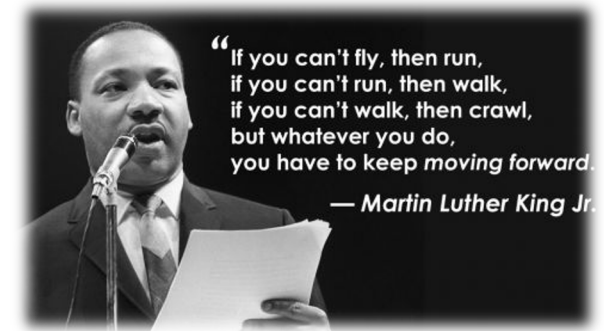


Place leadership

Markku Sotarauta

The questions

- What is place leadership?
- How does it differ from smart specialisation, territorial governance etc?
- Why should we focus on 'leadership' in a multi-actor and multi-dimensional constellation?
- What are the challenges for effective regional leadership?
- What factors drive successful place leadership?
- Are there any good practice examples from the Nordics?



"Management is doing things right;
leadership is doing right things"

(Peter Drucker)

"Leaders are those actors who
more than others influence social
activities"

(Bernard Bass)

"Do individuals make history, or does
history make individuals who make
history?"

(Richard Samuels)

Leadership is about creating a way for
people to contribute to making
something different happen

Who influences whom, how,
for what purpose and in what kind of context –
and with what outcomes?

Management and governance

- Executing goals
- Fine-tuning what already is
- The visible and the predictable

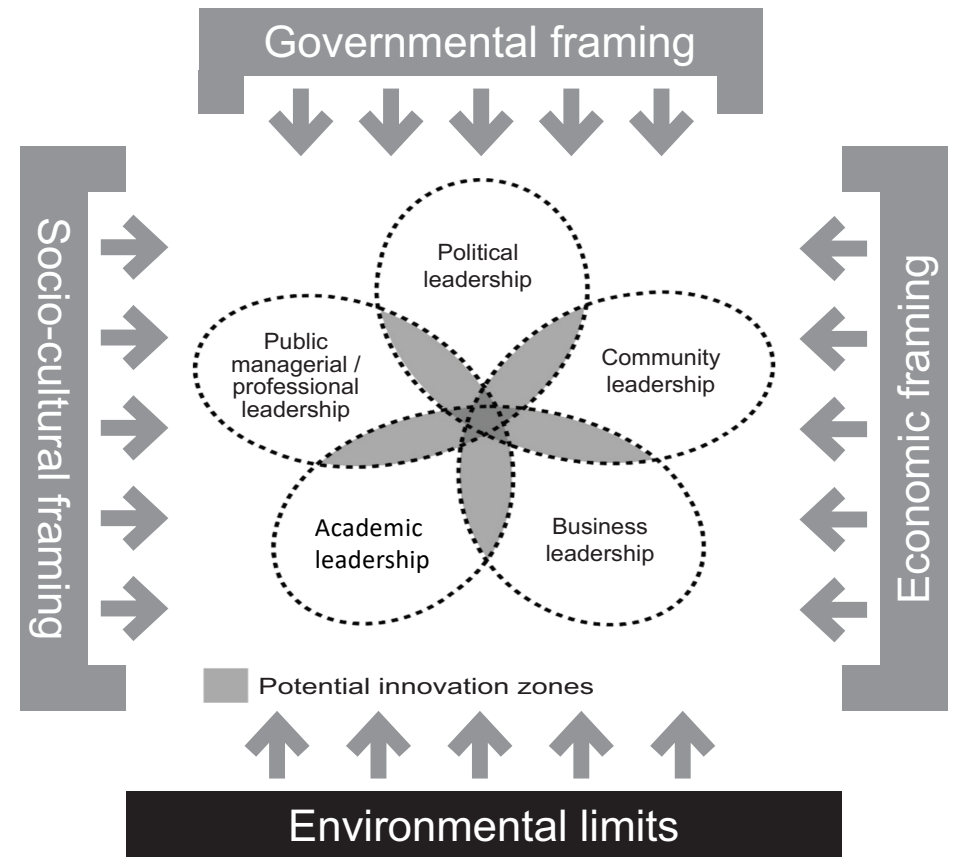
Place leadership

- Seeking futures
- Challenging what already is
- Focusing on the novel and the unpredictable

Place leaders

- Stretch constraints while managers operate within them
- Reach beyond their familiar fields of activity and policy spheres to influence
- Reach beyond those individual organisations and institutions that authorise them to take the lead in the first place
- Are required to influence actors who are not by definition their followers, and conversely

(Sotarauta 2016)



Slightly modifying Hambleton 2021

The core of place leadership

- Mobilisation and co-ordination of activities of independent actors to achieve local, community or regional aspirations
- Place leaders influence the ways collective interpretations of global/national/local phenomena emerge

Mobilisation of powers,
capabilities and resources

Smart specialization and place leadership: dreaming about shared visions, falling into policy traps?

Markku Sotarauta 

ABSTRACT

The concept of smart specialization has rapidly acquired a central position in European policy and academic circles. It raises interesting challenges for the regional studies agenda. First, smart specialization is about not only policy formulation, implementation and evaluation but also pooling scattered resources, competencies and powers to serve both shared and individual ambitions. Thus, policy formulation and implementation need to be seen in a new light. Second, when smart specialization is seen as one of the platforms for aligning several actors to boost regional economic development, the need to understand agency in its multiplicity emerges as central. This paper argues that to achieve truly transformative smart specialization strategies, there is a need to investigate in more depth the multi-actor strategy processes and new forms of leadership, as well as to invest time and money in advancing related capabilities across European regions.

ARTICLE HISTORY

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place leadership; smart specialization; policy; vision; mobilization; institution

JEL CLASSIFICATIONS

O10; O18; O25; O38

Constraining and enabling elements

Governance systems

- dictate resources and formal position of the local development work, and thus also to leaders

The financial capacity

- affects the local capacity to manoeuvre and the space local leaders have for their action



A variety of place-based
needs and intentions

Place
leadership
as a nexus

Intentions of
placeless leaders

Unpredictable economic-
social-political forces



The questions

- What is place leadership?
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Conclusion - place leaders...

How can regional leadership contribute towards implementing green, just and smart transitions?

aim at creating novel context for collective action instead of directly directing the course of actions and events

induce, or rather 'seduce', other actors to do something differently (mobilisation)

do not aim to challenge preferences of the other actors

- but aim to combine individual aims to collective regional objectives

aim to multiply the opportunities and alternatives for other actors

