



How Term Limits Constrain the Emergence of Agency and Resilience

Lucinda David (lucinda.david@circle.lu.se)

KEG & CIRCLE, Lund University, Sweden

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Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (CIRCLE)

Lund University

Sölvegatan 16, S- 223 62 Lund, SWEDEN

<http://www.circle.lu.se/publications>

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Key words: agency; regional resilience; institutions; institutional work

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How Term Limits Constrain the Emergence of Agency and Resilience

Lucinda David, PhD Candidate

Department of Social and Economic Geography

CIRCLE, Lund University

Abstract

This paper investigates how timing norms affect the emergence of agency in regional resilience. It forwards three arguments: timing norms establish the boundary for action and generates corollary timing norms that schedule adaptive strategies, term limits shape incentives for institutional work, and the interplay of term limits, institutional work, and agency, shape the path of regions for adaptation or adaptability. Findings show that incentives for policy action arises at the beginning of terms, term limits generate incentives for types of institutional work. Layering is not effective in maintaining resource allocation to agendas, affecting regional tendencies for adaptation and adaptability.

1. Introduction

As regional actors attempt responses to local economic crises, an agency perspective of adaptive resilience is coming to the fore in economic geography, in order to understand this micro-level process (Bristow and Healy, 2014, Huggins and Thompson, 2017). Agential lenses permit the recognition of the importance of a wide array of actors such as individuals, organizations and governance bodies in the transformation of regional paths and economies (Feldman and Lowe, 2018, Dawley, 2014, Sotarauta et al., 2017). This literature suggests that resilience from an economic crisis is neither natural nor inevitable (Pike et al., 2010). If it happens at all, adaptation is due to the concerted efforts of diverse actors, reacting, improvising, and adjusting to these changes whilst using available regional resources and attempting to push their agendas forward (Bristow and Healy, 2015). However, an agency perspective cannot be fully understood without a closer examination of the relationship between actors and institutions. This is because actors are ineluctably subject to an institutional environment that ubiquitously limit and enable action (North, 1990). Whilst the agency perspective does acknowledge the importance of the institutional environment, it does so in very generic terms. Claims over the importance of institutions in resilience studies in economic geography are made but not matched with explications on the specific mechanisms by which institutions constrain and influence the emergence of agency and adaptive strategies. The consequence of which, is that there is an

underdeveloped understanding of how and in which ways do institutions affect agency in the process of regional resilience. This paper, then, aims to contribute to filling this gap.

Agency is subject to the configurations of the institutional environment, but specifically, in this paper, timing norms. Timing norms establish the temporal boundaries for actions that actors take. Term limits define the length of time an actor has access to a given position and with that, the ability to mobilize resources and push agendas forward. An example of a term limit is the 4-year term limit on presidents in some countries. Actors are considered reflexive and as such, take these term limits, as well as the nature and specificities of the term limit, as bases for current and future possibilities for action. Agency is operationalized through policy action which suggests that timing norms in general, and **term limits, specifically, should be considered an important condition in engendering regional resilience policies.**

The focus on timing norms moves this paper beyond the general treatment of institutions in resilience studies in economic geography. Time is recognized as an important, if slightly esoteric, concept in human geography since the seminal contributions of Torsten Hägerstrand (1970) on the importance of the interplay of time and space in the activities of individuals (Hägerstrand, 1989). In recent studies, time is integrated within economic geography, particularly, on the work on path dependence, which refers to inter-temporal institutional legacies within regional development. Moreover, most economic geographers acknowledge time, implicitly, when they describe timelines to events they observe. Very few, however, explicitly study how timing norms are constitutive of the process of adaptive resilience. This paper, then, attempts to contribute to filling this gap by using promising conceptual tools from neo-institutionalist literatures on how actors are subject to timing norms (Granqvist and Gustafsson, 2016). Specifically, this paper interrogates the question **‘How do timing norms, such as term limits, affect agency and adaptive resilience outcomes?’** And in so doing, demonstrate that timing norms are important to an agency perspective of regional economic resilience

This paper argues the following: 1) *Term limits establish the boundary for action and generates corollary timing norms that schedule and pace adaptive strategies for resilience.* 2) *Term limits shape the incentives for institutional work done by actors,* 3) *the interplay of term limits, institutional work, and agency, shapes the path of regions for adaptation or adaptability.* Broadly speaking, the goal of this paper is to augment the understanding of the role institutions play, such as term limits, in shaping the incentives of regional actors in engendering agency in adaptive resilience. The overarching purpose of which, is to understand the uneven landscape of regional resilience as this may have something to do with how actors pace their agency given the term limits they are subject to and attempt to manage.

