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Combinatorial Power and Place Leadership

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Abstract

This paper presents a theoretical framework for understanding place leadership and combinatorial power. Place leadership is defined as the mobilization and coordination of diverse groups of actors to achieve a collective effort aimed at enhancing the development of a specific place. Place leadership is a form of agency that works across institutional, organizational, geographical and/or sectoral boundaries to boost local/regional development. The framework presented in this paper highlights the need to understand power from a combinatorial perspective when studying place leadership. First, the general concept of power as well as the relationship between power and geography are discussed to provide a conceptual context for the paper. Second, the dynamics of cumulative institutional power are introduced, followed by a review of network power and interpretive power in the third section. Fourth, it is argued that we need to understand how different forms of power are combined instead of focusing solely on the cumulative nature of institutional power, and for that purpose, a schematised combinatorial power typology is presented.

1 Introduction

Many people want to be leaders, but very few are leaders in the sense that I mean it: using great power for great purposes

(Robert A. Caro in a conversation with Joyce Ravid in 2012)

Many people want to be leaders and use great power for great purposes. Indeed, it is not difficult to identify the purposes calling for such action, including climate change, the increasing polarisation between regions and general political turbulence on a global scale. Using great power may indeed be tempting for many leaders. However, in a world with only a handful of corporate and political leaders exercising great power amid a broader spectrum of leaders with lesser powers, achieving a great purpose is notoriously difficult. Perhaps we need leaders who, instead of seeking great power for great purposes, would seek to combine many forms of power for great purposes. This would be desirable in every sphere of a particular society and also in local/regional development.

Research on place leadership has rapidly emerged as a new avenue with the promise to provide us with an alternative lens to study local and regional development. Sotarauta, Beer and Gibney (2017) argue that place leadership has the potential to add an important ingredient to many of the traditional targets of interest in regional development studies; in other words, examining place leadership has the potential to provide ‘an additional “agential” lens through which issues and relationships of structure and agency can be explored’. Place leadership stands out as a discrete form of agency compared to traditional targets of attention in leadership studies, such as organisational or political leadership. In this paper, place leadership is defined as the mobilization and coordination of diverse groups of actors to achieve a collective effort aimed at enhancing the development of a specific place. It works across institutional, organizational, geographical and/or sectoral boundaries to amplify the local power base in order to strengthen its capacity to influence those with great powers.

Hambleton (2015) contrasts the placeless decision-making of powerful actors, in which leaders are unconcerned about the impact their decisions have on particular communities, with place leadership, which aims specifically to make sure that place-based ambitions are not pushed aside but instead achieved. In a complex, network-based world, place leadership operates on the one hand in between the intentions of placeless actors and unpredictable economic-social-political forces, and on the other hand, amidst a variety of place-based needs and intentions. Each of these sources of pressure is not one-dimensional but actually notoriously multi-dimensional and complex. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance to better understand how place leaders exercise power when navigating through complex situations in order to (a) intentionally generate future options for a place in question and (b) adapt to emergent developments (Sotarauta & Mustikkamäki, 2012).

The concept of place leadership is an elemental part of studies which aim at revealing the secrets of agency, i.e., 'the ability of people to act, usually regarded as emerging from consciously held intentions, and as resulting in observable effects in the human world' (Gregory et al., 2009). In this line of thinking, regions are not only the outcomes of emergent and unintended economic-social-political processes but also the deliberate products of actions by powerful actors (Macleod & Jones, 2007). Nevertheless, the status and agency of a region as a collective actor is not innate or pre-given in any specific geographical context (Lagendijk, 2007). In practice, regions are ever-changing constellations of economic, social and ecological elements, and as such, drawing on the work of Castells (2009, p. 13), they are 'contradictory social structures enacted in conflicts and negotiations among diverse and often opposing social actors'. Indeed, the basic premise of this book is that place leadership is called for in making a region, or some parts of it, at least a bit more collective for achieving great purposes. For these reasons, power needs to be seen from a relational perspective. As Castells (2009, p. 50) says:

The sources of social power in our world – violence and discourse, coercion and persuasion, political domination and cultural framing – have not changed fundamentally from our historical experience ... but the terrain where power relationships operate has changed in two major ways: it is primarily constructed around the articulation between the global and the local; and it is primarily organized around networks, not single units.

