

Innovative Milieu, theoretical approach and policy concept – A comparative study surrounding the use of the European Regional Development Fund in Sweden.

Master's Thesis (120 credits) in Spatial Planning with an emphasis on European Spatial Planning and Regional development

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Abstract:

The thesis seeks to study through a qualitative text analysis how strategic policy concepts from three different policy documents concerning the use of the European Regional Development Fund can be said to align with two theoretical concepts from the field of regional development. Furthermore this paper aims to analyse how the theoretical- and policy-concepts are operationalized in the project that received funding in accordance with the policy concepts in one of the policy documents.

Keywords: Innovative Milieu, European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), Swedish National Strategy, Skåne-Blekinge, Commission guidelines

Table of Contents

1	INTRODUCTION.....	6
1.1	PURPOSE.....	7
1.2	RESEARCH QUESTIONS	7
1.3	SOCIETAL AND SCIENTIFIC VALUE.....	7
2	INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF THE USAGE OF THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND.....	8
2.1	FROM EU POLICY TO THE PRACTICAL REALIZATION OF IT THROUGH THE ERDF PROJECTS	8
2.1.1	<i>The importance of co-funding for ERDF project.....</i>	<i>10</i>
2.1.2	<i>A projects way from application to approved funding.....</i>	<i>10</i>
2.1.3	<i>The Structural funds partnerships</i>	<i>11</i>
2.1.4	<i>Concluding remarks</i>	<i>13</i>
3	THEORETICAL CONCEPTS – INTRODUCTION.....	13
3.1	THE CONCEPT OF THE INNOVATIVE MILIEU	14
3.2	THE THEORETICAL CONCEPT OF THE REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEM.....	18
3.3	ANALYSIS CHART: INNOVATIVE MILIEU AND REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS	21
3.4	INNOVATIVE MILIEUS & REGIONAL INNOVATION SYSTEMS – A COMPARISON.....	23
	<i>Concluding remarks.....</i>	<i>25</i>
4	METHOD – INTRODUCTION	25
4.1	APPROACHING THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.....	26
4.2	RESEARCH APPROACH	27
4.3	CHOICE OF METHOD FOR DATA COLLECTION.....	28
4.3.1	<i>Comparing in order to describe</i>	<i>31</i>
4.4	SELECTION OF STUDY OBJECTS.....	33
4.4.1	<i>Policy documents – EU-, National- and Regional-level.....</i>	<i>33</i>
4.4.2	<i>Project – For an Innovative Milieu.....</i>	<i>34</i>
4.4.3	<i>Theoretical concepts – Regional Innovation Systems and Innovative Milieus.....</i>	<i>35</i>
5	COMPARATIVE TEXT ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE POLICY DOCUMENTS AND THE THEORETICAL CONCEPTS.....	36
5.1	COMMUNITY STRATEGIC GUIDELINES ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND TERRITORIAL COHESION, 2007-2013	37
5.1.1	<i>Guideline: Improving knowledge and innovation for growth</i>	<i>38</i>
5.1.2	<i>Comparative text analysis between the EU guidelines and the theoretical concepts</i>	<i>39</i>

5.2	THE SWEDISH NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR REGIONAL COMPETITION, ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND EMPLOYMENT, 2007-2013	42
5.2.1	<i>The strategic policy concept of the Innovative Milieu.....</i>	43
5.2.2	<i>Comparative text analysis between the strategic policy concept in the national strategy and the theoretical concepts.....</i>	44
5.3	THE REGIONAL STRUCTURAL FUNDS PROGRAM FOR REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS AND EMPLOYMENT IN SKÅNE-BLEKINGE, 2007-2013.....	47
5.3.1	<i>Comparative text analysis between the strategic policy concept of IM in the regional program of Skåne-Blekinge and the theoretical concepts.....</i>	47
5.4	PROJECTS OF INNOVATIVE MILIEU.....	50
5.4.1	<i>Project 1: Virtual Incubator for the commercialization of ideas within the area of environmental tech: Sweden CleanTech Incubators</i>	51
5.4.2	<i>Project 2: ICT- and moving media in south Sweden – preliminary study and initial activities Blekingedelen (MICT in Blekinge).....</i>	52
5.4.3	<i>Project 3: ESS MAX IV – Growth Innovation.....</i>	52
5.4.4	<i>Project 4: Baltic Sea R&D – Competence center and cluster initiative.....</i>	53
5.4.5	<i>Project 5: Establishment of Sigrun – Software Innovation and Engineering Institute</i>	53
5.4.6	<i>Project 6: South-Swedish Entrepreneurial Fund III</i>	54
5.4.7	<i>Project 7: Moving Media Southern Sweden 1 (MMSS1).....</i>	54
5.4.8	<i>Project 8: NetPort.Experience (NP.XP)</i>	55
5.4.9	<i>Project 9: Lund Bio Incubator.....</i>	56
5.4.10	<i>Project 10: NESST Market- and interest-analysis</i>	56
5.5	CONCLUSIONS	57
6	REFERENCE LIST:.....	60

1 Introduction

The European Unions Cohesion policy was allocated for the program period of 2007-2013 an amount of €347 billion, which at the time was more than a third of the total budget of the EU (European Commission, 2007). The Cohesion policy had under the period three main objectives: Convergence, Regional competitiveness and employment, and European territorial cooperation. In order to realize these objectives, different financial instruments were used in order to co-finance projects throughout the different member states and its regions. One such instrument is the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

The objective of 'Regional competitiveness and employment', which focuses on aims to reinforce the regions competitiveness, attractiveness as well as employment, is funded by the ERDF. In order for the different regions throughout the member states to be eligible for this funding their respective nation states are required to produce a strategy with stated national guidelines for the use of the funds.

In 2007 the Swedish government produced such a document that laid the foundation for the eight other regional programmes throughout the country, each with their own strategy formulated albeit in accordance with the national document but each in accordance with their own conditions and needs.

Within these regional programmes, the different objectives, goals or priorities of the region are formulated in the form of strategic policy concepts. These concepts direct what kind of projects is eligible for funds within each specific concept. One such strategic policy concept is that of the 'Innovative Milieu' which is presented as a primary priority in both the national strategy as well as the regional programme of Skåne-Blekinge, which this thesis intends to divert its research towards. This paper sets out to discover and to understand if how the strategic policy concepts are formulated can be said to come from knowledge that is based upon research in the form of theoretical concepts.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to **study how strategic policy concepts are adopted into practice**. What this means is that this paper intends to study how specific parts of the policy documents pertaining to the use of the European Regional Development Fund are interpreted into programmes and actual projects.

1.2 Research questions

These questions have been the basis for the research done in this thesis:

- How can the formulation of the strategic policy concept of Innovative Milieu be said to correspond to the definition of the theoretical concepts of Innovative Milieu and Regional Innovation System?
- How are the theoretical and policy concepts operationalized in the projects pertaining to the policy concept of Innovative Milieu?

1.3 Societal and scientific value

The societal and scientific value of this thesis lies in the reasons behind it being of an explorative nature.

As previously mentioned in the introduction, the cohesion policy of the European Union holds the position as the largest part of the entirety of the EU budget. Surrounding its specific approach with co-funded projects in order to realize its goals, there exists extensive research that focuses on the specific documents and evaluation regarding their implementation of specific policies. However, I believe a gap exists within this extensive research, a gap that this thesis intends to help discover through its explorative nature.

What is clear is how the different levels of policy documents and the projects that received funding via them, are connected to each other through their specific use of language. In other words and very simplified; projects that formulate their goals and use of language in accordance with for example the theoretical concept of Innovative Milieu receive funding from within that specific part of the ERDF funds. But while the research that exists often evaluate the number of new companies that have been created or how

many new jobs that projects have contributed towards, none of them bring up whether the strategic policy concepts and its projects are theoretically based or how the use of the concept differs in time or between different documents. It is therefore the aim of this thesis to provide the first piece of this potentially immense puzzle for future researchers while at the same time seeking to provide an explanation as to how decisions regarding (mostly) public spending are made.

2 Institutional framework of the usage of the European Regional Development Fund

In order to provide the reader with a clear thread to follow throughout the thesis it will in this chapter present what I have chosen to refer to as the institutional framework concerning the usage of the European Regional Development Fund. What that entails is to explain how and through what policy documents a project funded by the ERDF in Sweden is created.

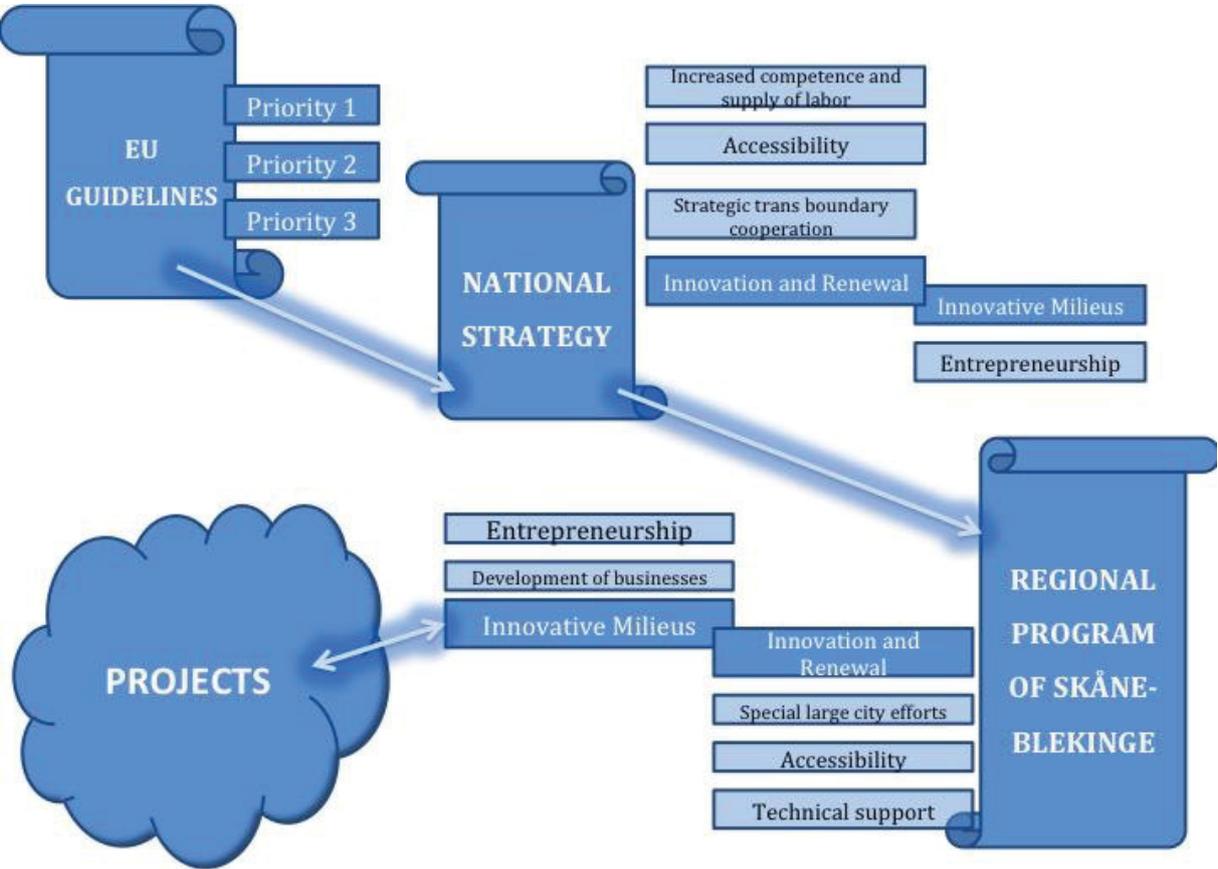
2.1 From EU policy to the practical realization of it through the ERDF projects

In order to start describing this path one should most logically start at the top and trickle down step by step. Here that would be the policy document 'Community strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 2007-2013' (Hereby referred to as 'the strategic guidelines' or 'EU guidelines'). Originally the European council decided upon three overall goals for the cohesion policy of 2007-2013, as a way to further focus the work towards the goals of the cohesion policy, the 'Strategic guidelines' was introduced (Tillväxtverket, 2007). An important aspect of these EU guidelines was that it had a clear focus to enhance coherence between objectives of the EU and those of national, regional and local strategies while providing a flexible framework towards the creation of national and regional programmes (ibid).

