

Resilient Region - a New Paradigm for Regional Development?

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„Growth in Transition“

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Resilience -new fad or new paradigm?

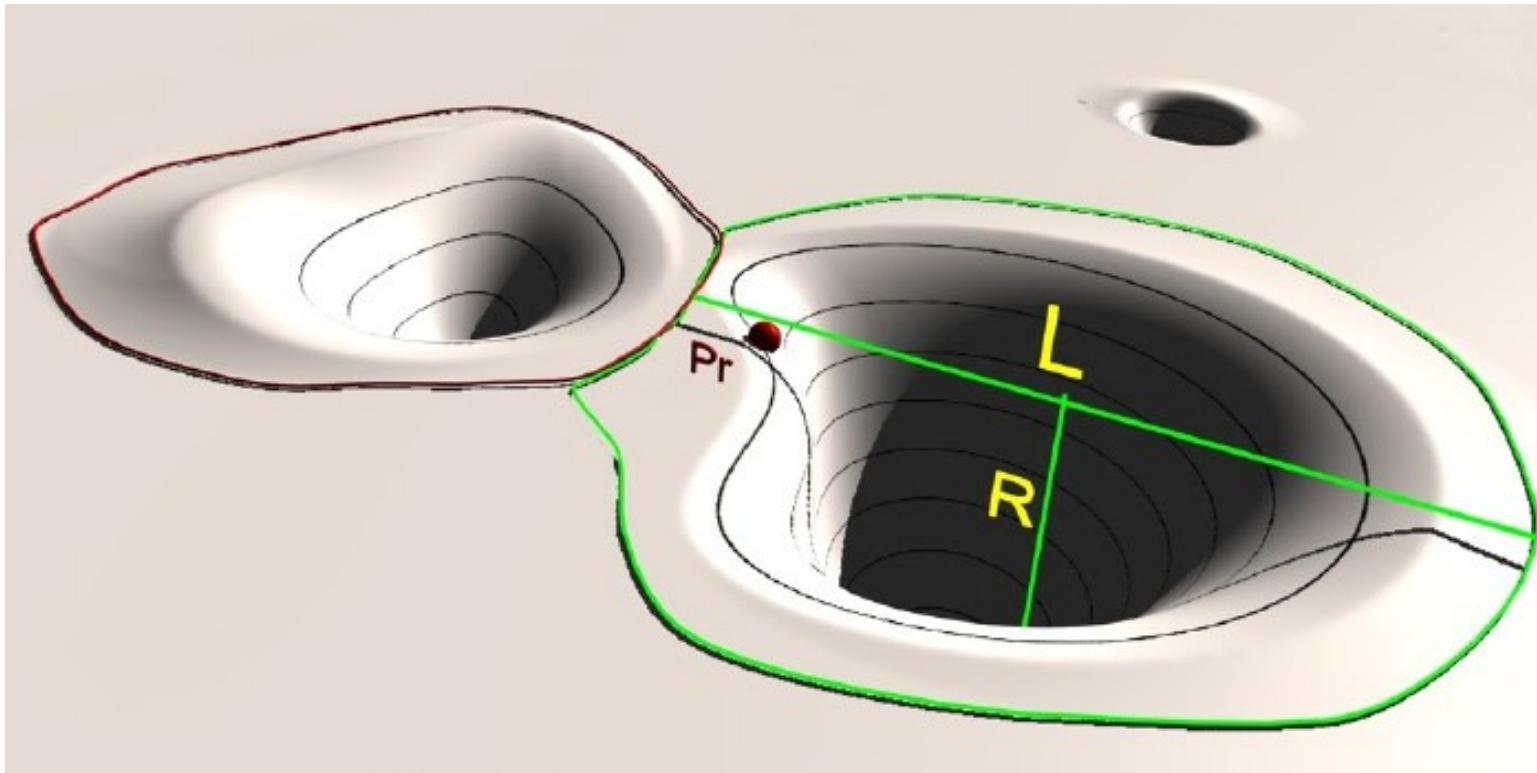
- In recent years the term „resilience“ is spreading across various disciplines, from cybernetics to ecology, psychology, business development and social sciences.
- Researchers related to the „Building Resilient Regions Network“ (<http://brr.berkeley.edu>) have published a host of very inspiring articles and books most of which are genuinely cross-disciplinary.
- Resilience is a feature of sustainability.
- It can be used as a new fad...like almost everything. However, it may also add considerable value to the sustainability debate and regional development concepts.



Some basics...



