to adaptors and hesitators (Schmidt 1986). Further, six differentiated though interconnected mobilisation strategies could be discerned, which of four were found clearly resource based whereas the final two could be tied to the entrepreneurial and proactive mind-set seen within the municipality or part of the municipal organisation. In result, the strategies are; *‘the coordinator’*, the *‘expert help’*, the *‘network approach’*, the *‘strength in numbers’*, the *‘sector specific and individualistic’*, and finally, *‘proactive and integrated’* mobilisation. The study has contributed with new knowledge of not only *how* local municipalities mobilises towards opportunities provided by EU membership but partly also answers the question of *why* and which factors influence and drive such strategies.

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Appendix: Interview guide

- **Vem arbetar med EU-frågor?**
 - Vad är din roll i kommunens EU-arbete?
 - Vilka tjänster finns inom området (heltid eller deltid)
 - Är det viktigt att ha en specifik tjänst?
 - Finns det någon intern struktur/organisation för EU arbete?
- **Finns det en uttalad EU strategi eller styrdokument för EU-arbetet?**
 - Om JA: hur används detta?
 - Om NEJ: Är det något som ni anser skulle vara värdefullt?
- **Fördelning politiker – tjänstemän**
 - Varifrån kommer initiativ/driv till EU-arbetet (i.e. ta del av projekt etc.)?
 - Hur är responsen till projekt förslag? (Bland tjänstemän, ledning och politiker).
- **Vad är vikten av externa händelser?**
 - Påverkas man av händelser i ens närområde? (Exempelvis EU-projekt i grannkommunen eller uppmärksammat EU arbete inom regionen)
 - Om JA: hur påverkar detta det egna EU arbetet?
- **Resurser och mobiliseringsstrategier:**
 - Vilka resurser använder kommunen sig av för att ta del av EU-medel?
(Exempel inkluderar samordnare; lobbying; konsulter eller via KFSK/Skåne Nordost)
 - Hur och varför använder man sig av dessa?
 - Har man ökat/minskat resurserna, varför? (Koppling lyckade projekt?)
- **EU fonder och program:**
 - Har kommunen några pågående EU-projekt?
 - Är några av ESIF fonderna eller Sektors-programmen mer intressanta än andra?
 - Om JA: varför är det så?
- **Relationer och roll inom regionen:**
 - Samarbetar ni med andra kommuner inom region Skåne?
 - Vilken roll tycker ni att den egna kommunen har inom regionen?
- **Externt eller internt perspektiv:**
 - Hur tycker ni att informationsflödet till kommunen är och vilka kanaler används?
 - Söker kommunen sig aktivt utåt, inom regionen och gränsöverskridande? (T.ex. genom nätverkande).
- **Framtiden:**
 - Vad är ert mål med EU-arbetet?
 - Hur vill man att EU-arbetet ska utföras inom kommunen?
 - Är EU-arbetet del av kommunens egna framtids- och/eller utvecklings vision?
 - Hur ser era planer inom programperioden 2014-2020 ut?
 - Hur rapporterar/synliggör ni avslutade projekt?

