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《Article》

Regional Governance and Development Networks in the Nordic Countries[1]

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Situated on the northernmost fringe of Europe, the five Nordic countries form a distinct group of countries and regions. In the concept Nordic countries we usually include Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland and Iceland. These countries are welfare states with a comparatively high quality of life for their inhabitants, and they are marked by harmonical relations between the private sector and the administrative and political apparatus. Together, the five Nordic countries have only about 25 million inhabitants. In spite of this, they form one of the most dynamic economic concentrations in Europe, and have managed to obtain relatively high growth rates during the 1990's.

Even the Nordic countries, particularly Finland and Sweden, were hit hard by the economic recession in the beginning of the 1990's. However, they have managed to recover qiuckly after the lowest level of recession was reached in 1993. In the period 1993 - 2001, all the Nordic countries had a real GDP growth well over the average for the countries of the European Union (Hanell et. al. 2002).

This bright image, however, should not lead us to conclude that the Nordic countries have no serious challenges to face in the years to come. One big challenge regards the maintenance of the welfare state. How can the welfare state be financed and organised without dangering the economic competitiveness of the Nordic countries in a globalised world? Another challenge is the increasing spatial polarisation which take place within the countries. In all the Nordic countries, the capital areas are increasing their relative share of the population, and even more regarding their share of the economic activity. The northern regions and also the rural areas in south are in danger of lagging behind and becoming zones with depopulation or a persistently high rate of unemployment.

In this lecture, I want to discuss some aspects of regional development and regional policy making in the Nordic countries. I will pay most attention to Norway, my home country, which of course is the country I know best. Iceland, with only 250 000 inhabitants, is a particular case, and I will therefore concentrate upon the four other countries. When making comparisons between the Nordic countries, however, it is important to bear in mind

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their different positions in relation to the European Union. Denmark became a member already in the 1970's, Sweden and Finland in the mid 1990's. Norway and Iceland are not EU members, but participate in the single market through their membership in the European Economic Cooperation Area, and have to obey most of EU legislation in this area. Norway and Iceland cannot participate in EU policy making, but they are entitled to cooperate within several types of policy programmes. In the regional policy area, Norway and Iceland may participate in programmes aiming at enhancing cooperation between regions across country borders, the INTERREG programme. However, regions in Norway and Iceland cannot receive grants from EU's structural funds.

I will begin with outlining a few aspects of regional development in the Nordic countries, followed by a brief sketch of the organisation of regional and local government. Then, I will discuss how we can define the concept of regional policy making, distinguishing between four different aspects of this concept. I will present an ideal typical model of what I consider to be the recent regime shift in the area of regional policy making, and illustrate this shift with reference to each of the four aspects of regional policy making. Finally, I will try to make some conclusions about which lessons that may be drawn from the Nordic cases.

Regional development in the Nordic countries[2]

Among the Nordic countries, Denmark is the only one which has a relatively high population density in all parts of the country. Regarding the other countries, much of the total area is uninhabited mountain terrain. In Norway, as much as 81% of the area is not inhabited. The share of uninhabited area is 71% for Sweden and 66% for Finland (Hanell et. al. 2002). The bulk of the population in those three countries is concentrated in the southern parts and along the coasts, and also in some scattered pockets of inland poulation. In Norway, these clusters can be found along the valleys connecting the eastern and western parts of the country. The most sparsely populated areas are to be found in north as well as along the borders of each of the countries.

If we look at the population change during the last half of the 1990's, we find that the most urbanised areas have increased their population. Particularly in Sweden and Finland, the population in the less urbanised area was decreasing. Denmark and Norway had a more balanced development, with the exemption of the northernmost county of Norway, Finnmark.

The population loss is mainly caused by a high migration flow from rural to urban areas. While Sweden and Finland had net in migration only to the areas comprising the four or five biggest cities, Norway and Denmark experienced a net in migration also to some of the smaller cities and towns. In the long run, this may be important to maintain a better regional balance within the countries.

[2] The data in this paragraph is adapted from Hanell et. al. 2002.

