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The case of North Jutland

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Carsten Jahn Hansen

Regional Development Planning

The creation of ownership?

The case of North Jutland

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Regional Development Planning
The creation of ownership?
The case of North Jutland

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Preface

This report presents and discusses intentions, experiences and challenges concerning Regional Development Planning (RDP). The main focus is on the discussion of conditions and opportunities for creating ownership concerning the establishment of regional development strategies and plans. The region of North Jutland in Denmark is used as a case. The report addresses politicians, civil servants, interest organisations, researchers and others with an interest in regional development planning as well as in new governance settings and practices related to spatial planning.

The report concludes the research project 'Regional Development Planning – the creation of ownership', co-funded by the Centre of Regional Development at Aalborg University. The project has been carried out during January-November 2007. Apart from this report, the project has also resulted in, or contributed to, the following publications:

-Hansen, C. J. & Vestergaard, J. (2007) Regional Udviklingsplanlægning i Nordjylland, contribution to the book *'Regional Udvikling'*, Center for Regional Udvikling, Aalborg Universitet.
-Hansen, C. J., Richardson, T. & Arleth, M. (2007) Imagining and Governing Regions and Cities? Exploring challenges and opportunities for dealing with climate change, *51st IFHP (International Federation for Housing and Planning) World Congress 'Futures of Cities'*, Copenhagen, Denmark, September.
-Tait, M. & Hansen, C. J. (2007) Trust and Governance in Planning, *AESOP Annual Conference*, Naples, Italy, July.
-Hansen, C. J., Lorentzen, A. & Lassen, C. (2007) Governance in the Experience-oriented City? *Regional Studies Association Annual Conference*, Lisbon, Portugal, April.

The project would not have been carried out without the support from the Centre of Regional Development – many thanks to Secretary Lisbeth Tved Linde and Head of the centre Jesper Christensen. Special thanks to Jes Vestergaard, the Head of Planning in the Region of North Jutland, who, despite a range of new tasks, still offered time for meetings, an interview, many emails, a co-authorship on a book contribution, and conversations concerning RDP. Jesper Nygård Kristensen deserves thanks for spending most of his student summer holidays gathering and systematising data. Thanks to Tommy Tvedergaard Madsen for updating me on all sorts of material and emailing lists, and thanks to Mette Arleth, Tim Richardson, Malcolm Tait, Anne Lorentzen, Per Toppenberg and my Land Management Master's thesis project group consisting of Lars Gilje, Anders Josefsen and Anne Mette Kjær for cooperation and discussions concerning regional development planning. Finally, many thanks and appreciations to the interviewees who willingly contributed with their time and remarkable engagement - Jes Vestergaard (Region of North Jutland), Mikael Jentsch (Municipality of Frederikshavn), Jan Krogh (Municipality of Thisted), Per Flemming Laursen (Municipality of Morsø), Torben Pedersen (HTS, Aalborg) og Ole B. Sørensen (Member of the Regional Council in North Jutland).

Carsten Jahn Hansen
November 2007

Summary

Regional Development Planning (RDP) is a new strategic tool in Danish spatial planning. The RDP is identified as a pivotal point for the new role of the regions as 'dynamos' for regional development. Based in a focus on North Jutland, this report presents and discusses the background as well as specific challenges and opportunities relating to the anchoring of regional development planning among a range of actors.

The RDP can be seen as a Danish government initiative to encourage a common regional-municipal interpretation and positioning in relation to globalisation. Through the report it also becomes clear that the RDP is an expression of recent more general western world changes in governing systems and cooperative practices. In a Danish spatial planning context, the RDP is a new institution that has to create its own identity and 'drive' through dialogue, cooperation, and bottom-up and need-based coordination. Where the former counties could operate on the basis of authoritative instruments, and hence legality, the new regions must now work with tools concerned with 'anchoring', 'transparency' and 'trust'. This implies a focus on legitimacy, and in particular on the (self-)creation of legitimacy in a non-determined interplay between non-determined actors.

So far, the RDP process of North Jutland can be characterised as cross-sector organised, open, broad, and stakeholder-oriented. The core of the organisation has been a political steering group and an administrative steering group (both including secretariat) and seven thematic groups, altogether with the task to act as a framework for discussion and the building of the RDP. In general, the process has been based on the participation of professional stakeholders; representatives for elected units, business, education centres, and interest organisations. However, the process has not yet had sufficient opportunity to spread into the 'hinterland', meaning that the establishment of a broad and deep (into municipalities and among citizens) coordination, integration and legitimacy is still to be considered as a significant challenge.

The RDP process has involved a necessary renewal and change of roles and the regional planning culture. In particular, the regional civil servants and the administrative steering group have taken on a central role as facilitators and catalysts, while the regional politicians have been more reserved. Considering the open, broad and networking nature of this type of planning, it seems contradictory that the politicians have not been a greater part of the process. Hence, the emergence of the networking regional civil servant can be identified, whereas the networking regional politician is somewhat absent.

In any case, the new roles imply significant demands for coordination and integration of various interests and power relationships. With the disappearance of authoritative instruments this must now rely on the building of a new trust-relationship between the parties. Establishing new trust-relations is a decisive tool for the building of the regions legitimacy, e.g. for building the acceptance and support of other actors concerning the role and operation of the region. In balancing and coordinating interests and power relations there is also a focus on negotiation and agreements between parties – e.g. agreements made for different reasons and on the background of different interests. Here, it has been of great importance to be heard, and that the process did not create 'enemies' or 'victims'. This has been identified as decisive for the establishment of broad ownership, because victims do not feel co-responsible for succeeding processes. As such, it will be an

important challenge for the RDP cooperation to solve an apparent conflict of interest concerning whether the city of Aalborg will direct its political attention towards the region or towards the East Jutland urban corridor (south from the region). Here, several actors have been very cautious without contributing much to clarification.

Based on the analysis of the report, the following opportunities and/or recommendations can be identified concerning the continued RDP-process:

-Develop further a new 'planning logic'; based in establishing norms, values and new ethical (professional) standards that build and signal shared understanding, shared language, community, and the achievement of synergy effects as well as added value.
-Develop further special values and norms of cooperation, dialogue, as well as the new process-, networking, and trust-building professionalism of the region. Goal: The RDP and the region as a 'flagship of good cooperation'.
-Process-dynamics: Take on confrontations early, however meanwhile avoid creating enemies. Victims do not become co-owners. Develop and maintain the trust relationships that the EDP will depend upon.
-Clarify and balance the relationship and interests between cities (Aalborg) and the region.
-Ensure a broader a more active involvement of both regional and municipal politicians, as network agents and participants.
-Ensure an appropriate balance between renewal and continuity in future RDP organisation and processes. Ensure political as well as administrative 'carriers' of cooperation cultures, trust relationships, alliances and key coherent perspectives.
-Ensure correlation between general perspectives and concrete initiatives.
-Clarify and make more transparent the distribution of roles and tasks between the Regional Council, advisory units, municipalities, new steering groups, committees, work groups, etc.
-Support communication of the RDP and further commitment to it in municipal organisations and among other stakeholders. E.g establish agreements, partnerships or pilot projects between the region and one or several municipalities.
-Inform municipalities that access to EU-funding is often improved if municipalities can demonstrate a local-municipal-regional coherence in planning.
-Build regional transparency as well as communication activities in relation to the media and the public.
-Maintain and develop the RDP work as a self-reflective learning process.
-Develop national mediation of experiences with RDP between the regions.

Is it possible to transfer, to other regions, the RDP experiences and lessons learned in North Jutland? Some general aspects may be transferable, such as basic organisational settings and tools. However, a range of locational and more culture specific and dependant aspects can be difficult to transfer, such as the strong social capital of the region and the fact that the administrative borders of North Jutland correlates reasonably well with a regional spatial-functional coherency. In addition, and in the face of globalisation and economic restructuring, North Jutland can be argued to be under a common problem pressure, which potentially creates good conditions for a pressure for common action. Other regions and RDP stakeholders or interest parties should of course take this into account when discussing or applying the lessons learned in North Jutland.

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1 Introduction

A recent structural reform has significantly changed the political and administrative map of Denmark. This has also had considerable consequences to the Danish spatial planning system and in particular to the conditions and opportunities for managing regional development and planning. Prior to the reform, the Danish planning system could be characterised as hierarchical and based on a principle of 'framework management', which, for instance, ensured that the former counties acted as planning and administrative authorities above the municipalities. Through a regional plan the county could set limits to municipal land use for e.g. residential and business areas. Hence, regional planning was very much concerned with land use regulation, and for the same reason many municipalities considered the regional plan to be restrictive in relation to local development.

As from 1st January 2007, the structural reform substituted the counties with regions. The region is no longer meant to act as the land use regulatory 'big brother' – municipalities and national authorities have taken over most parts, by far, of regional land use planning. In stead, the regions must now ensure the necessary coordination between municipalities as well as be in charge of an overall and strategic development planning for the regions. As such, Regional Development Plans[1] have been identified as a pivotal point for the new role of the regions as 'dynamos' for regional development (Indenrigs- og Sundhedsministeriet, 2004, s.73). The RDP is an entirely new phenomenon in Danish spatial planning and in the strategic development of different parts of the country. Traditional planning instruments have been substituted by expectations, from the national government, that the regions will be able to establish strategies and plans for regional development in cooperation and dialogue with a range of parties, in particular the municipalities. Therefore, many consider this to be a change from 'the municipalities of the region', e.g. the county as an authority above municipalities, towards 'the region of the municipalities', in which the region is seen as a tool for municipalities.

If the RDP is to live up to the expectations, it must be of special interest for a range of parties to study and learn from the concrete experiences, so far, of dealing with the recently initiated RDP processes in Denmark. Based in a focus on North Jutland, this report therefore presents and discusses the background as well as specific challenges and opportunities relating to the anchoring of regional development planning.

[1] Throughout the report, the term RDP will be applied as synonymous with the 'regional development plan' as well as with 'regional development planning'. This is not necessarily suitable at all times, as it can be of importance to distinguish between plan (product) and planning (process). In most cases, however, the truth of the matter should be evident. In addition, the actors and stakeholders dealing with the issue on a daily basis already use the term RDP in this broader sense.

1.1 Methods and main approach

How can the above mentioned purpose be approached and fulfilled? In many ways, it is the intention with this report to 'mirror' the events in relation to actors and interests of RDP in North Jutland. Viewed from, and across, the actors and interests themselves: what can be said, so far, about the RDP and its operation, challenges and opportunities? Such a broad approach seems to match well with identifiable needs embedded in the current state of the RDP work in practice – first of all, the new and complex interaction between actors and interests seems to require the establishment of an overview. In addition, the North Jutland example illustrates a process, which can be characterised as searching, discussing and 'mirroring' in its behaviour and rather open attempts at self-reflection. Here, by the end of 2007, many actors seem to be looking for mutual clarification and understanding concerning; 'what is the RDP?', and 'what can it become?' Therefore, a very 'context-near' and 'close-to-the-case' approach has been chosen. It provides the actors some space for explaining themselves and for aiding in building a more consistent picture or snapshot, hopefully, of the background as well as the challenges and opportunities relating to the anchoring of regional development planning.

In order to be able to discuss, understand and ultimately contribute to the further development of RDP, some more general aspects and perspectives have also been included, mainly concerning recent more general western world changes in governing systems and cooperative practices related to planning and strategic development of regions and local areas.[2] To a large extent, the RDP studied in this report can be seen as a key example of such changes.

Hence, the report is structured as follows:

In chapter two, a short introduction is given concerning recent changes in governing systems and cooperative practices in order to provide a background for understanding and discussing the RDP later in the report. The following chapter three identifies and characterises the new overall framework conditions for strategies and plans at the regional level in Denmark. Chapter four then narrows down the focus to North Jutland, in particular with the purpose to describe the basic or 'hard' facts concerning the establishment, organisation and main process aspects of RDP in the region.

[2] Here, a comparison with similar RDP processes in other Danish regions, or regions abroad, would of course have been relevant. However, due to the limited budget and short timeframe of this project this has not been possible. In stead, a new research project at Aalborg University will deal with this challenge; in the shape of a PhD in regional development and planning, carried out by Daniel Galland, starting 1st February 2008.

On the basis of the North Jutland example, the first part of chapter five then describes and analyses a range of specific experiences and challenges that can be identified at present. This is done, in part by help of the explanations provided by key actors themselves, and partly on the basis of the background understanding provided in chapter three concerning more general changes in governing systems and cooperative practices. Based on this, the second part of chapter five discusses some of the apparent opportunities relating to the anchoring and further process of RDP – again, primarily in relation to the North Jutland example, however also with an opening for the reader to think about the lessons learned in a different, broader or more general context. Finally, chapter six summarises the main points and conclusions of the report.

1.1.1 Case study methods

The report is based in a research project that builds on a case study of the establishment and development of RDP in North Jutland. The case study approach applied in the project primarily builds on document studies and analysis, literature studies, interviews, observations and conversations with involved actors related to the RDP:

-An extensive amount of specific documents have been studied, including several hundred pages of notes, reports (mainly government) and analysis (often the work of consultant companies), minutes, as well as material from conferences, seminars, workshops and homepages.

-A screening of relevant research literature has been carried out, focusing on regional development and new tendencies in planning, in particular with a focus on recent changes in governing systems and cooperative practices. This search has been applied in order to better understand and put into perspective RDP in North Jutland and Denmark.

-Six interviews with key actors have been carried out during October-November 2007, each lasting 1-1½ hour. All interviews have been transcribed, resulting in 70 pages. The interviews have not been published in their entirety – in stead they have been integrated into this report through a considerable use of citations, all with permission from the interview persons.

-The author of this report has participated as an observer in two public arrangements concerning the development of the RDP in North Jutland: A Kick-off conference in February 2007 and a 'Bazaar' for theme groups in April 2007.

-Finally, in general this investigation and report is based on a 'principle of triangulation', in which, for instance, claims concerning the chain of events or 'who-did-what-and-when'

have been cross checked through document studies and interviews. This is, however, only relevant in some cases – for instance it does not much make sense to apply this principle if the purpose is to identify the arguments or rationale of a single actor in order to contrast those with the viewpoints of others.

2 Changes in governing systems and cooperative practices

To a large extent, the new regional development planning in North Jutland and Denmark seems to be a key example of innovation and change in forms of governing and cooperation concerning the discussion, planning and regulation of regional-local development. These changes are not unique – in many ways they can be related to more general and international tendencies. Therefore, this chapter presents and characterises, in short, those changes and tendencies, with the specific purpose to establish a 'rough sketch' or opening as to how to begin to understand and interpret the RDP. Later in the report, in chapter five, this basic understanding will be applied and further specified in relation to the understanding provided and expressed by the actors themselves. As such, this chapter (two) forms a background for becoming able to qualify further the analysis, discussion and understanding of RDP in North Jutland.

2.1 Hierarchies and networks – towards new interactions

Today, actors in policymaking and planning are often faced with demands of handling conditions characterised by increasing fragmentation, differentiation and complexity. It shows, for instance, when coordination problems emerge concerning cross-sector challenges or tasks between both public authorities, private businesses, interest organisations and citizens, however often also internally in political-administrative organisations. Traditional top-down and hierarchically oriented systems, administrations and organisations often find it difficult to handle such problems, and in response to this a new range of organisational settings and cooperative relations and practices have emerged that can be characterised as more networking, dialogue-oriented, flexible and interactive. (See Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003; Dryzek, 2000; Forester, 1999; Castells, 1996; Bogason et al, 2004; Scott et al, 2004; Sehested, 2002 og 2003; Stoker, 1998; Uslaner, 1999)

Hence, during the last 10-15 years policymaking and planning activities seems to have changed in ways, which increasingly have been characterised in political and social science as well as in practice using terms such as dialogue, cooperation, network and new public management.[3] In general, the change is associated with and builds on claims that traditional hierarchical institutions and systems are increasingly unable to cope with contemporary problems of rapid social, technological, and economic change through schematic top-down approaches to development, management and regulation. In particular, it seems to be the case in relation to regional-local development and spatial and

[3] This section is primarily based on Hansen (2006).

land use planning. In response to the apparent limited reach of ‘set solutions and approaches’, a new range of informal and often ad hoc policymaking and cooperative practices is claimed to have emerged. This is exemplified when municipal authorities, in cooperation with interest organisations, investors and citizens, tailor new settings for discussing rather complex planning issues, such as larger urban regeneration or development projects. Such practices has been characterised in terms of dynamic or ´fluid´ networks, in which argumentative, debating and communicative approaches as well as an increased attention and reflexivity about clarifying mutual expectations and the ´rules of the game´ (formal and informal) are central elements (See also Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003).

Hence, there is a move away from mono-centric, hierarchical and often rather closed ways of governing and regulation mechanisms towards more open and networking polycentric approaches. It shows through more interactivity and cooperation between relevant actors, and often also through a broader and sometimes atypical split of the use of resources in the attempt to solve collective problems. For instance, planners in a public administration may not necessarily produce the first plan proposals, and gather the information for that purpose, on their own – this often also happens in active and early-phase cooperation with citizen groups, interest organisations and investors. In those cases, planners move towards a more facilitating and process-oriented role, as an alternative to a traditional, authority based, and planning content defining role.