From these premises, this paper focuses on power, a concept that receives surprisingly little attention in place leadership studies. One cannot but wonder if the secrets of power are not so important to study after all, or, maybe they are so important that scholars try to get around them so as to avoid investigating something inflammatory. Power is one of the most central concepts to consider when attempting to understand regional development through the lens of place leadership. We do not have the luxury to circumvent power or try to look through it without seeing its many dimensions. Interestingly, power may be a somewhat neglected target of attention in place leadership, but this is not the case in, more broadly, regional studies or economic geography. For some time now, regional development scholars have sought ways to explain and understand the polarization of regional development through the analysis of power.

As Pike (2007) maintains, power relations are critical in defining the region, its interests and what is seen (and not seen) as development.

The first part of the core argument presented in this paper is that the power relationships framing and guiding regional development are both constructed through social networks and embedded within them. The second part of the argument, derived from the first, holds that we need to focus on understanding the dynamics of combinatorial power rather than seeing power as a cumulative product or a 'thing'. Place leadership is about drawing on and influencing the power relationships while simultaneously being embedded within them, and for these reasons, the concept of combinatorial power may add value to future studies not only with respect to place leadership but also those concerning regional development on a broader scale. The main aim of this paper, however, is to present a theoretical framework for understanding place leadership from the perspective of combinatorial power. First, the concept of power as well as the relationship between power and geography is discussed to provide a conceptual context for the paper. Second the dynamics of cumulative institutional power are introduced, and then network power and interpretive power are examined in more detail in the following section as a third step. Fourth, it is argued that we need to understand how different forms of power are combined instead of focusing solely on the cumulative nature of institutional power, and for that purpose, a schematised combinatorial power typology is presented.

2 Power, networks and place leadership

2.1 The negative and positive sides of power

A common basic definition of power as 'the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others' (Wrong, 1997, p. 2) is neutral in the sense that it does not say anything about the purpose of power, and this is for a reason. Power is a capacity that needs to be leveraged by an actor, and the purpose of exercising power depends on the particular issues at hand, the intentions of the relevant actors and other institutional pressures. Actors exercise power for many purposes, both good and evil; these purposes are many and often conflicting, as the history of humankind shows quite clearly.

Pike et al. (2007) link power to the essentials of regional development by asking 'how power is exercised in deciding what varieties, institutions and resources frame, address and answer the questions of what kind of local and regional development and for whom'. To answer questions such as these, geographers and regional development scholars have had a tendency to focus on the negative side of power. The emphasis has not been on how to achieve great purposes; instead, it has been on how 'the others' pursue their ambitions and purposes at the cost of a specific place. Both implicitly and explicitly, the focus has been on placeless actors who use their power for their own purposes. In other words, power is more often than not approached as something that is utilized for exploiting the resources of a place and coercing other actors to do something against their will (Faulconbridge & Hall, 2009). Importantly, these studies reveal how

actors mobilize resources in order to gain influence over others and shape the actions of the many to secure economic advantages (Faulconbridge, 2012). Indeed, it is important to understand the negative side of power, but it is also critical to understand how place leaders mobilize resources to make sure that place-based voices are heard, and local collective intentions are constructed.

Placeless leaders, a group of which includes some political leaders and leaders of corporate giants, can exercise power, which is personified in them, having been accumulated in and for their organisations and themselves for a long time. It may be financial power, or it may be power drawn from an established position in a governance system. Either way, it is power over other actors or power to control resources. As such, placeless leaders may but not necessarily always choose to make other actors do something against their will. In contrast, and by definition, place leaders do not have that option; they are not sitting on top of accumulated power. Among place leaders, we may find mayors or leaders of locally important firms with accumulated power, but more often than not, these individuals are not powerful enough to change the destiny of a place simply by exercising their powers alone. Of course, history shows there are also influential corporate and political leaders who have used their powers over other actors for a particular place in question instead of thinking only for their own benefit. The intention in this paper is not to hide the negative side of power or downplay its overwhelming importance. Regardless of this negative side, since regional development policies and place leadership are about creating new pathways for the future, we need to understand how place leaders combine various forms of power and thus amplify their often-limited power base. Thus, power has a positive side too.