One such national programme is the Swedish 'National Strategy for Regional Competition, Entrepreneurship and Employment, 2007-2013' (hereby referred to as

'The national strategy'). The national Strategy was produced by the Swedish government, in dialogue with representatives from local, regional and national level as well as other organizations of interest, both private and public. The strategy makes up the national frame of reference for use of the cohesion policy, or in this case more specifically the use of the ERDF. This work shall in Sweden be performed through eight regional structural funds programmes aimed towards regional competitiveness and employment (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 5). The Swedish government identifies in the National strategy three national priorities, which in turn has further specified sub-goals formulated within them.

Figure 1: Connection, from EU- down to project-level



The eight regional programmes are all produced by a ‘Structural funds partnership’ consisting of representatives from the region in which the specific programme concerns (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 98-99). The national strategy and its three priorities have been used as a framework for the development of the goals in the regional programmes while

simultaneously allowing a clear regional and local influence regarding how they are formulated. Furthermore, the regional programmes formulate their priorities through the use of current regional development plans and strategies (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 32). What this means is that several of the regional programmes often share one or several of the prioritizations used by the national strategy while still maintaining priorities hailing from the regions themselves. By using the programme from the region of Skåne-Blekinge as an example, one can with an easy overview see how they both hold at least in name the prioritization of Innovation and Renewal as well as its two sub-categories of Innovative Milieu and Entrepreneurship (Tillväxtverket, 2007). Furthermore, it is within these specific sub-categories that projects seek funding from the European Regional Development Fund.

2.1.1 The importance of co-funding for ERDF project

In order for a project to be eligible to receive the funds, co-financing must be made for at least the corresponding amount that is applied for. The largest share of Sweden's public co-financing is made by governmental funds channelled via the Swedish budgetary system and decided by authorities on regional or central level. In addition co-funding also stems from municipalities and county councils (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 93). It is mentioned in the national strategy's directives how co-financing can also be made by private actors (Ibid) as well as how it should be continued to be encouraged (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 32). Private funding for projects utilizing the ERDF is however only possible as additional investments. In other words, private funding does not grant the equal funding back from the ERDF as funding would if it came from a public source. This is in accordance with the Swedish government's directive regarding the issue (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 109).

2.1.2 A projects way from application to approved funding

The administrative process or flow a project application goes through to receive funding can be divided into four main parts (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 92). It starts off with the application being sent in to the administrative authority, which in Sweden is the governmentally controlled organization named Tillväxtverket. At Tillväxtverket the application is then registered in the database and checked so that everything is in order

with co-financing and the content of the application. If there should be anything lacking Tillväxtverket will ask for amendments to be made to the application.

The second step in the administrative process for Tillväxtverket when managing project applications is to verify its legality or validity. This involves evaluating if the projects align with the focus areas and criteria of the regional programme. Apart from this evaluation Tillväxtverket also needs to make sure that the projects fulfil the constitutional demands set by the EU as well as the national-level before it can move forward in the decision-making process. An important note in this stage of the process is that projects can be turned down. However a crucial part of the work in this step is to inform the project owners of which indicators might be lacking.

After a project has been validated it moves on towards the step of consultation with the structural funds partnership. The partnership prioritizes between which project that shall be granted funding and delivers a proposal to Tillväxtverket. Tillväxtverket then takes a decision on each project separately and subsequently informs the recipient(s) and the actor in charge of regional development in the concerned county of the decision. In the final stage of the decision-making process the administrating authority (Tillväxtverket) can only grant funding if it is in accordance with the priorities between projects done by the structural funds partnership (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 93). When the partnership prioritizes between projects, they have specific selection criteria that are meant to *“provide them with guidance”* so ideally, the projects that are chosen are to the largest possible extent contributing to the goals of the concerned regional program (*ibid*). These selection criteria revolve around the horizontal goals of the program such as equality, integration, environment and diversity taken from the standpoint of its goal and ambition (*ibid*). In order to support the prioritizations between projects the Partnership is to confer with the actor responsible for regional development in the corresponding administrative region.

2.1.3 The Structural funds partnerships

Throughout this chapter it has been presented how a project is created from the policy of the EU guidelines, down to the National strategy and its priorities which in turn establish the foundation for the priorities in the regional programmes and through the application process to end up as a project co-funded by the ERDF. However, in order to

provide a proper understanding of the whole institutional framework, I consider it of importance to describe how the hierarchical structure looks on the regional/local level. Therefore I have in this part of the chapter decided to present the structure and power of the group known as the 'Structural funds partnership'.

In the national strategy, guidelines are set for the creation of the eight partnerships throughout the same number of the Swedish Nuts2 regions. These guidelines state that the partnership shall consist of elected politicians from the concerned municipalities and county councils as well as representatives work market organizations, county boards and interest organizations (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 36). It also clearly states that the number of elected politicians in the partnership shall exceed the number of the remaining members (ibid).

To provide a proper outline of the member structure in a structural funds partnership, I have chosen to use the example of the Partnership in the region of Skåne-Blekinge. According to the regional programme of the same region their partnership shall consist of the following:

- 5 political representatives from municipalities and county council in Skåne county (including the president chosen by the government)
- 4 political representatives from municipalities and county council in Blekinge county (including the vice-president of the partnership)
- 4 representatives for work market organizations. These are LRF (agriculture interest organization), SKL (employer organization for municipalities and county councils) LO (representative for 14 worker unions), and TCO (central organization for 14 other unions).
- 2 representatives from the county administrative board, one from each county.
- 1 representative from the Swedish work agency
- 1 representative from the interest group/association Coompanion Blekinge, which is a business consultant for business associations

When going through guidelines for how an application is processed and how the role of the structural funds partnership in the decision-making fits in, one cannot help but to wonder about possible issues regarding conflict of interest and how they are dealt with. This interest in conflict-of-interest related issues in the process stems from the fact that

representatives from the public sector dominate the structural funds partnership. Nine politicians (from both county's) representing municipal and regional level, and three civil servants representing the state out of a total of 17 participants. Furthermore, the economic association Coompanion that hold the spot of 'interest group/association' in the partnership is co-funded by public sector organizations as well as the state (Coompanion, n.d). Since the association is co-funded by public means but not part of the public sector, one would argue that it is therefore a semi-public association.

Amongst the nine representatives from regional and municipal level are individuals that belong to the same public organization that is responsible for regional growth. Furthermore, as previously mentioned this is the same organization that also has a supportive role towards the partnership in the decision-making process.

Should a situation arise where there is an issue regarding conflict-of-interest in the partnership, according to Swedish law (SFS 2007: 459) the regulation regarding conflict-of-interest as mentioned in the law concerning it shall be applied (SFS 1986: 223). The part of the law, which is of interest to this topic states that a conflict-of-interest is to be found if the same individual that takes part in the decision-making process regarding whether a project should receive funding or not from the ERDF also has contributed in the decision-making process regarding the project itself at the authority or actor which owns the project.

2.1.4 Concluding remarks

Going through the institutional framework surrounding the usage of the ERDF I have here chosen to adhere to the purpose of this thesis by focusing my research towards studying the sub-category priority of Innovative Milieu, which was brought up both in the National Strategy as well as the Regional Program of Skåne-Blekinge. Further explained, I intend to study how the strategic policy concept of the Innovative Milieu is transformed into practical politics in the shape of project.

3 Theoretical concepts – Introduction

This part of the paper will aim to present two of the theoretical concepts or theories that are brought up or referred to in the above mentioned policy documents. The two concepts that will be presented and discussed are 'Regional Innovation System' and

'Innovative Milieu'. The reason behind choosing these two is that they are two key phrases that keep reappearing in the policy documents and that there exists a theoretical framework for each of them. Furthermore, within the National strategy, the policy concept of Innovative Milieu is described to work as a foundation or pre-condition for Innovation systems to emerge (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 12). This description from the national policy document describes the policy concept of IM as the central concept while the RIS is presented as an element of it rather than as a separate concept. However, as theoretical concepts they are considered two separate theories and I will therefore present them as such.

This leads me as the author of the thesis to ask the question whether they can be said to influence how regional development policy is formulated in the programmes. However, in order for this thesis to find out if such a relationship exists and how it may look like it first needs to present the two theoretical concepts in such a way that this is possible. The discussion in this part of the chapter will therefore revolve around two general questions.

1. What defines the theoretical concept?
2. What are the elements needed to have or create an innovative milieu or regional innovation system?

The purpose of these questions is to make it clear what defines each of the different theoretical concepts and how they differ from each other.

3.1 The concept of the Innovative Milieu

The concept of the '*milieu innovateur*' or '*innovative environment*' was developed in the later part of the 1980s by the research group GREMI or Groupe de Recherche Européen sur les Milieux Innovateurs (Camagni, 1995: 318). It was created within the framework of the endogenous growth approach, which simply explained economic growth stemming from within the milieu rather than from forces external to it (Camagni, 1995). The concept was originally developed for the case of successful and new industrial regions where factors such as the presence of district economies and widespread cooperation between local actors gave rise to fast innovation (ibid). Since its birth by GREMI, the concept of Innovative Milieu has had further definitions added to it by other

members of said group, definitions that has left the concept with a fuzzy and less profiled idea of what an innovative milieu actually is (Fromhold-Eisebith, 2004: 749) but also included other kinds of regions than just the case of new, successful industrial ones.

The main hypothesis of the Innovative milieu approach is that the creation of firms is to be seen as a product of its milieu rather than something separate from it (Ache, 2000). According to Aydalot (1986 in Maillat 1998: 7) the innovation that is created by the firm is to be seen as bi-product of the milieu in which said company resides. Roberto P. Camagni which have been one of the initial protagonists for the work on Innovative Milieu under GREMI defines the Innovative Milieu as

“The set, or the complex network of mainly informal social relationships on a limited geographical area, often determining a specific external 'image' and a specific internal 'representation' and sense of belonging, which enhance the local innovative capability through synergetic and collective learning processes” (Camagni 1991: 3 in Fromhold-Eisebith 2004: 749).

This paper will choose to use the initial definitions of Camagni which focuses on how patterns of personal interaction can lead to positive regional outcomes, especially large numbers of innovative firms (ibid). According to Camagni, this view of the innovative milieu is defined by three elements: *“effective actor relationships within a regional framework; social contacts that enhance learning processes; and image and sense of belonging”*.

Effective actor relationships within a regional framework is the first defining element of the concept of Innovative Milieu. It focuses on co-operation and information exchange between key actors of economic development from within the same region. Focus here lies on the importance of face-to-face interaction and that it specifically is between economic actors that originate from a wide variety of different sectors and organization from within said region. By bringing together actors from firms both within manufacturing- and service-industry as well as those hailing from public support-institutions, universities, research laboratories and more, a *“particularly favourable seedbed for creativity”* is provided (Shapero, 1977 in Fromhold-Eisebith, 2004:750). This mix of actors from different fields provides a milieu in where new combination of

ideas can emerge. This comes to be when the different actors combine their skills and competencies as well as provide each other with inspiration (Fromhold-Eisebith 2004, Crevoisier, 2001 and Ratti et al., 1997). Worth mentioning is how although the personal network of regional actors are bound to the region it is important that it is open to “*inflows of know-how from external sources, to prevent ‘lock-in- situations’ and to enrich the regional circulation of information*” (Fromhold-Eisebith, 2004: 750)

While the previous element of ‘*effective actor relationship*’ puts its effort towards the relationships and cooperation between regional actors in a more formal setting of communications, the element of ‘**Social contacts that enhance learning processes**’ focuses on the informal communication of actors operating within a specific region. These informal modes of communication are explained as being built on a foundation of a shared common identity between regional actors that have a high degree of mutual trust between them. The shared identity is part of the third element in this definition of an innovative milieu from Camagni, which will be explained in the next paragraph. The specific advantages of these *socially embedded learning processes* which often occurs face-to-face and in more private settings can for example be: easier acceptance of advice, access to preferential and cost-free information as well as an easier and faster exchange of know-how. This is facilitated by a reduced uncertainty between actors that share a private relationship. Other benefits could be the support, advice, motivation and encouragement that firms can receive by other actors to back up their entrepreneurial decisions to innovate (Fromhold-Eisebith, 2004). Fromhold-Eisebith (ibid: 750) concludes by stating that the kind of trust that is needed in order to establish such fruitful kinds of relationships between actors in an innovative milieu needs a long time to grow, and they need to grow by themselves. Following that, one can assume that the creation of pro-active policies in accordance with the IM may be hard to accomplish.