The next figure shows that there is a fairly decentralised pattern of employment increase in most of the countries, again with Sweden showing the most centralised growth pattern. But we can read from this figure that even many of the smaller communities in the Nordic countries are able to develop new jobs. Migration to the bigger cities is not only a matter of jobs, it is also an effect of lifestyle choices among the younger generation. Particularly young women prefer the urban lifestyle. This creates a further challenge for regional policy. How can the smaller towns and townships be made more attractive for young people? But before I return to regional policy, let me say a few words about the organisation of regional and local government.

The organisation of regional and local government

Like Japan, the Nordic countries are unitary states. The three Scandinavian states have parliamentary systems where the executive or cabinet is responsible to the parliament. Finland and Iceland have varieties of semi-presidentialism, where the president has independent power in some policy areas. Local and regional bodies are allocated their authority from the national state.

With the exemption of Iceland, all the Nordic countries have a three tier system of government. To clarify my terminology, I would like to use the concepts regional level or county about the meso or intermediate level of government, local government or municipality about the lowest level. Sweden, Norway and Denmark have popularly elected councils at the county or regional level. In Finland, the regional level consists of an association of municipalities with indirectly elected representatives.

Elected regional (county) government in the Nordic countries

Country	Name of regional government	Name of council	Number	Population end of 2000		
				Smallest	Median	Largest
Denmark	Amtskommune	Amtsting	14	44 024	296 875	640 637
Finland	Maakuntaliitto*	-	19+Åland	25 776	189 621	1 304 595
Norway	Fylkeskommune	Fylkesting	19	74 087	215 030	508 726
Sweden	Län (landskommune)	Landsting	21	57 313	273 615	1 823 210

*Association of local governments

At the regional level, there are also state prefects or governors. The balance of strength between the prefects and the popularly elected bodies varies between the countries. According to a recent research project conducted by Mydske (in print), discussing the three Scandinavian countries, Sweden is the country where the prefect (landshovding) has had the strongest position vis a vis the elected politicians in the regional council. The council's tasks have mainly been managing hospitals. Regional planning is residing with the prefect.

In Denmark, the situation is the oposite. Here, the prefect (amtsmann) is quite unimportant. Power at the regional level resides with the amtskommune, which is responsible for regional planning and development, hospitals and high schools, road, cultural affairs, social welfare and environmental protection. In Norway, there is more of a power balance and continuing rivalry between the state representative (fylkesmann) and the fylkeskommune. Until 1975, the fylkesmann were strongest and also presided over the meetings in the county council. The Regional Government Act of 1975 changed this situation. From now, the county government (fylkeskommune) became virtually independent from the prefect, with responsibilities for planning, hospitals, high schools, regional development, transportation and cultural affairs. Environmental protection, social welfare, and also legal and economic control with the municipalities were the tasks which remained with the prefect. During the 1990's, however, the position of the fylkeskommune has been weakening again in some areas. After heated political debates, the county government lost responsibility for hospitals and business development grants. The two parties at the right wing want to abolish an elected regional government altogether, while some players have suggested merger of the counties to 5-7 larger regions. Decisions about the future organisation at the regional level are to be taken before 2007.

Also in Sweden, there have been recent changes in the government system at the regional level. The national government have launched an experiment where the aim is to merger counties into larger regions with strong elected councils, and a main responsibility for planning and regional development. Five different regions have been carrying out an experiment with somewhat different tasks and organisation forms. Sweden seems to be moving steadily towards larger regions in a few years.

Let me also mention a few words about the municipal or local level. In the Nordic countries, with the exemption of Iceland, the local government has main responsibilities for welfare services. Non hospital health care, social welfare, schools and kindergartens are the main responsibilities for the municipalities. Even the smaller municipalities are staffed to manage those tasks. In the Nordic countries, we can truly say that the welfare state is implemented by the local governments. In addition, local governments are responsible for local infrastructure and to a varying degree economic development initiatives.