With the rise of new modes of governance and the increasing importance of networks, even the greatest of place leaders influence with, through and by networks. Ideally, they and other potential or actual place leaders intentionally grasp the positive side of power. The positive side of power does not refer to leaders making other actors do something against their own wills or intentions. It does not refer to any known form of coercion either. By definition, place leaders are not in a position to change the preferences of the other actors, and hence they need to find novel ways to influence them. In this paper, the positive side of power refers, broadly speaking, to the abilities to (a) exercise power for creating a novel context for collective action, and (b) combine individual aims into collective place-based objectives for multiplying the opportunities for other actors (Sotarauta, 2016). Even though the power of networks has become more prominent, the cumulative, one-dimensional institutional form of power is still very much with us.

2.2 Cumulative institutional power

The strength of regional development theories and empirical studies lies in their ability to reveal how actors are connected both with each other and a particular place in question along with the geographical orientations of these connections. However, they often underestimate the complex patterns of power that frame these connections and the related leadership and

strategy processes. Many studies emphasize, both explicitly and implicitly, national and regional institutions and thus cumulative institutional power, and in practice, local/regional development strategies are often formulated by reflecting upon the ambitions and ideas of the dominant or hegemonic groups, which then again reinforces the cumulation of power. Of course, the dominant groups are still required to consult other interests, as even within the most centralized of systems, power is never an absolute entity captured and held indefinitely by a specific group.

Indeed, in many respects, the one-dimensional form of institutional power has implicitly dominated many accounts of regional development, as power tends to, in one way or another, accumulate in time and space; it is embedded in distinct institutional arrangements that are multi-scalar by nature. In a one-dimensional view, power is a 'thing' that is possessed by individuals and organisations who are deemed powerful by others by virtue of them 'holding' power (Allen, 2003). Allen (2003) argues that this form of power can be thought of as 'power as capacity', in that actors can hold power but may choose whether or not to use it. Drawing on an earlier empirical study on power in local and regional development, power as capacity may also be labelled as accumulated institutional power (Sotarauta, 2009). Cumulative power dynamics refer to (a) the degree to which the exercise of power builds upon existing power bases and (b) the continuity that builds upon selecting and stabilizing institutions, thus reducing uncertainty through cumulative structures of power. Such processes reduce cognitive distance in decision-making and in turn facilitate, or coerce, the formulation of development strategies by drawing on dominant groups of social actors. While this may be effective, it may also reduce the potential for innovation and cause lock-in situations.

Individual actors may accumulate their own institutional power base by holding multiple positions (Suvinen, 2014), climbing up ladders of a hierarchy or through other means, such as by increasing their chances to make decisions with the use of money by moulding the rules of the game. Institutional power is most notably a combination of legitimate power and reward power (Sotarauta, 2009). Legitimate power is based on an actor's formally assigned position in a system, whereas reward power refers to the degree to which an actor can provide others with rewards of some kind (French & Raven, 1959). Notably, reward power also provides an actor with the capacity to demand that other actors change their behaviour by sanctioning what is seen as wrong. Consequently, institutional power, in a simplified sense, is based on an assigned position that provides an actor with the power to demand that other actors act differently, change institutions guiding regional development work, organise official strategy processes, and modify the ways in which development work is organised (Sotarauta, 2009). Importantly, even if actors do not exercise their institutional power, they are still widely seen as powerful.

Put simply, such authoritative systems of government that are based on centralized institutional power rely on assigned leadership, i.e., actors with formal powers and strong mandates to directly influence local and regional development without the apparent need for collaboration across organisational boundaries. In confrontative systems, local/regional development processes are based more on competition than collaboration, and in these kinds

of situations, we may witness continuous power struggles. Thus, place leadership may emerge from outside the formal governance system, and the mobilization of resources may occur both for the benefit of the selected actors in a given place and against other assemblies competing for the same resources. Indeed, in the words of MacKinnon et al. (2009), 'The different positions and material interests of particular individuals and groups can generate conflict over strategies of adaptation at the level of individual firms, industries, and regions'. Because conflict is common in human activity, cross-sector collaborations are more likely to succeed if leaders use various resources and tactics to help equalize power, avoid imposed solutions, and lead through conflict effectively (Crosby & Bryson, 2010).