The third and final characterizing element of the Innovative Milieu is the ‘**Regional Image and sense of belonging**’. It states that actors within a successful economic locality all share a common identity related to their shared region. This common identity is often used to brand or market them as belonging to their specific region towards the outside world. An important factor is how this shared regional identity is also what sets the spatial boundaries for the innovative milieu. The physical borders of the Innovative

Milieu end where the social networks and feelings of belonging to the region fade out. A definition shared by both Maillat (1992 in Proulx, 1992: 149-153) and Ratti (1992 in Proulx, 1992: 149-153) who defines the milieu as a “*grouping of elements of social, economic, political and cultural characteristics*” and “*occurring within a specific shared geographic context*”. This is an important element of the theory since it does not conceptualize spatial proximity in terms of geographical distance but rather focuses on the potential for exchange and contacts between actors via their shared sense of belonging or “*similarities in attitudes or cultures*” (Ache 2000: 697). This shared region related identity and sense of belonging further functions to unite or harmonize the actors of the region. As previously mentioned in the part of ‘*social contacts that enhance learning processes*’ it is of crucial value for the triggering of innovativeness that actors from a wide variety of sectors and organizations come together and share their knowledge with each other.

In the article ‘The concept of Innovative Milieu and its relevance for public policies in European lagging regions’ by Camagni (1995), the view on the innovative milieu focuses further on how spatial proximity is essential for economic development. Camagni in this work builds upon notions brought up by Fromhold-Eisebith by clearly defining the Innovative Milieu as something that has a fast reaction capability and capacity for shifting resources from a declining sphere of production to a new one while at the same time utilizing the same fundamental know-how (ibid: 318). Furthermore, Camagni brings up characterizing economic elements of the IM approach. These elements further build upon and/or specify the definition previously mentioned by Fromhold-Eisebith quoting an earlier work of Camagni.

The elements are divided into the three categories of district economies, proximity economies, and synergy elements (Camagni, 1995: 319). Defining factors of the IM previously mentioned such as the sense-of-belonging to the region and the trust that it entails both run like a red-thread through the characterizing elements. However, Camagni further specifies advantages such as: reduce in the cost disadvantage of doing business with small local firms compared to doing business with large firms, and synergy between public and private actors within areas such as infrastructure and service projects (ibid). An interesting point Camagni makes is in describing how the different elements of the IM are often performed at larger companies in their R&D

and/or strategic planning departments. What gives the IM an edge though is how these elements or activities are performed "in a collective and socialized way by the milieu itself, through fast information circulation, imitation and cooperation processes" (Camagni 1991a in Camagni, 1995: 319). This shows how the concept of IM tends to focus more on to the small and medium sized enterprises rather than larger ones. Furthermore Camagni lists and describes how IM can be found in a variety of different areas such as metropolitan areas, newly industrialized areas, old industrial areas and even in lagging regions (Camagni, 1995: 321). However, Camagni declares that this does not however entail that an Innovative Milieu can be found anywhere.

3.2 The theoretical concept of the Regional Innovation System

The concept of the Regional Innovation System does not have a commonly agreed upon and clear definition of the concept itself (Doloreux & Parto 2004:3). With this in mind, I have chosen to start presenting the concept of the RIS by explaining its origin shortly followed by a discussion regarding its key elements or building blocks according to different authors responding to the previously mentioned questions.

The concept of the RIS emerged in the early 1990s as an analytical framework to better understand the innovation process within a regional economy (Asheim et al., 2003; Isaksen, 2002, Cook et al; 2002 in Doloreux & Parto 2004: 3). It emerged from the use of the innovation system concept by Freeman in his analysis of the Japanese economy in 1987 as well as the work on national innovation systems (NIS) by Lundvall in 1992 and Nelson in 1993 (Asheim & Gertler in Powell et al, 2005). Furthermore, Doloreux and Parto (2004) brings up the origin of RIS as hailing from two main bodies of theory and research, one of them being the system of innovation as was previously mentioned, while the other is from the literature of regional science.

The literature on innovation systems conceptualizes innovation as hailing from social interaction and collective learning processes between for example different departments within a company and/or external cooperation's with other companies or actors (Dosi 1988, Cooke et al. 2000 and Edquist 2004 in Doloreux & Parto 2004). Lars Coenen (2007) simplifies it somewhat by stating that innovation occurs in interaction between economic agents. Asheim and Gertler (in Poweel, 2005) further expand on this

by stating that geography or the spatial context is fundamental to the emergence of innovation. They build this notion on the basis that the trajectories of technology are based upon what they refer to as “sticky” knowledge. The “sticky” knowledge here refers to tacit knowledge. Tacit knowledge is built upon face-to-face interaction and done by people from the same region that shares culture, norms and institutions with each other. Doloreux and Parto (2004: 5) shares this notion and develops it further by describing innovation as something that is embedded in these social relationships which develop over a long time along culturally determined lines which are specific to the region from which they emerge. (Johnson, 1992 and Lorenzen, 1998 in Doloreux & Parto 2004: 5). Granovetter (1985 in Coenen, 2007: 805) further defines this embeddedness as something referring to *“personal relations and networks ingrained in a local social and cultural context”*. These social networks within their shared cultural context can develop into benefits for its inhabitants such as: *informal rules, and habits that coordinate economic actors under conditions of uncertainty (e.g. innovation) and other region-specific benefits* (Storper, 1997 in Coenen, 2007).

Maskell (et al 1998 in Asheim & Isaksen, 2002) describes this spatial proximity between regional actors as something that makes it possible for them to *“create, acquire, accumulate and utilize knowledge a little faster than firms outside of knowledge intensive, dynamic regional clusters”*. These clusters are defined as concentrations of interdependent businesses bound together within a geographical context (Rosenfeldt, 1997 in Asheim & Isaksen, 2002: 9), which together with supporting organizations are what a RIS according to Asheim and Isaksen consists of (1997 in Asheim & Isaksen, 2002: 10).

The categorization of the theoretical concept according to Asheim and Isaksen as previously mentioned consists of two main actors. The first are the firms of the region, which simply put consists of companies from the region’s main industrial cluster and its supporting industries. When presenting the second and final main actor of a RIS the authors bring up the need for a ‘institutional infrastructure’ to be present in a regional innovation system, which consists of actors such as *“research and higher education institutes, technology transfer agency’s, vocational training organizations, business associations, finance institutions etc., which hold important competence to support regional innovation”* (Asheim & Isaksen, 2002: 10). This view literally excludes

companies that are not part of what the authors refer to as the 'main cluster in the region' from the RIS.

A similar and perhaps less excluding categorization of the main actors in a Regional Innovation System is done by Braczyk (et al, 1998 in Cooke & Memedovic, 2006: 5). Braczyk explains in his definition how an innovation system consists of one supply side and one demand side. In this definition the supply side consists of the "*institutional sources of knowledge creation as well as the institutions responsible for training and the preparation of highly qualified labour power*". The demand side then consists of firms and organizations, which apply the knowledge output of the supply side in the creation and marketing of innovative products and processes. Braczyk also adds an extra group, which bridges the gap between the demand and the supply side. This group consists of a wide range of different organizations aimed at supporting innovation such as: technology centres, business innovation centres, organizations in the higher education sector as well as different mechanisms, which provide capital for innovation measures, such as venture capital systems.

David Doloreux (2003 in Doloreux & Parto 2004: 3) defines the concept of RIS as:

"a set of interacting private and public interests, formal institutions and other organizations that function according to organizational and institutional arrangements and relationships conducive to the generation, use and dissemination of knowledge".

What is worthy of note in this definition is the mentioning of public interests. Braczyk also brings up this emphasis on the public sector. In his work on the two sides (and the group which bridges the gap between them) of RIS he continues his definition by adding two separate dimensions to it, the governance dimension and the business innovation dimension (Braczyk, 1998 in Cooke & Memedovic, 2006: 6-7). The governance dimension consists of "*public policy, institutions and knowledge infrastructure [...]*". The actors which belong to said dimension are explained to often work in such a way that may enable an organizational setting, in which regional administration works as an enabler of networking and cooperation between actors both inside and outside of public governance. Further going into the second dimension which is the 'business innovation dimension' would be repetitive and redundant since it responds well with other definitions mentioned previously by other authors. The importance in this paragraph

lies with Cooke and Memedovic's (2006: 6-7) view on the public sector in a regional innovation system. In their conclusion they state that a RIS must be a public entity where the market cannot provide the region with the innovation services it requires. However since the users or customers of the RIS are presumed to be private actors, the system itself should if feasible be able to evolve into a mix of profitable elements and co-ownership between private and public (Cooke & Memedovic, 2006: 28).

A conceptual flaw of the concept of Regional Innovation Systems lies in the fact that it can be found anywhere (Doloreux & Parto, 2004: 10). This defining feature or critique is brought up by several authors which claim that RIS can be found in regions not necessarily with a strong preconditions for innovation. Whether they be old industrial regions, peripheral regions, rural regions and regions in transition, they are all said to contain a RIS (Kaufmann & Tödtling, 2000; Doloreux, 2003; Wigg, 1998; Quévit & van Doren, 2001 in Doloreux and Parto, 2004: 10). This "flaw" however is not something I as the author of this paper is concerned with, as has been stated previously it is the goal of the paper to find out what defines a RIS and what actors are involved in it. This vagueness of the concept which has been presented does open up to some questions that are shared by Doloreux and Parto (2004: 20) who in their concluding remarks question the soundness of a concept on which significant proportion of regional policy making is based. Although finding an answer to these question is not directly aligned with the chosen purpose of this thesis, it will however be taken into consideration in its empirical analysis.

3.3 Analysis chart: Innovative Milieu and Regional Innovation Systems

Category	Innovative Milieu	Regional Innovation Systems
Key Actors	Actors from both private sector such as manufacturing as well as service industry and university and research organisations and the public sector.	Companies of the region and the institutional infrastructure consisting of <i>“research and higher education institutes, technology transfer agencies, vocational training organizations, business</i>

associations, finance institutions etc., which hold important competence to support regional innovation”

Emergence and source of Innovation

Through the formal and informal relationships within a region characterized by a shared sense of identity and regional image.

Through cooperation and synergy with other actors mainly through tacit/sticky knowledge.

Spatial boundaries

Shared sense of belonging and regional image

Organisational and institutional arrangements

Definition of the concept

The set, or the complex network of mainly informal social relationships on a limited geographical area, often determining a specific external 'image' and a specific internal 'representation' and sense of belonging, which enhance the local innovative capability through synergetic and collective learning processes” (Camagni 1991: 3 in Fromhold-Eisebith 2004: 749).

“a set of interacting private and public interests, formal institutions and other organizations that function according to organizational and institutional arrangements and relationships conducive to the generation, use and dissemination of knowledge” (Doloreux, 2003 in Doloreux & Parto, 2004: 3).“

View on external actors as a complement for the region.

“cooperation with external institutions, firms or public agencies and research centers is crucial for the continuous recreation of local competitiveness and innovation capability” (Camagni, 1995)

A focus is put on the internal organization of a region; no mentioning is made of external actors within this context.

3.4 Innovative Milieus & Regional Innovation Systems – A comparison

In order to compare similarities and differences and to be able to present them in a clear and consistent way, the thesis will here present several categories in which the theoretical concepts will be compared to each other. The selection of these categories have been chosen in accordance with what I consider to be the most defining elements of the theoretical concept. The analysis chart that was presented previously is written in accordance with these defining elements. In order to provide the analysis chart with the information that was required to perform the data extraction, categories may also be chosen in accordance with different topics brought up in different policy documents. Further explanation regarding the analysis chart and its use for this thesis will be presented in the end of the following chapter on methodology.