Municipal (local) governments in the Nordic countries

Country	Name	Number	Population end of 2000		
			Smallest	Median	Largest
Denmark	Kommune	275	2 666	10 239	499 148
Finland	Kunta	448	129	4 802	555 474
Iceland	Sveitarfélag	121	30	328	111 345
Norway	Kommune	435	232	4 392	508 726
Sweden	Kommun	289	2 695	15 163	750 348

Norway and Finland have on the average smaller municipalities than Sweden and Denmark. In Norway, it is currently a discussion about merger of municipalities. The minister of local government, Ms. Erna Solberg, says she wants to reduce the number of municipalities with one hundred, to about 300. However, the parliament has decided not to use its legal power to amalgamate municipalities. Thus, mergers have to be voluntarily decided by the citizens, and this causes reform to be a slow process.

Then I would like to turn to regional policy, beginning with a discussion of the concept regional policy itself.

Four aspects of regional policymaking

It is quite easy to say what regional policy making is all about. It could be defined as all policy making which in some way or another has impacts upon the spatial or territorial distribution within a society. However, this simple definition does not help us much regarding which aspects of public policies we ought to include in the concept. Almost every aspect of public policy making may have spatial effects in the short or the long run, because most public policies are implemented in specific sites or localities. For example, whether an airport or a college is localized in one small city or another, may have great impacts on the development of those two areas in a longer perspective.

But of course, if everything is considered to be regional policy, then regional policy cannot be anything particular. On the other hand, it is to narrow for many purposes to define regional policy only as these policies that explicitly intend to influence spatial or territorial patterns. My suggestion to avoid this dilemma is to make a distinction between several different aspects of regional policy. I would like to introduce four meanings of regional policy which it may be useful to explore (Bukve 1998):

— Firstly, regional policy can be understood as general policy making with the intention to influence spatial patterns. Regional planning is the main example of this both inclusive and intended type of regional policy.

— Secondly, regional policy may be considered as national policies aiming at the development of specific problem areas, be it either rural areas which are lagging behind, or industrial districts in need of structural change. This is what I would label top down regional policy.

— Thirdly, regional policy can be considered as the actions by local and regional players in order to promote economic and social development within their region or community. I would label this bottom up regional policy. The relation between this regional policy from below and the policies pursued at the national level, may be complex. National policy may be implementing standardised national schemes without any consideration of the local and regional context. But national policy could also be a policy aiming at improving the ability or capacity of players at local and regional level for self development.

— Last, but not least, is it necessary to consider the spatial impacts of policies in the functional sectors of government, that is the sectors which primarily has other tasks than to influence territorial patterns. When a decision to create a new university is taken, this is primarily a matter of educational policy or research policy. But the localisation of the university also has territorial impacts, whether they are openly considered or not. In the Nordic context, we usually refer to this aspect of public policy as the "broad" regional policy, while the policy with explicitly spatial goals is referred to as the "narrow" regional policy.

The breakthrough of the developmental regime

During the last twenty years, big changes have taken place in the regional policy regimes in the European countries. This also holds true for the Nordic countries. By a policy regime, I mean the totality of institutions, decisional procedures, values and norms which are prevalent within a policy area. Briefly, the change in regional policy regime could be described as a change from a distributive, exogenous development model to an innovative, endogenous development model. New organisational setups for regional policy have become necessary in order to manage this change process. Regional development policy has to an increasing degree become organised in partnerships, with participation across traditional borders between institutions. This also implies a transition from hierarchical, authority based decision procedures to mutual adaptation between formally independent, but actually mutually dependent players.

Many researchers have tried to develop concepts capable to catch this new reality. One way of describing the changes, is to say that they represent a turn from hierarchical organisation to organisation by networking (Marin & Mayntz 1991, Thatcher 1998, Thompson 1991). Another concept labels it a change from government to governance (Rhodes 1997). In governance theory, the point of departure often is a breakdown of hierarchical authority within the public sector. The point of view is that regional and local players cannot be understood only as agents on behalf of a central authority. Through their control over detail information and possibility of administrative discretion, they may influence decisions in many ways. It is seen as more fruitful to influence them through dialogue than through hierachical commands.