Stability landscapes



Three-dimensional stability landscape with two basins of attraction showing the current position of the **system (red dot)** and three aspects of resilience: L = latitude, R = resistance, Pr = precariousness (adapted from Walker et al. (2004): Resilience, Adaptability and Transformability in Social-Ecological Systems.



Regional Resilience - Proposed Definition

- Regional Resilience is the capacity of a region to absorb endogenous or exogenous disturbances in a way that its structures, functions and relationships being essential for its prosperousness remain intact.

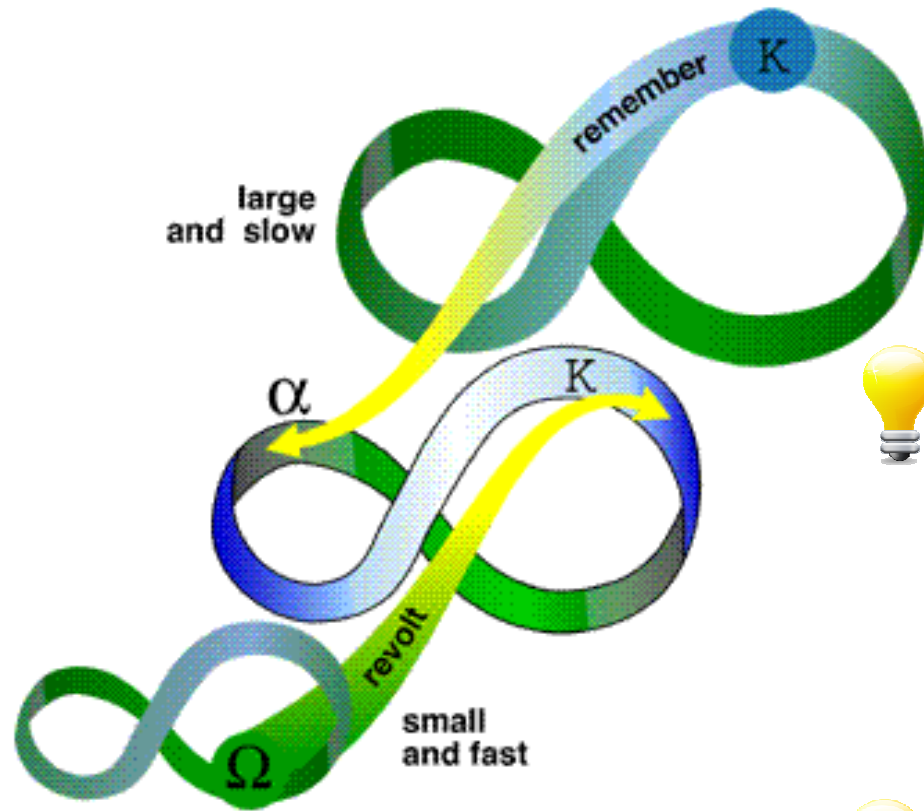


Adaptability and Transformability

- **Adaptability** is the capacity of actors in a system to influence resilience (= the capacity to manage resilience).
- **Transformability** is the capacity to create a fundamentally new system when ecological, economic, or social (including political conditions) make the system untenable.



Adaptive Cycles and the Concept of Panarchy



Four phases of an adaptive cycle:
 α = reorganisation
r = exploitation
K = conservation
 Ω = release

