

# Action Research strategies at the “third place”

Hans Chr. Garmann Johnsen, Jon P. Knudsen,  
Roger Normann

This article discusses action research strategies in regional development. It argues that regional settings are complex, and conceptualises this as the “third place”. This complexity implies a democratic challenge. Furthermore, using regional leadership as a case, it argues that in order to approach this as action researchers, one needs to discuss the assumptions the research is based on. The article discusses two action research approaches: the socio-technical approach and the democratic dialogue approach, and argues that in the complex setting of the “third place”, and at a pragmatic level, one might use insights from the two approaches. The argument for this is that regional development in practical terms both implies functional and structural challenges, but is also a matter of meaning construction. We discuss this as *sequential governance*.

**Key words:** action research, third place, democracy, regional leadership, socio-technical, democratic dialogue, sequential governance