Using a comparative case study on the regional economic resilience strategies in coping with the closure of a large pharmaceutical company, in Lund and Södertälje, empirical evidence is gathered to demonstrate the arguments set forth above. **Section 2** briefly reviews the extant literature on resilience and agency. **Section 3** outlines the conceptual framework on timing norms, positions, incentives, and institutional work; integrating theories from organizational studies to the resilience and agency literature in economic geography. **Section 4** discusses the research methods used in this paper. **Section 5** discusses the findings and implications and **Section 6** concludes the paper with highlighting the findings and suggesting future research directions.

2. Literature on Resilience and Agency

Resilience is the quality of a region in its ability to adapt to economic changes and disturbances (Christopherson et al., 2010). The scholarly work on resilience is voluminous and has been studied from engineering, ecological, disaster studies, and complex adaptive systems from more evolutionary perspectives (Martin, 2012, Martin, 2018). Adaptive resilience involves several dimensions: resistance, recovery, reorientation, and renewal. Resistance refers to the susceptibility of regions to economic

disturbances. Recovery pertains to how quickly a region can recover. Re-orientation involves structural processes leading to regional outcomes. Renewal refers to abilities to return to previous growth paths (Martin, 2012). Adaptive resilience, as such, covers a wide scope of economic processes. Despite its popularity, the resilience literature is not without criticism. Resilience is criticized as predominantly treated as a macro-phenomenon, where crises and recovery are naturalized (MacKinnon and Derickson, 2013, Pike et al., 2010). This reflects a broader critique that the role of actors and micro-processes have been largely obscured from economic geography in general (Bristow and Healy, 2015). This has precipitated a burgeoning literature on agency seeking to address this conceptual deficit by examining policy responses to crises enacted by actors, which can account for micro-processes. The transformative role of actors are taken into account, as well as the coalitions they form, in attempts to foster regional resilience (Holmen and Fosse, 2017, David, 2018). This paper seeks to contribute to furthering this agency perspective by examining explicit mechanisms by which institutions affect agency and vice versa.

3. Conceptual Framework

Agency is the ability of actors to engage in purposeful actions intended to forward their interests in managing uncertainty (Bristow and Healy, 2014). Actions are embedded within institutional structures; that is to say, actions and agency are constrained and enabled by institutions. Institutional structures shape the outcomes of behavior of actors, as well as create incentives and disincentives for action. Institutions include systems of rules that confer agenda setting powers to actors such as positions, obligations, and expectations of responsibilities (Portes, 1998, Bourdieu, 1989). Positions, in particular, are enabling institutions for actors. Positions entrust mandate to actors which, in turn, establish fields of practice, expectations, and responsibilities (Battilana, 2006). Administrative rules regarding positions can animate agendas of actors by conferring agenda setting powers over constituents (Sheingate, 2009). Positions allow actors to embed these agendas into the adaptive strategies operationalized through policy action. This explains why, although a region is a confluence of diverse

agendas, adaptive strategies are often imbued with the agenda of politically powerful groups. **Most positions, however, are temporal in nature.** Rules and norms tend to exist that limit the amount of time certain designations of positions can be occupied.

These rules on time are typically referred to as **timing norms** and demarcate the scope of agenda setting powers of actors in position and the length of time they can mobilize resources. Timing norms within organizations refer to elements of its temporal structures, such as specific schedules and deadlines, to which actors within an organization, adhere (Granqvist and Gustafsson, 2016). As such, timing norms treat the behavior of actors and organizations as meaningful and paced sequences of events rather than isolated occurrences (Ancona et al., 2001). These structures subject potential action of actors with the anticipation of prospects and impediments because time becomes a scarce resource to manage (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998). Timing norms help organize and govern the activities of actors because they impose cadence of possible actions, and periodicity and cycles in the way actions can be carried out, manifest in schedules and timeframes. Actors, within and across organizations, opt into general and specific timing norms, according to the positions and roles they have (Dille and Söderlund, 2011). Opting in to timing norms reproduces and produces other timing norms such as schedules and deadlines that are aligned to more encompassing timing norms like term limits.

Term limits, in particular, refer to rules on when an actor can assume a position, how long an actor stays in that position to fulfill a role and to carry out a mandate, and when they have to stop assuming that position. Term limits establish the periodicity of democratic governance in the political sphere (Schedler and Santiso, 1998). It also facilitates the transfer of agenda setting powers within and between groups of actors across time (Mahoney and Thelen, 2009). They guide the actions of actors in specific positions and the extent to which they can forward their agenda. Decisions to embark on long-term and resource-intensive policy actions require sufficient spans of time. This suggests actors

are more likely to initiate policy action if the opportunity arises early in the term when resources are not yet committed and locked to other agendas. If the scope, the timing norm provides, is not wide enough, this can partially explain why some actors in regions do not take any action even though it might be necessary and within their means. The timing might be off or does not establish a wide enough scope and boundary for action. This is how term limits constrain the emergence of agency.