Applied to the relationship between public authorities and businesses, a main point of governance theory is that in capitalist societies, governments and businesses control different resources which are important for economic development. Businesses take decisions about investments and localisation of plants and offices, public actors take decisions about infrastructure, frame conditions and incentives for businesses. This creates a type of reciprocal dependency where both parts may gain by mutual adaptation. There is no single centre of authority, but players which may and also need to play together.

Network theory presents networks as a basic form of social coordination, like hierarchy

and market. Where markets are based on competition, and hierarchies are based on authority, networks are based on voluntarily cooperation between independent actors. To make networks work, there must be a basic trust between the participating players. The conditions for the development of trust is important in order to understand how networks are established. The second condition is mutual resource dependency, that each actor controls resources which are relevant for the other actors. Within this framing, networks may be different. They can range from instrumental and contract based networks via traditional community networks to value networks where shared symbols and values are the decisive glue and motivating force behind the cooperation. But what network theorists and governance theorists have in common, is the idea of increasing complexity in policy making and consequently an increasing mutual dependency between the actors.

If I should make an ideal typical model of the changes in regional policy regimes during the last twenty years, utilizing the mentioned concepts, I would describe it as a change from a distributive regime to a developmental regime (Bukve & Amdam 2004, in print). Where the central norms of the distributive regime was distribution of economic growth from centre to periphery, and modernising of the periphery to be more like the centre, the ideology of the developmental regime is to develop a region's competitiveness based on a mobilisation of the region's own resources and knowledge. Multi-level governance implies that the regions act in concert with national authorities about both programme development and the underlying guidelines for the development of the region. The regions are not expected to simply adapt to a hierarchical and rule based set of policies defined by national authorities.

An ideal typical model of change in regional policy regimes

	The distributive regime	The developmental regime
Central norms	Distribution Modernisation	Development Competitiveness
Relations between state and region	Hierarchical Rule based	Dialogue/competition Negotiation based
Relations between governments and businesses	Client relation Hierarchical	Partnership Mutual dependency
Organisation	Fragmented Detail administration	Integrated Strategic
Decision procedures	Authority based Government	Policy networks Governance

The relationship between governments and businesses also have changed. From a hierarchical relation where businesses are clients who receive public grants, there is a change to a situation where the mutual dependency is recognised, and the client relation changed to a partnership relation. Regional development agencies to a lesser degree administer a few specified policy measures. They are rather strategic development bodies with the ability to integrate packages of different policy measures. To sum up, we can talk about a transition

from authority based decision procedures - government - to networking decision procedures-governance.

The description above is of course no exact empirical description of what has happened in Europe or the Nordic countries. It must be understood as an ideal type, as a purified version of important development patterns which we may observe. In the real world, there are different processes and many forms that lay between the purified forms described above. However, I consider that it can be a useful model when we go on to describe some actual patterns in regional policy development within the Nordic countries. I will do this by tracing changes within each of the four aspects of regional policy which I mentioned above.

Regional planning

Regional planning became a prominent part of regional policy from the 1970's. In regional planning, two different planning traditions have met: the tradition of physical land use planning and the tradition of macroeconomic planning. From the beginning, the planning process was differently organised in the Nordic countries. In Sweden, the prefect or landshovding was responsible for regional planning from its introduction in 1967. Finland had a dual system, with the regional state agencies responsible for regional planning and the municipal associations in charge of land use planning. In Norway and Denmark, however, regional planning became the responsibility of the elected regional governments.

The ambitions behind regional planning were extremely high in the Nordic countries. The regional planning system were expected to coordinate between national sector policies at the county level, the policies of the regional governments and the policies of the municipalities. This truly were great expectations. And they proved to be too ambitious. At the end of the 1980's there was a growing discontent about the impact of regional planning. An evaluation (From & Stava 1985) concluded that the regional plans were mainly loose collections of sector plans, made by the bureucrats from each sector. The planning process received little attention from the politicians who were expected to lead the process. They entered the stage only in last phase. In Sweden, regional planning was not mandatory after 1990.