In other words, the focus of policymaking and planning moves toward more concrete and pragmatic local problem-solving, joint responsibility, and continuous performance-based and collective learning in more open-ended and often ad hoc arrangements. This is, of course, not the case in all governing relationships. In many ways, governing is still a business of central regulation and traditional hierarchical institutions of government. However, the new practices seem to offer and open up opportunities for learning and change in exactly those circumstances where classical-modernist institutions have failed to deliver. (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003, p.3)

The fundamental requirement and driving force of such new governing systems and cooperative practices is based in a perception of mutual interdependence among involved parties and in the realisation between them of a need for coordination and cooperation across interests. This perception and realisation emerges, because problems and challenges are recognised as being simply too complex, too unclear or unstable for central authorities, or a single actor, to act upon with a reasonable result and resource use. Often, one actor may not be aware of knowledge that another actor may know for obvious reasons – and it would be too costly for the first actor to produce or acquire this knowledge single-handedly. As such, the realisation of a need for cooperation is not (necessarily) driven by

idealism or a sense of obligation for 'doing the right thing', but rather by perceptions of necessity and need as well as purposes of optimised and more effective problem-solving.

Hence, these changes are concerned with the improvement of planning and decision-making systems and with the capacity to get things done through cooperation between different actors and interests. This typically requires an active and early involvement of actors and resources outside public (planning) administrations, and it often leads to the advent of new types of institutions that are collaborative, involving different stakeholders, self-organising, and uniquely tailored to context, opportunities and problems (Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). And, because it is recognised as a real and mutual need, such institutions will tend toward an 'authentic dialogue' with the purpose to achieve real-life beneficial changes, rather than a more positioning-oriented 'rhetoric dialogue' (see Innes & Booher, 2003).

However, this positive and constructivist approach requires the existence of a critical mass of actors and interests who believes, or can be convinced to believe, in positive synergy effects and the opportunity to establish win-win solutions in specific situations where this was not possible earlier. And herein lays, potentially, the Achilles heel of the new governing systems and cooperative practices. The mechanisms implied above raises principal questions concerning, on the one hand inherent ideals of mutual trust, equality and consensus, and on the other hand new problems of coordinating, integrating and creating and upholding legitimacy (see Sehested, 2003, p.30). It reflects fundamental policymaking and planning challenges concerning the handling of power relations and the relation between the representative democratic system and more market oriented decision-making systems.

Therefore, it is important to clarify that this report does not view the new governing systems and cooperative practices as a substitute but rather as a supplement or add-on to more traditional settings. In practice, one will often find attempts at combining the traditional and new ways of governing, e.g. to ensure and optimise coherence in relation to decision-making systems in representative democracy. Increasingly, this is also reflected in political and social science publications. In general, the latest few years seems to have implied a move from an initial enthusiasm over 'pure' informal and emancipated network designs and processes towards recognition of a need for debating and searching for connections between traditional approaches and new flexible settings.

In relation to regional development planning in Denmark, and the challenges and opportunities relating to its anchoring, it seems to be clear from the outset that the newly established regional-municipal scene for strategy formation and development of regions

require renewed and extended coordination and cooperation between a range of parties, e.g. the region, municipalities, the business community, interest organisations, etc. In all probability, this will also involve the establishment of new forums and new forms of governing, organisation and cooperation as a substitute for the apparent 'governing void' at the Danish regional level. And, it is likely that it will question fundamental values and legitimacy, as well as views and believes embedded in policymaking and planning. Therefore, it is considered most relevant to study and discuss the RDP in relation to the above mentioned tendencies and changes.

3 Regional development planning in Denmark

This chapter provides a short insight into the background for regional development planning in Denmark. The basic elements and conditions for this new planning were outlined in the 'Structural Reform Agreement', in which it was stated that; 'the task of the regions is to develop regional development plans that must be a completely new and strategic instrument that covers general and overall aspects of issues relevant for the development of the region. The RDP's must provide an inspirational basis and an overall umbrella for development initiatives in the region' (Indenrigs- og Sundhedsministeriet, 2004, p.75). In addition, the agreement transferred (from the former counties) the main part of regional land use planning to the municipal level, while at the same time the agreement extended the opportunities for the national level to intervene into municipal land use planning activities. Thereby, the hierarchy of traditional physical-functional oriented land use planning was simplified, and it is reasonable to conclude that the structural reform has also lead to a reform of the Danish planning system.

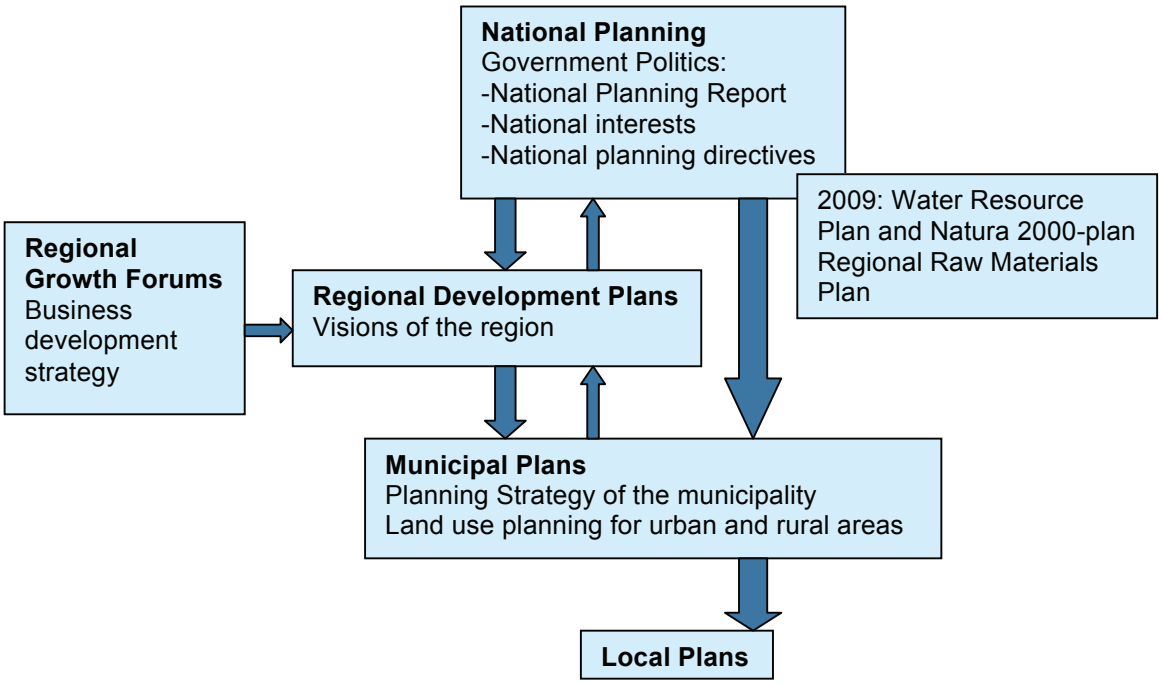

Figure 1. The Danish Planning System after 1st January 2007. Translated from (Miljøministeriet, 2006, s.15)

As such, the reform also lead to necessary changes in planning legislation, and in 2006 the Ministry of the Environment published the first post-reform National Planning Report with the appropriate title: 'The new map of Denmark – spatial planning under new conditions'. The report further specified the consequences of the structural reform to the Danish

planning system. It was stated that the planning system was expected to renew its role in relation to strengthening the ability to create innovation and develop more valuable solutions in order to improve the global position and competitiveness of Denmark. Land use planning was identified as a basic instrument in relation to the protection of the special characteristics and nature of Denmark as well as the creation of conditions for attracting companies, knowledge institutions and labour (Miljøministeriet, 2006, s.10). However, it was also stated that municipal and regional level planning should adopt a more proactive and cooperative role in relation to regional growth and development.

As a consequence, regional development planning must establish strategic visions for regional development in cooperation between the Regional Council, municipalities, the business community and a range of other actors in the region. In short, the RDP must (Miljøministeriet, 2007; see also the 'Danish Planning Act' and the 'Structural Reform Agreement'):

-based in an overall assessment, describe a desirable future development for the urban, rural and fringe-areas of the region – as well as for nature, environment (including recreational purposes), business (including tourism), employment, education and culture.

-contain maps that include overall, but not precise, assigned areas that illustrate the contents of the plan. The Regional Council can put forward proposals for use in municipal and local planning. Municipal plans may not contradict the regional plan. The Regional Council has the right to raise objections in relation to municipal planning.

-produce a plan proposal that must be made public before the end of the first half of the four-year election period, and hence in a parallel process with the revision of municipal planning strategies.

-clarify 1) the coherence between future development and national and municipal infrastructure planning, 2) the coherence with the eventual cooperation on planning and development issues between the region and authorities in bordering countries, and 3) the actions that the Regional Council will initiate as a follow up to the development plan.

-ensure coherence between the business development strategy of the Regional Growth Forum, the employment strategy of the Council of Employment, development strategies of local action groups, the Programme for Rural Areas, local

and regional Agenda 21 strategies, and other regional strategies and plans, e.g. on education and culture.

These main tasks presuppose the establishment of a continuous dialogue between the region and the municipalities concerning the RDP's (Indenrigs- og Sundhedsministeriet, 2004, s.73).

Prior to the initiation of the new regional planning, and in particular in the transition phase up to 1st January 2007, various professional actors with an interest in RDP debated how this new planning could be handled in practice. Already then, a general understanding was established that it would require significant changes in cooperative settings and practices and in the development of new tools and approaches that would contribute to pull a range of actors and driving forces in the same direction.

Through reports, conferences, dialogue projects and other activities, the Ministry of the Environment (Miljøministeriet, 2006), the County Councils of Denmark (Amtsrådsforeningen, 2006) and Oxford Research (2005; a report produced for the Ministry of the Environment) have focused on describing and clarifying previous expectations concerning the upcoming challenges of regional development planning. In doing so, the understanding of complex networks and driving forces as well as the establishment of common understanding, dialogue, interaction, mediation and local anchoring were identified as the main aspects and challenges for the regions and involved parties.

> *The cooperation with municipalities on the regional development plans will be decisive, in that the municipalities will not be obliged to act on their implementation. To a large extent, this will be a common project between municipalities and the Regional Council.* (Connie Hedegaard, Minister of the Environment, 29th April 2004)

> It is *important that the development process is designed in a suitable manner, so that results will be anchored locally. At the same time, transparency in the decision-making process and in the initiatives is an important prerequisite for the creation of support and trust concerning the process among the regional actors. To a high degree, successful regional management depends on the completion of an extensive process of mediation, from the beginning to the end, so that it is ensured that many regional actors will contribute to the formulation and realisation of the same common vision and strategy.* (Miljøministeriet, 2006, s.33)

Hence it can be concluded, so far, that the basic instruments and means for the realisation of regional politics and planning in Denmark have been changed significantly. Earlier, the counties could act and rely on the use of authority-based instruments, and thereby mainly on principles of legality. However, after 1st January 2007 the instruments of the new regions are much more concerned with issues of anchoring, transparency and the building of trust. This implies a focus on legitimacy, and in particular on the (self-)creation of legitimacy in a non-determined interplay between non-determined actors.

4 Regional development planning in North Jutland

How, then, have the above mentioned general conditions, prerequisites and expectations been translated and interpreted into practice, so far? In order to begin answering, this chapter presents and describes the background and the organisation of the process of regional development planning in the example of North Jutland. In the next chapter (five) the RDP will be analysed and discussed in more detail.

4.1 A difficult start

In North Jutland, the challenge of the new regional development planning was considered and debated from early on. Prior to the election in late 2005 to the new Regional Council, the regional politicians and civil servants (in the former county of North Jutland) wanted to bring the issue of the RDP onto the political agenda in order to be able to discuss more broadly the tasks of the new region. In cooperation with the neighbouring County of Viborg, the County of North Jutland therefore attempted to combine and write together the regional strategies embedded in the existing regional plans of the two counties in order to illustrate the tasks that could become relevant.

> When the municipal reform was almost ready, and we could see the proposals for new legislation, then we were about to have the election to the Regional Council. And what do regions do? They manage hospitals, and then there is something more. That is not much on which to base an election campaign – only having hospitals – because people already know a good deal about that. However, the other important role to play was that about regional development. Then they said, well we could try with the strategies of the two counties, and hence together with the County of Viborg. So, we will take the strategies and our business development strategies and try and write it all together in order to show how it could look like – to show that such are the tasks that you are about to work with, when you get elected for the Regional Council. It went rather fast, we made it in three months, because the strategies were already there, and they were relatively recently renovated. There were no problems in doing that. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

However, this initiative was not well received, in particular not by the municipalities in the region and Local Government Denmark (LGDK), the interest group and member authority of Danish municipalities. In recognition that the initiative could be interpreted by LGDK and the municipalities as unnecessarily narrowing and delimiting for the discussion, it was then removed entirely.

> However, then it collided with the strategy of LGDK. They said: 'be very careful concerning those new regions, they will make new plans, and then they will cover you all over again. And, all your new competencies will be reclaimed by them.' Admitted, I am formulating this a bit categorically, but it was very, very sharp, what they did. It was the LGDK, and then the

municipalities followed up. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

And, it was kicked right out of the field, without a doubt. It was mentioned at a certain time in this process, and made absolutely clear, that this was a non-existing piece of paper, which was absolutely not going to be included. (Jan Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)

The no-nonsense rejection of the attempt to illustrate the new planning also indicated that the municipalities would rather see the end of the regional planning as it was prior to the reform.

…basically, we as municipalities made it clear in 2006, also through LGDK, that municipallities did not consider the RDP to be a new regional plan. It was not, and it was not going to be it. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

4.2 Establishing and organising the process

Then we said: let's start all over again. And, as a signal for starting up again we did a kick-off conference in June 2006. That was the start. There was almost nothing before that. Of course, we did some preliminary work. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

Following the election for the Regional Council and the establishment of relevant legislation and announcements from the Ministry of the Environment, the actual work towards a regional development planning in North Jutland was initiated during spring 2006.

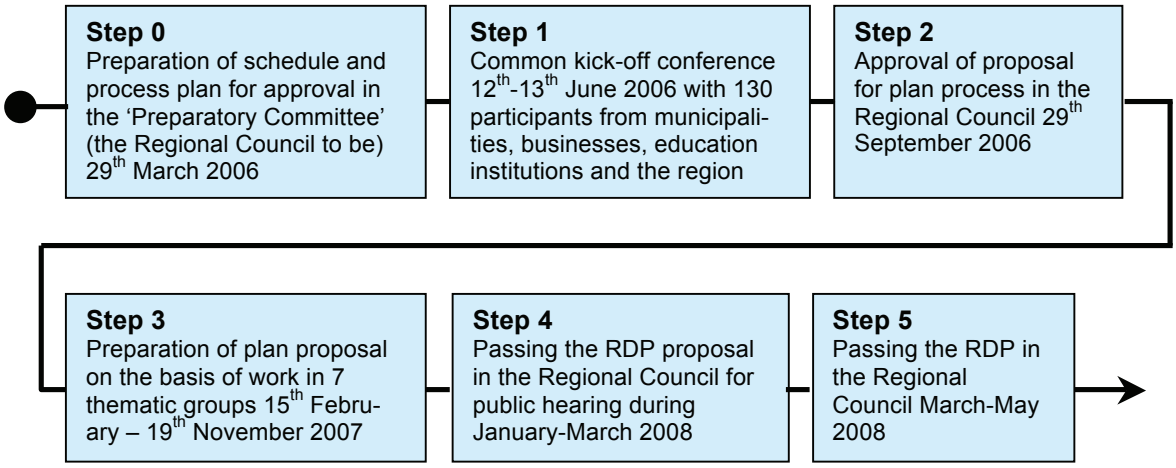

Figure 2. The process towards the RDP of North Jutland. Inspired from the website of the Region of North Jutland.

During 2006, the newly elected Regional Council acted as a Preparatory Committee (until the initiation of the reform 1st January 2007). In cooperation with civil servants, the Preparatory Committee initiated the RDP process. This resulted in a kick-off conference in the town of Hirtshals 12th-13th June 2006 during which 130 participants from the region, municipalities, businesses and education institutions met to discuss and formulate ideas and preliminary visions for future development in North Jutland. At the conference, the chairman of the Regional Council, Orla Hav, stated: 'Nothing is settled in advance, so it is now that we, together, must agree on a vision for, where we want to go, and how we will get there. If we are to cope, then we need to stick together, and if we can manage to team up, then we will also have the opportunity to grow.'

The conference marked, in earnest, the initiation of the RDP process. In eight groups, the participants debated and formulated their dreams for the region and the future. It concerned issues such as the strengthening of the North Jutland nature and culture, how to attract skilled labour to the region, and how to make tourists feel even more welcome.

> It was exciting during the Hirtshals conference. We went through some processes, where we were put together in groups with both regional and municipal politicians, representatives from interest organisations and educations. There were also grass roots there, putting forward their unique approach, as well as others who, at some earlier time, had expressed themselves as to where North Jutland should go. It provided another kind of dynamics that one could build on – also in relation to the succeeding process. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

On the basis of the results of the conference and the succeeding discussions among politicians and civil servants it was decided to establish a political and an administrative steering group (including secretariat) as well as seven theme groups . Together, these groups were to function as an organisational framework for discussing and building the RDP, see figure 3.