Therefore, term limits establish the boundary for action and generates corollary timing norms that schedule and pace adaptive strategies for resilience.

Some term limits can be renewed and others, cannot. Different stipulations on the renewal of term limits create different incentive structures. When a term is renewable to its full length through an election, an actor has an incentive to win in the next election to retain mandate (Schedler and Santiso, 1998). The prospect of running in subsequent elections incentivizes behavior in the current term. This is because voters can punish the candidate in the next election by not voting for them if performance is perceived to have fallen short of expectations (Persson et al., 2007). This suggests that agency, through policy action, is likely if it helps actors get re-elected to the position. Policy action, however, is helpful for re-election if its success can be credited to the actor. Thus, actors with renewable terms have an incentive to attribute resilience initiatives to themselves and their performative actions, in order to be renew their term.

Conversely, when actors have a non-renewable term limit, this creates a different incentive structure. Policy initiatives and institutional changes need continuous resource allocation in order to actualize in the long term (Mahoney and Thelen, 2009). But once a term limit is reached, the ability of an actor to allocate these resources, expire. Actors, then, have incentives to overcome the constraints of their fixed term limits and compel organizations to continue resource allocation even after terms have expired. This incentivizes actors to embed their agendas within the organizational framework and

attach agendas to the mandate of the position. Thus, actors with non-renewable terms have an incentive to attribute resilience policy initiatives to the position and organization rather than to the actor.

The incentives of actors in how policy initiatives are attributed, impacts the way **institutional work** is carried out. Institutional work refers to attempts of actors to adjust, manage, and mediate institutions they are subject to (Lawrence et al., 2011). Layering is one type of institutional work that actors do in order to engender institutional change. It involves tweaking rules instead of imposing completely different sets of rules, and makes revisions to and reinterpretations of, existing institutions. This mode of institutional work can typically be observed for actors of whom are unable to make wholesale institutional changes so amending rules are sought (Mahoney and Thelen, 2009). This strategy is a function of limitations set forth by both position and timing norms. Institutional work, then, is related to the incentive structures that actors have in attributing policy actions either to the organization or to themselves. ***Thus, this paper argues that term limits shape the incentives for institutional work done by actors.***

Actors can also engage in institutional work that target timing norms within organizations in order to manage the availability of time within a term limit, referred to as **temporal institutional work**. The purpose of temporal institutional work is to engender a perception regarding the eventuality of a future event (Granqvist and Gustafsson, 2016). Examples of temporal institutional work are 'window of opportunity' and 'sense of urgency'. Window of opportunity refers to a temporal construct that encourages action whilst a scarce resource is still available (Suarez et al., 2015). Sense of urgency refer to a temporal construct that raises a perception of an imminent period of uncertainty and transition (Granqvist and Gustafsson, 2016).

Adaptation points to how agents respond to an economic disturbance by conforming to emergent economic conditions. Prior strategies that proved to be successful in the region are typically deployed but with some small adjustments (Pike et al., 2010). Adaptability entails creating novel path directions in the region related or wholly divergent from paths pursued previously. It refers to capacities to pursue progressive policies in order to bring about diverse paths via geographically loose links connecting different actors. These links make regions and their systems more agile to formulating solutions to unforeseen circumstances (Grabher, 1993). Adaptability necessitates implementing a different strategy from previous times (Martin and Martin, 2017). Facets of both adaptation and adaptability can manifest in the resilience process (Hassink, 2015). What is apparent from the definition of both types of adaptive resilience is that it involves effort in initiating policies that require some level of institutional change in order to launch new path dynamics for a certain region. This suggests that adaptive resilience requires the interplay of agency and institutions and the ways in which actors attempt institutional work to engender change. The nature of term limits influences actors to subscribe to particular types of adaptive strategies. Previously successful policies might be preferred by actors with a time limited horizon for enacting policy action whereas an actor with the possibility of renewing the term, might seek to expand coalitions and new paths for industrial change. ***Thus, the interplay of timing norms, institutional work, and agency influences the path of regions for adaptation or adaptability.*** This conceptual framework seeks to put in place key concepts that will be used to address the research question ‘**How do timing norms such as term limits affect agency and adaptive resilience outcomes?**’ in order to fill in the gaps in the literature regarding why some regions struggle in order for agency to emerge when crises hits.

4. Methods

This paper uses a case study method in order to study the actions of actors in times of regional economic crises. The case method is useful in examining cases where both the phenomenon and context are tightly linked (Yin and Davis, 2007) and designed comparatively in focus and structure

around meaningfully comparable reference points (George, 2019). In this paper, the case is about agentic behavior in response to the announced closure by AstraZeneca, a large pharmaceutical company, and their R&D facility in Lund in 2010, and in Södertälje, in 2012 (Severinsson et al., 2012). The aftermath in both cities involved different sets of actors from different types of organizations, attempting to shape their adaptive strategies through policy action. Two different coalitions intervened in the closures and initiated policies to convert former AstraZeneca facilities into science parks. The respective closures in Lund and Södertälje provide an opportunity to observe and compare different types of actors subject to different timing norms, whilst taking advantage of the parallelism between the two cases to minimize the number of explanatory factors (Teune and Przeworski, 1970).