2.3 Power of networks and network power

What has been discussed thus far leads us to approach power relationally. The relational approach reminds that if we focus only on institutional power that is held by certain actors and used by them over others, our view of power would be one-dimensional. The relational approach to power moves us beyond the one-dimensional view by emphasising social systems and structures as well as networks as essential elements in the study of power. For instance, Foucault (1980) speaks about covert power that works through people rather than only upon them, and, drawing on the relational approach, Clegg (1989) approaches power as a two-way process with the focus being on the relations between actors. Importantly, for a proper scrutiny of place leadership, Clegg highlights the significance of agency, specifically focusing on the ways in which practices and actions as well as resistance define power. Social collectives (organisations, groups, and networks, for instance) play a crucial role here, as they may both benefit from power and construct it (Clegg, 1989).

Network power can be linked to Lukes' third aspect of power (Lukes, 2005); Lukes seeks to transcend the one-dimensional view by including control over agendas in his theoretical account, but such control does not necessarily manifest itself through formal decisions alone. Values, norms and ideologies embedded within social networks shape the preferences of actors and are hence also a form of power. This also means that all social interaction within networks is comprised of power, as ideas work behind dominant discourses and actions. All of this easily becomes routine, since actors do not consciously think of them but instead act upon them. Consequently, as place leaders work upon those factors that shape the relationships between actors, place leadership is largely (but not only) about shaping the power of networks. From this perspective, power emerges as the relational capacity that enables place leaders to influence the actions and decisions of other actors in ways that favour empowered actors' own intentions, interests and values, but also a place in questions. Thus, the power of networks is central to any effort to understand agency as well as place leadership in regional development. It refers to ways in which specific sets of social actors' interests and intentions form the core of networks and the construction of the relevant standards and directions for them (Castells, 2009). Of course, networks do not have fixed boundaries or eternally permanent structures or modes of

operation, and thus they do not have fixed purposes either. They are open-ended and multi-edged, and hence constantly in search of new forms and practices. Network power is particularly critical in contemporary conditions where traditionally powerful players are unable to accomplish their objectives alone (Innes & Booher, 2010). As Castells (2009) maintains, network expansion or shrinkage depends on how well the interests and values remain aligned in time, and in the context of regional development, it is place leaders who work to keep them aligned. Furthermore, network power is exercised not only by exclusion or inclusion from the networks, but largely by changing the rules of inclusion/exclusion (Castells, 2009, p. 42). Accordingly, in Allen's view, 'power is a force that is dependent on how different actors internalize meaning and are enrolled into the networks of others through their social practice' (Allen, 2003, p. 40).

Network power revolves around building relations between actors and enhancing knowledge exchange between them as well as working for commitment and trust. Castells (2009) writes especially about global networks, but in place leadership studies, the power of networks is an open question; what the most important networks from the perspective of a particular place in question are, and who is and is not included in them, are of central concern. One may also be inclined to ask if the situation is optimal for place development or whether place leaders ought to make some effort to change the balance. Importantly, as Faulconbridge (2012) states, power is 'not necessarily conceptualized as being restricted to one spatial scale but shown to cross cut and reproduce both the local and the global depending on the practices associated with power through mobilization'. Thus, we might argue that place leaders are expected to move beyond and across scales in order to strengthen the networking power of local actors in two dimensions; on the one hand, they are expected to network among themselves in a particular place, and on the other hand, they must network in areas external to a region. Along these dimensions, place leaders work to change the rules of their respective networks for inclusion and the identification of both a shared purpose and the collective action required to reach it.

