

FO-RUM'S NEWSLETTER

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Academy project on temporary organisations

Academy of Finland has granted funding for a new research project "The Democratic Impact of Administrative reforms – temporary Governance Instruments in Regional Development". The three year project will start from the beginning of 2012. It relates to one of the key research fields of FO-RUM, i.e. the increase in temporary organisations in public decision-making and, in more general terms, to the temporal dimension of current governance systems. The project will focus on the possible advantages of temporary organisations compared to traditional bureaucratic forms of organising and especially on their effects in terms of democratic governance.

The development towards increasingly informal and temporary governance instruments – especially programs and projects - has been particularly salient within the field of

regional development due to the fact that the Structural Fund system by the midst of the 1990s became normative in Finland and that it still to a large extent retains this position. Thus the Finnish regional development system provides an excellent context for a critical assessment of the democratic effects of new governance instruments.

The responsible leader of the project is Professor Stefan Sjöblom. Other partners related to FO-RUM are Professor Kjell Andersson (Åbo Akademi University) Professor Jan-Erik Johansson (University of Tampere) and the PhD students Sebastian Godenhjelm, Kanerva Kuokkanen and Johan Munck af Rosenschöld.

Stefan Sjöblom
Professor, political science

Rural issues, rural-urban governance and related socio-ecological relationships

TRANSRURBAN is a research network for rural issues, rural-urban governance and related socio-ecological relationships in University of Helsinki. It is new, however, not really new. This acronym was developed for the evaluation of research communities in the university. When discussing the evaluation among researchers in FORUM, in Ruralia Institute and the Faculty of Social Sciences and the Faculty of Agricultural and Forestry, it was remarked how many-sided ties existed between researchers in different departments and faculties in rural studies, in food chain -research and in different environmental and other spatial research. The evaluation of research and doctoral training in the university offered an opportunity to reconsider research cooperation and to improve this research network – or research community as it is called in the evaluation.

The historical background of

Members of the leading group

Kjell Andersson (professor, Åbo Akademi), Leo Granberg (professor, Ruralia Institute and Department of Social Research), Jouko Nikula (Principle Investigator, Aleksanteri Institute), Tiina Silvasti (University Lecturer, Jyväskylä University) and Stefan Söderblom (Professor, SSKH)

TRANSRURBAN is in interdisciplinary rural, environmental and rural-urban studies. In Swedish School of Social Sciences this reserch was carried out since 1990s first in FISS (Research Institute of SSKH) and then in FO-RUM. Ruralia Institute was established over 20 years ago in Mikkeli and Seinäjoki. Both FISS and RI have rather strong tradition of applied research, among others in local gov-

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ernance research. Here one may add Aleksanteri Institute, which brings a tradition of rural and local research in Russia and Eastern Europe.

The mission of the network is to provide a capacity building platform for introducing new and integrative analytical approaches to research of above-mentioned topics, moving beyond traditional rural and rural-urban perspectives. A difficult dilemma to solve has been the language question, how to bridge Finnish and Swedish research traditions. When SSKH moved to the Central Kampus of Helsinki University, to the next building by Faculty of Political Sciences, it became very actual to activate the old ties between researchers and to put together the relatively small resources of each institute and department concerned on rural-related issues.

COMING ACTIVITIES OF THE NETWORK ARE

- Research workshop in Lammi 1.11., organized together with Ruralia Institute,
- Nordic Workshop on "Rural - urban- relation revisited; global and local aspects of development in contemporary fringe areas of Russia", organized together with Aleksanteri Institute in Helsinki, 15-16.12. This event is funded by Nordforsk.
- Conference in Helsinki 27-28.1.2012 on "LAGGING BEHIND OR LEADER IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY? An assessment of LEADER-type development projects as a tool for democratic integration in the contested countryside. Organized by SSKH Kjell Andersson & Imre Kovách (Budapest).

While waiting for results from the University's evaluation, the network is co-operating around four main sub-themes. These are *Food systems, animals and ecosystems, Rural – urban and environmental governance,*

Rural development and transformation and Rural transformations in post-socialis countries.