Background of Cases

In 2010, Lund was poised to lose 1200 jobs with AstraZeneca's intention to close their R&D facility (Severinsson et al., 2012). In the Lund case, it was the vice chancellor and the chairman of the board from the region's Lund University, who took the lead in responding to the issue. They initiated and orchestrated the eventual purchase of the facility through a coalition of actors, involving partners such as the foundation of Mats Paulsson, philanthropist and founder of a large construction firm called PEAB, as well as Region Skåne, the regional government. The facility was turned into the science park, Medicon Village, managed by an eponymous company, that recruit companies mainly from the life science industry, to take up residence in the park. An estimated 1600 people are employed in the 163 companies situated there as of 2019 (Medicon Village AB, 2019).

In 2012, AstraZeneca announced it would also be closing its R&D facility in Södertälje. Unlike in Lund, it was the municipality who took the lead in responding to the issue. Södertälje partnered up with Scania, a large manufacturing firm founded in the region over a century ago, to enable and facilitate the sale and development of the former AstraZeneca facility to a consortium called Acturum, a joint venture between the acquisition arms of the philanthropic organization of the Wallenberg Foundation

and PEAB. An incubator was established, called Biovation Park and with the former toxicology component of the AstraZeneca facility to be run by SWETOX, an academically oriented center funded by Karolinska Institute. This cooperation has been scaled up to create the Södertälje Science Park (SSP). It involves the same partners but with further support from the Ministry of Education from the national government and partnerships with AstraZeneca.

Data Collection and Coding. To investigate how actors managed timing norms and engaged in institutional work in terms of the closures of the facilities, this paper draws on varied empirical materials. Qualitative data was collected from several sources. Firstly, from desk research on company annual reports from Astra Zeneca, reports from different bodies such as universities, municipality, unions, website material, news articles, and pamphlets. Secondly, 18 interviews were conducted amongst key actors, including vice chancellors, top management from industry, and politicians and other public governance representatives from both sites. Informants were identified from the desk research as key stakeholders and central actors from news articles and official reports. Selection of actors was based on their involvement in the closure of Astra Zeneca but also on involvement in enacting policies in response to the closure, in both Lund and Södertälje. Majority of the interviews took place between 2016 and some, for confirmation purposes, in 2018.

An analysis of the empirical material showed that time was a recurrent theme in both cases, so some further interviews were necessary to investigate the role of timing norms in the emergence of agency. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes to 2 hours. A semi-structured approach was selected. Questions were organized thematically around the roles and positions of the actor and their respective organizations, and their involvement and policy responses to the closure. Questions were also made regarding subsequent actions done during and after term limits expired or extended. This interview

method allowed informants to express their views and narrate their experiences but also allowed the interrogation of core themes set forth in the interview guidelines.

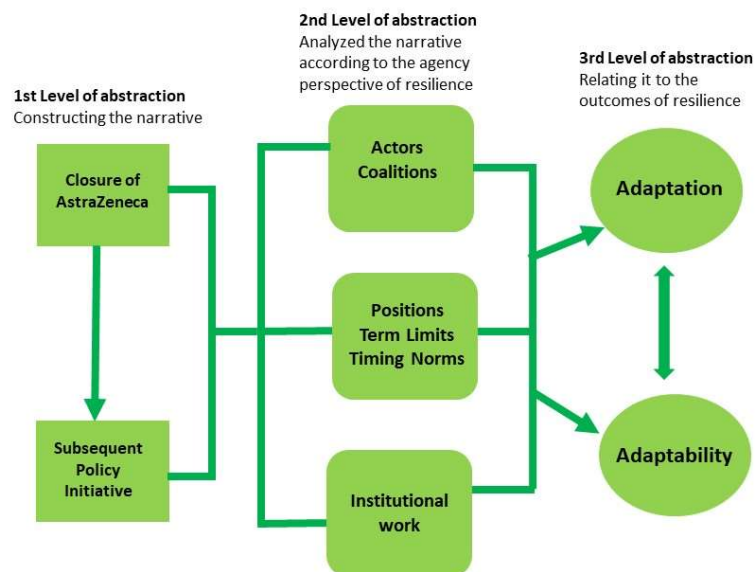


FIGURE 1. Process of data analysis

Using the snowballing technique, wherein primary actors were identified and interviewed and afterwards, asked to recommend other actors who should be interviewed. This allowed the identification of more stakeholders and also, access to these interviewees; some of whom were previously identified but did not immediately respond to requests to be interviewed. Snowballing made possible these further interviews with the endorsement of the primary interviewees in some instances. Triangulated with the interviews were archival data collected, including reports, documents and online newspaper articles, on both closures of AstraZeneca in Lund and Södertälje.