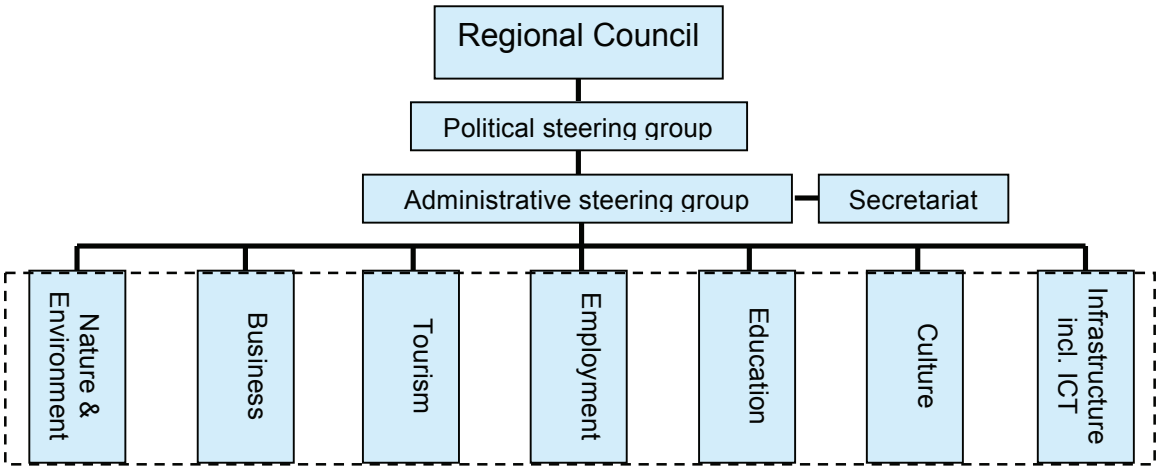

Figure 3. Organisation plan towards the RDP of North Jutland. Inspired from the website of the Region of North Jutland.

From the beginning there was a widely expressed wish among politicians as well as civil servants that the RDP should be spread as much as possible among municipalities, businesses, education institutions and other actors in the region.

> Afterwards, one then said that we need to look at this in more detail within the seven themes in some working groups. It was an entirely conscious choice by us that of course we should include people from municipalities, interest organisations and the region, but it should also be open to others with a particular interest and special resources, knowledge and input concerning a given topic. So that one could enter the process with inspiration and ideas. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

> I did not have the feeling that the region intended to control the process. On the contrary they were very engaged in trying to ensure that the process became as open and broad as possible. (Jan Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)

The political steering group was established with 5 key politicians from the Regional Council, 5 from the municipalities and 5 from the Regional Growth Forum. The task of the group was to determine the terms of reference and principles for pointing out participants and chairmen of the theme groups. In addition, the group was to be responsible for preparing a RDP proposal for the Regional Council and for use in a public hearing phase, and finally the group was also given responsibility to prepare the RDP for final approval in the Regional Council. The administrative steering group was established with leading civil servants from the region, and representatives from business, education, organisations pointed out by the Regional Growth Forum, and leading civil servants from municipalities. It was the task of this group to assist the political steering group concerning the above mentioned responsibilities.

During the initiation of the RDP process, the Regional Growth Forum had significant difficulties in producing its first business development strategy. This strategy was prepared by January 2007 and approved in March 2007. With the approval of the strategy, the business sector issues related to the RDP could then be grafted into the RDP process.

> What is the connection between the regional business development strategy and the RDP? The formulation of this is more or less that the regional business development strategy provides the foundation for the business part in the RDP. And what does that mean? That is actually what is somewhat difficult …there, we have suggested to all the theme groups that they should also look at things from a business perspective. When you look at nature and the environment – is it then possible to capitalise from it? Are there development opportunities that can earn money? That is what it is about. Without it having negatives effects on nature. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

4.3 The theme groups

> Should we have tourism on its own, business on its own, culture on its own, etc? Or should we try to combine them across [sectors] already from the beginning? In that case we chose the solution to deal with one silo on its own, if that is what you want to call it. We did this partly in order to connect this as directly to legislation as possible, and perhaps first of all in order to avoid making it more complicated that necessary for those who had to work with this. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

The 7 theme groups – Nature & Environment, Business, Tourism (by own initiative later named Tourism and Experience Economy), Employment, Education, Culture, and Infrastructure incl. ICT – was given the task to deliver input and proposals for RDP sub-strategies within each their theme. The groups were to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and treats related to their theme, and based in this to produce proposals for visions and goals concerning the theme. In addition, the groups were meant to help ensure a discussion and consideration of coherence between themes. In practice, and to a large extent also for strategic reasons, the region had no wish to occupy the chairs of the groups. In stead, one wanted to include the municipalities and other actors as chairmen, which succeeded in 5 of the 7 groups.

Hence, the composure of persons in the groups was based in a principle of trying to achieve an early activation of the parties that was to be responsible or contribute to the realisation of RDP strategies and initiatives. As such, the idea that the RDP should be spread out as much as possible among municipalities, business life, education institutions and other actors in the region was rather consequently attempted mirrored in the organisation of the planning process.

> We had announced the themes. Then, we simply asked some [in the municipalities] to appoint representatives. We gave them an idea how many to involve, more or less. We have been rather flexible – if the municipalities said to us; 'we can't do with only three, we need four', then they got it… They were told about the character of the task, and then they could show up with the team they wanted, as this is also a complicated matter. …However, it has turned out quite well. Besides, beforehand and by principle we also turned down the chairmanship of the groups. It was a signal to say that we did not want to sit around and decide everything. They have embraced that – there were 2 [groups] where they could not find people to chair, which we then occupied… In addition, we have also had a principle of using 'wild cards'. We looked a long time for those. Could we find some really crazy people, someone who was not greased over in politics and strategies beforehand concerning a particular theme? It was more about trying to include the growth layer concerning knowledge and experience. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

The Contact Council of the Municipalities in North Jutland repaid by recognising that 'the process and the cooperation has been well initiated, and a good foundation has been made for a solid anchoring in the municipalities of the results.' (Focal points of the municipalities in working with the RDP, 21st February 2007)

In order to start up the theme groups, a Take off conference was arranged for all groups on 15th February 2007 in Aalborg. The first part of the conference was a joint meeting while the second part concerned the initiation of each of the theme groups. At the joint meeting two consultant companies presented their input to both the contents and process of the RDP. Based in a regional development model, Oxford Research[4] presented an analysis (geographic with focus on development opportunities) of the region, which was meant to provide a starting point for dealing with the contents in the groups work. In order to also provide inspiration for the initiation of working processes in the groups, the consultant Mercury Urval presented 'the appreciative method'. This method focused on making participants aware of the roles and interests of themselves and others as well as to attempt to create a basis for a more open, positive and opportunity-oriented dialogue. As such, these inputs exemplified a transfer of concrete experience and knowledge from the world outside the region.

During the second half of the conference, each of the participants joined a theme group in order to discuss the terms of reference related to them, to discuss the above mentioned analysis from Oxford Research concerning their particular theme, and to organise the work of the group. In doing so, the terms of reference for a group was, to a certain degree, open for discussion and feedback from the participants of the group. For instance, the theme group of Nature & Environment was allowed and encouraged by regional politicians and

[4] During 2004-05, Oxford Research also helped the Danish Ministry of the Environment to collect experiences from 9 dialogue projects that were seen as inspiring and relevant concerning the upcoming work on new regional management and planning, see Oxford Research (2005).

civil servants to explicitly add the issue of climate change as a part of their terms of reference.

The theme groups were made responsible for their own working process within the group.

> We said; we will use the first meetings to test each other and to let all ideas surface through dialogue, because such things will emerge when one talk with each other. Then, one suddenly realises something that one actually did not know beforehand. That is the way it is. The first 3 meetings we had were very much about; well, now we have this topic, and then we talk and talk and talk. We talked for a long time, it was 4-5 hours, for sure. That way many things emerge. But, it also means that some things start to crystallise. In that way you should actually imagine a funnel before you – so that our meeting structure has had the shape of starting wide, then becoming more and more narrow, and finally we are at the core of things, at that is where we will write the report. That is how it has been. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

However, for reasons of orientation, coordination and clarification of transverse and eventual overlapping interests and discussions between groups, joint meetings have been arranged between both the steering groups and the theme groups. For example, a 'Bazaar' was arranged for all theme groups on 18th April 2007. Here, the groups exchanged ideas and visions as well as discussed and found interfaces, issues for cooperation and potential conflicting issues between the groups – as in this case, between the Business group and the group of Nature & Environment:

> Concerning the Business group – in that case, I believe it was quite an experience for us in the Nature & Environment group when we promoted the happy message, that we considered environmental technologies as a whole as an important parameter for future industries. Then the Business group came – and they simply did not agree. They turned it completely upside down and said that they actually thought it would be negative for the business development if one attached such a green foot shaped stamp to it. So, I can't say how much it moved them, but it moved a little among us. Now, we were almost being religious about this, so it might have been good to have some cold water thrown at us in terms of; 'well, do try and think a little about what kind of signals you transmit, for as many as you might attract, as many may you also scare off by being this way'. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

However, the activities and display of opportunities of the Business group in relation to other groups was also influenced by the fact that the conditions for action of the group were limited by the already approved regional business development strategy:

> There is this special thing concerning the business area – something we have also been reflecting on during the groups work – that we have the regional business development strategy. It was already made, and of course we had to respect that. So, where the other groups started we an empty cardboard, we started with one that was completely full. (Jan

Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)

The theme groups also had the task of arranging workshops, which should aim at inviting for discussion of their ideas and initiatives before finalising writing reports. Invited for the workshops were mainly politicians from municipalities and the region as well as representatives from business life, education institutions and interest organisations.

4.4 Supplementary activities

During the process, and particularly through 2007, it has been debated mainly in the administrative steering group and the secretariat if one should carry out an even broader involvement of actors, e.g. with selected groups of the population. Therefore, the region and the Laboratory of Creativity at Aalborg University arranged a workshop on 7th September 2007, in which 40 young people from high schools, business schools, technical schools, colleges of education and Aalborg University gathered to break down traditional ways of thinking and to recombine knowledge concerning North Jutland in new ways. The young people were split into 7 groups (corresponding to the themes mentioned above), and through 14 intensive hours they worked with 7 imaginary problems.

For instance, the Employment group worked with the problem; 'how do you get people to live in Hundelev (a small village) in 2017?', while the Tourism and Experience Economy group looked at; 'how to make the perfect holiday experience at the Limfjord in January?' New thinking and generation of crazy ideas were at centre stage. By the end of the day, the

ideas were presented for and well received by the chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland. Thereafter, the ideas functioned as input to the final writing process towards a proposal for the RDP.

> …then we tried this thing with the young people. This is probably what has been the most successful in practice. It was rather impressive. Full throttle from early morning and onwards. It was fun. I have tried something similar already 15 years ago, but this was good …the method itself, and to think across sectors; they were really good at that. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

In addition, citizens have been able to follow the RDP process on the website of the region, http://www.rn.dk/RegionalUdvikling/, where analysis as well as agendas and minutes from meetings could be found. A blogg function was also established.

4.5 Writing the EDP proposal and the process to follow

Currently (November 2007), the RDP process has reached a moment where all the input from the above mentioned working processes is collected, and an actual RDP proposal is being produced. With some variations, the theme groups have been active until ultimo September or early October, where the groups work have been concluded by approximately 30 pages of reporting from each group and handed in to the steering groups and the secretariat. These theme reports represent the outcome of the theme groups, and hereafter the reports are included as part of the basis for writing the RDP proposal.

At the moment, the secretariat attempts to condense the reports into only a few pages, and at the same time the secretariat tries to develop cross sectored areas for initiatives. It is a very complicated writing process, in which a number of interests and conditions have to be measured and balanced in relation to each other, including eventual differences and contradictions between the theme reports.

> …then we will take the 30 pages and condense it into something like 4-6 pages for each of these themes, which then becomes part of the RDP. Some of it will then be taken out, because it is cross sectored. That means that we have cross sectored initiatives. For example, public transport relates to all of the themes – so, we have a cross sectored initiative concerning how to connect North Jutland. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

Hereafter, the process is as follows: the condensed RDP proposal of the steering groups will be presented for the Regional Council, in order to achieve approval that the proposal can enter into public hearing. After the public hearing, the feedback from it will be taken

into account, and it is then expected that the RDP for North Jutland will be finally approved in spring 2008. The RDP will be in force until and including 2011.

5 Analysis and discussion – challenges and opportunities

> *…it is no secret that it is a great challenge to make all the new cooperation processes work and not least to make them interconnect in all sorts of ways… If the [RDP] plan is going to make a difference, then it must point out goals for a regional development that is based in a broad ownership.* (Bent Hansen, chairman of the Regions of Denmark & Erik Fabrin, chairman of Local Government Denmark, 2007)

> *A plan that expresses the common interests of multiple actors will strengthen the ownership and interest for regional development. That requires dialogue and cooperation.* (Regions of Denmark & Local Government Denmark, 2007)

What can, at present, be identified as some of the most important challenges and opportunities for the establishment and anchoring of RDP in North Jutland? This is analysed and discussed in this chapter on the basis of 1) the description in chapter 4, 2) preliminary interpretations via interview persons and document studies, and 3) contributions related to the perspectives and understandings provided in chapter 2. The purpose is to attempt to understand and interpret the RDP through different entry points, so that together these will contribute to form a useful overview and narrative of the challenges and opportunities of the RDP.

Section 5.1 will present and discuss how a basic understanding and perception of the RDP has developed until now among a range of actors. In the following section 5.2, a range of the most significant specific experiences and challenges concerning the RDP organisation and process will be detailed and discussed. Finally, section 5.3 primarily focuses on opportunities and possible recommendations: what is the RDP becoming, or what could it turn into? How are problems and challenges met and solved?

5.1 What is the RDP?

> It is a completely new type of plan, given that there is no actual authority behind it. It is not an authority-based plan. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

As indicated in chapter 4, the birth of the RDP was influenced and made difficult by images and perceptions of regional politics and planning, which to a large extent were rooted in the 'old' counties and the associated planning system. However, what was the

controversy about, and what does it indicate about the starting point for the establishment and development of the understanding of the RDP?

First of all, the controversy had to do with a confrontation and a struggle between the municipalities and the regional level concerning the former authority-based regional plans. From the outset, this struggle was characterised by backwards-looking and repositioning and to a high degree by a focus on what the RDP should *not* be.

> There were also this bogey, that there was this plan that one referred to and said; this is how it cannot be. The bottom line was that one had a plan that it was not supposed to turn into. It was the plan in which everything was descriptive, the [former] regional plan. This was also felt quite clearly at the first couple of meetings in the administrative steering group – that there was a need for marking off territories. There were some new municipalities and a new region, but most of us had also been actors in the old county and the old municipalities. …So, some of the actors had new roles, and that was the reason why people approached this with some sensitivity and said; 'hey, you don't have that authority-based task any more, now it is us'. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)
>
> I participated when we, in the Regional Council, made the decision that the paper made by the former county [as to how the RDP could look like] had to be put in the bin, and that one should start all over again. I had read the paper, and somehow I think that one made the decision because one could see from the paper that it really was, as I remember it, restricted by the old authority-based way of thinking. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)
>
> However, here afterwards I can see that it was really really inappropriate to start this way. And, I could not understand it, but now I can. It was because the relation between the municipalities and the County of North Jutland had been war. I experience and feel it a bit in other situations; that now it is payback time. Because, now the region is in this situation of reduced competencies, and then it must also be told in clear terms. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)
>
> One could say that this is simply like the original sin. It can be debated how justified it is, but the regional plans were hated, because they were limiting for the municipalities. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

The structural reform had removed the counties and the regional plan, however through 2005-06 it was still unclear, and felt as insecurity among the actors, by what it would be replaced. The lack of clarity was not much concerned with an eventual doubt about the new location of the former tasks of the county, mainly concerning land use, as these had now been shared between the national level and the municipalities. In stead, at the regional

and local level one was in doubt as to how to understand and fill in some of the remaining governing void in relation to the new strategic and development oriented tasks.

> The age of the regional plans is over. Now we will have a RDP, but that is something else. The size alone of the document, and the way it will be presented, clearly illustrates the change. In the RDP, there will be no appendices with [land use] maps that specify what is allowed, and what is not. So, in that respect it will not have the governing effect that the regional plans have had. It is obviously something that we as municipalities have been focusing on. The counties disappeared, and the regions have not substituted the counties, the regions are something else. They do not exist in the decision-making hierarchy as such. In stead, we have two levels today; we have the state and the municipalities. …We had a fine feeling what the RDP was not going to be, but less about what it was actually going to be. This has also influenced the work in the theme groups, also our group, and in general among all parties; that we are dealing with something that we do not quite know what to turn into. We cannot look this up in a manual, neither from the national level, to see how a RDP should look like. (Jan Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)

Hence, one had to build both a new perception of planning and a new strategic planning product among the regional and local actors. This establishment of 'something else' resulted in many reflections over the character of the new product as well as the repositioning of actors in relation to the goals and workings of the product.