In sum, power is the relational capacity that enables place leaders to influence the actions and decisions of other actors in ways that favour empowered actors' own intentions, interests and values as well as the particular place in question. In relational thinking, power is not located in one particular organisation, social sphere or institution. Institutions and networks shape the ways power is embedded in time and space, and place leaders work to shape networks and institutions to gain power. It is worth mentioning again that even though power is distributed throughout the networks, power tends to simultaneously concentrate in certain organisations and institutions—powerful nodes of networks—to condition and frame the practices at large by enforcing domination. As Castells (2009, p. 15) puts it, power is relational while domination is institutional, and hence institutional power makes it possible for some actors to also dominate networks. Consequently, as place leaders work on those factors that shape the relationships between actors, place leadership is largely (but not only) about shaping the power of networks.

2.4 Power through mobilisation

What follows from the previous sections is that place leadership is embedded in social and economic networks and builds upon practices and influence strategies designed to construct power where it might not already exist. Place leaders often work in between institutional power bases on the one hand, and seek for other forms of power to amplify their capacity to influence on the other hand. Therefore, we need to study in more detail the ways in which place leaders construct (or lose) power in their efforts to mobilise actors for their respective places. It is worth noting that place leadership studies ought to be sensitive to the ways in which place leaders mobilise other actors across organisational and geographical boundaries as well as administrative levels to both amplify place-based power and to mobilise and direct collective efforts of some kind. Allen's (2003) view of power through mobilization strongly supports these considerations. Power through mobilisation produces and reproduces power, but it also calls for other actors with complementing power bases. Indeed, it is hard to imagine a place leader mobilizing other actors without adequate and versatile power base.

'Power through mobilization' is crucial to any examination of place leadership. It is a more subtle version of power as it builds upon the view that power is constructed relationally through and within networks (Allen, 2003, p. 40), as pointed out in the preceding section. Indeed, the power place leaders exercise is not a 'thing' which can be held and deployed in a hierarchical sense. Consequently, we need to know more about how actors gain power in time-place specific ways, and also, for what purposes and with what outcomes. This would involve identifying powerful actors but also those who strive to become powerful. Moreover, the relationship between these two groups along with that between them and other actor groups are also worth exploring (Sayer, 2004, p. 26). We may therefore start the analysis of power by identifying asset availability, practices of exercising assets and responses to the exercise of assets by both rivals and partners (Faulconbridge, 2012). In his detailed analysis, Flyvbjerg (1989) shows how the invisible mechanisms of the practical forms of power shape the course of a particular set of events and the utilisation of assets. His study reveals a wide spectrum of ways to influence networks and decision-making over extended periods of time.

The analysis of powerful and aspiringly powerful actors further supports the legitimacy of the present analysis of place leadership, as the capacity to access assets and the availability of them frames the capacity of actors to amplify their power base. Moreover, for these reasons, we need to be sensitive to issues related to governance, as the forms of power available to actors and the practices of using them vary not only between governance systems but also within them (Beer et al., 2018). Additionally, place leadership is not the concern of public or elected local/regional governments alone; it may also involve actors from local communities, higher education institutions and corporate firms. Ultimately, the question is one of who takes leadership and how, along with who has the capacity to do so. In practice, place leadership is distributed, but at its best, it may be shared among many (Karlsen & Larrea, 2012). Place leaders work to pool the distributed system of leadership and make it more coherent so as to make a

difference, and as argued above, for analytical purposes, place leadership may be boiled down to questions related to relational power and power through mobilisation. For mobilisation, if there is not an adequate power base in place, place leaders need to influence the independent decisions of autonomous actors; in other words, they are required to combine different forms of power held by different actors. Thus, place leaders do not only mobilise resources but also different forms of power.