Table 2. List of Interviewees		
Actors	Lund	Södertälje
University	4	3
Industry	4	3

Government	1	3
Total	9	9

Interviews that were successfully recorded have been transcribed. Transcripts have been analyzed and coded in NVIVO to track references, mentions, allusions, to time, term limits and timing norms in a systematic way. Broad themes, used in the coding, draw from the conceptual framework in this article, namely: agency, timing norms, positions, term limits, incentives, institutional work, adaptation, and adaptability. When these terms are alluded to and referenced in the text, even if not in name but in meaning, text were coded into the specific themes.

Data Summary Table					
	Archival data				
	Interviews	Pamphlets	Annual Reports	Policy documents	News and media coverage
No. of items	18	3	14	4	19
Pages	95	76	2308	97	36
Time	2016-2018	2016-2018	2008-2017	2012-2015	2010-2018
Description of the data	Key stakeholders; vice chancellors, mayors, CEOs, closure managers, political administrators, industry representatives, communication directors, and labour union representatives. Overview of events, detailed descriptions of sentiments of groups of actors, insights into factors that influenced outcomes. Information was used in all three papers and the kappa.	Pamphlets contained information on vision and mission of organizations, descriptions on the work they do and their role in society.	Annual reports by AstraZeneca are published yearly by the company and includes both financial information but also updates on the activities of the company.	Information regarding recommendations and plans for organizations involved in the closures and the policy initiatives, in varying degrees.	This included press releases, reactions from members of the public, pundits weighing in on the issue, updates on developments regarding the closure, and opinion pieces by organizational surrogates.
Type of information provided		Background information on the actors and their operations. Included in the background information in the kappa.	Reported on the financial information of AstraZeneca, justification for the closure of R&D, prospects for the future, and information regarding their operations; reporting on the aftermath of the closure.	Information regarding the intentions of organizations. Provided information on types of institutional work attempted.	Opinion pieces argued for the need for policy intervention. It also provided information on the perceptions of actors.
Use and Limitations of the data	post-hoc rationalization but was included in all the stages of abstraction.	One sided view of actor; used in the initial process of analysis in constructing the background of the case.	One sided view of actor; used in the initial process of analysis in constructing the background of the case.	One sided view of actors; used in looking at the outcomes of the closure, policy initiatives that were then connected to agency in the 2nd and 3rd level of abstraction.	Seemingly factual information but also based on press releases made by key actors pushing their message in the press. Used in constructing the general background on the case but also abstracting types of institutional work.

5. Discussion of Findings

Term limits establish the boundary for action and generates corollary timing norms that schedule and pace the adaptive strategies for resilience.

The announcement of the closure of the AstraZeneca R&D facility was made in 2010 as well as the plan for a two-year transition from announcement to actual closure in 2012. One of the leading advocates for purchasing the facility to promote innovation was Lund University, led by a vice chancellor that was appointed for the period 2009-2014. This span of time allowed the vice chancellor to consolidate a

coalition of partners involved in planning, lobbying, and sourcing for funding to enable the purchase of the facility.

“So when I become here president of Lund University, I initiated..an organization with region skåne, the municipalities, the universities and the good people from the business sector to form this research and innovation council for Skåne. And that was just initiated with us taking some formal steps just as we heard that AZ was going to close down, the site here.” (Vice Chancellor of Lund University 2009-2014)

The time permitted lobbying the owner of a large construction company to purchase the facility through a philanthropic organization, the Mats Paulsson Foundation, and create a science park in its stead. This required, however, helping secure bank loans needed for the purchase which involved guaranteeing rental contracts worth 30 million Swedish kronor from coalition partners such as Lund University and Region Skåne. Connections with top management of the European Spallation Source (ESS), a large synchrotron facility being built in Lund, permitted successfully lobbying ESS to rent at Medicon Village in order to help meet the financing requirements from the bank. Big resource allocations within the university required internal negotiations within organizations, for example, moving the cancer research group to the facility which inevitably caused distributional conflicts with some research groups; some deans opposed this resource allocation.