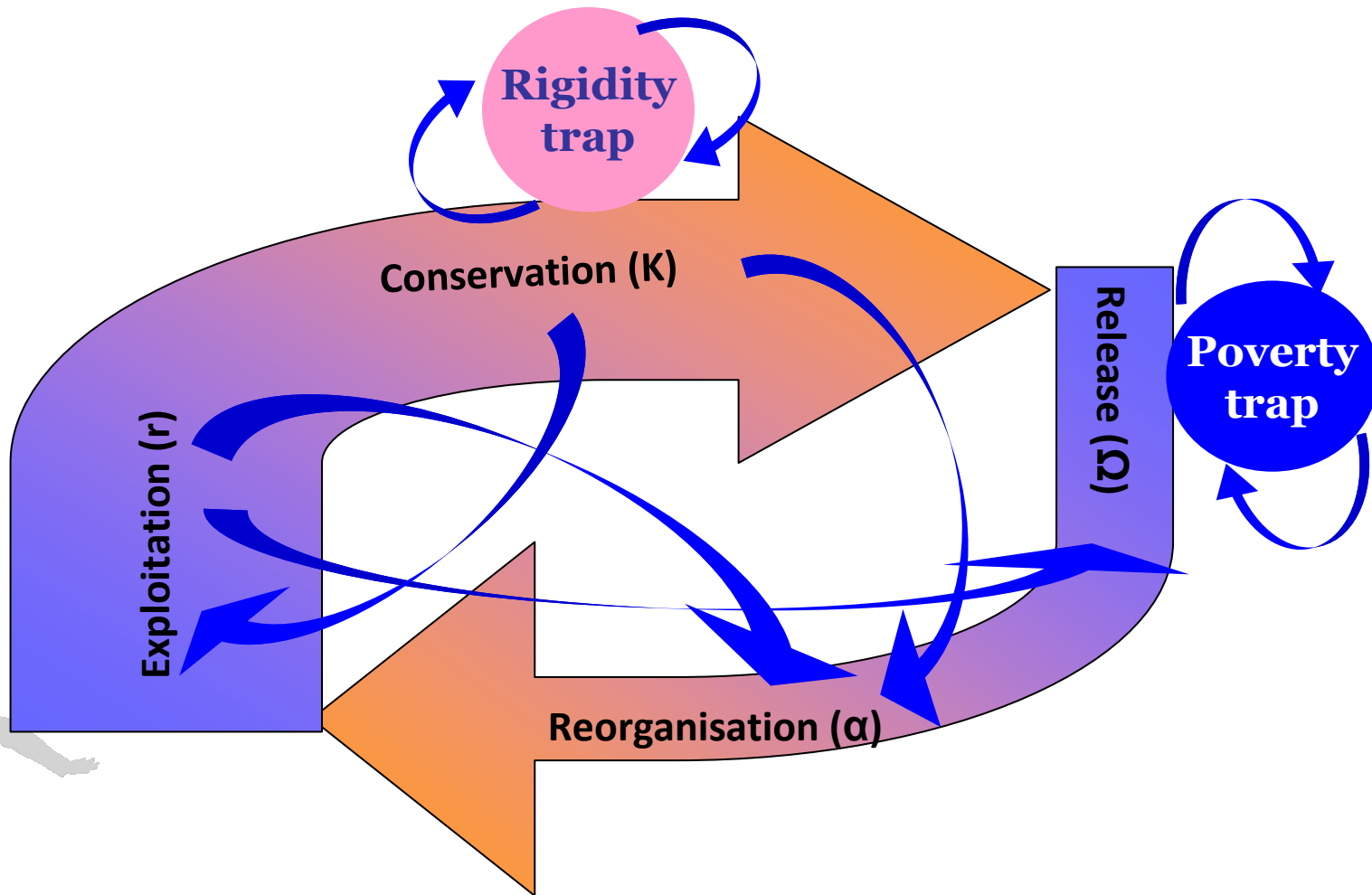


Nested adaptive cycles and cross-scale effects

(adapted from L. H. Gunderson and C. S. Holling, editors. *Panarchy: understanding transformations in human and natural systems*. Island Press, Washington D.C., USA)



