

# **INSTITUTIONAL PROJECTS AS MOBILIZERS OF CHANGE IN THE REALM OF INSTITUTIONAL COMPLEXITY: A CASE OF ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

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RISK REDUCTION THROUGH CLIMATE ADAPTATION  
OF BUILDINGS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

# Background



The climate in Norway is expected to be warmer and wetter towards 2100

- The yearly temperature might (in worse case scenario) increase with 4,5 °C!
- Perspiration might increase with an average of 18 %
- Consequences: More rain and heavy rain showers, less snow, more flooding, decreasing glaciers and increase in sea level between 15 to 55 cm depending on local conditions (Hanssen-Bauer et al., 2015).
- Substantial impact on buildings and infrastructure, and the cost to society of increased flooding and landslides/avalanches is already significant

# The Built Environment: Adaptation to Climate Change



- A need for improved coordination, communication, competence development, research, and dissemination of knowledge across organizations responsible for handling the consequences of increased flooding and landslides/avalanches
- Establish different projects to look into how to deal with changes in climate
- We have investigated NIFL (The Natural Hazards, Infrastructure, Floods and Landslides program), 2012 – 2016, and the continuous work

# Research Question

- **The role of institutional projects in mobilizing change in fields characterized by institutional complexity**
- **In need of relatively quick adaptation to climate change**
  - Severe increases in insurance payments due to climate related issue
  - Damage on infrastructure (public organizations self-insured)
  - Severe risk for individuals
- **How do institutional entrepreneurs use institutional projects to embed changes in complex environments?**

# Institutional Entrepreneurs

- **“activities of actors who have an interest in particular institutional arrangements and who leverage resources to create new institutions or to transform existing ones” (Maguire, Hardy and Lawrence, 2004: 657)**
- **Role of agency in shaping and changing institutions**
- **Paradox of embedded agency (Leca et al., 2008)**
  - How can actors embedded within ‘taken-for-granted’ institutions be the very same that change them?

# Institutional Projects

- **Projects specifically set up to change existing institutions (e.g. Holm, 1995; Tukiainen & Granqvist, 2016)**
- **Key activities connected to institutional change**
  - Issue mobilizing (Munir & Phillips, 2005)
  - Sense-making (Raaijmakers et al., 2015)
- **Types of institutional projects (Perkmann & Spicer, 2007)**
  - Interactional projects – coalition building, bargaining
  - Technical projects – conceptualize and create categories
  - Cultural projects – framing institutions so they appeal to wider audiences
- **The institutional projects concerned with adaptation to climate change are set up to develop new rules, beliefs, and practices for dealing with natural hazard events**



# Institutional Complexity and Institutional Logics

- **The natural hazard environment – a mature field**
  - Established structures, regulations, practices, routines and logics (Greenwood, et al., 2011)
- **Need to deal with conflicting demands (Pache & Santos, 2010)**
- **Institutional complexity – situations where organizations face multiple institutional logics (Thornton et al., 2012)**
  - Fragmentation
  - Lack of joint and coordinated action
  - Interpretations and personal beliefs (Raaijmakers et al, 2015)



# Research Design and Methods

- **Inductive, exploratory study of one exemplar case - The Natural Hazards, Infrastructure, Floods and Landslides program (NIFL)**
  - One institutional project in a stream of many dealing with natural hazards
  - Initiative and funding – Norwegian National Rail Administration (NNRA), Norwegian Public Roads Administration (NPRA), Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE)
  - Project period 2012 – 2016
  - The collaboration continues in the Natural Hazard Forum (extended the # of partners)
- **Aim: Contribute to a safer society with more robust infrastructure, safer homes, safer transport and reliable avalanche/landslide and flood warnings. Generate new knowledge and develop good, effective and forward-looking solutions for handling different natural hazards through collaboration across agencies and areas of responsibility**

# Research Design and Methods (cont.)

- **Data sources**

- Interviews – key informants
- Project reports
- Project presentations
- Media coverage
- Participation in meetings and seminars

- **Data analysis (not completed)**

- Constant comparative methods
- NVivo
- (a) Narrative, (b) temporal bracketing to structure the narrative, (c) identifying recurrent themes

# How do institutional entrepreneurs use institutional projects to embed changes in complex environments?

- **Creation of artefacts and shared knowledge to connect past, present and future**
  - [varsom.no](http://varsom.no)
  - 120 reports
  - [Norwegian Climate Service Center](#)
  - Identification of dilemmas – different institutional logics
- **Improvisation through investigating of critical incidents**
  - What needs to change? How can it be changed?
  - In-depth analysis of several natural hazard events – why it happened, good and bad practices dealing with the challenges, investigating possible solutions
  - Created shared understanding and elucidated challenges connected to roles and responsibilities dealing with the incidents

# How do institutional entrepreneurs use institutional projects to embed changes in complex environments?

- **Institutional projects - meeting places and arenas for exploration**

- Inter-organizational collaboration
- The project – a place to discuss and find solutions not disturbed by the ongoing business
- Challenge 1: Integration of new practices into existing practice in ongoing organizations
- Challenge 2: Not operational core that participate, often professional staff – theory and practice

- **Creation of joint practices in crisis situations**

- Joint crisis management handbook for flooding, landslides and avalanches
- Clarifying roles, responsibilities, communication and safety across the three organizations

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