2.5 Interpretive power

Power through mobilization involves the activation of actors so that they can take a seat and have a voice at tables where strategic issues are framed and strategic decisions are made; thus, obtaining such power is among the core task in any place leader's set of practices. To do so, as Heifetz (1994) argues, leaders are assumed to draw the attention of many and then deflect it to the issues that need to be faced. Interestingly, Flyvbjerg (1989) argues that those in power are not interested in discovering what the situation in a place really is but instead to focus on defining it from their own perspective. In his thinking, power seeks to define what counts as rationality and knowledge, or what counts as reality (Flyvbjerg 1989, 227), and thus also what kinds of development initiatives should be taken with respect to a particular place. Flyvbjerg's view of power is utterly down-to-earth, if not negative, but it nevertheless still remains important and topical. We may turn the coin and argue that interpretative power may also be exercised positively for the construction of collective strategic awareness and thus work towards building shared belief systems that can facilitate interorganisational contemplations of future options and the required development strategies along with future visions. This process serves to strengthen the power base if groups of people accept a belief system and begin to take it for granted. Belief systems define the arena for many actors, affect institutional design and are often institutions in themselves (Foucault, 1980). Hence, they are the central targets of place leaders' attention. Relatedly, Sotarauta (2009; 2016) argues that the highest form of power can be seen in the ways in which (1) actual discussions and collective contemplations are constructed, and (2) problems and challenges are defined and framed. For example, Thrift (1996) argued some time ago that, in a world of massive information overload, those actors who are capable of creating the most credible interpretations of the moment and the near future gain the most influence.

Place leaders with strong interpretive power are called for to lead processes of construction for a collective understanding of transformative measures. This is important, as actors have the tendency to focus more on *who* argues for something rather than *what* was argued for. Furthermore, by mobilising collective sense-making processes, place leaders may be able to divert the collective contemplation more towards the meaning of the required action and imaginable futures than on individual personalities. Thus, the capacity of place leaders to influence thinking depends on their capabilities to penetrate dominant 'social filters', i.e., the unique combinations of innovative and conservative elements that support or conflict with

development efforts (Rodríguez-Pose, 1999). A social filter draws upon differences and similarities in actors' values, goals and perspectives on a given issue, and hence it is not just one social filter that needs to be penetrated to generate something new but several overlapping and potentially conflicting ones. Drawing on their interpretive power base, place leaders aim to move local debates beyond the 'dialogue of the deaf', in which the same arguments are echoed ritualistically with nobody willing to actually listen to the other viewpoints or have one's own perceptions interpreted in an unfavourable light. Place leaders are expected to seek out ways to prevent such blind alleys from arising and/or to eliminate them by creating better conditions for open debate. (Termeer & Koppenjan, 1997.) Consequently, belief construction and knowledge justification are central components of interpretive power so that individuals are able to see through the jungle of complementary and conflicting assumptions; identify and acknowledge the dominant beliefs in relation to other actors' beliefs; and to construct a shared belief system that allows for collective efforts.

3 From conflict to alignment through combinatorial power

3.1 Rationale for combinatorial power

As dispersed sets of human action, regions and dominant social networks are also arenas of endless (sometimes never-ending) debates and conflicts. To put it differently, they are landscapes of asymmetrical power (Castells, 2009). In this landscape, instead of supporting the centralization of power, place leaders aim to pool and coordinate dispersed sets of powers to reach temporary agreement for the development of a specific place. Key actors may reach a temporary agreement and construct more or less stable institutional arrangements to align their actions and intentions over significant periods of time. Thus, the effective combination of institutional, interpretive and network power seems to be a way to mould the preferences of the other actors involved. However, as Castells (2009, p. 13) reminds us, such alignment is often reached at the cost of the plurality of interests and values.

The relationships defining a region and its social networks may be reciprocal and influenced in two ways, but in power relationships, some actors always have a greater degree of influence than others. Those social actors having an advantageous position, and accumulated institutional power in social networks after various power struggles may scale their interests onto a more collective level. We should never assume that networks are power-free zones or somehow inherently egalitarian; instead, we should ask how power is exercised within networks, and how various forms of it could be combined for the collective good. The balance between excessively accumulated power and dispersed action is a fine one indeed. Importantly, there always remains the possibility to challenge the prevailing power relationships (Castells, 2009, p. 11), whatever forms they may have taken. Withdrawal of consent could take the form of organized collective action, but it might also occur through the decentralized actions of many individuals (Levi, 1990). Thus, it is important to remember that power is not only a cause of place leadership but also a

consequence of it. If and only if followers follow will leaders become truly powerful (Riggio et al., 2008). Nevertheless, as has already been said, it is difficult to gain followership without an adequate power base. Regulative and normative institutions may provide some actors with power, while some of the marginalised groups may work to induce institutional change by challenging the existing institutional arrangements via the mobilisation of networks and the introduction of enticing interpretations of the near future.