„Managing“ Regional Development

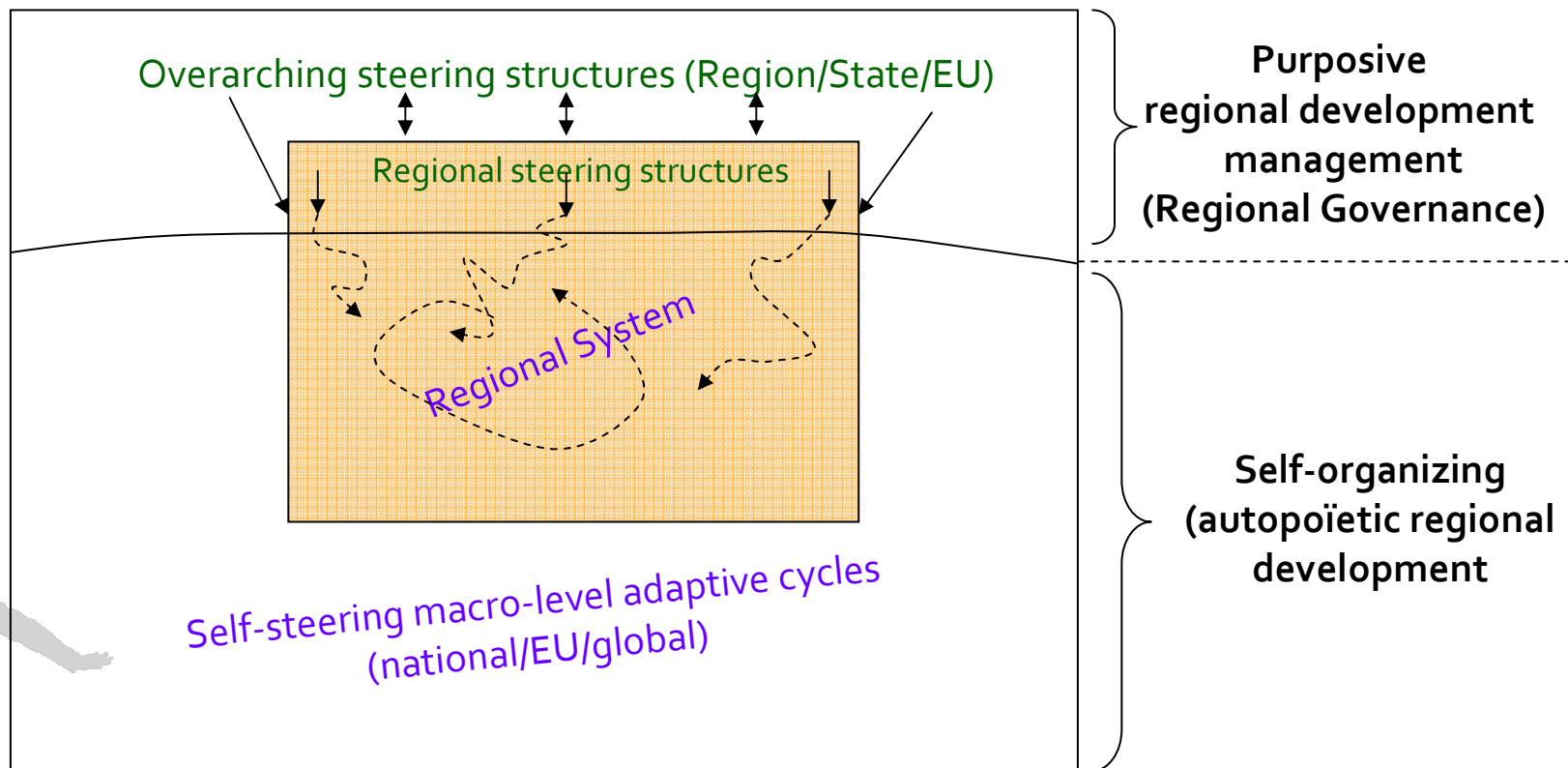


Managing Resilience: Why Regions?

- The region can be conceptualized as an adaptive cycle which we choose as observation and operation unit to influence our productive capacities and living conditions.
- Hence „managing“ regional development means the attempt to move the territorial system into more desirable states.
- Thus the socio-economic construct which we call *region* becomes a common pool resource, the management of which requires appropriate institutions and rules.
- We use to call these steering structures and functions regional governance.
- Regions are useful observation and operation units, because
 - regions conform with the archetype of governance as being space-related;
 - They are (in most cases) not overly determined by strictly hierarchical (politico-administrative) relationships;
 - an area size between NUTS IV and II provides a viable arena of overlapping and cross-relating personal and structural relationships.



Regional Governance: Mission (Im)possible

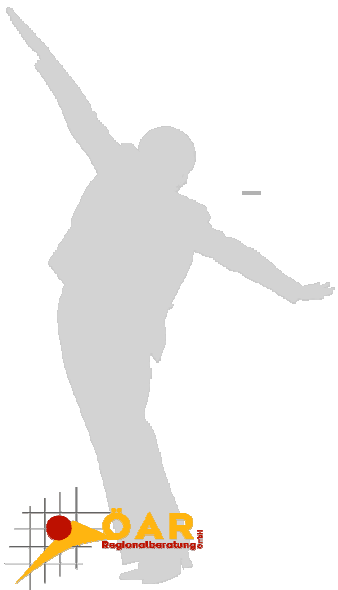


Features of Resilience...