> It was obvious to everyone that it [the RDP] was not an authority-based plan and that we as Regional Council would not have any authority similar to what was implied in the regional plan. And, considering that it is a plan vision to a large extent, and a plan that provides directions for how we would like to develop, but directions that in reality has to be enabled by everyone else but the Regional Council – then one need to get them onto the pitch. Our task as Regional Council was to be in a coordinating role, setting an agenda in cooperation with the other actors. However, it is exactly those other actors that have to implement this. It was the civil servants that realised this first, I guess. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

> Then, a 'restart' was initiated, which included a proposal on how this could be done. It resulted in this much more process-oriented role, where the process was spread out among the interest parties. …In the administrative steering group we focused a lot on; first of all the recognising and appreciative approach, as I experience it. It was about trusting each other. And secondly, this was a first generation work, so we had to take care that it did not turn into something that reminded people, even remotely, of the county's regional plan. This has to be miniature, and not heavy bricks of documents. It has to be at a visionary and strategic level, not more detailed than that. And, it has to be transverse. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

During summer and autumn 2006, the RDP was organised and the process initiated (see more in next section). And, during 2007 it was particularly the work in the theme groups that enabled the establishment of a broader and in many ways much more common regional-local understanding of the role and workings of the RDP. Below, some of the

central actors specifies and explains the current status of this understanding (November 2007), and in particular some of the different aspects related to it:

> This might be where the RDP can be said to have a good mission. It has created a dictionary that we can use, when we proceed. It is much easier. For instance, also when we have to talk between municipalities – if we use the words created by the RDP, then we don't need to start by having 3 meetings in order to identify what this is actually about. Then we will already know. We will also have a reasonable idea about the frame that we move towards – that will also have been somewhat settled. So, if we accept this beforehand, then we will, rationally speaking, have managed to cut off a part of the work, and then we can move strait to the core of things. One should not underestimate the value of this – to have created a dictionary. A lot of people think that it is very unambitious to view the RDP as a dictionary. Actually, I think it is a rather big ambition to have, because this is really what we use as human beings. When you and I talk, we can only do it because we have a reasonably similar understanding of the meaning of the words that we say. It is … time saving that we don't have to say all the words. It is also like that with some of the things that we are about to deal with concerning the RDP. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)
>
> I believe that what we have done fits quite well with the nature of this plan – that it is an overall strategic plan that spans everything. …I think it is important that we view this transversely. …the way that this has been set up; I think that the participants have had the feeling that they have not been working under tightened conditions. Their creativity has been asked for, in stead. And, I believe that is the right thing, it fits this type of plan. …It is a strategic plan, and as such we need those who take up some space, those who decide, we are talking about decision makers, to deal more with the strategy of the whole. And, that has been quite an exercise. I have been out there talking with some business leaders, and that is encouraging – I can call them and ask; 'hello, we are in the process of making a RDP, do you have an hour for discussing it? Yes, let's do that', they say. They are very interested in this planning, so there is some kind of potential. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)
>
> I think that it is a vision and strategy paper for North Jutland. In some way it is a map of the direction we should move towards. We want to see, how North Jutland should develop towards 2017. We think we can do that by carrying out some initiatives in different areas. It is a vision and strategy paper. But, as with all strategies, they cannot become real without someone to back it up by action. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

As a new type of plan and political-strategic idea, the RDP is clearly and example of the new forms of governing presented shortly in chapter 2. It has emerged on the basis of wishes to improve the opportunities of regional and local levels to be able to discuss, develop and improve their own role in a globalising economy and in a world that is viewed and recognised as increasingly complex. It has lead to a change of fundamental political-administrative structures in Denmark and the fragmentation of earlier more clearly defined hierarchical systems and conditions for cooperation.

In the North Jutland approach to the RDP work, the understanding of the RDP, and in many ways the mood surrounding it, has turned from both frustration, delight and insecurity over the abandoned governing void towards an increasing acknowledgement of a need for working actively with the opportunities of the new planning. The feeling of delight primarily related to a municipal satisfaction with the fact that the former three level plan hierarchy concerning planning and detailed binding regulation of land use has now been reduced to two levels – with the municipalities as a kind of winner, as large parts of this regulation has been transferred to them. The frustration and insecurity consisted, and to some extent still consists, in a lack of clarity, partly concerning the coordination of land use planning and regulation across municipal borders, and partly related to the handling of the new strategic dimension. In addition, there has been some feeling of insecurity concerning the coordination and interaction between strategic and land use planning.

In other words, it can be claimed that today a two level hierarchy within land use planning and regulation must communicate with a three level hierarchy of strategic planning. The RDP constitutes the middle level in the strategic hierarchy, but the region cannot apply land use planning on its own in order to implement its strategies – that is the job of the municipalities. As such, the RDP can also be seen as a 'common plan strategy of the municipalities'. However, through interaction with the municipal plan strategies, the RDP has a potential strategic access to land use planning, to the extent allowed by the municipalities themselves. Such conditions inevitably raise questions concerning the actual opportunities for the RDP to create the necessary coordination and integration. See more about this in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

Hence, an existing hierarchy of governing and planning has been broken open and in some ways fragmented. At the regional level, a new arena has been left open intentionally, and it provide opportunities and frames for a self-organised establishment of a regional-municipal network that must deal with the interests of both the region and the municipalities in cooperation – however, without the traditional hierarchical relations and binding governing instruments. It is a new kind of institution that has to create its own legitimacy, identity and 'drive' through dialogue, cooperation, and bottom-up and need-based coordination. Therefore, the question also seems to be if this legitimacy and trust-based concurrency has sufficient conditions of growth in practice? More on this in sections 5.2 and 5.3.

Finally, and viewed in a more overall perspective, the changes in regional-municipal structures and tasks in Denmark can also be interpreted as an expression of what Brenner (2004) terms 'rescaling', e.g. a rescaling of governing structures and networks. Brenner views and characterises this as an inherent necessity, as a significant expression and

catalyser for 'glocalisation strategies'. When applying those lenses, the RDP can be seen as a Danish government attempt to improve the global competitiveness of Denmark, based on the thesis that regional and municipal levels must, increasingly, become strategically co-responsible for a broader economic development, adjustment and adaptation. Therefore, the RDP also becomes a common regional-municipal interpretation and positioning in relation to globalisation.

5.2 Organisation and process – experiences and challenges

> I think it has been an exiting process that has moved from being a question of delimiting the RDP to the highest degree possible towards the recognition that it actually contains elements that can be used. That is why I consider this to be a good process. …The basic condition is that the diffuse words in the top stimulate the building of themes that are important, that provide a range of main ideas, and that has a proper foundation in real life. And, I actually think that they do. I believe it has actually succeeded. The process has succeeded in this – to create some overall words or an overall structure, which means that our activities down here all of a sudden can be seen in a larger context, than merely as isolated activities. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

This section intends to specify and discuss some of the most significant experiences and challenges related to the organisation and process of the RDP. Given that the RDP is a completely new type of plan in a Danish context, the involved parties have of course not been able to identify or draw on comparable Danish experiences and examples (however, see input from Oxford Research, 2005 and Amtsrådsforeningen, 2006). Hence, the organisation and process, as it has been described so far in chapter 4, has in many ways been of a relatively experimental and explorative character. Therefore, it will be useful for the future work with the RDP, as well as for RDP-related research, to attempt to summarise the specific experiences and challenges that is considered to be influential in relation to the anchoring and implementation of the RDP in North Jutland. The section is divided into subsections that illustrate different aspects and perspectives concerning the organisation and processes of the RDP. To a large extent, these aspects have emerged on the basis of accounts of what actors in the North Jutland example believe has turned out to be influential, meaningful and relevant.

5.2.1 Cross sectored organisation, interfaces and alliances

It has been a very significant challenge to organise the production of the RDP. Who should do what, how, and when? From early on, the extensive process and its organisation, as described in chapter 4, was discussed and reflected upon in relation to the establishment of ownership and anchoring among the interest parties who were actually going to implement

the RDP, in particular the municipalities. Therefore, issues such as comprehensiveness, openness, transparency as well as process- and product-orientation were discussed and identified from the beginning as fundamental conditions and principles for the organisation of the RDP.

> It has been the aim from the very beginning that we should widen our approach. And in that respect North Jutland probably differs from the other regions. When the others talk about widening their approaches, they primarily talk about it in relation to the municipalities. We don't. We have included education institutions in a central role, and we have included businesses in as much a central role as is possible. …During the entire process, we have proclaimed with an absolute inner calmness that this is for decision makers and other interests. If people are interested, then they are most welcome. This is also why we do this completely in the open. We have even tried applying a blogg where people could join the debate as much as they desired. However, we will not target this in relation to the individual citizen. But, I think that something will emerge in the public hearing phase. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

> I believe it was already at the first meeting [in the administrative steering group] that we initiated the discussion concerning ownership. And, I believe it was done very consciously and wisely. It kind of set the tone. One might say that the tone was set with reference to two bottom lines – one was that something had to come out of this, and the other was that we had something that it absolutely could not turn into [the former regional plan]. This is how it has been realised. …In the beginning one has to be very process-oriented. One must participate in the opening process in order to be able to lead people into the process, and to make them produce something that can contribute to create development within exactly their themes of interest and areas of expertise. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)

In other words, the organisation is primarily based in the involvement of organised actors and interests (stakeholders), rather than citizen participation.

The work inside and between the theme groups was central to the wide and cross sectored organisation. The theme groups themselves consisted of a broad and differentiated variety of actors and interests, which provided opportunities for and provoked discussions and harmonisation of expectations between the parties. However, as each theme group only represented a part of the whole picture, it was in particular through the relation and interaction with other groups that the involved parties reflected, debated and acted in order to be able to manoeuvre or negotiate through their own viewpoints – or to attempt to achieve a sense of community.

> …from the very beginning, our basic intention in the group was to keep trying to be attentive towards finding common patterns and alliances with others. If we look at the environmental side of things, then there is an important interface relating to the Business group. And all the time, the thesis in our group was that; well, yes we can do something on

> our own, but it does not carry enough weight. If you are to achieve something in the real world, then you have to do it with somebody else. You have to deal with it together. Hence, one must think in terms of alliances all the time. With whom should this be implemented? With whom can we create a sense of community, concerning the issues we work with? And, in respect to the environment it was of course the Business group. In terms of nature, it was also the Tourist group, which is why we [also] carried out a bazaar together with them. We thought that we had much to do with each other. One can argue that the two reports coming from this easily can be viewed separately, but basically we are tightly connected. There is a large interface between the two groups, so we thought about this all the time. …an interface contains an opening for creating an alliance. Whereas conflicting points in common contain no opening for creating alliances. …We knew that the bazaar would come, and at the bazaar we wanted to test and discuss with the groups that we found interesting. It was actually quite well prepared, when thinking about it afterwards. It was quite smart. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

Hence, the organisation of meetings and activities across the groups had a significant importance to the opportunities of success for each group as well as for the establishment of broader communities and alliances between the groups. The question then seems to be how far these communities and alliances are able to reach? So far, it has turned out to be difficult to ensure a deeper anchoring among the municipalities, both between and within the municipalities.

> I think that it has worked out reasonably – e.g. the establishment of the theme groups with a broad anchoring, one might say. However, it was only a small part of the whole that was represented in the groups. One of the things we have discovered along the way is that the chairmen of the groups do not go back home and write to their good colleagues in the other 10 municipalities and tell them; 'now, listen to this'. Neither have they said, when they met for other reasons; 'I need half an hour to inform you about this'. That is not the way it is. That is actually a problem. It has turned out to be a problem, because the municipalities must be a large part of this. They are invited everywhere, and I think they have contributed with a total of 50 people for this process. The idea is that they bring a manager or head of planning from each municipality, but what happens when they get back home? Very, very little. …They should already have involved their own people in the process. That is a problem. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

In other words, it seems to be a significant challenge to spread the anchoring process and ownership beyond the participating persons in the process. The organisation has resulted in broad settings and cross sectored activities in the process, primarily based on the involvement of professional actors in the region. In addition, it seems there is a widespread satisfaction among the involved parties concerning the process itself. Municipalities, businesses, the university, etc. have had the opportunity to achieve significant influence, for instance via representation in steering groups, chairmanship in theme groups, and through the work in the theme groups as a whole.

Then, the challenge at the moment (winter 2007-08) is to transform this satisfaction and sense of influence into broader and more obliging action among the actors, and the institutions/organisations they represent. Will the experiences of the involved actors in the RDP process be transferred or transformed into binding action in the base? So far, not much seems to indicate that there has been a broader communication or spread of experiences in the municipalities concerning the RDP work and its likely consequences for each municipality – not to any significant extent. This can turn out to be a great challenge and Achilles heel in the future, as the municipalities are deciding factors to the realisation of the RDP.

Similar challenges can emerge in relation to the regional business life, although the following comment should also be viewed with respect to the previously mentioned fact that a regional business development strategy had already been produced before the RDP process was initiated:

> Then we had the representatives of business life… those who represented somebody felt more committed to participate. But, for all of them it was very much a question of; what are we going to do with this? What will emerge from this? There, we had to deal with the fact that business people are very oriented towards results – they don't mind spending time doing this, but they are busy working in their companies. They are participating in many places. They have been asked to meet up for this, and they basically also want to. However, how will the world be different as a result of this? What is the result, also in the shorter term? What will happen? It is a lot to spend 7 times to discuss academic strategies for how the society might look in 10 or 15 years time. (Jan Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)

Hence, and so far, the organisation of the process has been somewhat successful, in particular between the participating actors. However, significant challenges awaits; mainly concerning the anchoring of the RDP within the municipal administrations. In addition, the relation, coordination and interaction between the new RDP network and the 'old' primarily municipal organisations and to a certain extent the business life has not yet been settled. However, as will be discussed in section 5.3, new organisational settings and approaches are currently being debated in the steering groups, and these initiatives seem to aim to deal with the above mentioned challenges.

The organisation of the RDP mirrors some of the general features and challenges presented in chapter 2 concerning new governing systems and cooperative practices. Partnerships and self-organising or tailored bottom-up processes (often termed deliberative processes in social and political science) are considered by the key actors to be important strategic instruments for establishing the RDP. A widespread involvement of actors across regional-local levels and interests is viewed to be more efficient and resource generating. It is also

considered to be a necessity because the need for coordination and interaction on specific initiatives is now to be defined among the actors themselves rather than from above. So far, this need seems to have been recognised among the participants – in particular in relation to the work in the theme groups. Here, 'silo mentality' and sector orientation was actively dissolved through the establishment of alliances, coalitions and links both inside, between and across themes. See Healey (2007, p. 5) for reflections on similar challenges and organisational settings, in particular that sectoral approaches today seems to generate 'a momentum to create linkages between policy fields … expressed as a search for policy integration and joined-up government'.

> *Intellectually, it involves imagining what to link, integrate and 'join up'. Politically, it involves developing coalitions with sufficient collective power to make the links and joins actually work. It involves building relations in the mind and in the social worlds of policy and politics. (Healey, 2007, p. 5)*

Hence, this form of organisation, as exemplified by the work of the theme groups, can be seen as an attempt to link actors and interests and as a rather efficient means to policy integration and joined regional-municipal governance.

Apparently, such a momentum occurred because the actors in general accepted a premise that sub-optimisation would not suffice, and hence that a one-sided pursuit of own interests would not lead to a better result than cooperation would. In other words, the perception of a plus-sum rather than a zero-sum game seems to have been established and accepted. This is perhaps because one did not dare to hope for an overall prioritisation of the particular visions and goals formed in ones own group, and/or because it was considered very difficult to force through, between equal actors, a consensus favourable to the groups viewpoints. When general and overall views, visions and goals had to be established across themes, is it then likely that alliances had to be created in order to ensure the best opportunities for ones own viewpoints? It is yet unclear, and to be researched further in the case, what in fact produced this apparent acceptance. Did not the actors see other possible paths, and if so why not? Or can this be caused by other and more socio-cultural factors? Hence, it is not possible at this stage to further clarify the importance of the RUP-organisation to the balancing of interests and the handling of power relations. For that, a better understanding of the actors and their roles is required. This is dealt with in the next subsection.

However, it seems likely that cross sectored organisation has contributed positively to illuminate the possibility that sub-optimisation does not suffice. Early involvement of implementing parties, in particular municipalities, seems to have contributed to legitimise the new regional institution. On the other hand, the required recognition among the actors

of the need for interaction and establishment of coalitions has not yet had sufficient opportunity to spread into the hinterland. This implies that the establishment of a broad and 'deep' (into the municipalities) coordination, integration and legitimacy (and hence acceptance) still stands as a rather significant challenge.

5.2.2 Changes in roles and cultures

Apart from the organisation of the process it has been a considerable challenge, and in many ways probably the most significant, to influence and change the underlying mentality and mindset to an extent that was sufficient for moving forward the new type of planning. This has been a challenge for practically all the involved parties and to such an extent that it has not only been a matter of a renewal and change of specific roles, but also to a certain degree of a broader or deeper cultural change.

As described or indicated above, from the very beginning the regional politicians and civil servants were in the line of fire and were being pushed from several parties concerning the definition of their new role (or rather it was a redefinition, as there were quite a few politicians and civil servants that also served in the former county). The change in role was connected closely to the change in the split of tasks between the region and the municipalities. However, it also had a more concrete departure in the above mentioned regional-municipal conflict over the early attempt by the region to illustrate how the RDP could look like (see chapter 4 and subsection 5.1).

> …my experience was that somebody was thinking a lot in terms of analysis and descriptions. I had the feeing that this was completely wrong, because if the region was to do that, then one would only project earlier problems onto the screen. So, it must not begin with analysis, it must not begin by classifying the cities in relation to each other – because then Hjørring and Frederikshavn will immediately start wrestling, and the rest of us will start arguing over Nykøbing and Thisted. It has to be done in another way… (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

> …we had no direct confrontation over roles. On a few occasions we had bits emerging over the term authority roles – that something had happened. It occurred if some members of the group [the administrative steering group] were thinking that the process had gone a bit too far – if they thought that this started to look like a plan that reminded them too much of the key that it could not become [the former regional plan]. Then they presented this bogey and said: it shall not be like this. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)

However, from early on the region and in particular its administrative staff seems to have been prepared for a change in role from being an authority to become a facilitator.