“...that was really tough because when I had to make that decision, the majority of the deans, there are 8 deans, 5 against, 2-3 positive, but I took the decision and I went to the board of the university and they supported me.” (Vice Chancellor of Lund University, 2009-2014)

The facility was purchased by and relinquished to the Mats Paulsson foundation and Medicon Village, operational by 2013. This vice chancellor had most of the length of his term as the time horizon for engaging in policy action. His term limit established the boundary for action and coincided with the planned closure and transition of the R&D facility of Astra Zeneca, enabling policy initiatives. Despite the science park being operational, to date, the university has not recouped its investments, outlasting the six year term of vice chancellors with certainty. In the meantime, many of the actors who joined the coalition to enable the purchase by allocating resources from their respective organizations, have

either had their terms expired or changed positions. Knowing that a non-renewable term means that any promised long term benefit to investing in Medicon Village will not be seen during his term, the vice chancellor (2009-2014) worked to show short-term benefits such as procuring a professorial endowment through connections with Medicon Village. This suggests that actors respond to do this inter-temporal problem with reflexivity whilst mediating this time horizon over the life of the resilience project:

“So I think in a long time, of course it takes some time when you buy a facility, housing facility, it takes some time before you get the profit but...in order to get some quick results, we were able to get some direct funding to the university” (Vice chancellor of Lund University 2009-2014)

Term limits shape the incentives for types of institutional work.

Actors in position who are subject to non-renewable term limits, such as vice chancellors of universities, have incentives to engage in institutional work to encourage successors to continue to mobilize resources to their initiatives. Universities are notoriously rigid organizations as large bureaucracies with complex formal procedural rules and norms which are difficult to change. Layering attempts to tweak the institutional environment and becomes the instrument of choice in trying to embed the agenda of the vice chancellor (2009-2014) within the organization. He did so by creating a new position within the university called the ‘Dean of Innovation’ to attempt to institutionalize and embed the agenda for various innovation activities and projects, including support Medicon Village. Another attempt at layering was to re-write the officially declared societal role of the university to include “education, research and **innovation**” [*emphasis made by this author*]. Innovation is not typically part of the mission of the university and is something that signaled the priority of the administration of this vice chancellor. This demonstrates the attempt to attribute the innovation projects to the organization instead of the actor, in order to maintain resource allocation.

Moreover, concerns emerged that opposition to the creation Medicon Village would resurface particularly because the incoming administration of the succeeding vice chancellor included appointments of actors previously opposed to the large resource allocation to Medicon Village.

“But the present dean [then], he was totally against it. He is now president of the university. And I have to live with it.” (Vice Chancellor 2009-2014)

As a result, layering to renew commitments to Medicon Village, were attempted after the term of the vice chancellor had expired. A memorandum of agreement was drafted by a deputy vice chancellor who was part of the original coalition that advocated for the creation of Medicon Village. The aim of this memorandum of agreement was to renew the commitment of the university to support and work with the science park. This institutional work is aimed to retrospectively embed the initiative further into the organizational agenda. However, no clear results came from this instance of layering. Furthermore, in order for resources to be mobilized and unlocked from coalition partners, temporal institutional work had to be done in order for other coalition partners to opt into the timing norm of the policy initiative by the university. Temporal structures were targeted by the use of the idea of ‘window of opportunity’, with the vice chancellor convincing coalition partners by pointing to the rarity of the AstraZeneca facility and how it can be used to showcase specific innovation strategies. This shows that the selection of temporal institutional work is based, not only on the incentives of actors, but also on regional assets and context.

These works have been subsequently rolled back by the succeeding vice chancellor (2015-2021), having since re-written the societal role of the university to “education, research, and **cooperation**” [*emphasis made by this author*]. The position of Dean of Innovation also has a different role under the succeeding vice chancellor, relative to how it originally functioned in terms of stimulating innovation policies. Moreover, the vice chancellor no longer sits in the board of directors of Medicon Village despite convention to do so and has instead assigned it to other university representatives. These

signal a departure from the priorities of his predecessor. Layering then, as a type of institutional work, is limited in binding organizations to the agendas of outgoing actors. Actors, though, are circumspect about the permanence of the institutional work they do:

“But you can’t make everything sustainable. You have to do experiments. You have to have freedom for the next leader, for the next board, the freedom to do good things and to do bad things.” (Vice chancellor of Lund University, 2009-2014)

The interplay of timing norms, institutional work and agency shapes the path of regions for adaptation or adaptability.

The vision for Medicon Village was to be a world leading site for cancer research and biotech firms. But the six year term limit of the vice chancellor has discontinued the previous level of access to resources and support it once had. And since the temporal institutional work of ‘window of opportunity’ is effective in allocation of resources rather than continuously mobilizing it, coupled with the rollback of efforts to embed innovation priorities within Lund University for Medicon Village, the path to the original vision is uncertain. Less access to resources means that Medicon Village has to find stable sources of financing. Since AstraZeneca bequeath all the equipment it had when it made the sale to the Mats Paulsson foundation, the pull to optimize the resources they have means recruiting biotech firms that research in fields that use these types of equipment. Thus, this pull to adaptation rather than adaptability, allows Medicon Village to partially circumvent the loss of access to top management of the university.