Leo Granberg

Professor, Rural studies

Innovation through networks

Innovation produced in the context of networks, public-private partnerships and the tertiary sector's "third task" has taken on a grail-like status in the last 10 years. Academic research and management consulting alike have sought to investigate, understand and utilise the mechanisms and synergies that determine the conditions under which such cooperation develops and the means by which these mechanisms can be fostered. In the end much of this boils down to creating and identifying win-win situations, i.e. possibilities for each of the parties to concentrate on their core competence while enabling them, in addition, to benefit from the expertise and insights of the other party. In the evaluation field this has been the case with the cooperation developed between Net Effect Ltd (since March 2011 part of Rambøll Management Consulting) and Forsknings- och samarbetscentret FO-RUM.

As a consultancy providing research-based evidence for decision-making through its research and evaluation activity, Net Effect Ltd has in recent years co-operated with academic experts from across Europe. In many cases cooperation partners have been identified in academic organisations in Finland, in cases

where the deep substantive expertise required necessitated an academic "home base". Recent cooperative projects between FO-RUM and Net Effect included "The evaluation of the national archipelago programme" (undertaken in 2009-2010, commissioned by the Ministry of Employment and



the Economy) and the "Evaluation of the national fisheries programme" (Utvärdering av operativt program för fiskerinäringen i Finland, undertaken in 2010-2011, commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry).

As with most network-based activities, cooperation is promoted by both internal and external drivers. Cooperation is however primarily motivated by self-interest, a willingness to learn and the need for product improvement

thus better addressing the needs and requirements of clients. We all want to do better and networking is often a force multiplier and thus a useful instrument at facilitating this goal.

For a network to be valuable and value creating, it has to meet the minimum criteria for additionality: something is created through the network that would not otherwise be in existence. In addition to this minimum criterion, expert organisations typically expect financial, cognitive and behavioural additionality to emerge as well. We cooperated in order to create a mix of knowledge and experience that was unique. The more generic motivations for cooperation may often be linked to finding economies of scale or additional financial resources / turnover, adding to the expertise or knowledge pool at the disposal of the team or organisation in question, as well as adding something qualitatively significant to the behaviour of the partners involved. Expert companies in the private sector seek to ensure the quality and relevance of their research endeavours and in some cases this necessitates 'academic anchoring'. By cooperating with selected experts

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PROJECTS

Local Democracy and Rural Development in the EU

In the summer of 2010, Kjell Andersson from FO-RUM and Imre Kovách from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences initiated a three-year research project, which is funded by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. In addition to Finland and Hungary, three other European countries are involved in the research, namely Romania, France and the United Kingdom.

The research project focuses on LEADER, which is a central strategy within the rural development policy in the EU. The aim of LEADER is to strengthen the conditions for local citizens to engage in the development process by encouraging them to create and manage development projects themselves. This "bottom-up" approach is seen to be able to accommodate to the differences and peculiarities at the local level.

Bearing this in mind, this research project sets out to study the capacity of LEADER to create new visions and forms of activities. More specifically, this research project aims to evaluate the ways in which LEADER influ-

ences the possibilities of increasing local participation and democracy. As five European countries are included in the project, it will be possible to explore how the political and institutional variations between the different countries affect how LEADER is implemented. These variations may in turn influence the potential of strengthening local democracy.

Currently, the data gathering phase is almost finished and now the focus lies on making comparative analyses of the material. The analyses will be finished later this autumn. In January 2012 the project will organise a meeting, where the results from the project are to be presented. Invitations will be sent to the researchers within the project, external researchers, LEADER-activists and administrators from Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, among others.

Johan Munck af Rosenschöld

Doctoral student

* Kjell Andersson is now professor in Rural Studies at Åbo Akademi University in Vasa

'Institutions for Sustainable Development' continues

The research project 'Institutions for Sustainable Development' initiated in 2003 by Guy Salmon of the Ecologic Foundation (<http://www.ecologic.org.nz>), New Zealand, continues with the original collaborators Kim Zilliacus and Hanna-Maria Bärlund at the



Swedish School of Social Science. The paper 'Collaborative Governance in Finland and New Zealand: Consensual Environmental Policy?' by Bärlund, Zilliacus and Salm-

on is presented at the annual New Zealand Political Studies Association Conference in Dunedin at the University of Otago in December 2011 (<http://nzpsa.wordpress.com>).

The original point of departure of the project involving the role of consensual processes in environmental policy outcomes is explored further in the forthcoming paper. The case studies in Finland and New Zealand are focused on the continuance of the policy process and how the key players involved conceive the process in terms of achieved goals and degree of agreement. The stakeholder participation displays significant differences of outcomes depending on the achieved level of consensus and deliberation. The outcomes are comparatively analysed within a combination of the frameworks of Lijphart's 'consensus vs majoritarian model of democracy' and Jänicke's 'consensual capacity for ecological modernisation'. The continuation of the project follows up its goal to open up further prospects for comparative research of the dynamics of environmental policy development within a Nordic-New Zealand context.