In sum, to mobilise actors and navigate through conflicts or prevent them from occurring, place leaders need to understand a variety of power sources, since place leadership is a nexus of ambiguous set of forms of power embedded in institutions and social networks; in other words, place leadership is a nexus of combinatorial power. The concept of combinatorial power is therefore useful in any effort to understand power in a particular situation where key elements of economic and social structures are local and global at the same time rather than purely 'level-based', i.e. either local, regional, national or international. Moreover, to link back to the basic premise of this paper, without combinations of power, place leadership might not be able to operate in between the intentions of placeless actors and unpredictable economic-social-political forces on the one hand, and a variety place-based needs and intentions on the other.

The concept of combinatorial power serves as a valuable tool in the study of power allowing us to avoid losing sight of its linkages to leadership and regional development; combinatorial power promises to shed light on where (and what kind of) power resides in the system and how it is leveraged. Allen (2003) clarifies this point by identifying a range of different forms of power that emerge depending on actors' influence strategies and the ways in which they mobilise institutional assets and other actors. Allen (2003) argues that the forms of power that emerge through these practices are many, including authority, coercion, domination, inducement, manipulation and seduction. As emphasised in this paper, knowledge justification, belief construction and rule shaping of network engagement also qualify as influence practices. Importantly, each of these practices may have distinct geographies deriving from how power is mobilized within social networks.

Interestingly, and contrary to what is sometimes argued, regional development initiatives may function well not in spite of the lack of a centralised institutional powerhouse, but exactly because place leaders have a limited formal power base over the mobilised set of actors. Collinge and Gibney (2010) made this observation in their study on Øresund cross-border regional development. In networks, the absence of dominant institutional power may paradoxically be the basis of influence, as it necessitates finding forms of collaboration and combinations of power that benefit both the members of a specific development initiative and those of a particular region in question (see also Sydow et al., 2011). Issues are not served to other actors as ready-made packages; instead, people have an opportunity to find themselves in different situations (development programmes, for example) after setting out from their own starting points. In spite of these kinds of observations, as already argued above, power is often

seen from a cumulative perspective, and there is a tendency to focus on visible forms of power rather than to use the concept as an analytical tool to investigate who actually influences the actions and decisions of actors in cases of regional development.

3.2 A schematised combinatorial power typology

For better understanding of the dynamics of combinatorial power, and also for the sake of simplicity, the many dimensions of power can be crystallised into three forms: institutional power, interpretive power and network power (Sotarauta, 2009; 2016). The three forms of power comprise the IIN typology. The IIN typology displays the different ways of exercising power rather than different forms of power as such. Thus, this is not a matter of constructing an 'epistemology of power' but rather an epistemology of leadership practice and power through mobilisation (cf. Manniche, 2002). Different power bases are characterized by different temporalities and geographies of social networks. Specific development processes may be dependent on a variety of combinations of the three forms of power, exercised by many actors but with differing emphases. However, regional development policy makers and practitioners often pursue their policies while implicitly assuming that the development needs and related strategies change but the power bases remain the same. This is not reality; power is a dynamic process.

Interpretive power refers to capabilities to create a new vocabulary for mobilisation and coordination; promote new ways of looking at different functions important for a specific place; and lead a process of sense-making around particular institutional changes. It is about influencing how other actors see themselves, the place and regional development more broadly. The importance of interpretive power is based on actors not reacting directly to reality but to collectively/individually constructed perceptions of reality. Importantly, the exercise of interpretive power, when seen from a positive angle, does not suggest that a consensus must be reached but instead promotes the construction of a common base for collective action while accepting and respecting the positions and perceptions of other actors.