“We have a new vice chancellor coming in. And that’s when you start doing things from scratch again. That’s sort of the basic principle...to utilise all the possibilities, the continuity, the knowledge from the past was very vital to the process.” **(Assistant to the Deputy Vice Chancellor)**

In the case of Södertälje, this paper finds the following:

Term limits establish the boundary for action and generates corollary timing norms that schedule and pace adaptive strategies for resilience.

When Astra Zeneca closed their R&D facility in Södertälje, the mayor of the municipality had just been elected and only a few months in to her term, similar to the condition faced by the vice chancellor in Lund.

“She had been working here one month...it popped right out of the blue...it was one of the worst days of my professional life. Boel...sent me an email the day before. ‘You have to clear my schedule in the morning. I have a meeting with Astra Zeneca. I can’t tell you what it is but I have to take this’.” (Assistant to the mayor of Södertälje)

So the boundary for action was large enough for the mayor to lead the municipality to take an active role in initiating the adaptive response to the closure. Election cycles are every four years so this is the term limit for politicians in positions of governance in Sweden, but unlike vice chancellors of universities, there is a possibility to renew the term through re-election. Once the mayor of Södertälje had gotten a coalition in place to support the creation of the Biovation Park, the lobbying of the Ministry of education was next on the agenda to further increase support from the national government. One of the initial targets set by the municipal government was the construction of a new building for KTH to accommodate the larger amount of students that the coalition in Södertälje successfully lobbied for with the Ministry of Education. The completion of this building was set to 2018, the end of the term and mandate of the ruling party of the municipality and a few months before the next election. Moreover, the scaled-up version of Biovation Park, SSP, was also set to launch in January of 2018. This demonstrates that term limits tend to generate corollary timing norms and schedule of adaptive strategy for resilience aligned to the term limits of those in positions of governance.

Political actors in Södertälje have not faced a political transfer of power yet like that in Lund. Elections are every four years but turnover only happens if the party does not gain majority or the leader of the party at the municipal government is replaced and so far, this mayor and her party have succeeded in getting re-elected in two electoral cycles. The only turnover SSP has experienced, thus far, is in the toxicology facility, where the vice chancellor of Karolinska Institute was replaced in 2016. The person

who replaced her, previously supported the involvement of Karolinska for funding the staff at the facility, so commitments of support have not abated and carried over to the succeeding Karolinska administration. This demonstrates continuity is possible under university-initiated adaptive strategies but is conditional on agenda alignment with possible successors.

Term limits shape the incentives for institutional work done by actors.

In order to mobilize resources, actors subject timing norms to temporal institutional work. In this case, the mayor of Södertälje attempted to create a sense of urgency in order to convince coalition partners and the national government to opt into the adaptive strategy and policy initiative being proposed. They used two bases for regional affinity. The first is the prospect of losing AstraZeneca which is considered a heritage company since it was founded in the region over a century ago, and the second, is Södertälje's past experiences with criminality and unemployment.

"The mental setback for Södertälje was immense...this is our municipality. We have a proud history of being both the home of Scania and AstraZeneca working class city but also one of the prides that we had highly skilled scientists inventing pharmaceuticals right here in Södertälje...And now that would cease to exist and that would be a setback...we had had problems with criminality...and that would be in the mindset of ordinary citizens of Södertälje...it would be one setback after another." (Assistant to the Mayor, Södertälje)

This implies that timing norms created from temporal institutional work can be regionally bound and does not extend beyond geographical boundaries because it is reliant on context to be meaningful. This temporal institutional work succeeded in creating a bipartisan support for large municipal resource allocations to SSP. There is less incentive for institutional work in embedding and institutionalizing the initiative within the organizational framework, relative to the Lund case, because attributing the policy and its successes to actors is a political advantage and can augment the perception of performance of politicians to voters.

The interplay of timing norms, institutional work, and agency, shapes the path of regions for adaptation or adaptability.

The need to mediate term limits for re-election favor continuous development by municipality actors.

As the term of the mayor gets renewed, there is a need to attract new partners and actors to participate in the operations of SSP. New partners means potentiality for new combinations of skills and capabilities in the region. This is conducive to fostering adaptability because it incentivizes actors to foster new combinations of partners working together, which can create paths not previously present in the region. Effort to draw in more partners and renegotiating roles and responsibilities have been made such as re-engaging the former owner of the facility, Astra Zeneca as well as including the hospital and the food industry firms. It also hosted a science week to herald the doubling of KTH students from 600, prior to the closure, to 1200 with the increased capacity of the new building finished in 2018, heralding an attempt to make SSP a stronger educational environment for engineers.