Emergence and source of Innovation

Both of the theoretical concepts bring up innovation as something that emerges from the company but through the stimulation received through and from knowledge networks of different kinds. At a first glance on the two concepts one could assume that the focus on *“mainly informal social relationships”* of the IM would be a clear divider of the two. However, several authors write about how RIS include a social embeddedness of the local networks as something that provides its actors with specific benefits in order to be able to be more innovative and thereby also more competitive. This view is matched in one of the three elements of the Innovative Milieu as presented by Camagni in Fromhold-Eisebith (2004), namely that of the ‘Social contacts that enhance learning processes. However, a difference perceived on both of them is how IM emphasises that importance of having a *“specific external ‘image’ and a specific internal ‘representation’ and sense of belonging”* (Camagni 1991: 3 in Fromhold-Eisebith, 2004: 749). The importance of this lies in its ability to present a strong attractive region towards external forces as well as a unifying internal identity that has the function of *“harmonising the agents’ differing professional background ... and interests, directing them towards common goals of locality development”* (Fromhold-Eisebith, 2004: 750 in Tripp, 2008).

Key-actors of the concepts

As in with the previous topic the two concepts are quite similar to one another. They both revolve around what defiantly seems like a triple helix inspired combination of actors which is the name of the concept used to describe the relationship between business, governmental and university/research sector in the world of innovation studies (Etzkowitz, 1998). The concept of RIS brings up its key-actors within a diverse set of ways since several of the published authors define it with a different term. However, the common denominator between the different definitions seem to be that they all include clusters of interdependent firms that are bound together within a geographical context, together with supporting institutions and organizations. The IM approach however tends not to be as specific in its definition as the RIS concept. It focuses on the triple-helix relationship with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises.

Spatial boundaries

This topic tends to be somewhat harder to separate than the previous ones. The RIS approach is according to its name focused on a regional boundary. Meaning that the RIS ends where the region administrative or judicial boundary does. In the case of the IM concepts as previously brought up it does not conceptualize spatial proximity for the actors of the “region” in terms of geographical distance but rather puts its emphasis towards the potential for exchange and contacts between actors via their shared sense of belonging (Ache, 2000: 697).

Definition

I have here chosen to include the definitions by Roberto Camagni for the concept of Innovative Milieu and David Doloreux in the analysis-chart in order to provide an easily accessed overview of the concepts main themes as provided by renowned authors within each of the specific concepts.

View on external actors as a complement for the region

In the different texts that bring up the two theoretical concepts a specific focus on external economic actors is only brought up within Camagni’s (1995) work. Here he

brings up its importance as a factor that maintains a steady source of new knowledge into the region that keep the local competitiveness and innovation capability refreshed.

Concluding remarks

What I perceive as the initial problem in comparing these two theoretical concepts is how stretchable their definitions are and how this enables them to appear very similar to each other. An example for this could be what they both consider the main actor of the region. According to authors writing about RIS it often specifically states the kind of actor and how they cooperate with others in a more formal and organized manner. While the concept of IM describes its main actors in far more general definitions and their synergy and cooperation is focused on mainly informal (but also formal) relationship. The point that is to be made is that the concept of IM tends to provide more versatile definitions of the elements that it consists of. This enables the concept to often stretch itself well into an often-similar replica of the RIS, making a distinction between the two almost impossible.

In the introduction of this paper it was explained that it sets out to discover and to understand if the strategic policy concepts were formulated with the theoretical concepts in mind (or according to them). Assuming hypothetically here that they in fact were, even if I were to point this out through a proper analysis it would still come down to my own subjective interpretation of for instance how much or how little I believe these theoretical concepts contain. This problem of subjectivity that can by any regard be considered a distinct weakness of this thesis, is further discussed in the following method chapter and will therefore not be lingered upon further at this point in the paper.

4 Method – Introduction

Gerry Stoker (in Marsh & Stoker, 2010:182) in his co-authored book titled ‘Theory and Methods in Political Science’ introduces the reader to the chapter on methodology by stating that it is of crucial importance to be able to explain the logic of the research design chosen by the researcher, as well as what makes it fit for its purpose. Following

on that advice I, as the author of this research will in this chapter present, discuss, and motivate the decisions that I have taken in regards to research design, methodology and selection of subject.

4.1 Approaching the research questions

Research does not start with a literature review or with data in search of an explanation; it starts with a research question (Hancké in Marsh & Stoker, 2010:236). Such a question according to Hancké needs to be asked in such a way that the answer given to it through research can be the wrong answer from what you as the researcher expected. Further, the research question needs to be simplistic enough so that it is understandable for the reader without requiring any major pre-existing knowledge of the subject. Lastly, the research question needs to be researchable, meaning that the empirical material needed in order to answer the question need to exist and be obtainable (ibid).

Earl Barbie (2007 in Shields & Rangarajan, 2013:8) identifies three purposes behind empirical social science research. These three are description, explanation and exploration. At a first glance at the purpose of this thesis one could assume that its scientific nature is that of a descriptive approach which aims to explain what is going on by analysing and presenting the relation between the policy documents and the theoretical concepts. However, the aim of this research is rather to use the data provided by its initial stage as a point of departure for research best defined within the frames of exploratory research. The main goal of exploratory research is to be able to produce inductively derived generalizations about the activity or process, which you as the researcher have chosen to study (Stebbins, 2001: 8). To be able to conduct such an explorative study successfully it is imperative that the phenomenon that is to be explored is approached with both flexibility and open-mindedness (ibid).

Robert A. Stebbins (ibid) motivates the usage of an exploratory approach when conducting research with the following statement:

"Researchers explore when they have little or no scientific knowledge about the group, process, activity, or situation they want to examine but nevertheless have reason to believe it contains elements worth discovering"

What this thesis is doing is to study how specific strategic policy concepts are

transformed into practice. I have found no previous work that brings up this in their research and therefore I have chosen the explorative approach, since I believe that there are elements worth discovering from where the research has put its aims.

4.2 Research approach

According to Furlong and Marsh (in Marsh & Stoker, 2010: 184) *“each social scientists orientation to his or her subject is shaped by his/her ontological and epistemological position [...] they shape the approach to theory and the methods which the social scientist uses”*. Furthermore, this approach towards epistemology and ontology states that it shapes what kind of result the researcher believes that he or she can claim from their work (ibid, 2010:189). However, Alan Bryman (1984) argues that when it comes to choosing between quantitative or qualitative in ones research it is not a question of one’s epistemological nature but rather a technical one. Bryman (1984: 84) explains how *“qualitative research is inherently exploratory. As a result of this emphasis, the qualitative researcher embarks on a voyage of discovery rather than one of verification”*. Ariadne Vromen (in Marsh & Stoker, 2010: 250) writes how originally political science was more or less built upon the descriptive qualitative approach. This domination by a qualitative approach has in later years changed and now it competes evenly with qualitative methods (Bennet et al, 2003 in Marsh and Stoker, 2010: 256). This change is explained partly due to its closeness to other disciplines within social sciences such as; sociology, history economics and geography. This proximity influences the methods used when performing research (Marsh & Stoker, 2010:256). Vromen concludes in her chapter that even though the usage of qualitative methods in political science may have been marginalized, the different sub-disciplines of it, such as policy studies, will provide the discipline with an upswing of qualitative research methods, amongst them the interpretive discourse analysis (Marsh & Stoker, 2010: 265-266).

Research that uses qualitative methods tends to aim their focus on a single or a few cases or examples (Marsh & Stoker, 2010: 255). While qualitative research tend to focus on explaining outcomes in individual cases by explaining how and why that activity or phenomenon occurred, a quantitative method would approach the activity by studying several cases where the same activity have occurred and try to establish a pattern of the ‘average’ cause of that activity (ibid). Furthermore, quantitative researchers formulate

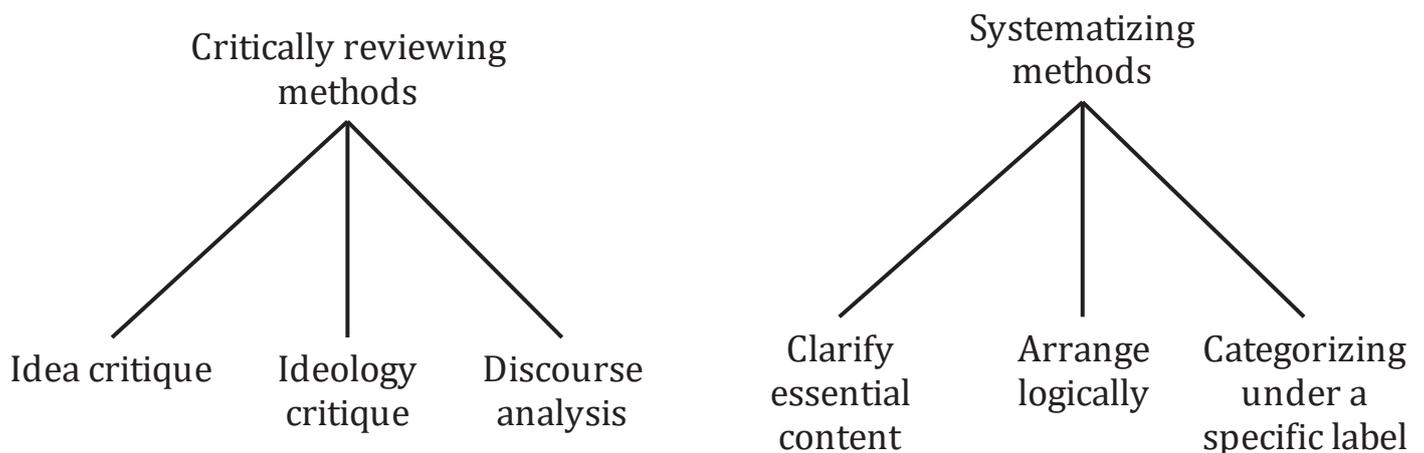
questions such as: 'what is the effect of X on Y?' while questions asked by qualitative researchers can be said to aim deeper into what is yet unknown and where nature of the answer is less likely to be expected (Mahoney and Goertz, 2006: 230 in Marsh & Stoker, 2010:255). Beck (2006 in Mahoney and Goertz, 2006:231) believes the contrast between the two approaches to exist in whether the researcher goal lies in "*finding some general law like statements or in explaining a particular event*". However some qualitative researchers reject the aim of explaining the causality of an activity or phenomenon and rather focus on providing understanding or interpretation of them. (Caterino and Shram, 2006: 5; Schwartz-Shea and Yanow, 2002: 461 in Marsh and Stoker, 2010: 256)

The purpose of this thesis more thoroughly explained, is to explore and to understand how policy concepts are transformed into practice. In order to achieve this purpose and to understand the reasoning behind such a transformation, I believe that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon is necessary. The different authors view on qualitative versus quantitative approaches which have been presented in this chapter describe how a qualitative approach rather than a quantitative one may in depth be able to shed light on such a transformation. I have therefore decided to proceed by using a qualitative method for gathering the data needed to fulfil the purpose of the thesis.

4.3 Choice of method for data collection

Following the choice of a qualitative approach and the fact that the data is to be gathered from written materials a qualitative text analysis has been chosen for the method of data collection. In the book *Metodpraktikan*, Esaiasson (et al, 2007) explains that the purpose behind using a qualitative text analysis in ones research is to bring out the essential content of a text through careful of reading of its elements, its whole and the context in which it is included (ibid., : 210). However as Esaiasson (et al, 2007: 210-211) states in the chapter pertaining to qualitative text analyses, the terminology of it tends to fluctuate and the different methods housed within it are numerous.

Figure 2: Illustration of the method's different applications (Esaiasson et al, 2007: 210).



In order to illustrate the different uses of the method of qualitative text analysis Esaiasson (et al) outlines two main categories of formulations of questions pertaining to text analyses (see figure 2: Illustration of the method's different applications): those questions that pertain to research which seeks to systematize the content of texts, and those questions that seeks to critically review their content (ibid).

Within those that seeks to critically review a text Esaiasson lists three methods: '*Idea critical*' which seeks to clarify to what extent a given argument in a text lives up to certain standards of a rational or moral nature, '*Ideology critical*' which seeks to lift up societal conflicts that are reflected in a given text, and the method of *discourse analysis* (Esaiasson et al, 2007: 212). The latter of the three is according to Esaiasson (et al) described as being focused on power structures. This view stems from the framework provided by French social theorist Michel Foucault. Foucault developed a framework that posited that "*power was developed and exercised through the control of knowledge and that powerful interests created and maintained particular discourses to minimize any challenge from others also interested in these forms of knowledge*" (Grbich, 2007: 14 in Marsh & Stoker, 2010: 264). However, many different kinds of studies can be sorted under the method of discourse analyses even if it does not tend to focus on power structures (Esaiasson et al, 2010: 212). What does remain a defining feature within this commonly used method (ibid) is how it is "*fundamentally concerned with the analysis of language [...] to uncover some of the ways in which people or groups [...] seek to represent their actions in texts and language* (Jacobs, 2006: 138 in Marsh & Stoker, 2010: 264) or in

other words: how the use of language is what shapes the reality which the reader perceives (Esaiasson et al, 2010: 212).