Comments and reflections from a range of other parties support this broadly, as exemplified here:

> There is a deciding difference between being a county and authority in relation to planning or a region and facilitator of a process. It is crucially different. I think that the region has related really, really loyal and sensible to the issue of moving from being an authority towards the role of a facilitator. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

> It was not my feeling that the region wanted to control the process. On the contrary they were very occupied trying to ensure that it became as open and broad as at all possible. This was for several reasons: partly because they were also much occupied with recognising their own role, and partly because they were as searching as anybody else; what was this going to become? …They have been incredibly open about what we could do, both in the initial phase and along the way. (Jan Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)

On the other hand, the extent to which the regional politicians have been involved along the way seems to have been limited.

> …if you look at the sessions carried out by our group [Nature and Environment theme group], then you can say that the anchoring within the regional council has been weak. Then, one or more joined meetings have been arranged, in which each group have presented the status of their work, and where the regional council were of course also invited. There, a few more members of the regional council participated, but not that many. So, I think that the anchoring within the council happens very much in the traditional manner – that is, that those who participated are also the ones to carry the issue into the [political] party groups, and then one can see if it has an impact there. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

According to several interviewees, this can partly be explained by the fact that the regional council has been much occupied with the health sector, in particular the establishment of a new hospital structure. However, in any case it can be stated that the conditions have changed significantly concerning the role of the regional politicians. To a much higher degree, the new role for the individual regional politician seems to consist of being agenda setting and network participating in stead of exerting authority. However, and as indicated above, in relation to the RDP process this change of role do not yet seem to have emerged broadly among the politicians in the regional council. It can primarily be observed among a minor number of politicians who have actively participated in the process along the way through the political steering group, advisory forums and additional meeting activities. The implications of this are yet unclear, but it must be considered a possible weak link in relation to the opportunity to achieve a broad political acceptance and anchoring in the regional council. In addition, it is still rather vague and therefore also a challenge, what it

actually means when the role of the regional politician seems to move towards agenda setting and network participation. See more concerning this later in this subsection.

The role of the municipalities, in relation to the region as well as between the municipalities themselves, also seems to be changing, as exemplified here:

> Now we [Morsø municipality] have become part of the Region of North Jutland. And, because of our extremely low unemployment rate and a lot of growth industry – through three years we have been among the top ten 'innovative municipalities' – then by playing a contributing, positively constructive role in the RDP and other areas we could join the region and create ourselves another image. Therefore, my approach to this has been to meet the region in a recognising and appreciative dialogue, rather than from the viewpoint that 'they are probably trying to screw us'. Because, that viewpoint was also present. It is part of the approach to this, here from Morsø municipality, that we want to be a constructive and contributing cooperation partner. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

Hence, a new process such as the RDP also seems to have provided an opportunity, or a platform, for municipalities to stage and present themselves in new ways. This seems rather important, because it means that we are not only talking about a facilitating, conversational, dialogue- and process-friendly role. It is also a role that may embed some conscious contents-focussed, value-based and strategic communication oriented components. To the municipalities, this is about (which is in reality also intended in the RDP set up) trying to influence the regional strategy and plan formation process to ones own advantage. As such, this is not in any way new, as the municipalities have always tried to influence the regional level. However, the hierarchy of planning has been changed significantly; the regions are now at the mercy of the municipalities, so that one may characterise the relationship as 'the region of the municipalities', rather than the opposite. This apparently creates a situation where (some) municipalities sees new opportunities for using the RDP process to stage themselves to a higher degree. Such an approach also seems to have been helped by recent experiences of working with plan strategies in Danish municipalities (this has been a requirement in the Planning Act since 2000 and several municipalities have experiences of working with strategic planning from the 1990s). Finally, city and urban branding perspectives increasingly also seems to influence urban development and planning activities in general, which often implies conscious self-reflective efforts of imaging and staging cities and municipalities.

Behind the considerations of each actor concerning their roles or changes in roles it seems that there has been an underlying transverse perception that no single actor wanted to be the cause of, or the obstacle to, a block up to the process. This has been reflected broadly

among the interviewed actors. Particular interests should not be allowed, to any significant extent, to stand in the way of the building of a common project.

> I want to stress this: my impression of the work here in the region of North Jutland has been, that every time anybody tried to use the RDP to go through with their own special interests – for instance that the RDP should have some binding guidelines on somebody's own account – then the employees of the region have been very observant that this should not occur. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

> It could be the municipalities, but it could also be the employees of the region, who would say (in the administrative steering group); do not understand it as though this is the plan that we want to do. That way, I guess we were all mentally prepared that if we were to achieve something with this, then it could not become a battlefield. That was kind of in the air. A battlefield leaves victims, and it is really difficult for a victim to say afterwards; I am guilty of this report. You do not get ownership from that. In such a planning phase one has to try to avoid creating victims. However, it does not mean that you cannot do anything. Therefore, in general it was the feeling that we should not embark upon greater conflicts, but on the other hand we also wanted to do something useful. Something to evaluate. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)

Victims do not become co-owners. A similar mentality can be identified in the work in the theme groups, as in this case in the Nature and Environment group that included, among others, representatives from agricultural organisations and the Danish Association of Nature Preservation (DN):

> I actually think that the agricultural organisations changed. They opened up for some thoughts concerning their role as a preserver of nature, about not to cultivate into the last margin. That is, all the time it was about being attentive towards that there was something that was of value to others than just for business. It was also about thinking alternative methods into it, e.g. can we choose the least impacting technology in relation to some goods that we want to keep? Actually, the agricultural organisations deserve some credit for that – that they were so open in their announcements during the meetings. Because, there was nothing to hinder that DN and the agricultural organisations could have used all 7-8 meetings for quarrelling. But, it was not there. Because, DN deserves the same credit – that the very religious approach that can sometimes be found; actually, it was not there. One agreed that: 1) agriculture is a business, 2) agriculture is also important for preserving nature. Well then, our task is to coble the two and to find out where they connect. Because, this is where it moves. This is what we need to concentrate on. We should not concentrate on where it fails – we should concentrate on what it is that we can do to make things go well. My impression is that both parties were actually taking a great part in that. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

However, how does the new greater Aalborg municipality deal with this? (Aalborg is the main city in the region; it is located in the middle of the region and after the structural

reform the municipality of Aalborg contains approx. 35 % of the inhabitants of the region) Does Aalborg agree with the approach that the RDP work should not become a battlefield? Through interviews and conversations with the author of this report, several actors have raised their doubt and concern on this issue. Their worries consist of a sense of insecurity concerning the interest, view and role of Aalborg municipality, and in particular the city of Aalborg, in relation to the RDP and the North Jutland region. To be more specific, many participants in the RDP process fear that, in stead, the city of Aalborg will strengthen cooperation with the Region of Mid Jutland in order to become part of what the latest National Planning Report has termed 'the East Jutland Urban Corridor' (Miljøministeriet, 2006). So far, 'the East Jutland Urban Corridor' has been identified by the ministry as going from Kolding in the south to Randers in the north, and as such it transects several regions but without (yet) stretching further north to Aalborg. Many actors think that this will result in an open confrontation on the thoughts of cohesion and balance between urban and rural areas in the North Jutland RDP. Can Aalborg be the main motor of North Jutland in close networking with the actors of the region – while at the same being in a close network with the Region of Mid Jutland?

At this early stage of the research project behind this report, the author has not yet interviewed RDP participants from Aalborg, which of course has to taken into account. However, at present (November 2007) it seems reasonable to identify this lack of clarity, among a range of actors, concerning the role of Aalborg as a significant challenge and risk factor in relation to the opportunities for a broad anchoring of the RDP and creation of ownership in the region.

Another important element in the change in roles and culture has been the matter of 'an early provocation'. Several actors point to the likely importance of the issue that the early 'provocation' from the new region (the regions illustration in 2005 of how the RDP could look like) actually contributed to a 'cleansing of the air' early in the process. The actors got the opportunity to test each other, as indicated here:

> There has been a very fine attunement between what the interest of the municipalities was and what the interest of the region was. So, the old clash of interests that one could imagine to emerge again; that has in general disappeared. That has been a good experience. But, I also think that both parties got to test each other about what this was about quite early in the process in 2005 and 2006. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

Based in the above, it seems reasonable to claim that the RDP process and the adaptation to the structural reform have been contributing factors to the initiation of rather significant role changes among several types of actors. Furthermore, it seems to have been going on

to an extent that can also be characterised as cultural change. The change in roles primarily occurs with the particular actor, while the change in culture to a large extent becomes visible in the interaction between the actors. However, it is not likely that this is only caused by the structural reform. On the contrary, several interviewees refer to their own earlier experiences and thereby point to the fact that similar tendencies have been emerging over a longer period – tendencies concerned with new ways of cooperating and organising spatial planning processes. For instance, the municipality of Sallingsund has had positive experiences with a very extensive involvement of the citizens in envisioning the future of the municipality.

To a large extent, the new facilitating and catalysing role, particularly among the regional civil servants and the administrative steering group, has been concerned with the building and maintenance of efficient processes. It has been the main intention of these processes to generate knowledge and implementation resources through openness, transparency, and transverse dialogue. To a rather significant degree, it is a role that implies attempts to provide an opportunity for the participating actors to balance expectations through ensuring time for everybody to speak, and through listening, observation and conversation.

In other words, it seems that the administrative steering group has had a rather significant role compared to the political steering group behind the RDP. This is not necessarily a problem, and in many ways it has undoubtedly also been an advantage. However, it could for instance become a problem if complications should emerge concerning a broader political anchoring of the RDP in the regional council (such challenges have also been identified by Edelenbos, 2005, in studies of similar new governing and cooperative settings in The Netherlands). Given the open, broad and networking nature of this type of planning, it seems contradictory that politicians have not been a greater part of the process along the way. In particular if their role is also moving towards a more networking approach. The Danish structural reform clearly implies that not only the civil servants but to a similar extent also the regional politicians no longer have an authority-based role. The regional politicians have no real power to enforce municipalities to act – in stead they must now behave as one networking actor among many in the region.

Hence, it seems to be a central question whether only the civil servants should act facilitating, or if a more networking politician's role also implies facilitating and interactive functions during a RDP process? Or does this reflect a more general challenge that perhaps we have already seen the emergence of the facilitating/networking civil servant while the facilitating/networking politician is yet to be seen at this political level in Denmark? See more on this in subsection 5.3, where future opportunities for these roles will be discussed and advised upon – including the new dilemmas it may embed.

In any case, the new roles imply great demands to the coordination and integration of differing interests. This poses a challenge to the dynamics and management of power positions and relations. In the above, it has been claimed on several occasions that both the organisation and the new roles imply new requirements and conditions for balancing and handling specific interests. Prior to the structural reform there was a rather clearly defined hierarchy and split of tasks that ensured that the balancing and prioritisation of interests in principle were in the hands of politicians. After the reform, and based in the current experiences with the RDP, this system does in fact no longer exist at the regional level. Therefore, the challenge then seems to be to identify the mechanisms and tools necessary or relevant for manoeuvring between interests and power positions. As legality- and authority-based instruments are ruled out in advance, attention must be directed towards instruments that contribute to the establishment of legitimacy (and hence the necessary acceptance) behind the new region.

As indicated above, the organisation of the RDP has contributed positively to legitimise the new regional institution. But, how about the actual interplay between the actors; how is 'regional legitimacy' produced at the actor level? Here, it seems to be a basic challenge to establish a new relationship of trust between the participating actors – a trust in the ability and will of the region to attend to the interests of the municipalities through the RDP. As such, this is a whole new relationship of trust that no longer rests in a principal trust in authorities and hierarchical systems, but in stead in other types of trust that can be applied in a more horizontal manner between different interests and power bases.

So far, the experiences form the RDP process seems to have been that the changes in organisation, roles and culture have not neutralised power positions or particular interests. In stead, these changes have contributed, to a higher degree, to transform power relations and particular interests into constructive forces in the process. In addition, it seems to have become increasingly difficult for actors to leave the process and go for ones own agenda through other channels – an otherwise common trait if you are a powerful player.

However, as the RDP process is still young, conflicts and power struggles may still emerge. Specific projects or initiatives are yet to be established, and as is often the case with spatial development issues it is often in the phases of specifying and implementing specific projects that disagreement and fragmentation of consensus occurs. Here, it will be a decisive challenge and test to the RDP cooperation to be able to manage the interests of Aalborg. Will it be possible to achieve and maintain agreement and in particular to build an efficient relation of trust? Will team spirit and a sense of community develop between Aalborg and the remaining municipalities in the region, so that regional-municipal actions

towards envisioned and actual change can develop in North Jutland? As described earlier, a concrete challenge can be identified concerning a likely conflict of interest over Aalborg's political and spatial orientation towards the region or the East Jutland Urban Corridor. Is this a matter of 'cooperation confusion' – an upcoming conflict between two types of possible cooperation (a political-administrative demarcated versus a spatial-functional defined)? Will it become an example of strong actors going their own way when real issues and matters are at stake? For instance, if Aalborg not only consider themselves as an actor together with other North Jutland municipalities (that may have weak growth potentials), but also as an actor in an already defined community of growth right outside the doorstep of the region. It may seem paradoxical if the region considers its own cooperation and process to be a plus-sum game, while Aalborg's cooperation with external players is considered a threat to this. What happens when two apparent plus-sum games overlap in spatial development and planning inside and near the region? This is likely to be clarified through the discussions and actual management of the specific matters at stake.

On the other hand, several interviewees claim or hint that there exists a special North Jutland solidarity – a general sense of community or commonship that transects particular interests. In addition, studies have shown (for instance this has been documented by Oxford Research in Denmark) that North Jutland has a social capital well over the average of the rest of Denmark. In principle, this should provide good basic conditions for the development and growth of more horizontal trust-based approaches.

Finally, so far it seems to be a significant and widespread experience related to the RDP work that inclusion rather than exclusion of actors and interests has had a positive influence on the creation of broad ownership. The inclusion or the creation of increased visibility of actors and interests may have meant that potential confrontations and conflicts became part of the game rather than an ignored or external part. Here, several interview persons claim that it was decisive that one was heard and that the process did not produce 'enemies' or 'victims'. It has been formulated as decisive for the establishment of broad ownership because victims do not feel co-responsible for future processes. Several cooperation processes in the theme groups support this claim, but the difficult initiation of the process (in which the region already in 2005 presented a proposal for how the RDP could look like) also seems to be an example of this claim. Apparently, it is because of a widespread openness, transparency and persistent invitation to cooperation that the confrontations in the beginning did not result in the production of victims (who may then not feel co-responsible for the continued process). On the contrary. Even though many actors continue to have different views and perceptions on the opportunities and function of the RDP the same actors seem to feel commonly obliged to engage in the continued process.

However, and once again, the question is whether this applies in relation to Aalborg? Here, several actors seem to be very cautious. But, does such an approach contribute to clarification? Based on the above, the questions and challenges seem to be: In the relationship between the region and Aalborg, can there also be found a possible path for a more open and trust based cooperation? Has this pathway not been identified because the parties have not actively taken up the challenge? Are current viewpoints and underlying worries for example based on actual knowledge concerning each others views or are they rather based on guesses and rumours? Are the parties categorising each other unnecessarily by not taking up the issue more actively?

In section 5.3 a range of the experiences, challenges and questions mentioned above will be addressed again in order to identify recommendations for the future work concerning the RDP as well as similar processes.

5.2.3 Communication – also with citizens and media

The two sections above have treated the experiences and challenges concerning the organisation and process of the RDP in a relatively broad manner. This and the following two sections (5.2.4 and 5.2.5) will focus on more specific aspects, which have turned out to be influential.

So far, the focus in the process on the involvement of actors rather than citizens leaves it to be an unknown as to how the RDP will be received by the citizens. This could entail significant future challenges concerning an upcoming broader dissemination and communication with the public in the region. Despite attempts to involve the press it has been difficult to attract and maintain the interest of the press and thereby also the opportunity to use such channels to reach a broader public.

> We may, among ourselves, think that this is exciting, but Nordjyske [main regional newspaper in North Jutland] do not. And TV Nord [TV 'North' which is a regional TV channel and part of the national channel TV2] do not at all. We had them coming to our arrangement for young people, that was interesting to them, and they have been to a couple of our workshops. But they say; we have already been to one of your workshops… so it is really hard to sell this. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

> When we started there were some very big intentions that we should be proactive in the press and make articles, and that we could expect to be interviewed here and there and everywhere. At that, one can only say that in the world view of the news media the RDP is not particularly protruding. There are not many good stories in it. …So, I do not think that part of the intentions has succeeded. I do not think it was possible either. …This is the

> reason why I think that the success criteria of the RDP are not so much a question of a huge public meeting where it [the RDP] is presented to everybody. They simply aren't. The success criteria are that we as municipalities now start to act upon the elements that were made visible in the RDP. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

It is unclear what a limited contact to the public will in fact mean to the RDP as the implementation of the visions and strategies of the RDP typically will have to be carried out through municipal planning and projects. Thereby, the citizens will meet the specific outcome of RDP initiatives. However, will the citizens also be able to see coherences, connections and a common North Jutland understanding of conditions, opportunities and, in the end, identity? If this is also a purpose of the RDP – as has been pointed out by several actors – then it is hardly to the advantage for its implementation if the RDP does not meet the citizens in more broad and direct ways.

Does this mean that a strategic communication approach is missing? No, a short communication strategy of about half a page was developed by the region in a note dating 23rd February 2007 – hence a good way into the RDP process:

> It is not particularly sophisticated. …In its essence it is about total openness. And I actually think we are succeeding in that. I can't imagine there to be much more openness than this. …There is nothing new in the strategy, it is simply utterly open. And then we have to be as active as we can, and we have really tried that. Some of it has succeeded. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

The strategy established that 'in general, the Region of North Jutland wishes to be as accessible as possible' (Region Nordjylland, 2007a). It was primarily oriented towards the use of the region's website to provide access of the public to agendas, minutes, analysis, strategies and good stories as well as an opportunity for those interested to comment on the planning. In addition, it was the intention that special stories should be chosen and offered to the press, or that they should be published in the region's own magazine and newsletter, and that the press should be invited to special occasions. Finally, 'information' should be a fixed issue on the agenda in steering and theme groups.