Kim Zilliacus

Senior Lecturer, Political Science
Swedish School of Social Science

CONFERENCES

Rural at the Edge in May 2012

The second Nordic conference for rural research is taking place in Joensuu, Finland, Monday 21 May to 23 Wednesday, 2012.

A number of social challenges and policy issues are confronting Nordic rural areas. The shifting flows and paths of global change, climate change mitigation and adaptation as well as environmental changes, create diverse challenges and opportunities for social and economic transformations in the Nordic setting. The theme of the conference is "Rural at the Edge" indicating not only our Nordic location at the outskirts of Europe, but also a focus on issues

that emerge in this changing landscape and increasing interdependency between countries and regions.

Conference is organized as Nordic co-operation. The conference is hosted by the Finnish Society for Rural research and development in collaboration with Finnish National Rural Network. For additional information about the conference, please contact Tuija Mononen tuija.mononen@uef.fi or visit <http://www.mua.fi/ruralattheedge/>

Subthemes during the conference

- Cultures and people, places and identities
- Natural resources governance and landscape management
- Rural economy and entrepreneurship
- Policies and politics of the rural



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in the academic sphere, expertise in private sector organisations can be both deepened and broadened.

A form of expertise often typical of private sector firms is their ability to facilitate constructive and innovation-driven interaction across boundaries, be it between private and public sector, across policy sectors or across and between vertical levels (of governance, organisational structures etc.). By collaborating with academic experts, this boundary-expertise can be further developed and sustained. Thus cooperating becomes an instrument of competence development and a means of focusing one's efforts on core competence. This allows such companies to specialise further, becoming more strategically focused. As regards internal processes it also contributes to welfare in the workplace.

The advantages of such public-private networks and collaborative efforts were clear in the case of collaboration between FO-RUM and Net Effect. The functions and motivations may be more complex and may also differ across contexts: the main motivation

for the company may not be the same for the university (and vice versa). This is linked to the many functions of the network itself. Is one in the business of building transformative or instrumental networks? Is the objective of network-creation to shift the focus from instrumental (competence-based) networks to transformative (empowering) networks? Are we in fact seeking to change the process of knowledge creation in a fundamental way or are we seeking to "merely" influence the quality of the output? If, however, a more fundamental shift is sought, networks need to be persistent and maintained across time, not simply project-based 'one-off' entities (organised and dismantled according to project duration).

Learning within the network takes time and patience while also demanding that appropriate methods are used in terms of dialogue and network governance. The required resources (time in particular) are easily under-estimated if the network function is not correctly identified. Though in the case outlined above the two bodies were both working

in the same country and largely between people with similar academic backgrounds, even in this case, shared understanding required clarification of the conceptual and cognitive understandings of evaluation practice. This is seen to be an inherent characteristic of any knowledge-creation network: whenever a new network is fostered, a need emerges to find the common vocabulary. Recurring cooperation and the social capital that gradually emerges in this context thus undoubtedly reduces transaction costs over time. Each incidence of renewed cooperation reduces the likelihood of misinterpretation and mixed messages emerging. This makes it more likely that we will successfully meet the needs of the client by providing them with the right mix of academic and practical knowledge and experience.

Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith PhD

Head of Unit
Rambøll Management
Consulting (previously Net Effect Ltd)

PUBLICATIONS

The contours of a new equine industry

The new equine industry, stakeholders and land use planning are the focus of a new anthology in Swedish, HÄSTSAM the contours of a new equine industry edited by Kjell Andersson and Erland Eklund. The book analyses the return of the horse into the Finnish society. Why do so many individuals and groups again want to keep horses? What new economic opportunities are opened up by the new equine industry? What problems have arisen in land use planning? How will the new interest in equine activities be governed and steered?

The anthology is based on a three-year project financed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, the Equestrian Federation of Finland and the Finnish Trotting and Breeding Association Hippos.

The authors are teachers and researchers at the Swedish School of Social Science and the unit of demography and rural studies at the Åbo Akademi University, Vaasa.

HÄSTSAM the contours of a new equine industry is published by the Swedish School of Social Work at the University of Helsinki. The book can be ordered från sskh-info@helsinki.fi for 15 euros.