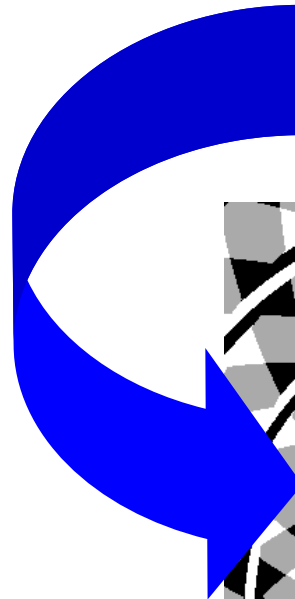
1. Functional and Response Diversity

- Mixture of sectors, branches, size of productive units, operation scales, purchase and sales markets, technologies
- Social diversity (intergenerational relations, migration balance, differentiated services, cultural tolerance)
- Landscape and environmental diversity

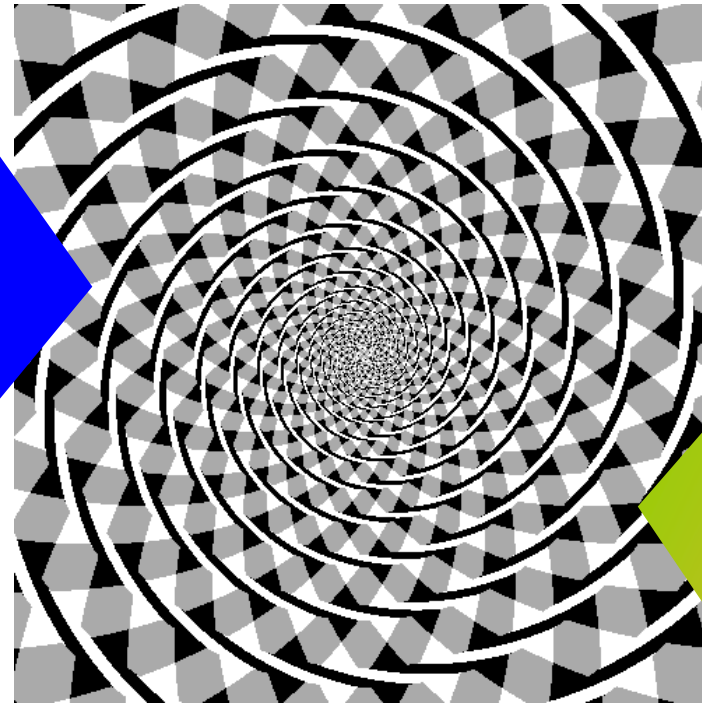


2. Redundancy

- Creative messiness
- Be aware: Efficiency may weaken resilience!



TOP DOWN



BOTTOM UP



3. Modularity

The 3A of Regional Governance

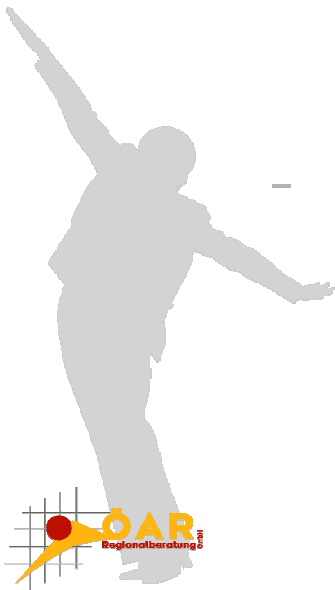
- **Operational Autonomy** for regions: partnership-based local development agencies, local action groups...
- **Strategic Alignment** between governance levels: facilitated negotiations with built-in periodic feedbacks and reviews...
- **Normative Adjustment**: the direction of change must comply with core values and long-term commitments undergone at higher, up to global governance arrangements

NB: Federalism ≠ Subsidiarity!



4. Focus on Social Capital

- The 3T of Dynamic Regions
 - **Technology** (research, development, innovation)
 - **Talent** („creative class“: operational skills rather than higher education)
 - **Tolerance** (co-existence, blending and benign competition between different values, cultural expressions and lifestyles)
- High levels of both **bridging** and **bonding** capacities