Within the category of different approaches for text analysis that seeks to systematize written content, there are according to Esaiassons (et al) three more precise forms of the method. These three methods are all different variants of describing analyses. The first one of these seeks to bring forward and clarify the essential content of a specific text produced by an actor or actors. The second of the more precise forms of the text analysis method is that which to logically arrange the content of the texts. This is used for example in researches that seek to get an overview of different arguments used in a political debate. The third and last of the three applications for the method is about categorizing the content of the text under a specific label. Esaiasson (et al) presents examples of research questions where this specific part of the method might be used. For instance an example of such a question could be: *“Was the political Gaullist party politics during the 1950s characterized by a liberal or conservative view of the state?”* (ibid). This thesis therefore perceives that the same choice of method could be done with the question: *“Are the strategic policy concepts mentioned within the ERDF Program for Skåne-Blekinge formulated in accordance with the theoretical concept of RIS, IM, or none of the above?”*. This application of use of the text analysis aligns well with the previously stated purpose and research question of this paper. I as the author therefore conclude that the categorizing application is what this study will use to fulfil its purpose.

Esaiasson states how the methods pertaining to critical reviewing go a step further in their analysis than that of methods pertaining to systematizing. The research that this thesis intends to do simply revolves around how the two theoretical concepts are handled in the policy documents. Therefore, it does not need to delve into methods that aim at critically reviewing a theory, idea or power structures that may or may not exist within the written language. On that point, this thesis will move forward with a qualitative text analysis that intends to categorize the content of the policy documents in accordance with their inclination towards either of the previously mentioned theoretical concepts.

4.3.1 Comparing in order to describe

The approach this thesis has chosen within qualitative text analysis is that of a comparative analysis. When performing such an analysis Esaiasson et al (2010: 137-139) brings up technical requirements that need to be taken into consideration. A first and crucial requirement is to clearly describe how I as the author have chosen to operationalize what I intend to compare. In the context of the research of this paper, I need to present to the reader the different categories or elements of the theoretical concepts that are of interest to this research. The chart that was presented at the end of the Theoretical concepts chapter has been constructed in order to accomplish this purpose. This chart is what Esaiasson et al (ibid) refers to as an analysis chart. The analysis chart is a tool used for comparative analysis that has the purpose to grab essential aspects of the activity or phenomenon that is to be studied. The correct usage of the tool helps direct the analysis by providing the answers to the question: *where shall I look for what*. However, seeing as the two theoretical perspectives that will be compared to the policy concepts can be perceived both as vague and similar to each other the analysis-chart will be used together with the presentations of the theoretical concepts presented in chapter 3. This in order to provide a more thorough description of each specific concept, that would be impossible to convey only through the use of the analysis-chart.

The list of technical requirements previously mentioned need to not only be able to operationalize the theoretical concepts but also provide an ample description as to why the specific components within it are relevant for the research. Furthermore, it is of value that the different categories or components in the analysis chart are mutually excluding. This means that what is describes to fit within the theoretical concept of IM does not also fit within that of RIS. However, Esaiasson et al writes that the occurrence of such demarcations is most often impossible to avoid when conducting research. It is however of great importance that the researcher remain transparent in his or her research with such occurrences (ibid).

When performing a categorizing analyse such as this a problem most likely to be encountered is that of level estimations. The dilemma of level estimations asks the question: where the line is to be drawn between what is to be considered 'a little' and 'a lot' or in other terms: if a policy document can be said to very inclined towards the

theoretical perspective of RIS or very little towards that of the perspective of IM. In the introducing chapter of this thesis the different research questions was presented. One of these questions pertains to how the strategic policy concepts (IM or RIS) can be said to correspond to the theoretical concepts of IM and RIS. When this question is answered in the empirical chapter by using the analytical method to which this chapter is dedicated I foresee that I have to be able to provide the reader with estimation of how much or how little said policy concept corresponds to their respective theoretical concept. Therefore I intend to present how I will solve this problem of level estimations.

To remedy the problem of level estimation, Esaiasson et al proposes the use of one of three strategies: population-, point of reference-, or change over time- strategy (ibid: 146). The change-over-time strategy involves using parameters from earlier research, however as was brought up along with the exploratory nature of this thesis, none such research exists. The population strategy is about developing a median value of the whole population which the analysis is performed on and thereby being able to decide what can be considered low and high. The last of the proposed strategies are the one that seeks to explain how the object of analysis has changed over time. Neither of those strategies is viable for the research that fits within the chosen scope of this thesis. The author does however indirectly bring up a fourth approach to the problem of level estimations, namely that of the stipulated setting of boundaries (Esaiasson et al, 2010: 144). In other words an approach where the researcher him- or her-self decides what is to be considered 'a-little' or 'a-lot' of the analysed phenomenon. The same authors insist that any researcher should remain sceptical against those that claim to have the right answer to questions concerning level-estimations of their research (ibid). Despite this warning this thesis has chosen to move forward by using a stipulated definition of the level estimations.

What we are now left with is the potential subjectivity of myself as the author or researcher of this thesis. Malterud (2001: 484) brings up the subject of reflexivity and how a researchers background will affect both what they chose to investigate, the angle of the investigation as well as what findings they deem most appropriate to present. According to Shah and Corley (2006) this is however not something that will imply less validity to qualitative research since the subjective interpretation from a researcher is something we should strive to achieve. They bring up that it is the researchers

responsibility to understand how different people interpret a phenomenon and “[...] develop his/her own interpretations of the phenomenon [...] that can be expressed in relation to current theory” (ibid: 1823). Following a similar train of thought Haraway (1991 in Malterud 2001: 484) states that we need to recognize that knowledge is partial and situated and we should during all steps of the research process assess the effects from the researcher, and later on share this, “*Subjectivity instead arises when the effect of the researcher is ignored*”. The reflexivity mentioned by Malterud (2001) also brings up how a researcher should start by identifying preconceptions brought into the project by him or her as well as previous personal and professional experiences. In order to address such dilemmas I tend to provide the reader with the transparency required surrounding the choices I make regarding both level estimations as well as the choice of study objects.

4.4 Selection of study objects

In order to provide the transparency that was previously mentioned the thesis in this part of the chapter intends to provide a short explanation behind its choice of theoretical concepts, policy documents as well as the specific choice of the policy concepts mentioned within them.

4.4.1 Policy documents – EU-, National- and Regional-level

The interests of how projects funded by the ERDF emerge from policy documents came to me when I was reading through projects applications from the region of Skåne-Blekinge. Therefore my choice of region simply came from a region which projects had already awoken my interest and curiosity. The decision to include the policy document from the EU as well as the National level was quite logically taken since the regional documents is produced upon the framework of the national document, which in turn is produced with the EU guidelines as a framework. I believe that in order to produce a clear trail of how policy concepts are adopted into practice in the form of projects it is essential that those documents that they stem from are included.

Strategic policy concept - Innovative Milieu

Within the regional- as well as the national policy document in which the first steps of shaping this thesis was taken is the chapter that brings up the policy concept of 'Innovative Milieu'. As previously explained, within the chapter of Innovative Milieu are examples of activities that are to be used as a framework for projects applying for funding from the ERDF. I chose to study this particular policy concept because of its focus on the concept of Innovation. The European Union have declared a strong focus towards innovation, even going as far launching an initiative referred to as the Innovative Union. It is therefore hard not to perceive innovation as something else than a key-concept within the area of EU politics. Therefore, I consider it to be of great personal - as well as scientific - interest to dive further into how the concept (through the policy concept of IM) is actualized into projects.

4.4.2 Project – For an Innovative Milieu

The project applications (and their decision of funding) that will be analysed are from projects that have sought and received funding for activities within the strategic policy concept of Innovative Milieu in the regional policy document. During the EU program period of 2007-2013, a possibly larger number than that of the 27 projects (which this thesis have received from the supervising organization of Tillväxtverket) sought funding within Innovative Milieu. However the administrative authority in charge only categorized the different projects separately by sub-goals (such as Innovative Milieus) up until November 2011. It was therefore only possible to find project documents such as applications and decisions filled under the main focus areas and not under any of the sub-categories. However as the author of this thesis I find that 27 projects is a satisfactory amount of projects to choose from in order to fulfil the aim of this thesis. Furthermore, the time span of the projects covers the majority of the program period and can therefore be said to at least chronologically be representative for the total amount of projects, which sought funding within area of Innovative Milieu for the region of Skåne-Blekinge.

Out of the 27 projects I have randomly selected 10 of them that are to be analysed in accordance with what was stated in the previous part of this chapter. However, key-characteristics of the total amount of projects such as ownership, amount of funding

sought as well as geographical location of the projects may be used in order to support a possible argument or lift up an interesting aspect. The reason behind randomly selecting the projects instead of choosing them strategically lies in the explorative nature of the paper. As was brought up in a previous chapter, researchers explore when they have little or no previous knowledge about what they wish to study, but nevertheless believe it contains elements worth discovering (Stebbins, 2001: 8). I believe that there might be something to be discovered, and if I avoid my own subjectivity as much as possible by not strategically choosing the projects I believe I may increase my chances of discovering that something.

In order to analyse the project applications and their pertaining decisions, the thesis will focus its analysis on the categories: project -description, -purpose, -goal, targeted demography and its working -and business- description as well as its motivation for funding presented in the decision.

4.4.3 Theoretical concepts – Regional Innovation Systems and Innovative Milieu

Although names of other theories or concept may be mentioned in the policy documents this thesis will focus its work on the theoretical concept of the ‘Regional Innovation Systems’ and the ‘Innovative Milieu’. The reasoning behind the choice of the ‘Innovative Milieu’ is quite simply that the specific parts of the policy documents that this thesis have chosen to analyse carry its name. I can see that it might be some hesitance to connect these two at a first glance since the name of the focus area (Innovative Milieu) can be considered quite open to interpretation. However, the fact that both the policy documents as well as the theoretical concept revolves around spatial development have to the very least be consider common ground strong enough to justify examining it further.

Regional Innovation Systems together with Innovative Milieu are two of the key concepts that keep coming back in the policy documents. RIS, which is specifically brought up in all three of the policy documents as an essential tool to provide innovation, seem to stand in the centre for how the cohesion policy is constructed, i.e. in the usage of the ERDF. The reoccurring mentioning of the concepts in the documents together with the fact that both of them are backed up by theoretical definitions is what I believe justifying their use in this paper. Furthermore, I consider it of value for the

quality of this paper and any result it will produce that the analysis it performs in order to fulfil its purpose is done by using two theoretical concepts. I believe this will enrich the research and obviously expand the span of its analysis significantly.

5 Comparative text analysis between the policy documents and the theoretical concepts

In this chapter the strategic policy concepts of the three policy documents as well as the project together with their decision of approved funding will be presented. Each presentation will be followed by their comparative text analysis against the theoretical concept. The presentation of the specific parts of the documents will work to ease the reader into the part of the analysis without losing sight of what is actually being analysed.

The policy documents as well as the project applications that will be presented here are in their original language of Swedish (except for the EU guidelines). Because of this there will be several occasions where it is necessary to provide translations. More specifically, this becomes important when names and description of different key-areas of the documents are brought up. The reason why mentioning this is of value, is because when one is analysing policy documents where use of words are of outmost importance, there is a risk that the intended value or purpose of a word or a sentence or even its proper context might get lost in its translation. The risk is however both necessary and something that will be taken into consideration throughout the presentation as well as the analysis to minimize the possibility of it occurring.

The documents that this thesis has chosen to analyse consist of the three policy documents that were brought up in chapter two along with their relations to each other. The project applications that will be analysed will in this chapter be described in order to provide the reader with a clear view on how they are formulated and what part of them that have been chosen to direct the analysis towards.

The policy documents that will be presented and analysed in this chapter are; European Unions '*Community strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 2007-2013*', the '*Swedish National Strategy for Regional Competition, Entrepreneurship and Employment, 2007-2013*' and the '*Regional Structural Funds Program for Regional*

Competitiveness and Employment in Skåne-Blekinge, 2007-2013' as well as the randomly selected projects.