However, the 'out-of-the-house' experiences with the press and for instance the use of a blog on the region's website have not been satisfactory. So far, the networking and communication of the RDP has been played out among professional actors. In many ways this seems, according to the interviewees, to have worked out quite well. Hence, the communication seems to have functioned inwardly in the extensive RDP network between many political and planning professional actors, while on the outside, towards the surrounding world, it seems to have been a significantly greater challenge.

In more theoretical terms and discussions related to steering and governance these challenges raise questions whether the RDP is an expression of the democracy of the elite and the market or of cooperating citizens? Typically, such a question can be answered by asking how the process is being legitimised? Here, and as pointed out earlier, to a large extent it seems that the process is being legitimised through the participation of the professional actors. Those actors represent both elected political bodies and business life, education institutions, and interest organisations. In other words, there are relations to both the traditional representative democracy, to the market, and to a range of interests that in different ways mirror organised social and knowledge networks. Viewed this way it can be claimed that the RDP reflects a democratic practice based on a broad elitarian public sector network with strong relations to the market and interest organisations, while the direct relations to the citizens are significantly weaker. See section 5.3.3 for a description of how a development of the relationship towards the citizens is being debated at the moment among central parties in the RDP process.

5.2.4 Coordinating and writing the first RDP proposal

The current phase of coordinating and writing together a plan is a significant and perhaps underestimated challenge. In light of the expectations to ownership and a broad and powerful anchoring among the involved actors the question is whether those parties will, in the end, be able to support the final plan proposal – despite the absence of an organised broad dialogue at this stage in the process. This is likely to become clearer in the hearing phase, but also later in the implementation phase. However, the theme groups do not seem to have explicitly expressed a wish to see the plan proposal before it is forwarded to approval among the politicians.

> …we have debated a lot whether we should go back to each of the theme groups and consult them concerning a proposal, but in fact no one has said that we should. There has been an understanding that this was the process. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

> However, in process terms it still feels a bit odd to spend so much time, where we have tried to whip up people to commit to this. And where we have also discussed along the way if it should be like this or this. If it then has to be boiled down to three pages, then that is when you say; Well. …It was not entirely completed, the last chord was not played. But this is more about the process. We should have met one last time to see the end result and say; this is it. What you risk is in fact that when the last three pages arrive, then there may no longer be anyone in this work [theme] group that feels an ownership and will go out publicly and say; I was part of this. In worst case they will in fact do the opposite – not to disregard it, but in stead saying that yes, I was part of this, but hey… this I spent seven times three hours doing plus a couple of half days, and then this is the result. That is almost the worst that could happen. In the best case they will relax and say; well yes, okay, it doesn't harm

> anyone, but it doesn't make a difference either. (Jan Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)
>
> Every theme group finished their meetings by writing 30 pages. However, behind those 30 pages there are investigations, analysis and brutto notes. So , it is like a pyramid. So, when we end up here with the vision, what do we then do with all the underlying material? What kind of process is going to take us further from here? It has happened, and it was also the set up, but throughout this people are thinking about projects. It is difficult to maintain momentum in a group where the level of abstraction is high. But, it is there for the group as documentation afterwards – everything that has been said, written, meant and done, etc. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

However, it has been a significant help to the current process of writing together a proposal that there has been a focus on prioritising transversal activities (in particular between the theme groups) in order to create dialogue, understanding and clarification across interests. In concrete terms this has enabled the opportunity of the secretariat to produce one text, because converging or possible conflicting interests thereby have become more visible and concrete. And in addition, the groups themselves have worked solution-oriented in relation to converging or possible conflicting areas.

Seen in a more general and steering-oriented perspective it can seem paradoxical that the very open process suddenly shots itself down for a period, in which some of the most significant decisions are likely to be made. It provides calmer working conditions and the opportunity for a faster production of a plan proposal, but does it also lead to ownership afterwards? And in light of this, what will, in the end, be regarded as the most efficient as well as something that actually changes things? At the moment, however, this exact topic also seems to be debated and possibly adjusted, see more in section 5.3.

5.2.5 Knowledge and other resources

Finally, in general it seems there has been positive experiences with the inclusion of external knowledge for the inspiration of both contents and working processes. This has been the case in relation to both transversal meetings and activities, but also within the theme groups. For example, consultant companies have contributed with knowledge for use in relation to the overall process but also to the processes in the theme groups. In addition, the theme groups and the region have, on their own, organised supplementary input from the outside via workshops and external speakers (for instance researchers or business people). Finally, the participants themselves have contributed with their own knowledge. Hence, there has been an attempt to transfer and include knowledge, and it is likely that this has contributed to, for instance, clarify or further develop the above mentioned distribution and transformation of roles. It may also have aided in delimiting

and focusing on positions of strength and qualities, such as for example social networks, an attractive natural environment, etc.

> What was also part of the considerations was that in stead of it "just" being about us as regional politicians and administration turning up with suggestions on how this could look like – well, could we then bring in some resourceful persons with each their area of interest, so that they can bring into play their ideas. One way or the other this is in order to provide us politicians with other views than the ones we persistently have on things. And that is what I found exiting. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

> One of the other things we talked about during the first meeting [in the theme group on business] was that if we wanted to include people from the outside, then we were encouraged to do so. We could do it, and there was a good deal of funding for it. And if we wanted to go elsewhere, then we could also do that. We then talked a good deal about that. However, in the group there was also a general mood that; well, why do we have to go to any great length to fetch someone, because with the people around here we in fact already cover much knowledge and much competence. There are people here who in each their field have worked with this – why not try to get that knowledge into the group and have it made active? (Jan Krogh, Chairman of the RDP Business theme group, head of Business and Development in the Municipality of Thisted)

> However, in process terms I think that this has become really good. Also the fact that along the way the theme groups have been out to gather inspiration and sort of test if this is just about the direction in which we should go. Several groups did that. It has been really good. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

As opposed to earlier regional planning processes in the county, the new RDP process cannot base significant parts of the collection of data and knowledge and the analysis of it, as well as the use of resources in general, on the conditions and opportunities within the regions own administration. A great number of employees, with knowledge and competences related to a range of sectors, have left the regional level, and many have in stead gone to work at the municipal level. To a high degree, this fact alone has made it a necessity for the region to search, find and establish knowledge and resources in a greater interaction with the surroundings of the regional administration.

Moreover, the involvement of external knowledge and resources seems inherently logical when seen in relation to the emergence of new and more horizontal and transversal forms of steering and cooperating. In reality, the RDP is parallel to, or even below, the municipalities and the other actors in the region. With relatively limited resources being available to any single part, the region and the participating actors must establish the necessary knowledge and resource settings between them in order to be able to solve the task. No one has an overview of neither the whole picture or all its parts – one therefore

need each others knowledge and experience, as well as each others work force and eventually economic resources. So far, it seems that there have been positive experiences concerning this in the RDP process.

Finally, the organisation and interplay between resources and knowledge from many sources also seems to have supported the building of the apparent perception of the process as a plus-sum-game, in which the parties benefit more from working together than apart. If a single actor has already contributed actively and constructively, then it seems to increase the sense of co-ownership and co-commitment. One does not want to see ones own resources wasted.

5.3 The process to come – opportunities and recommendations: what can the RDP become?

> The RDP can become, if we are capable of using it, to be playing a role in knitting together North Jutland to one common unity. To a large extent it can contribute to that. It means that we stick together, that we have an overall common goal – to create development. An ownership to a common development. In reality, this is what the framework opens up as something we can do. …Therefore, it is important that one lifts oneself up and sees this as something that can help strengthening the North Jutland community. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)

> I believe that we have managed to produce one common understanding. Now it is about helping the region through with this. …in fact we shall need this to demonstrate that we are good at cooperating in North Jutland and give it a mental uplift in the new structure. We can do that. …The other aspect is that I think it could be really, really nice if this could become a kind of state-of-the-art project for municipal-regional development planning. …I do think we could use that as a common ambition; that this is something we were good at; this is something we were capable of in North Jutland. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

How will it be possible to learn some lessons and identify usefulness from the experiences and challenges above in relation to the continued work on the RDP and perhaps also in relation to other similar planning processes? This section looks further into opportunities and suggestions for recommendations: What is the RDP becoming, or what could it become? How are problems and challenges attempted resolved in practice, and how can some of the better experiences be used in the future? The section follows the same logic as in section 5.2, meaning that it has been subdivided into sections that illustrates different aspects and perspectives in relation to the future process and function of the RDP. Those aspects are, as in the above, to a high extent the result of input from the North Jutland

example, as well as the result of inspiration from research publications concerned with the transformation of governing systems and cooperative practices.

5.3.1 Towards a new planning logic? Added value, trust, cooperation, and common understanding and language

In many ways the RDP is an expression of a new way, in a Danish context, of thinking, establishing and implementing planning. The structural reform (see chapter 3) sets out an overall framework, which means that some of the earlier instruments and tools of spatial planning no longer have relevance or legality at the regional level. Hence, for that reason alone it has been clear from the beginning that something new had to happen. However, as touched upon in section 5.2 the RDP is also an expression of a more long term and perhaps deeper change in tendency. One that, to a higher degree, is about changes in mentality and a changed perception of the opportunities and more strategic use of policymaking and planning in relation to development.

Several interviewees and actors have offered their views on which basic perceptions, understandings and rationales that seem important now and in the near future. Below, it is first and foremost seen as important that policymaking and planning at the regional level must be able to be justified in relation to particular interests, a production of added value, appeal to broader understandings, as well as being implementable:

> What is the very most important is that, what you go about doing, what you want, firstly has to be something that really leads to an added value, secondly can be understood, and thirdly can be done. Those are simply the three elements. If they are present then you can anchor anything. Added value with all those affected by the decision. As far as possible. It is an ambitious goal to aim for, but it is in fact in those situations we have the most successful decisions. It is where we add something to someone, something they did not know they could have gotten – more than what they would actually have been able to create themselves. And, it is where we can also positively explain why it happens, and where we can do it in practice. That is where we really anchor things out there. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

> The different participants must have an interest in this. And, they must be able to see their own interest in this, otherwise it will just become empty speeches. …If the municipalities, companies, etc. cannot see that there is a massive need of standing up together, then it wont hold, then this wont contribute . …They have to be convinced that they have a particular interest in joining all these partnerships. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

Trust is considered a significant basic capital or condition when navigating between many different actors and interests in the RDP process:

> Our cooperation partners in this process can choose to join us or not, and they wont if they do not have an interest in it. It means that if they do not trust that what we say is also what we do, then they will of course leave us. …It is something entirely fundamental in a politically managed system, that the greatest capital you have is trust. …It has to be such that when the process is going on, then it is not good enough, when we look at the product, that we think we had them lurked into something. Because, afterwards they are the ones to implement it. Different companies, educational institutions, municipalities and we have to do something, and if they think they were lurked, then it won't succeed. So trust is a key concept. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

> You cannot have anything functioning if you do not have trust and engagement as part of it. Those are the conditions for a dynamic process to take place. Otherwise, any process will loose its dynamics. …That goes for both the formal and informal level. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)

In other words, trust and the establishment of new trust relations is a decisive tool for the building of the legitimacy of the region – meaning the building of accept and support of other parties concerning the role and function of the new region. Trust is a catalyser for establishing acceptance and legitimacy. It is therefore also of significant importance that trust is not considered as something stationary, as something which is simply there or not. The research literature indicates that trust is continuously being created, developed, strengthened and broken down, and that such processes in fact often goes on simultaneously and in connection with policymaking and planning processes. See for instance Warren (1999), Uslaner (1999), Korczynski (2000), Hardin (2001), Tait & Hansen (2007) and Hansen (2006). As was also pointed out in section 5.2, new forms of trust seem to be necessary or emerging. This further implies that it could be of relevance to attempt to map and apply what might be termed 'the anatomy of trust'. Together with Malcolm Tait (Sheffield University, UK), the author of this report suggests four forms of trust (see Tait & Hansen, 2007). All four forms of trust may exist simultaneously, however it is likely that one or two forms may dominate over other forms from situation to situation:

-A *rational-calculative trust* where trust is linked to identifiable benefits (e.g. added value) attached to a trusting relationship. This can also be termed a 'thin' version of trust (Hardin, 2001), because it is limited to and balances around the realisation of benefits (the added value).
-A *personal trust* where trust is based on personal relations, of knowledge of the other person and empathy with them. This type of trust may not be linked to distinct benefits from entering into this relationship, and might therefore be identified as a 'thick' version of trust (Hardin, 2001), which is fundamental to notions of social capital.

-A *trust in values or norms* where we are likely to place faith in someone because we know their values.
-A *trust in abstract systems* where trust is about believing or accepting a relation because the person being trusted is linked into accepted practices and ethical standards. To a high degree, this relates to trust in professionals and institutions (or authorities) such as for example the county, region or municipality.

If trust is a decisive tool for legitimising the RDP and the role and function of the region, then it must also be of use to attempt to understand and characterise the RDP in relation to the above. Here, it is in particular the shift from county to region, from authority to facilitator/catalyst, etc. that marks a change that also reflect changes in the need and use of forms of trust. Earlier, the county could almost entirely base itself in the general trust of the surrounding world in abstract systems. For example, despite that municipalities may often have had opposing agendas, they still accepted and lived by the legally bound guidelines and regulations put forward by the county.

The structural reform has removed the basis for this trust relationship. In stead, a new relation between the region and other parties (primarily municipalities) is being attempted; one that is based in a rational-calculative trust where the production of added value seems central. However, as indicated this form of trust can be considered 'thin' and fragile, something that many actors also seem to be aware of or guided by through their behaviour. Perhaps therefore, a trust in the norms and values of the actors, and in particular in the new norms and values emerging in the regional political-administrative organisation, is clearly being developed (for example through the fact that the region continuously has attempted to clarify to their surroundings their change in role and intentions). Thereby, one can identify an attempt of the region to build up a new and more process-oriented professionalism. A tool applied for this is an increased focus on personal trust relations (in particular the ones that were established through the work in the theme groups), in which the documented strong social capital of North Jutland seems to have been be used actively.

The above mentioned considerations on the building of new forms of trust create a new basic condition for cooperation, networking and community logic. Below, it is pointed out that the capacity to act as well as the speed to do so is improved, but also that it could be developed further:

> Furthermore, it is simply about joining forces and having a certain power. And being able to function as a region, bringing along everybody… that is where we have an opportunity up here [in North Jutland], with the cooperation we in fact already have, so that we can strengthen it in order to be able to react faster and more adequate than others can. It is a fairly good cooperation, but it needs to be strengthened significantly. Many good things can

> be created these days if one is fast. …it is about being the first. …And, because we are not more people, because we have a dense network or can have a real close network, then we can react fast concerning this. We can produce a coherent offer concerning such things [development]. That, I think we can do faster than the others. …This is what one calls social capital, it is greater here. However, it needs to be operationalised more. That is what I find most important about this. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

In other words, when continuing the RDP process it seems that there are positive opportunities in attempting to continue and develop a focus on values, norms, the region's new network-oriented professionalism, as well as personal relations through theme groups or similar activities.

The following comment illustrates that there may already be a kind of upcoming consensus concerning cooperation as a value or norm in itself. The RDP can become a 'the state-of-the-art of good cooperation':

> …in the group of head's of municipal administrations we have said that this should become the 'flagship' of good cooperation between municipalities and region in North Jutland. Because, if we manage to go through successfully with this cooperation, then we can use it as a mirror on how to cooperate in other areas. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

In addition, the following remarks gives the impression of the emergence of a new planning logic, which is based on the establishment of norms, values, and new ethical (professional) standards that signal common understanding, common language and community – and also that this is the way in which synergy effects and added value may be achieved:

> …surely, it is important with common understanding. Otherwise, you cannot go in the same direction. And, this is also where the network concept enters – that you get to use each other somewhat more. For instance, one could imagine that the 'lights'-factory in Frederikshavn were to do some strategy development. Then they call Orla [the head of the regional council] and ask him; in your opinion, where are we going? That way, one can become intertwined at the strategic level. And that is when the synergy effects come. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)
>
> The other aspect is more about language. It is that we have created ourselves a dictionary, where we all know that, when we talk about this, then this is what is meant. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

> …however, another dimension I have experienced in the administrative steering group is that there has been an enormously positive development from having just looking a bit around in the group to somehow have a sense of community concerning all of North Jutland. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)

Finally, it is important to be attentive towards the new form of power and interest dynamics that seems to be entailed in the new planning logic. Even though one might be tempted to believe so, the RDP process does not seem to be an example of the emergence of a 'consensus tyranny' or an idealism concerned with the equal distribution of power and interests. Such an approach would also find it hard to succeed, which has been demonstrated through the studies by Bent Flyvbjerg (Flyvbjerg, 1991), as powerful actors would then be prone to rely on other and often more selfish approaches. In stead, power relations and particular interests seem to be embedded as a somewhat constructive element in the RDP process, as indicated in section 5.2. Hence, interests are not neutralised or removed, they are integrated into the process rather than being outside. Therefore, consensus does not seem to be the basic ideal, in stead there is a focus on negotiation and agreements between parties and interests – agreements which, for instance, are settled for different reasons and on the background of different interests, as illustrated here by Dryzek (2000, p.170):

> *In a pluralistic world, consensus is unattainable, unnecessary, and undesirable. More feasible and attractive are workable agreements in which participants agree on a course of action, but for different reasons.*

Here, the Aalborg-region relation again becomes a decisive test. See more in the next section, where basic opportunities and recommendations concerning the new roles and forms of organisation will be related to the new understanding described above. In section 5.3.3 roles and opportunities concerning organising will be debated and developed further.