“That was a big step forward. Because that made Södertälje a stronger focal point for higher education. So we’re going to expand now...this how we would like to develop this place as a site for higher education especially for engineers.” (Assistant to the mayor of Södertälje)

A finding that was not predicted by the conceptual framework is the positional transfers of actors between organizations as term limits are reached. Actors previously involved in the coalitions for policy initiatives in both Lund and Södertälje have moved to other organizations loosely or directly linked to the respective science parks. The former vice chancellor consults and mediates in negotiations with parties concerned with Medicon Village. The former head of Region Skåne who was part of the policy initiative in Lund, has transferred and currently works at ESS. Whilst, in Södertälje, the CEO of Scania, someone who was both active in pushing for an early show of support for helping with the closure of AstraZeneca and helped lobby the Ministry of Education to increase the KTH student population in Södertälje, is now appointed as the Chief of SSP. This suggests that participating in coalitions enable actors to position themselves adjacently to previous policy initiatives. These transfers of position enable modicums of access to agenda setting processes and resource distribution capacities but to differing extents and capacities after their terms have expired. This demonstrates how actors mediate

the boundaries for action that term limits establish in order to continue to forward agency and agendas.

6. Conclusion

Managing timing norms such as term limits can have positive consequences on continued support for adaptive strategies for resilience. It is clear though that actors and their adaptive strategies, subject to term limits with no possibility of renewal, are more vulnerable to shifts in resource mobilization and access to agenda setting, than actors who can renew their terms. This shapes resilience strategies, which tend toward adaptation rather than adaptability. Thus, attempts at layering to embed agendas within the organization and bind successors to their agenda is done in order to encourage continued resource allocation to policy initiatives. This raises the question whether universities are the right actors for launching adaptive strategies because universities are subject to such strict time constraints whereas political parties under a four-year term seem to be in a better position to take on this role. Adaptive strategies need long-term horizons to reach full fruition. Continuous resource mobilization is critical to this enterprise and term limits constrain resource mobilization. However, the SWETOX case does demonstrate that continuity is possible, within a university bureaucracy, but this depends largely on how consensus was arrived at for the policy initiative.

This paper has made several contributions to the study of agency and timing norms. Studying timing norms and the impact of temporality in the way actors pursue agency, particularly during times of crises, partially explain why some regions are more resilient than others. Timing norms provide boundaries that can enable or constrain actors. So whilst there may be resources for regional resilience, timing for action needs to be conducive to mobilizing these resources. Furthermore, timing norms have to be further examined in the way they shape the types of institutional work to be carried out, in order to bring resilience policy initiatives to full fruition. Timing norms can also explain

positional transfers and incentives of actors to access resources once a term limit is reached. This suggests that adaptive strategies for resilience does not only involve how regions should change but also how timing norms should be managed in order to transform regions.

This paper shows that layering, as institutional work, is not effective in maintaining institutional change if an actor is succeeded by actors opposed to previous policy initiatives, and especially if institutional work is done retrospectively; the creation of the memorandum of agreement is an example. Layering is limited in binding university leaders to a resilience project and in generating the same level of support. Moreover, scheduling of milestones of initiatives are aligned with electoral cycles for actors with renewable terms through the political process. When the term is renewable through elections, efforts to attribute the policy to the actor rather than to the institution, is likely. This is to increase probability for re-election if voters can attribute policy initiatives to the actor. This paper also finds that institutional work is iterative throughout the process of agency and adaptive resilience. Actors attempt to create windows of opportunity or a sense of urgency, in order to, initially, enable formation of coalitions of actors and trigger organizations to unlock and allocate resources for opting into policy initiatives for adaptive strategies. Once policies are in place, institutional work is made whilst the actor is in position, in order to embed agendas within the organizational framework, given the incentive to do so, is in place. When terms expire and resource allocation relatively declines, institutional work is still pursued to attempt to renew commitments to these agendas.

Future research directions in developing the agency perspective of resilience include further testing the dialectical relationship between agency and institutions. There are a multitude of institutions that impact on outcomes of behavior and timing norms are but one type. This means there is a rich array of institutions to potentially query. Whilst the comparative case study here is useful in contributing empirical material to the literature, novel methods should be explored to improve ways in which

institutions are tested in relation to agency. Furthermore, there are diverse manifestations of agency in cultural and socio-political spaces that can shape regional resilience outcomes such as experimentation in cities (Rekers, 2012) and community-organized activism (Cretney, 2014). These can be further studied through agentic lenses and thus, casts a wider net of instantiations of agency in economic geography. Discussing agency, however, needs to make distinctions between those with power and those without. The limitation in the empirical material in this paper is the focus on those in position and with power. Actors who are marginalized from decision making processes are, inevitably, some of the most vulnerable to the vicissitudes of economic decline. Thus, further research is needed on how the link between agency and institutions manifest when resource inequalities are taken into serious account. Confronting the question of ‘resilience for whom?’ (Cote and Nightingale, 2012) should be integral to the research agenda of further developing the agency perspective of resilience.

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