5.1 Community strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 2007-2013

As a way to further focus the work towards the goals of the cohesion policy of the European Union, the 'Community strategic guidelines on economic, social and territorial cohesion, 2007-2013' was introduced (Tillväxtverket, 2007). The purpose of the guidelines was to focus efforts in regions where the need for them was considered to be the greatest. Furthermore, the guidelines also worked to enhance coherence between the objectives of the EU and those of the national, regional and local strategies while providing a flexible framework towards the creation of national and regional programs (ibid). What this means is that the guidelines still maintain the overall goals or direction of the cohesion policy but point out three prioritisations within them. It is around these three priorities that the national strategy as well as the regional program should seek to formulate their own policy towards (Community strategic guidelines on cohesion, 2006). The priorities listed in the guidelines are as follows:

- *Improving the attractiveness of Member States, regions and cities by improving accessibility, ensuring adequate quality and level of services, and preserving the environment,*
- *Encouraging innovation, entrepreneurship and the growth of the knowledge economy by research and innovation capacities, including new information and communication technologies, and*
- *Creating more and better jobs by attracting more people into employment or entrepreneurial activity, improving adaptability of workers and enterprises and increasing investment in human capital.*

Within the three guidelines exist a wide spectrum of different factors that are all important to stimulate economic growth. However, throughout the guidelines, nothing is mentioned about either the policy concept or the theoretical approach of Innovative Milieu.

It is brought up in the National strategy document that Sweden and its regions are only covered by two of these priorities and not all guidelines are relevant from a Swedish

perspective (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 8). The document of the guidelines brings up how *“not all of these more detailed guidelines will be relevant to all regions”* and how the guidelines rather present a single framework which member states and regions are invited to use when writing their own programmes (Community strategic guidelines on cohesion, 2006: 14). From this, one can safely assume that the policy concept of the IM is a product of Swedish creation since the large part it plays in both the national as well as the regional policy document.

This presents me as the author with the dilemma of which part of the EU guidelines I should direct my analysis towards since there is no specific part of the guidelines titled ‘Innovative Milieu’ to link them together with the strategic policy concepts from the national and the regional document. However, judging from the three priorities of the EU guidelines and their contents, the thesis is inclined to focus on the second priority that focuses on *“Improving knowledge and innovation for growth”*. The reason for this is how the specific guideline shares a focus on knowledge, innovation and the advancement of research through the cooperation of actors from public, private and the research sector.

5.1.1 Guideline: Improving knowledge and innovation for growth

The guidelines are divided into four sub-categories that are each followed by a compromised ‘guidelines for action’ in the end of them (Community strategic guidelines on cohesion, 2006).

The sub-category of ***‘Increase and better target investments in research technology development (RTD)’*** as its name suggests focuses on improving cooperation among businesses and businesses and research and educational institutions by supporting the creation of regional and trans-regional clusters (ibid).

The second sub-category, ***‘Facilitate innovation and promote entrepreneurship’*** explains innovation as a *“result of complex and interactive processes, including the ability of enterprises to connect complementary knowledge from other market players, organizations and institutions”* (ibid). Furthermore, its proposed actions include developing cooperation’s between SME and research institutions, providing business

support to increase competition and internationalization of firms. This support is to be done through science parks, incubators and other related services.

Promote the information society for all focuses on making sure that information and communication technology (ICT) is available to both firms and households while promoting its usage for SMEs *“with the particular objective of boosting technology transfer between research institutions and enterprises”* (ibid).

The last sub-category, **‘Improve access to finance’** is perhaps somewhat self-explanatory, it suggests that grants should be used to build and maintain infrastructure that can facilitate the access to finance through an integrated approach that is simultaneously able to support innovation (ibid).

5.1.2 Comparative text analysis between the EU guidelines and the theoretical concepts

This analysis seeks to present how the theoretical concepts of IM and RIS are understood and therefore presented in the EU guidelines documents. The part of the EU guidelines that will be analyzed here consists of the four sub-categories under the guideline of *‘Improving knowledge and innovation for growth’*. In order to avoid being repetitive, the thesis will instead of focusing the analysis on one sub-category at a time provide an easy to follow overview of the different themes present throughout the chosen parts of the document, and how they align or not with the chosen theoretical concepts.

A reoccurring part of the policy in the guidelines is their view on the emergence of innovation. In the document this starts off with stating how activities surrounding research and technology development (which is to be understood in this context as innovation since it is about bringing new knowledge to the market as soon as possible) requires close interaction i.e. geographical proximity between its actors in order to encourage the formation of poles of excellence (Community strategic guidelines on cohesion, 2006: 19). Furthermore the guidelines encourage that the actors within this geographical proximity shall consist of actors from both the private and public sector as well as educational sectors that create synergy and share and spread knowledge. Through these synergetic co operations, the guidelines further propose that SMEs are encouraged to partake in research, which should later be ensured that it is brought into

commercial use. This view on the source of innovation as well as its key actors explained in the guideline aligns well with both of the theoretical concepts. The specific focus on SMEs align well with the IM concept which concludes that larger companies often already have whole departments providing the company with the edge that small and medium sized ones achieve through operating within an Innovative Milieu (Camagni, 1995).

The guidelines briefly bring up ways to strengthen the cooperation between the actors that has been previously referred to a triple-helix combination by supporting the creations of regional and trans-regional clusters. The strengthening of cooperation between public, private and research/educational sector is well within the boundaries of both the theoretical concepts. However, cross-border and transnational initiatives are seldom, if at all mentioned, within work covering the concept of RIS since it rather focuses on a regional internal system rather than external actors to it. However, Camagni (1995: 323) in his work about IM brings up how *“cooperation with external institutions, firms or public agencies and research centers is crucial for the continuous recreation of local competitiveness and innovation capability”*. Camagni also brings up the establishment of external cooperation agreements with external firms and institutions as examples for policy within an IM approach (ibid: 338).

The guideline continues with the need to focus activities on already existing poles of activity in order to *“exploit regional potential for research and technology development and to foster networking and technological cooperation within and between regions”* (Community strategic guidelines on cohesion, 2006: 20). Asheim and Isaksen (2002: 10) describe one of the main actors of a RIS being the ‘main industrial cluster of the region’. Although no other reviewed author’s work made this distinction in such a direct and excluding way, nor did they directly state against it. Calling something the main cluster of a region is in itself a quite ambiguous use of wording, since we cannot distinctly know what makes it big (be it because of revenue, number of companies and so forth). The concept of IM tends to be more generalizing when it focuses on what kinds of firms and so forth that are to be considered the main actors of its theoretical concept. However, the main focus of either of the concepts concentrates on the interactions between companies and other private and public organisations and their successful synergy in order to produce innovation and not necessarily that it would require a specific cluster

of companies. Camagni (1995: 338) does however bring up the spatial concentration of efforts in the most promising territories where a potential innovative milieu already exists as examples of regional development policies directed towards an IM approach. It is worth mentioning that aside from the policy proposals done by Camagni, the focus of the concept lies in the cooperation and synergy between the local actors of the region and not on focusing on a particular sector of the region.

The guideline mentions how business services specifically directed towards the needs of SMEs should preferably be delivered by the private sector or if needed by mixed public-private organisations. Cooke and Memedovic (2006: 28) state in their work that a RIS must be a public entity where the market cannot provide the region with the innovation services it requires, however if possible it should later evolve into something co-owned between public and private sector. Although this view is directed towards the RIS as a whole since it established that innovation stems from the companies in cooperation with other knowledge-supplying actors, one could make the assumption that idea of a publically controlled RIS would include organisations working towards business services. The concept of IM is not as clear on what should be run privately respectively publically. However Camagni (1995: 319) brings up the synergy between public and private sector as being one of the crucial economic elements of the concept of IM.

The guideline continues by bringing up the focus on improving access to finance for both companies in need of risk capital for their endeavours as well as grants directed towards building and maintaining of infrastructure that facilitate access to the finance. Within the concept of RIS this is clearly supported by both Asheim & Isaksen (2002:10) which include access to finance through its finance institutions that are part of a regions institutional infrastructure that as previously mentioned is one of the two main actors of a RIS (the other being the companies of the region). Robert Braczyk (et al, 1998 in Cooke & Memedovic, 2006: 5) supports this notion in his three-part definition of an RIS (supply-, demand-side and the bridging group of actors in-between) by placing venture capital systems for innovation measures in the 'bridging in-between' category. Within the theoretical concept of IM however, access to capital is not brought up.

The guideline also brings up a more direct activity that proposes that measures using the structural funds should encourage the use of information and communication technology (ICT). This is to be done in order to provide a boost to both companies

producing products and services as well as to increase productivity by stimulating the human capital with knowledge of ICT. Neither of the two theoretical concepts encourages investments into a specific sector such as this.

The similarities between the two concepts and the policy guideline are quite numerous. There are however a few topics that go against this alignment towards the theoretical concepts. The investment in the use of ICT and how that would correspond to regional growth (within the context of the theoretical concepts) is one of them. The guidelines are the first framework that spills down to the national and the regional strategies for use of the ERDF. In order to eventually avoid creating a regional strategy that is too narrow in its framework the commission guidelines need to formulate in such a way that all the regions of the member states in the European Union can fit their projects within it. A good example of this is on the topic of specialization, where the guidelines leaves the reader with more than sufficient possibilities to interpret as he or she may seem fit for their own national or regional strategy.

This often-experienced vagueness of the guidelines aligns well with the somewhat ambiguous nature of the theoretical concepts. This often makes it very hard to provide a proper analysis, and thereby to categorize different groups of policy with belonging to either of the theoretical concepts or neither.

5.2 The Swedish National Strategy for Regional Competition, Entrepreneurship and Employment, 2007-2013

A primary purpose of the national strategy document is to act as Sweden's national strategic frames of reference for the cohesion policy and thereby its use of the European Regional Development Fund (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 8). As was previously brought up in this chapter, the EU guidelines worked as a loose framework for the formulation of Sweden's national strategy. In other words this means that the Swedish government could be somewhat flexible in the way they chose to produce their document.

Similar to the Commission Guidelines, the focus on the regional level as an engine of growth is shared in the Swedish national strategy. The document puts emphasis on the regions role to provide growth based from its own perspectives and its pre-existing

conditions. Since every region has different possibilities for growth the national strategy brings up how each region shall be given responsibility and authority, which enables them to grow from their own pre-conditions. This means that a similar flexibility that was provided between the EU-level and the national-level is here provided from the national- to the regional-level.

Following the flexible recommendations of the Commission guidelines, the *Swedish National Strategy for Regional Competition, Entrepreneurship and Employment* identifies four priorities of its own. These four are: Innovation and renewal, Increased competence and supply of labour, Accessibility, and Strategic trans boundary cooperation.

5.2.1 The strategic policy concept of the Innovative Milieu

Within the focus area of Innovation and Renewal exist two further defined goals, Innovative Milieu, and Entrepreneurship.

In the part of the chapter that focuses on the strategic policy concept of the 'Innovative Milieu', the concept is presented with a focus on the company as the initiator and creator of innovation. However, for the companies of the region to be able to initiate the process of innovation, the development of a strong milieu for innovation is considered essential (ibid: 12). The text does not specifically state what an Innovative Milieu is but rather presents a serie of activities or efforts that directly or indirectly describes how the level of innovation of local companies can be increased (ibid).

In the policy document is also a summary of the different activities within the strategic policy concept of innovative milieu. To provide the reader with an overview of the policy concept before the actual analysis, I have chosen to include those guidelines here.

Innovative Milieu:

- *Promote cooperation between R & D, business and public sector, to develop initiatives for more effective interaction within innovation systems and clusters*
- *Stimulate international exchange of knowledge and cooperation between universities and industry*
- *Promote the development of regional profile-areas and specialization*
- *Harness natural environments, culture and heritage in developing innovative*

environments

- *Stimulate innovation capacity in the industry by promoting the development of knowledge of mainly small and medium enterprises*
- *Improve the businesses opportunities to take part in the development of knowledge in universities and research institutes*
- *Develop structures that stimulate transfer of knowledge between companies*
- *Promote the ability of companies to develop new products and services*
- *Promote the commercialization of research results and ideas from universities, industry and other stakeholders*

(Regeringskansliet, 2007: 16)

5.2.2 Comparative text analysis between the strategic policy concept in the national strategy and the theoretical concepts

In the beginning of the part of the document pertaining to the strategic policy concept it is stated how *“an efficient interplay between research, businesses, public sector and political institutions is key for having functioning innovative milieus”* (Regeringskansliet, 2007: 11). This likely triple helix inspired view is followed throughout the policy concept as a key factor in the emergence of innovation stemming from the companies through cooperation with other regional actors.