The concept of the institution refers to all those relatively permanent modes of operation, rules and resources—both formal and informal—providing social networks with their form and framing the decisions and choices made within them. *Institutional power* refers to the capability to act, to make decisions, to create and change formal institutions and to direct resources. Exercising institutional power involves influencing other actors through changing the playground and the rules of the game; such a form of power has an indirect effect on present and future decisions and actions along with the broader architecture of networks. Institutional power therefore predicates opportunities and sets limits for development work and the operations of related social networks (Klijn & Teisman 1997). In contrast, *network power* refers to the capability to link to, bridge to and bond with other actors while also removing obstacles for communication, information flows and collaboration. Exhibiting network power is a matter of influencing who is and is not included in the development efforts.

The IIN typology adds analytical leverage for explaining differences between place leadership processes in different times and places. Any successful regional development effort calls for different forms of power; thus, leaders draw from more than one power base in their leadership processes. These efforts reflect the strategies that actors adopt when aiming to break away from the institutional path previously followed to create new ones. In combination, the three forms of power may inform us about the deep structure of social and economic activity that is manifested within place-specific cultures, which influences such activities from the background in an indirect, invisible, penetrating and pervasive way. The deep structure of power often defines which phenomena are touched upon and which are not, along with what may or may not be talked about.

Table 1. The IIN-typology in simplification

	Institutional power	Interpretive power	Network power
<i>Main influence</i>	Plays through normative and regulative institutions	Plays through cognition	Plays through connections between actors
<i>Main focus</i>	Rules of the game; the playground	Mindsets; thinking patterns	Selective inclusion and exclusion
<i>Main leverage</i>	Decisions; channelling money; statutes and norms	Theories; models; words	Relationships and interdependencies

4 Conclusion – combinatorial power and place leadership

Regional development revolves around collective and individual interpretations of the past and present as well as possible and imaginable futures along with the various views on initiatives and practices being derived from such ideas. The basic premise of the combinatorial power approach is that many development efforts and policies, when reaching beyond their visible forms, are negotiable but also ambiguous, diverse and complex. It may be impossible to construct trust, mobilize and coordinate networks without combinations of power. Moreover, oftentimes a struggle for power arises, and such struggles are usually ongoing in one form or another. More often than not, these struggles are approached one-dimensionally, and the power to act and decide as well as the formulation of formal strategies are emphasised. In such cases, the many shades of power are easily lost, and the struggles are consequently approached with partial understanding. What seems to be obvious is that cumulative power is an insufficient basis to understand and explain place-based leadership, but also, its interaction with placeless leadership is crucial to understand as well.

The concept of place leadership reminds us, among other things, that in regional development, influence is often inductive and not coercive by nature. In networks, influence is a subtle process, essential to which is the renewal of thinking patterns, relationships, attitudes

and beliefs. In this landscape, power is only a potential to influence others, a latent resource that needs to be freed and activated through leadership processes. For these reasons, power is to be studied as a complex emergent phenomenon that is always incomplete, provisional and unstable, and that coevolves with many other complex phenomena. The combinatorial power approach aims to offer a differentiated view on patterns of power that are deeply embedded within various forms of networks and leadership processes. Place-based leaders work to reach the institutionalized assets by combining the various forms of power of many actors, and hence they work to mobilise actors with complementary forms of power for the amplification of the collective capacity to influence others. Indeed, as the heterogeneity of actors involved in regional development processes is increasing as is the cognitive distance between them, place leaders may be the ones building bridges across the differing power bases and cognitive dissonances. Indeed, in connection to place leadership power is the capability to combine different forms of power, thus increasing the likelihood of effectively realizing place-based aims and ambitions; in other words, here lies the capability to use combinatorial power collectively for great purposes.

It is assumed here that the importance of studying power is not diminishing. It is more than likely that a need to study power dynamics, both positive and negative, cumulative and combinatorial, will acquire even more prominent of a place in place leadership studies. This paper aimed at initiating a new contribution to such studies by specifically focusing on the dynamics of power. It conceptually shows how different forms of power contribute to place leadership, and how our understanding of them may be combined to better serve place leadership studies, the ultimate aim being to see beyond individual organizations and their leaders in order to understand how various forms of power are connected to each other and to place leadership. Based on this conceptual analysis, it is therefore argued that they are distinct from each other, but in the course of events, they are also interdependent. The combinatorial power approach consequently has the potential to shed light both on relational power and dispersed/shared leadership.

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