5.3.2 The basis for new processes and forms of organisation

> …I actually mean, and I will keep on claiming it until proven otherwise, that we have significant opportunities in unfolding policies in relation to the regional development. I really think that there is a potential, which just have not been unfolded yet. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

First of all, it can be claimed that the planning process at the regional level – and in many ways also the planning culture or logic which the process mirrors – has already been

transformed significantly. To a significant extent, earlier authority-based roles have been replaced by facilitating as well as dialogue and network-oriented roles. These reflect changes in the fundamental understanding and perception of planning at the regional level in North Jutland.

The apparent strength and role of cooperation and dialogue is its focus on illuminating and creating interaction between knowledge, interests and often also economic resources in order let those elements become a constructive part of the process. And as indicated above, trust is an important 'tool' in achieving it. However, as also indicated then it has to happen with a purpose and in interaction with the actors' perception of self-interest and added value. In other words, if it is to have an effect, then it is a requirement that people do not meet because they have to, or for rhetoric reasons, but rather because the participating actor is also motivated and can identify a specific benefit from doing so. Only in such a situation it seems to become a serious opportunity to realise and build on the drive and capacity to act of each actor. It requires attention to and insight into the understanding of what drives and motivates the participating actors, as also claimed by Oxford Research here (2005, p.8-9, translated from Danish):

> *Understand the driving force among the many actors – what aims and motives are pursued by each actor? Most actors would very much like to participate in the attempt to develop visions, strategies and plans for the region. However, they must also feel that they get something in return from participating. This is why there is often a considerable challenge in balancing long term regional visions and goals with the more short term oriented goals of the actors. Therefore one must understand what drives them to participate. If the actors do not feel that they have enough influence, or if they feel that others have too much influence, then one risk loosing those actors in the process. Therefore, the power balance between the actors is very central to anchoring – if one does not understand the importance of the power balance and is capable of using it as a collective force, then a successful regional management will be made more difficult.*

The continued organisation of the RDP process should take such matters into account. In section 5.3.1 a foundation of understanding was discussed and proposed concerning the organisation and show of the roles of the actors. However, this establishes very high demands or expectations to the coupling, and thereby also the organising, between: the formal entities with decision-making competences (regional council, municipal councils and the growth forum), the formally advisory entities (but not entitled to be able to recommend the adoption of a proposal), as well as the other more limitless but often also

flexible and potentially resourceful and capable actors and interests (business life, education institutions, cultural institutions, etc.).

> I very much believe that we have to think a lot about the organisation – not necessarily a municipal organisation but something more network-based. It could be… focus groups or theme groups, it could be ad hoc, it could be permanent, etc. We simply have to think about the organisation that has to support getting this implemented and creating the ownership, through the way in which the organisation is established… in order for this to have an impact on the municipal planning. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

Hence, it is important that the RDP is not undermined through an eventual lack of steering as well as comprehensibility couplings between more traditional ways of governing and the surrounding networks. Such aspects are also discussed in contemporary literature on new forms of governing and cooperation. Some authors point to the establishment of mixed forms of steering, network governance or meta governance (e.g. Sehested, 2003, p. 31-35) as opportunities that may 'provide a common direction in the joint steering without completely undermining the autonomy of the networks'. Similar recommendations can be found elsewhere in the research literature, see for instance Hajer & Wagenaar (2003), Hansen (2006) and Edelenbos (2005).

In addition, it also seems to be common to these discussions that they put significant emphasis on that actors develop new organisations and processes between them in cooperation. In relation to the RDP this already seems to be have been initiated. At the moment, the further development of the regional-municipal organisation and split of roles is being debated among central regional and municipal politicians and civil servants. See more about this in section 5.3.3, in which specific potential links are suggested between authorities, institutions, units, organisations, etc.

The new way of understanding the RDP also leads to significant demands and expectations concerning the role of each actor. Here, the facilitating and catalytic role of the civil servants is essential (in particular in the regional administration):

> In order to be able to facilitate a planning like this, and include a lot of people, then we simply need to know more. We need to know what happens to that 'lighting' factory up there [in Frederikshavn], are they in trouble? So, we want to be more outside in the real world, so to speak. It has nothing to do with sitting around with your technology, IT systems, questionnaires, building up a colossal knowledge, etc. – it has more to do with gathering the creativity that is out there. And, to get in the good perspectives people have inside their heads, and see if we can make them match. So, it is more about being catalysts. …the process has been at the centre of attention all the time, in order to make us sing somewhat like a chorus. And that is really what we have to keep doing, that is what it is about. … In reality, it is not sure that we have to be much part of it, but we initiate it and

> then move on to something else. …Then, if you have a common overall vision or strategy to move from – meaning the whole – then one may also be able to say that we will find out about this, that we don't need to be so controlling here and there. In stead it is pulling together. That is more how I imagine our role to be. It is a new way. I do not think we have had this before. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

In addition, the role of the politicians seem to be subject to new conditions and therefore also the object of new general expectations. In particular, the role of the regional politicians has been in the spotlight. For example, it has been discussed whereas in the future there should be a higher degree of involvement by more politicians from the regional council through the process. This is recommended by several researchers. However, it is also a delicate balance as it may have negative consequences to innovation and creativity in the process if other actors thereby feel limited in their behaviour – for instance because existing power relations become more visible and unnecessarily conditioning (unnecessary because they are not necessarily fixed or real).

> However, when I put on my municipal cap, then I am not necessarily unsatisfied that the anchoring is so poor in the regional council. Because, if the anchoring were really, really big in the regional council, then there would probably also be, in the regional council, a great interest in thinking binding guidelines. On the contrary this is actually the actors', and thereby the municipalities, proposal for the RDP. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

Therefore, it is also important that in particular the formal decision-making units, and thereby the politicians, clearly and consistently signal, what actual role and influence the other actors and interests may expect to have. Furthermore, when this is seen in relation to the fact that the regional politicians now have a more limited mandate, then a new and significantly more network-oriented role starts to emerge for the politicians:

> It is no good that we make a priority. Actually, the actors do not have to take it into account. Therefore, this is very much building on a relation of mutual interdependence, where it is also a matter that the regional council must try to get these interests to play together. The difference between a regional council and the old county council is that now we have to become an authorised networker. And, in a sense, this is also what is expressed through the RDP – this is just a place where we also get to write it down. …Here, it is the network politician one has to get started on. The network politician establishes contacts and brings together people, and discusses some directions, and then hopefully gets to a point of being able to draw some conclusions and say: well, then this is the way we go together in order to reach the goal… (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

The role of the network politician then seems to consist of building, developing and influencing relations of mutual interdependence between actors, and, based on that,

extracting, concluding and promoting common understanding of directions, goals and actions. Thereby, the network politician becomes the carrier and communicator of, not only ones own positions and politics, but also of the network. The network politician therefore becomes a central node in the network, in which the politician may be able to influence positions and discuss concrete values and norms with other actors – however, a significant part of the political work will also consist of influencing, developing and maintaining the cooperation culture itself:

> One transforms a cooperation culture – it happens the moment one gets people to work together on something. The moment you can get some municipalities, educational organisations and business life to work together, then it is probably cooperation cultures that are being influenced. I actually think this is some of the most exiting concerning the structural reform. I believe, that the success and survival rate of the regions is based on the ability of the regional council politicians to show themselves within the role they now have. …I do understand, that there are some with the view that it is easier to be a politician when you have a budget to administrate. That is something to relate to very precisely and straightforward. However, I actually think that this is much more exiting. Because, if we as regional council politicians can get these actors to play together, and we can see that a result emerges from it, then I actually think that we have practiced a great deal of politics. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

Hence, the network politician role also encompasses a range of the characteristics that seem relevant to the civil servants, e.g. being a facilitator and catalyst. In addition, the politicians can also more freely discuss values, norms, concrete positions, etc., but to the regional politicians such expressions of politics can no longer be forced upon others in relation to regional development. In stead, the regional politician must make ones own politics relevant, attractive and meaningful to other actors (in particular the municipalities), if such politics is to gain any ground or to be 'sold'. More than ever, the regional politician is therefore to be found on a kind of open political trading ground or market place, where the politician not only acts according to the citizen's votes, but to a high degree also in relation to nearby central actors. And finally, as indicated above, it can be a political goal in itself for the regional politician to generate cooperation, interplay and synergy between other actors.

When viewing these roles of civil servants and politicians in relation to the new foundation of understanding concerning the RDP, then it seems important to an even higher degree that the roles become geared to manage the new relations of trust, as pointed out in section 5.3.1. For example, these roles are to a high degree concerned with establishing a new form of trust in systems, by exchanging authority and sector based professionalism with process and transversal professionalism as well as a more value-based orientation. This implies a need for, and therefore also a recommendation to, further development of

competences of management and cooperation, which (among other matters) include, discuss and communicate concrete ethical norms and standards of dialogue and cooperation. In addition, the new roles also imply an increased focus on personal relations, which is why it must, for instance, be assumed that a future competence profile could benefit from an increased awareness concerning social relations and in particular the development of social capital, internally as well as externally.

Finally, and based on the discussions so far concerning power relations and possible conflicts of interest (e.g. between Aalborg and the region), it seems relevant to clarify what this in principle may mean to the upcoming process, and in particular what basic recommendations it may then lead to for actors and roles across the spectre. Here, it seems important to notice that already once the RDP process can be claimed to have lived through and overcome a significant confrontation – the clash between the region and the municipalities in 2005-2006 because of the attempt of the region to illustrate, how a RDP might look like. In that case the parties still managed to move on. The situation was not gridlocked and it did not hinder the continuation of the process. Several interviewees claim or imply that the involved parties all learned from this confrontation. Here, the most decisive aspect seems to have been that, through the handling of this confrontation, no 'victims' were produced, e.g. actors that may afterwards have felt excluded or identified as 'loosers' – despite that everybody for instance could identify the municipalities as the real winners. Thereby, the parties could, with greater ease, look into each others eyes when restarting the new RDP process. The parties therefore also seem to agree that it was 'good to have the air cleared at an early stage', and that 'the difficult beginning may not have been so bad after all'.

It seems to be an obvious opportunity to use those experiences in future potential conflicts or confrontations – for example in the relation between Aalborg and the region. 'Cleanse the air' at an early stage, but avoid creating enemies while doing it! Early confrontations and balancing of expectations and interests can 'clear the air' and create an improved basis for the continued process – if it is handled in a way that makes it possible for the parties to find each other again. The rationale seems to be simple: victims do not become co-owners. Victims not only remember, what happened to them, but very often also how it happened. In particular, procedure and process handling is important to the development and maintenance (and sometimes fragmentation) of the trust relations that the RDP will depend upon.

In other words, the aim does not necessarily justify the means. The procedures chosen, and the way actors treat each other in a process, will also create the basis for the rules-of-the-game and the dynamics of trust in the next process. See also Dryzek (2000) and Hansen (2006). And given that, now more than ever, the rules-of-the-game are defined by, and

between, the actors themselves (and not by the Planning Act), then this new social order dynamics as well as role and cultural identities is of a very significant importance.

In practice, it may for instance imply that rather than trying to avoid, hide or postpone confrontations, the actors will try to provide them with a vocabulary, embrace them, learn from them, etc. early in the process (as it also happened in the theme groups). It may not necessarily lead to an equalisation or neutralisation of power relations (and in many cases it should not), however it brings forward a necessary clarification of the conditions on which the future process will be based. Therefore, it also seems recommendable to focus on further developing competences and tools to identify and manage power relations and the interests of each individual actor. For example, a contextualisation and clarification of single interests in cooperation with the actors themselves can be constructive and useful in relation to avoiding unnecessary misunderstandings, finding possible new openings to coalitions and cooperation, as well as finding new possibilities for added value or synergy effects.

In other words, what also seems to emerge is a more flexible, self-observing and reflective learning process where rules-of-the-game, constellations and coalitions are not fixed – instead they develop along the way with the overall goal to ensure anchoring and ownership.

5.3.3 The anchoring and implementation of the RDP among the actors?

Based on the two sections above concerning a new planning logic and a new basis for organisation and dynamic of roles – what more concrete opportunities can be identified, and what recommendations can be extracted and discussed? As indicated, some of the key questions have been: how the continued process can be established and managed, how in particular the municipalities can continue working with the RDP, and how a broader communication with citizens and the media can be achieved?

Both among the regional politicians and the political and administrative steering groups a wish has been expressed for changing the original process, so that the so far relatively closed process (concerning writing together a proposal, endorsement, and hearing) should be opened up and widened among some of the parties that have followed the whole process until now.

> …here, the administrative and political steering groups have wished to be allowed to join in and become part of reviewing the hearing-responses that will now emerge – before it is finally passed in the regional council. And actually it signals that the representatives from the different participating organisations find this exiting, also the municipalities. They want

> to be part of making sure that there is a certain basis in this that can carry it all the way through. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

Later, after the endorsement of the RDP, a broader process seems to be planed in order to transform the RDP into actions:

> …after it has been passed, the regional council will invite for what we, in a work title last time, called a take-off arrangement in order to let it become airborne – well, anyway, an arrangement of some sort where those who participated in producing this are being thanked, but also where this task is being opened up: how do we transform this into reality? What kind of actions are needed now? And who exactly is going to do what, and in relation what? (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

> What could be discussed is a form of network organising principle afterwards. Not with the intention that there should be actual political decisions about implementation at the level of projects – instead one should establish network groups that continuously debate: what do we do in the municipalities, how can we coordinate between us? In some areas there is a need of a regional implementation. In other areas there can be a need of sub-regional implementation, hence several municipalities getting together. And at the lowest level it can simply be bilateral between two municipalities, or it can be a single municipality. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

Hence, it seems that a form of regionally supported, but to a certain degree also self-organised, network process would be a good opportunity in trying to ensure the further destiny of the RDP. On the surface, it seems that the basis for such a process is present, as it is estimated that there is a rather broad support from the actors concerning the continued RDP work. Furthermore, it seems to be reasonable that it should be a process that deals with more concrete and closer to context tasks – e.g. where one or more specific initiatives from the RDP are at play, and where the directly involved parties and the region participates. In other words, and as described in chapter 2, focus is moved towards an entirely concrete and pragmatic local problem solving and a common responsibility between exactly the parties, for whom the problem or challenge is relevant.

The extent and span of the upcoming process is still unclear, however below it is expressed that it could be an advantage to expand the primarily elite-based system:

> Here, we have actually talked about, that we should stick to the theme groups. But, it is not enough. …if one could have a network at the top of this system, one that could be a bit broader than the people you already know. Because, I actually believe that it is a bit too much like a tribe-system, a lodge-system. It is the same people, the usual people within the different areas. …It actually has to be a bit broader, and one must also see to that new people are allowed inside, so that it can become more lively. That way, it is more sustainable. …we

> need some networking concerning the overall solution. (Jes Vestergaard, member of the administrative steering group, head of RDP in the Region of North Jutland)

In relation to this (and the sections above), it seems important to encourage to not only a renewal of the upcoming organisation but also to the creation of continuity in relation to the process so far. For instance, it is estimated to be of greater importance, that the coming networks and cooperation processes contain key actors from the earlier process. They can become carriers of precisely the cooperation cultures, trust relations and alliances that have turned out to be successful so far. These key actors will also be able to play a significant role in maintaining holistic perspectives – in particular when considering that the future RDP processes seem to be on their way to become more fragmented and oriented towards specific initiatives.

Based on the earlier discussions in this report concerning the role of the politicians, then the regional council could, for instance, contribute to the continued work by actively taking on a more process-oriented and facilitating role, as indicated here:

> Where we in the regional council can anchor a task – that is by keeping a focus on the implementation process, and by being firm in pushing the actors, in dialogue of course, because we actually cannot force them to do it. However, all the time we should stick to, that we actually have this, which we have to do together. We are the ones that keep moving the handle for the engine to keep running. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

Here, it will be decisive to a successful outcome, that the regional politicians can refer and appeal to the new basic common understanding and perception of the RDP (see sections 5.1 and 5.3.1), as it has developed so far in a close cooperation between precisely the same actors who are now meant to implement the RDP. In other words, the regional politicians can claim, that the RDP is a common inter-municipal document – and therefore also an inter-municipal project and obligation.

Apart from a direct and dialogue-based participation, a more extensive and active involvement of the regional politicians could, for instance, also be that they gather among themselves several times (that is, more than in relation to the political steering group). Thereby, and based on proper information, they could debate the ongoing messages coming from the broader planning process. This would also reduce the vulnerability to end up with misunderstandings, misinterpretations and the like due to missing contact between decision-makers and other parties. Such matters may threaten to overturn whole strategies or new projects, where in stead minor adjustments (through ongoing feedback or direct dialogue) may have been sufficient.

Another important aspect is the question as to whether the RDP is in fact spreading inside and between the municipalities – both in general among politicians and civil servants in the municipalities, but also in relation to the planning products of the municipalities? Several interviewees have indicated that this will not be a problem, because the RDP is so broad that it easily can embrace the future municipal plan strategies and specific plan initiatives. However, is this also the perception among the common planner and civil servant in the municipality – or among politicians in the municipal council? And, will there not be friction between the new regional common understanding and planning logic and the municipal planning perceptions and cultures? And finally, if no one or very few in the municipality is attentive towards whether they work with or against the visions, strategies and initiatives of the RDP – then how will this be discovered at all, and how will new inter-municipal overall solutions be created and build?