This notion of innovation through cooperation amongst local and regional companies is built on further into the chapter when cooperation between small companies is essential for them to be able to take on larger demands from customer than they would have been able to alone. However, the policy concept proposes that firms develop and use advanced ICT in order to create IT-based networks. As mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, cooperation amongst companies is highly encouraged within both theoretical concept but a specific focus on the use of ICT is not mentioned and interaction through IT rather than face-to-face, even less so. Both of the theoretical concepts clearly establish that one of the defining factors that contribute to the emergence of an innovative region comes from the relations between local actors through face-to-face interaction that generate tacit knowledge and trust. Proposing the use of what is referred to as advanced IT technology in order to create/support cooperation where the physical interaction gets taken out of the equation can therefore

only be said to stem from interests that are not within the frames of the theoretical concepts.

Another topic that is slightly shared by the commission guidelines is the focus on trans-regional and –national cooperation with other actors, which is brought up often within the strategic policy concept of the national strategy document. A somewhat noticeable difference in the national document is how it states specifically that through “*more and deepened relations over the national borders the regional innovative milieus be granted access to a larger critical mass of actors and competence and thereby strengthen their innovative ability*” (ibid: 12). As previously brought up concerning the same topic, both of the concepts put their focus on internal synergy and cooperation, although Camagni (1995: 323) as well as Fromhold-Eisebith (2004: 750) bring up the importance of know-how from outside the region in order to enrich the circulation of information.

The topic regarding specialization into specific sectors is also brought up in the national document in a similar way to its emergence in the guidelines. The national strategy both brings up the topic in two somewhat contradictory ways. The first is similar to the guidelines with a general view on the need to specialize within sectors where the region in question already experiences comparative advantages. The second time the topic of specialization is brought up is when an old strategy for development which was produced by the previous government is brought up. Here a few “key-sectors” are brought up but there is no mentioning of its connection to innovation or the development of regions. As previously mentioned, neither of the theoretical concepts themselves focuses specifically on specializing on a specific sector of business, except for Camagni (1995: 338) that focuses on the “*spatial concentration of efforts in the most promising territories*”.

Regional vulnerability that is described in the policy document to follow with the specializing into one specific sector is brought up together with the need for synergy between activities aimed at specializing and those aimed at providing better conditions to meet rapid structural changes. The ability for a region to shift focus from a declining sector to that of a more promising one is described as a key-factor of an Innovative Milieu (Camagni, 1995: 318).

The national strategy in its definition of an innovation milieu states that it works as a foundation or prerequisite for a region to produce innovation systems. To me as the author of this thesis this works as a clear hint towards the idea that the producers of the national strategy did not write it in a full accordance with either of the theoretical concepts. This notion that IM somehow precedes and is a required factor to produce an RIS is not supported at all by any of the authors that have been reviewed for this thesis.

In the end of the chapter on the policy concept of Innovative Milieu in the National strategy, a policy focus on natural environments and cultural legacies is presented. It states its importance because of its ambition to broaden the spectrum of companies in the region as well as providing a more attractive region to work and live in. The only possibility I could possibly perceive this focus to be connected to either of the theoretical concept would be through the development of a 'regional identity' with the IM concept. However, I considered this assumption to be too much of a stretching of the concept to be considered part of it.

The national strategy shows in several topics how it relates to the commission guidelines documents through a focus on specialization, the view on innovation as something that emerges through cooperation with public, private and research sector, an interest of cooperation with external actors and even a focus on IT-based business networks. There are however areas that were not brought up in the national strategy as they were in the guidelines. Access to capital for companies is one such topic. This topic is directly brought up in the theoretical perspective of RIS and indirectly in that of IM in a way that is to be perceived as being of utmost importance for a region looking to become competitive through innovation. A possible reason for this could be that the national strategy does not directly affect the formulation of any projects, nor does the national level have funds from the ERDF that they should spend in order to get as much out of the funds as possible.

As a final remark, I as the author get the notion that the more specific the policy tends to become in its directives, the less in sync with the theoretical concepts it is. This as a remark to the conclusion made after the commission guidelines analysis where I as the author brought up how a open and flexible policy, easier fits in with the two similarly flexible theoretical concepts.

5.3 The Regional Structural Funds Program for Regional Competitiveness and Employment in Skåne-Blekinge, 2007-2013

The Swedish government offered in 2006 Region Skåne to organize the development of a proposal for a structural funds program for regional competitiveness and employment in the nuts2 region of Skåne-Blekinge (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 4). To provide a foundation for the development of the program, Region Skåne and Region Blekinge together created a workgroup for the purpose of it. The workgroup contained representatives from the two county boards of the regions, from Region Skåne and Region Blekinge as well as representatives from Malmö Stad (civil servants from the city of Malmö).

The regional program of Skåne-Blekinge outlines four priority areas (as depicted in Figure 1). These priority areas are: Innovation and renewal, Accessibility, Special large-city efforts, and Technical Support. Out of these three, Innovation and Renewal is the one that contains the largest part of the budget with its 46 percentages compared to Accessibility's 25 percentages, Large-city effort's 25 percentages and Technical supports 4 percentages (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 4). Within the largest focus area of 'Innovation and Renewal' the program of Skåne-Blekinge has chosen to further divide it into three sub-categories. These three sub-categories are Entrepreneurship, Development of new and current businesses, and Innovative Milieu.

5.3.1 Comparative text analysis between the strategic policy concept of IM in the regional program of Skåne-Blekinge and the theoretical concepts

The three different focus areas are presented by listing 'examples of activities' in a somewhat similar fashion to that of the national program mentioned in the previous part of this chapter. What is different though from the national strategy is how the strategic policy of IM divides these examples of activities into four different topics: Growth areas, Further development of clusters and innovation systems, Physical environments of innovation, and Regional Innovation Strategy (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 61-63). These categories provide an easy to follow route through the pages of the policy concept, I as the author have therefore chosen to follow them in the analysis of the document. Before the different categories are presented in the document a short introduction is made where the policy concept of Innovative Milieu is described as "*efforts aimed towards existing and new growth areas and its system of actors*"

(Tillväxtverket, 2007: 57). Regarding what is referred to as new and existing growth areas, the previous parts of this analysis have brought up how it is only in the examples of regional development policies from Camagni (1995) where specializations into specific sectors of business are supported by the theoretical concepts. The mentioned 'system of actors' can however be related with ease to both of the theoretical concepts. These growth areas get defined in the beginning of the policy concept chapter under the topic with the same name.

Growth-Areas bring up what the authors of the text through analysis of the region consider are the fields of business in which they perform well. A wide variety of sectors are brought up such as: life Science, IT/Telecom, food, vehicle manufacturing, environmental technologies, sustainable urban development, logistics and even nanotech (Tillväxtverket, 2007: 61). The programs intention is to strengthen and further develop these areas but at the same time be responsive to future sectors that may show promise. With as many as eight of these growth-areas mentioned (not including a focus on green-technology start-ups that is mentioned later into the chapter), it is curious how it still is to be referred to as specializing. However, if it should be considered specializing or not, what I as the author believe it does is to provide a very large canvas unto which project owners may more easily fit their project within its lines. The text continues to bring up a focus on attracting foreign investments and working to keep the current ones in the region with the purpose of complementing the innovation system in the region. The chapter puts a clear focus on activities aimed at both attracting foreign businesses into its region while at the same time creating long-term relations with already established ones. As been previously brought up, these kinds of activities go well with the concept of IM.

The topic of '**Further development of clusters and innovation systems**', as the name implies, commits to focus on the efforts that support the cluster processes and its actors, this includes existing as well as emerging clusters in the region. The aim of this policy concept is to provide a framework for projects seeking funding within the specific policy concept area of IM. The line: "*efforts that supports cluster-processes and its actors*" that although aligns well with the theoretical concept of both IM and RIS is very vague and open statement about the use of the funds. The topic continues in a similar open manner it started, with efforts aimed towards "tools for business developments, the

development of structures to identify the potential of an idea, strategic partnerships, meeting places, clusters ability to interact with the outside world and more. These proposed activities are presented in such a flexible manner that I as the author of this paper see no problem whatsoever of fitting them into either of the theoretical concept or both.

The third topic, **Physical milieus of innovation** describes activities aimed at enabling SMEs to partake of research done at universities in order to develop their own products, give *“inventions with the potential for development to be given opportunities to become commercially viable”* and from them create new companies. Universities and organizations aimed towards research in general are depicted as part of setup of key-actor in both theoretical perspectives, albeit somewhat more vaguely in the concept of IM. The formulation of the activities aimed at within these policy concept once again present very broad and general goals that can theoretically end up being decided for funding by very subjective opinions, rather than perhaps following more direct and strict guidelines.

Described as “closely connected” to the topic of start-ups with their roots in the university world is the development of physical milieus of innovation. The policy continues with stating how it should aim to strengthen and develop incubators and these physical milieus of innovation. It is stated that these milieus are no guarantee that new companies will emerge and the regional program shall therefore also include business-counselling and business development to increase the growth of new companies. Organisations and/or companies working with the development of companies such as incubators and so forth are both represented in the theoretical concepts. However, the notion of the ‘physical milieu of innovation’ is not defined further than what has been mentioned here. With the risk of sounding repetitive, the strategic policy concept has once again provided what I as the author consider a vague and at the same time ambiguous concept or statement.

In the last topic, the importance of **Regional Innovation Strategy** is brought up. It is explained how the program intends to support the work around the procurements of such strategies aimed at developing a foundation and a common goal for the region towards the development of technology, innovation and entrepreneurship and exchanges with other external regions. The concept of IM presents actions such as this

as something done by the administrative power of the region in order to harmonize its actor to have them working towards common goals. The activities presented regarding the regional strategies for innovation, although perhaps not directly mentioned within the concept of RIS, include efforts such as synergetic acting of regional actors in order to develop innovation. These kinds of efforts do however play a large part in the concept of the Regional Innovation System.

Concluding remarks

Similar to the national strategy, the policy concept of IM in the regional program presents several vague and ambiguous examples of activities. It does however also provide as many as ten different areas of potential growth in the region. This could be explained by the fact that the regional program is looking to directly stimulate the creation of projects through their program, while the national strategy does not.

Another more specific difference between the two is that the topic of access to capital is brought up repetitively in the regional program, while it is not mentioned in the national strategy. Reasons for this could follow the train-of-thought concerning the regional programs need to stimulate the creation of projects. Out of the 27 different projects pertaining to the strategic policy concept of IM, the ones concerning access to capital for companies are by far the largest (seen to the amount of funding sought and received). Therefore, one could perceive the importance of including such formulation in the regional program.

On a final similarity between the two documents worthy of mentioning is how IM is once again presented as a prerequisite for the emergence of innovation systems and clusters. A statement argued previously to not be in accordance with either of the theoretical concepts and therefore the motive behind its formulation in the document must stem from somewhere else.

5.4 Projects of Innovative Milieu

In the previous part of this chapter the strategic policy concept of IM in the regional programme of Skåne-Blekinge has been presented as well as analysed towards the theoretical concepts. This chapter will focus on the projects that apply for funds by using

the policy concept of IM in the regional programme as guidelines when formulating their projects. More specifically this chapter will focus on the project applications as well as their decision of approved funding from the administrative authority Tillväxtverket. This is done in order to provide me as the author with a more developed view of the projects.

Since the projects chosen for the analysis are all different from each other, an overview similar to previous parts of this chapter is therefore not possible. Instead each project together with its analysis will be presented in a separate part of this chapter.

The project names are originally in Swedish but to be able to provide a more proper context the names of the projects have been directly translated into English.

5.4.1 Project 1: Virtual Incubator for the commercialization of ideas within the area of environmental tech: Sweden CleanTech Incubators

The project is described as being a virtual incubator for the development of companies within the clean tech sector. This project was according to the document from the funds administrative authority approved since its work will be on conjunction with university, public- and private actors. In the project-description within the application it is described how interested parties will be able to meet and develop in a virtual environment. It does however briefly mention the necessity of physical meetings even in a virtual incubator.