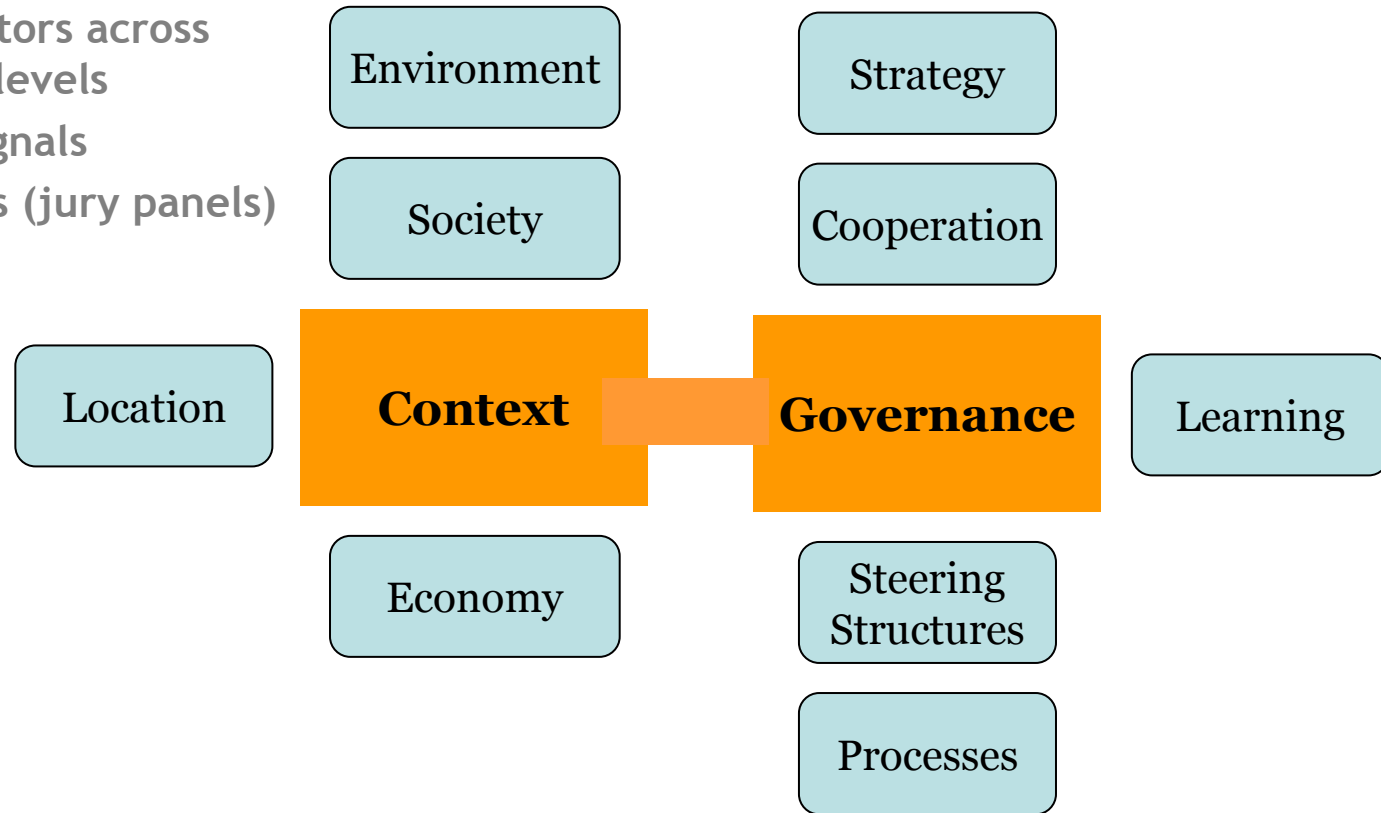
Caveat

- **Factors favouring regional resilience can also be risk factors** under adverse conditions, e.g. density, nearness and connectedness (*= the three main development factors emphasized in the World Bank Report on „Reshaping Economic Geography“*)
- **Ultimately, what is perceived as a crisis hinges on the perspective of the observer.** This contingency creates decision gaps: precious time gets squandered away by musing about the trajectory of „slow variables“ (see the CO₂ debate: *how many meters of rising sea level are we ready to stand?*).
- The wellbeing of a region can be considered as a common pool resource (CPR). Fostering its resilience is an investment, but **too often this investment is seen as a cost** (hence a waste).



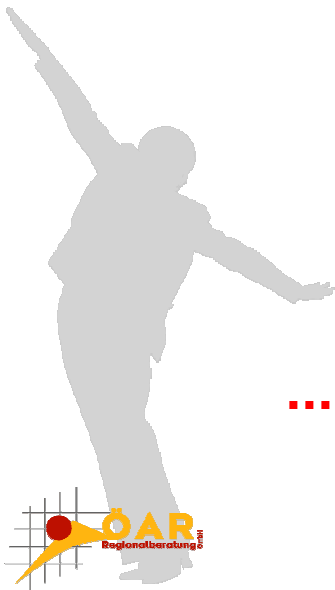
Framework for Monitoring Regional Resilience

- A few indicators across governance levels
- Algedonic signals
- Focus groups (jury panels)



.....→ maybe a useful proxy for regional sustainability...?

The model is inspired by the GTZ model for managing complex cooperation systems, „Capacity WORKS“



The Scoping Study on Resilient Regions...

..... on behalf of the **Austrian Federal Chancellery** will be ready by the end of February 2010 (in German).

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