Here, it is for example estimated to be important that the municipal representatives in the RDP process so far will be committed to a higher degree of communication of the RDP in the municipal political and administrative organisations. This could be supported by the region through more traditional means such as meetings, seminars, and workshops and similar between relevant parties.

> Finally, there will also be the opportunity, that if a municipality wants to arrange a meeting with a specific focus on the RDP, then we from the regional council will also be available. However, it has to be balanced – we do not believe, that 11 meetings (in every municipality) makes any sense. We will try to establish some theme-oriented meetings, which will then be the take-off for a discussion about the RDP. But, other than that we will be open to others that also want to discuss it. (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

However, in the cases where, to a higher degree, RDP initiatives are relevant to several municipalities, it is not necessarily the idea that the region should be in a coordinating role.

> …I do not know if the RDP is particularly successful in getting the municipalities to clarify amongst them, who will do what. I actually believe that it will be located a lot more in KKR [the Contact Council of the Municipalities]. I do not think that the municipalities will use the Region of North Jutland to clarify their internal and inter-municipal split of tasks. …One does not want the region to be part of that. …It is basically because the municipalities want to decide for themselves. …And, one does not want to bring back to life the determinative role of the county. There is an inbuilt nervousness that if one gives people a coordinating role, then it also becomes determinative. One can discuss whether this is reasonable and fair, but it is a fact. So, if two or four municipalities have to clarify amongst them, how we actually see ourselves in this picture, then they will sit down together and settle it. (Mikael Jentsch, Chairman of the RDP Nature & Environment theme group, head of Technical Administration in the Municipality of Frederikshavn)

> Right now, we have discussed in KKR [the Contact Council of the Municipalities] whether the political steering group has given a 'go' to this – it looks reasonable – but, also if we should include KKR in this sometime during spring [2008]. We could simply have a KKR conference where one could invite all the committee chairmen from North Jutland municipallities in this. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

Hence, it could be a recommendation to attempt to pursue and develop the cooperation between the region and KKR (the Contact Council of the Municipalities), and to an even higher degree attempt to co-commit KKR on the RDP in order to ease the implementation in the municipalities, but also to ensure an inter-municipal relation concerning it. Here, it will be important to further attempt to clarify expectations and illuminate the division of roles concerning the RDP between the regional council, the advisory bodies, KKR, the municipalities, eventual new steering groups, committees, etc. Many of these actors seem more or less equally ranked, and therefore it also seems there is a risk that the coordination will be lost in this interplay.

However, apart from a feeling of co-ownership and co-commitment created through having participated so far, what can make the municipalities work actively in order to realise the RDP? Here, a head of municipal administration point to a concrete economic incentive for the municipalities to coordinate their policies and plans with the visions and strategies of the region:

> …I do not think many municipalities realise this yet, but Morsø municipality has been a municipality with enormous success in project development through funding from the EU through the programme for rural areas that ran until 2006. …So, we come from a situation, where we have had a lot of cooperation with the county concerning development projects on Mors [an island in the Limfjord], to the present entirely new situation where we have to see to by ourselves that there are links between the plans, as it is conditioned in the new EU programme. It means that, all the time, we have continuously in this process had an eye on making a municipal plan strategy that, when it is finished, matches the regional business development strategy (which is done) and the RDP. So that one can see the link all the way down from the rural districts strategy, to the municipal strategy, and up to the regional strategy plan – the RDP and the regional business development strategy. Because, in the future that will be a precondition in order to have success with getting fundraised projects. And, that starts already now in February [2008]. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

In addition, the analysis of this report has also pointed out challenges concerning the meeting with the citizens and the press, where the efforts have not yet been successful. Here, it also seems to be the intention to adjust and develop further the process, so that better opportunities can be created for debating the RDP in public. In relation to this, it

will be important to involve the media more actively, for instance through events, press conferences or other attention creating arrangements.

> Now we have arrived to the difficult part of it – to sell the message out there. It is some of what we have debated right now. I do not know what the decision will be, but one of the possibilities are, that we make a presentation in four localities in North Jutland, four centres, where one from the regional council and the local municipality presents this – a kind of citizen hearings where one presents this with the help from some summarising material. It can then be shown in different TV broadcasts in order to get it out and into the homes of people. …In addition, a popular version of it [the RDP] will also be made. We have to say that it will be a difficult task to go out and tell the public about this, because it is not exactly something that Mr. and Ms. Jensen have a great interest in. We have to recognise that. (Torben Pedersen, member of the administrative steering group appointed by the Regional Growth Council, Regional Consultant at the Association of Trade, Transport and Services in Aalborg)

In many ways, the analysis above encourages increased transparency, communication, and mediation efforts, as well as increased attention to trust relations and the balancing of expectations and interests. The prize is then also an increased chance for broader ownership and a support to the regional management – for instance resulting in concrete and real contributions to the realisation of strategies from actors that traditionally would not have contributed, or perhaps would even have opposed new initiatives.

> This is simply the way we have to go to try and specialise our planning. It is exactly with this: how do achieve citizen participation, how do we get outside the city hall when we want to go towards dialogue rather than the other way? This way contribute to a higher degree to ownership, to dialogue between the political level and the citizen level, and meanwhile it helps in managing expectations. And finally, to a high degree it ensures against waffling and blabbering, when the concrete plan is to be implemented. We already know it, nobody cares about the local plan when it enters into a hearing, but the day the construction starts then all hell is loose. (Per Flemming Laursen, member of the administrative steering group, head of the municipal administration in the Municipality of Morsø)

It requires an ability to constantly explain and communicate, why it is that it has such great importance that all actors contribute to the formulation and realisation of a vision and strategy – and do not work against the goals for regional development (Oxford Research, 2005, p.9). Therefore, it makes sense to continuously initiate and target communication activities, from the initiation of new processes to the finalisation of projects.

A possible path forward at this stage could also be to establish one or more agreements, partnerships, and example- or test-projects between the region and one or more municipalities – with the intention to identify barriers and opportunities to a more effective and fruitful interplay, but also to establish concrete action, as it is suggested here:

> …however, we also have the opportunity, and that is also what is being considered, to go in and say: well, when we have passed it and have had our take-off seminars, etc., and we have to identify some actions, then I think it could be exiting that one also from the regional council had a chat with the municipalities and said; apart from you having to write this into your plans, could we then also come up with some agreements? We already make partnership agreements with the national government in relation to the growth plan, the business development strategy, so could we now establish some agreements with the municipalities concerning what they are contributing with, so that we get something action-oriented? (Ole B. Sørensen, member of the political steering group, vice-chairman of the Forum of Regional Development in North Jutland, member of the Regional Council in North Jutland)

Finally, several actors have expressed a wish for clearer reports, but not interference, from the national state. For example, it could be concerned with an increased national mediation of experiences and knowledge concerning RDP processes across the regions, as it is already happening in relation to Plan09. In addition, it seems there is a need for a more transparent national learning process – aided by the regions themselves, for example through an active and constructive feedback to the national level in order to improve the opportunity and basis for avoiding or adjusting constructions or legislation that may have unexpected effects and consequences.

> *In addition, the national state should support the common regional effort by being prepared to adjust legislation in order to cure the 'teething troubles' by which any such big reform will be borne… It does not make sense, that national civil servants should spend hours to zealously consider, whether the region can participate in an association, whether a member of the regional council may be appointed to a board in a regional business development organisation, or whether a region and its municipalities in unison may establish a common representation in for instance Bruxelles. (Danske Regioner, 2007)*

6 Conclusion

The regional development planning (RDP) is an entirely new strategic tool in Danish planning, and in the structural reform it has been identified as a key instrument to the new role of the regions as regional development dynamos. The RDP can be seen as a nationally initiated attempt to improve Denmark's position in the global competition. It is based on the thesis that the regional and municipal levels increasingly will also have to become strategically co-responsible for a broader economic development, adjustment and adaptation. Therefore, the RDP also becomes an encouragement to a common regional-municipal plan-strategic interpretation and positioning in relation to globalisation.

Through the report it has become clear, that the RDP is also an expression of new and more general transformation tendencies in governing systems and cooperative practices. At the regional level, a new arena has been created that provides the opportunity and framework for a self-organised establishment of a regional-municipal network. This network has to manage the interests of both the municipalities and the region in unison – however without some of the traditional hierarchical relations and authoritative instruments of governing. In Danish planning this is a new type of institution, which through dialogue, cooperation as well as bottom-up and demand-controlled coordination must, by itself, create its own identity and capacity to act.

As such, the basic instruments and means for the realisation of a regional politics and planning have been changed significantly. Whereas earlier, the counties could act and rely on the use of authority-based instruments, and thereby legality, now the instruments of the region are called 'anchoring', 'transparency' and 'trust'. This implies a focus on legitimacy, and in particular on the (self-)creation of legitimacy in a non-determined interplay between non-determined actors. Therefore, the question seems to be whether this legitimacy and trust based concurrency has sufficient conditions of growth in practice. With a focus on how such changes have been played out in North Jutland, this report has presented and discussed the background as well as the concrete challenges and opportunities relating to the anchoring of the RDP among a range of actors.

So far, the North Jutland RDP process has been primarily transversally organised, open, broad and actor-oriented. This has had a great influence on the establishment of broader communities and alliances across actors and interests. The early involvement of implementing parties, in particular the municipalities, seems to have contributed significantly to legitimisation of the new regional institution and to the creation of a provisionally broad ownership to the RDP. If an actor has contributed actively and constructively, then it apparently increases the sense of co-ownership and co-commitment.

One does not want to ones own resources wasted. As such, the legitimisation has, to a large extent, occurred through the participation of professional actors, that is representatives from elected political bodies as well as business life, educational institutions and interest organisations. Hence, the RDP can be claimed to be a process based on a broad elitarian network that combines traditional representative democracy, the market and interest organisations. However, despite that the participating actors through their work may have recognised a need for teamwork and the creation of coalitions, then the same tendency has not yet had sufficient opportunity to spread into the hinterlands. This implies, that the establishment of a broad and 'deep' (into the municipalities and among the citizens) coordination, integration and legitimacy (and thereby also accept) can yet be claimed to be a rather significant challenge.

In addition, it has been a considerable challenge to influence or transform the underlying mentality and mindset to an adequate extent so that it could carry forward the new type of planning. This has entailed a necessary renewal and change of roles and also the regional planning culture. In particular, the regional civil servants and the administrative steering group have taken on a central facilitating and catalytic role. This role included attempts to provide the participating actors with the opportunity to balance expectations and interests by allocating time for all to be heard, by listening and observing, and through conversation. This is also why it seems paradoxical that, quite abrupt, the otherwise very open process shut itself down for a period (during writing together the proposal for the RDP) – a period where some important decisions are likely to have been made. It provided focus and the opportunity for a faster production of the plan proposal, but does it also lead to a sufficient ownership afterwards?

Hence, the administrative steering group has so far had a rather significant role in relation to the political steering group behind the RDP. Given the open, broad and network-oriented nature of this type of planning, it can seem contradictory that the politicians have not been a greater part of the process along the way. The structural reform implies that it is not only the civil servants but also the regional politicians who do no longer have a role based in authority. More than ever, the regional politician is therefore to be found on a kind of open political trading ground or market place, where the politician not only acts according to the citizen's votes, but to a high degree also in relation to nearby central actors. Hence, the emergence of the networking regional civil servant can be identified, whereas the networking regional politician is somewhat absent.

In any case, the new roles imply significant demands for coordination and integration of various interests and power relations. By necessity, this must now rely on the building of a new trust-relationship between the parties. Earlier, the county could almost entirely

operate based on the principal trust of the surrounding world in systems, authorities and hierarchies. The structural reform has removed the basic condition for this trust relationship. In stead, a new relation between the region and other parties (primarily municipalities) is being attempted; one that is based in a rational-calculative trust where the production of added value seems central. However, this form of trust can be fragile, something that many actors also seem to be aware of or guided by through their behaviour. Therefore, a trust in the norms and values of the actors is clearly being developed, and in particular in the new norms and values as well as process-oriented professionalism of the region (for example through the fact that the region continuously has attempted to clarify to their surroundings their change in role and intentions). Trust, and the establishment of new trust-relations, is a decisive tool for the building of the regions legitimacy, e.g. for building the acceptance and support of other actors concerning the role and operation of the region.

In balancing and coordinating interests and power relations the experience from the RDP work also seems to be that consensus does not necessarily have to be the underlying ideal. In stead, there is a focus on negotiation and agreements between parties – agreements made for different reasons and on the background of different interests. In such a game it has been of great importance to be heard, and that the process did not create 'enemies' or 'victims'. This has been identified as decisive for the establishment of broad ownership, because victims do not feel co-responsible for succeeding processes. It has been exemplified by the work of the theme groups, but also by the 'difficult beginning' where an early suggestion from the region, on how a future RDP might look like, was very poorly received, in particular by the municipalities. Due to a widespread openness, transparency and persistent invitation to cooperation, the early confrontations did not, apparently, result in the production of victims that did not feel co-responsible afterwards. On the contrary. Despite that different actors continue to have different views and perceptions concerning the opportunities and function of the RDP, then the same actors still seem to be commonly committed on the continued process.

However, it is exactly in relation to this aspect that it will become an important challenge, and in reality a test, to the RDP collaboration to manage the interests of Aalborg. More specifically, the challenge is concerned with trying to resolve an apparent conflict of interest concerning whether the city of Aalborg will direct its political attention towards the region or towards the East Jutland urban corridor (south from the region). It seems to be a confrontation between two forms of potential collaboration (an administrative versus a spatially defined). It can seem paradoxical if the region sees its own collaboration as a plus-sum game, while one sees Aalborg's collaboration with other partners as a threat to this. Can two apparent plus-sum games contradict each other? Here, several actors have

been very cautious without contributing much to clarification. Has a more open and trust-based collaboration not been established, because the parties did not actively rise to the challenge? Are current viewpoints and underlying worries for example based on actual knowledge concerning each others views or are they rather based on guesses and rumours? Are the parties categorising each other unnecessarily by not taking up the issue more actively? In any case it seems there is a need for clarification.

Based on the analysis of the report, the following opportunities and/or recommendations can be identified concerning the continued RDP-process:

-Develop further a new 'planning logic'; based in establishing norms, values and new ethical (professional) standards that build and signal shared understanding, shared language, community, and the achievement of synergy effects as well as added value.
-Develop further special values and norms of cooperation, dialogue, as well as the new process-, networking, and trust-building professionalism of the region. Goal: The RDP and the region as a 'flagship of good cooperation'.
-Process-dynamics: Take on confrontations early, however meanwhile avoid creating enemies. Victims do not become co-owners. Process approaches and management is therefore important. Develop and maintain the trust relationships that the EDP will depend upon. Develop further competences and tools for the identification and handling of power relations and the interests of each actor.
-Clarify and balance the relationship and interests between cities (Aalborg) and the region.
-Ensure a broader a more active involvement of both regional and municipal politicians, as network agents and participants.
-Ensure an appropriate balance between renewal and continuity in future RDP organisation and processes. Ensure political as well as administrative 'carriers' of cooperation cultures, trust relationships, alliances and key coherent perspectives.
-Ensure correlation between general perspectives and concrete initiatives.
-Clarify and make more transparent the distribution of roles and tasks between the Regional Council, advisory units, KKR (the contact council of municipalities), the municipalities, new steering groups, committees, work groups, etc.
-Support communication of the RDP and further commitment to it in municipal organisations and among other stakeholders. E.g establish agreements, partnerships or pilot projects between the region and one or several municipalities – with the purpose to identify barriers and opportunities to a more efficient and fruitful interaction, but also in order to initiate specific actions.
-Inform municipalities that access to EU-funding is often improved if municipalities can demonstrate a local-municipal-regional coherence in planning.

-Build regional transparency as well as communication activities in relation to the media and the public.
-Maintain and develop the RDP work as a self-reflective learning process.
-Develop national mediation of experiences with RDP between the regions.

Finally, is seems relevant to ask: is it possible to transfer, to other regions, the RDP experiences and lessons learned in North Jutland? Some general aspects may be transferable, such as some general organisational settings and tools for how to manage the process. However, a range of local and more culture specific and dependant aspects can be difficult to transfer, such as the strong social capital of the region and the fact that the administrative borders of North Jutland correlates reasonably well with a regional spatial-functional coherency (although Aalborg may also orient itself further south in East Jutland). In addition, and in the face of globalisation and economic restructuring, North Jutland can be argued to be under a common problem pressure, which potentially creates good conditions for a pressure for common action.

Hence, the RDP can be claimed to be a good match to North Jutland. However, it is unclear whether other regions in Denmark will be able, to a similar extent, to make use of fundamental changes in the structural reform of forms of governing and conditions for collaboration. The national level government will have to take this into account if it wishes to evaluate and eventually revise the reform's framework concerning regional-municipal interaction on regional development and planning.

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Regional development planning is an entirely new phenomenon in Danish spatial planning and in the strategic development of various areas of the country. On this level of planning, traditional instruments have been substituted by expectations, in particular from the national level, that the regions can establish strategies and plans for regional development in cooperation and dialogue with a number of parties, in particular the municipalities.

This report discusses intentions, experiences and challenges concerning regional development planning in Denmark. It primarily focuses on the discussion of conditions and opportunities for anchoring and creating ownership in relation to the establishment of regional development strategies and plans. The region of North Jutland is used as an example.