The project connects to the strategic policy concept of IM by its main focus of stimulating the creation of new start-up companies within the field of environmental tech. Within IM as well as RIS theory, face-to-face interaction is explained as being crucial to the establishing and developing of networks (that leads to innovation and so forth). Although this project mentions the necessity for physical meetings eventually, it is indicated through its use of words that its main focus is on establishing a virtual meeting place, rather than a physical one. Its proposed purpose of connecting actors from different sectors to achieve common goals and to provide business development is however well within the range of both theoretical concepts.

5.4.2 Project 2: ICT- and moving media in south Sweden – preliminary study and initial activities Blekingedelen (MICT in Blekinge)

This project intends to perform a feasibility study with the intention to initiate a future project that is estimated to create new jobs in the region. This focus of this preliminary study was according to its project description, to focus on regional interplay, the development of knowledge, cluster expansion and flow of innovation. These kinds of activities is clearly brought and matched well with the topic of ‘regional innovation strategies’ in the regional programs strategic policy concept of IM.

In the literature regarding the IM concept, strategies that focus on innovation for the region is brought up as a powerful tool to rally regional actors towards common goals. The activities which the proposed strategy aims to promote is also well within the boundaries of the RIS.

5.4.3 Project 3: ESS MAX IV – Growth Innovation

The ESS and the MAX IV are two research facilities being built in the region of Skåne. The project has six sub-projects within it, all revolve around maximizing the potential of the two facilities. This is done through activities such as performing preliminary studies, creating physical milieus of innovation, attracting external actors to the region (firms, universities, institutions) and establishing networks and clusters all focused on utilizing the facilities and the research that is intended to be performed there. The concept of ‘physical milieu of innovation’, which was brought up to the analysis of the regional document is here defined as a *“number of regional and international creative meeting places”*. A definition I as the author perceive as equally vague and ambiguous. The six sub-projects except for marketing measures also include creating a common vision and pre-studies for actors throughout the region concerning the use of the research facilities. These visions and strategies are brought up under the topic of ‘regional innovation strategies’ in the regional program, where their focus fits well within the frames of the flexible policy.

Creating networks of actors from private, public and research sectors (universities and research facilities), and market the region in order to attract foreign companies and other actors to relocate and invest, these are all activities brought up well within the boundaries of both of the theoretical concepts.

5.4.4 Project 4: Baltic Sea R&D – Competence centre and cluster initiative

The purpose of the 'Baltic Sea R&D' project is to establish a cluster initiative and knowledge centre that is focused on gathering activities such as businesses, research, development of innovation, and projects and actions all aimed towards the environment of the Baltic Sea.

Following the project's very broad description of its proposed activities and goals, it can be said to fit in with several activities within the policy concept of IM. The project's intention to create a platform where research results from universities can be developed into products and solutions through the interaction with a diverse range of actors from the region is something that is found as a key focus of the policy concept of IM. Furthermore, the project's focus on technology that aims to improve the environment fits in with one of the specialized areas of "green tech". I as the author find it obvious that this project was granted funding since its ambitious goals and project description fit well within several of the often flexible topics in the regional program.

Furthermore, the creation of a cluster initiative that promotes the meeting of individuals from different sectors to work together towards common goals is well within the framework of both theoretical concepts.

5.4.5 Project 5: Establishment of Sigrun – Software Innovation and Engineering Institute

The Sigrun project focuses on taking results and innovations from software research and converting it into something that can be practically used by both companies and public authorities. Creating an organization where research from universities is transformed into product and services for the market as mentioned in the previous project (Baltic Sea R&D) is something that is brought up clearly in the policy concept of IM. Furthermore, the fact that the Sigrun project is focused within the growth area of IT-Telecom and aimed at bringing together actors from private, public and the university sector further solidifies its connection to the policy concept of IM.

As for its connection to the theoretical concept, the Sigrun project fits well within both theoretical concepts view on synergy between its main actors, businesses, public sector and universities/research sector.

5.4.6 Project 6: South-Swedish Entrepreneurial Fund III

The purpose of this project as its name suggests is to create a fund to provide capital for SMEs in their initial start-up phase, commercialization- or expansion-phase. In the IM policy concept the following is stated repeatedly throughout the chapter: *“The regional structural funds program shall operate to support the companies’ access to capital where the market is not functioning satisfactorily”*, a statement that can very well be said to leave project owners with a large amount of flexibility as to how they chose to formulate their projects within the topic at hand. Furthermore, the project description starts out with listing the different growth-areas of the region (as was brought up in the regional program). However, when stating to which kind of companies this access to capital is meant for, it states that the need for capital exists within all sectors of business, and therefore the fund will not limit itself to specific sectors such as the growth-areas of the region.

Access to finance is something that is brought up by several authors within the theoretical concept of the RIS but remains unmentioned in theoretical concept of the IM. However, what is mentioned within the theoretical concept of IM is the importance of targeting intervention policies such as this towards precise types of production or channels (Camagni, 1995: 338).

5.4.7 Project 7: Moving Media Southern Sweden 1 (MMSS1)

The MMSS1 project is one of the largest projects of the study, surpassed only by the Entrepreneurial Fund project and the ESS and MAX IV projects in regards to funds sought. The purpose of the project is to have the cluster initiative (Moving Media Southern Sweden) to *implement strategic development activities* in order to strengthen the innovation structures, create more companies and increase growth and employment within the field of moving media. When looking deeper into the description of the work the project aims to do to fulfil its purpose it lists a wide range of activities such as:

- Enhancing the financial structure for companies within the sector of moving media in the region
- Initiating and strengthening match-making and network initiatives between the moving media companies and between moving media companies and other more mature industries

- Enhancing the cooperation for growth creating activities between companies, academia and public sector

There are five other points within the areas of enhancing the cluster initiative itself, marketing the cluster and other related and similarly ambiguous topics. The topics have all been brought up previously in the analysis of other projects, and in order to not be overly repetitive, I as the author have chosen not to mention them further than I have. Their flexible composition allows them to align well with both the strategic policy concept of IM as well as the two theoretical concepts.

5.4.8 Project 8: NetPort.Experience (NP.XP)

The project NP.XP intends to develop what they refer to as the '*digital creative sector*', which is emerging in the region of Skåne-Blekinge. This development is to be done through a number of activities such as taking the first steps towards creating a centre "*that can handle the needs of the creative sectors*", set up an incubator for companies within the specific sector, initiate and start building an operation where researchers, students, companies and users are able to test ideas and develop services, use methods and knowledge gained from creating computer games to purposes other than entertainment, and developing networks and relations to promote and build knowledge surrounding GPS (Global positioning system) knowledge.

The digital creative sector is not directly mentioned as any of the growth areas that were pointed out in the policy concepts; however moveable media (which was mentioned in the policy) is flexible enough to fit some of the proposed activities in the project. The development of networks and environments where individuals from the private-, public- and university- or research-sector can cooperate, or the strengthening or creating of incubators are brought up several times in the policy concept of IM. Regarding the creation or at least the "first steps" of creating a centre and its purpose is somewhat vaguely described in the project. It could perhaps be a reference to a physical milieu of innovation but with the ambiguous formulation used it is impossible for me as the author of this thesis to find what it may refer to within the policy document.

Networking, triple helix inspired constellation of actors, incubators and the vague mentioning of business developing activities are all well within the boundaries of the

theoretical concepts as have been brought up more thoroughly in the previous project analyses.

5.4.9 Project 9: Lund Bio Incubator

The 'Lund bio-incubator' project is as its name implies an incubator with a specific focus on companies based on *"laboratory intensive research"* within the biomedical, biotechnological and medicine technical field they have chosen to label "Science for Life". The work the incubator intends to do is divided into six parts: business-development, business counselling, company related education, strategic relations, infrastructure and finance. In their project application they specifically mention how their project belongs within the topic of 'strengthening and development of incubators and physical milieus for innovation'. Furthermore, although not directly mentioned in the application it is brought up how the project belongs within the field of 'Science for Life' that has been in the region for a longer time. This aligns well with the focus on one of the specific growth areas in the strategic policy concept labelled 'Life Science'.

The project aligns well with the theoretical concepts and their view on supporting actors such as incubators that has an explicit focus on cooperating with actors from the university/research sector as well as the private sector. In the official decision for approved funding for the project, one of the key points for motivating their decision reads: *"Increase interaction between university, public actor and private stakeholder"*. However a small point of interest is that there is no direct mentioning of any participating public actors, directly or indirectly.

5.4.10 Project 10: NESST Market- and interest-analysis

The purpose of the project as it is stated in its application is to collect basic and preparatory information on the existing supply regarding education, training and research within the area of societal safety industry as well as to map interested parties and actor that operate in said industry in both public organizations as well as private companies. The formulated intention of the analysis is that it will act as a foundation regarding how the upcoming North European Societal Security Training (NESST) will be prioritized and organized.

The project mentions a close interaction and cooperation with actors from private-, public- and university sector, this is also the only connection I as the author see to the strategic policy concept of IM as brought up in regional policy program of Skåne-Blekinge. The strategic policy concept of IM mentions several growth areas which the program will aim to strengthen and develop, but the societal security industry is not amongst them. However, the program does mention the need to remain open for new combinations between industries, actors and regions, thus it is possible that this security sector potentially is one of those new combination. In the decision for funding it is stated the project will receive funding since it is within the aim of creating and developing existing clusters as well as potential ones.

The creation of cluster and cooperation and synergy between actors from private, public and research sector are well mentioned in both of the theoretical concepts. The intention to focus funds into a sector that can very well be considered unknown or unproven of its potential can in no way be said to align with the previously mentioned specialization of Camagni (1995).

6 Conclusions

In this part of the paper the conclusion of the research is presented, more specifically I as the author will here provide answers to the two research questions that were presented in the first chapter. As a reminder and as a way to more conveniently follow the conclusion I will repeat the questions.

- How can the formulation of the strategic policy concept of Innovative Milieu be said to correspond to the definition of the theoretical concepts of Innovative Milieu and Regional Innovation System?
- How are the theoretical concepts operationalized in the projects pertaining to the policy concept of Innovative Milieu?

Throughout the chosen parts of three policy documents the theoretical concepts can be said to correspond quite well with the policy concepts albeit with some exceptions to be found in each of the documents. If any patterns can be found from the analysis of the three documents it is that the Commission guidelines and the national program although

formulating their policy in a similar vague and ambiguous manner, tend to avoid focusing their directives on specific fields or sectors of possible growth. This way of shaping the hierarchy of policy from EU-level down to regional level appear quite logical. It is the Commission guidelines that set the larger framework from which the following documents are to be built, and if constructed too narrow it would leave the national and regional document with little space to operate and formulate their own policy.

The theoretical concept themselves as to have been discussed in the conclusive part of chapter to be quite ambiguous, this together with the equally ambiguous formulation of the strategic policy concept leaves me with the following conclusive statement: Vague concepts of policy align well with a vague theoretical concept and the more specific the policy, the less in sync with the theory it is.

Regarding how the theoretical concepts are operationalized in the projects the same conclusion can be made. The projects overall tend to align quite well with the theoretical concepts. What can be said is similar to what was previously stated regarding the documents, the more vaguely formulated a project is, the larger are its possibilities that it can align well with an equally vague or ambiguous policy- or theory concept.

Out of all the 27 projects that this thesis had to work with, 10 of them were directly owned by Region Skåne. Even more were directly funded by Region Blekinge and Region Skåne together. As presented in chapter two, these organizations are also the two main regional authority organizations that hold a majority of the seats as well as the chairman and vice-chairman seats in the partnership. The same partnership that produced the regional program and prioritizes between which projects that is to be granted funding. The same organizations are also conferred to by the partnership itself when prioritizing between projects.

It seems most logical that a somewhat openly formulated policy framework for regional projects whether it is based or not upon a theoretical concept with an equally vague formulation will provide a net that is large enough to catch whatever project one may so desire.

6.1 Further Research:

To further build upon this research a first logical step would be to expand the number of regional policy documents that are analysed. Throughout Sweden there are as mentioned a total of eight regional programs, out of these a clear majority brings up the policy concept of innovative milieu. I believe that comparing how these different regions programs align with the theoretical concepts could perhaps produce some interesting results.

For a different angle, another path would be to look into projects that were not granted funding and perceive how well they align with the theoretical concepts and the strategic policy concepts.

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