During the 1990's there have been many attempts to reshape regional planning according to the ideas inherent in the developmental regime. The idea of dialogue planning is currently in fashion. Planning processes are adapted in order to promote cooperation and dialogue between government sectors, between governments at different levels, between governments and businesses and between governments and citizens. These efforts have resulted in a much more differentiated picture of how planning is going on in the different regions. Some regions are able to increase the level of dialogue in the planning prosess, others are continuing more or less in the old way. Maybe the most promising results are not to be found in the overall planning, but in special planning regarding joint economic development projects or community development. What is true, is that the concept of what planning is about has

been changed due to the new ideas of developmental, not distributive regional policy. Implementing new types of planning processses, however, is not an easy task.

Peripheral policy the top down way

In the Nordic countries, regional policy in the after war period mainly was policies aiming at the modernisation of peripheral areas. The emphasis on regional policy as peripheral policy was particularly strong in Norway, Sweden and Finland. Later on, also restructuring policies for depressed industrial regions became an element in the national strategies for regional development.

If we take a look at the policy measures used in this kind of policy, they can be divided into several groups. Firstly, there are directly financial support to businesses, in the forms of grants, loans, guarantees, risk capital and so on. All the Nordic countries use this kind of measures, with maximum aid ceilings from 35% in Sweden to 27% in Iceland. The countries are divided into different support zones with unequal aid ceilings. Finnish support areas cover more than 40% of the population, Swedish only 16% (Hanell et. al. 2002).

Secondly, there are indirect development incentives. Development projects for communites, promotion of entrepreneurship, R & D programmes, developments programmes for groups of businesses, advice on technological and commercial matters may be examples. This kind of programmes have gradually become more important compared to direct business aid. In Finland and Denmark, they are more important measured in budgets. However, it is difficult to compare budgets because measures may be grouped differently.

Thirdly, there are subsidies towards operating costs, e.g. transport costs or wage subsidies. This is a kind of measure which often will get into conflict with EU competition rules, so they have mainly been built down in the Nordic countries. For example, Norway had to abandon transport subsidies for peripheral regions, and also the scheme for reducing the employer's tax on use of labour in peripheral regions.

Lastly, we can mention tax incentives for weak regions. For example, Norway has reduced income tax in the northernmost county Finnmark and in parts of Troms county.

Generally spoken, the model change related to top down regional policy took place in the 1980's. Then there was a shift from direct financial incentives mainly for manufacturing companies to incentives for all types of business. There also was a shift from incentives for "material" investments like machines and buildings to incentives for "immaterial" investments like product development and marketing. And there was a shift from direct incentives for businesses to indirect incentives for many types of participants. Entrepeneur programmes for women and youth, business incubators, community development programmes and so on became more important parts of regional policy during the 1980's and have remained so. These changes were necessary, bur they also meant trouble for top down thinking about regional development. The "soft" kind of projects require participation from the clients. In order to get that, the projects have to be adapted to the clients needs and

desires. This requires a relaxation of detailed national regulations about the programmes. The locus of policy formulation has to shift from national to the regional level.

During the last decade, not much new seems to have happened to regional policy considered as top down national policy. There seems to be a kind of exhaustment and resignation. When I read the Norwegian white papers on regional policy, which are produced every four year, I find more innovation in rhetorics than in policy. Less money is spent on regional policy in this narrow sense. Measured by budget, the level of incentives in 2003 for Norway were about 40% the level of 1993. Policy focus has shifted from top down to bottom up.

Regions as actors-bottom up regional policy

If we take a long historical perspective, regions and cities are not new actors in the area of economic development. More than a hundred years ago, regions and cities in the Scandinavian countries were active in economic development by founding hydroelectric power companies, providing infrastrusture for communications, i.e. telephone lines, roads and railway lines, and establishing transport companies of different kinds. During the first phases of industrialisation, regions had an active role. Many a prefect played an important role as a spokesman for his region towards the national government.

In the highdays of central macroeconomic planning following World War II, however, the instruments of economic development became more centralised to the national level. Regions and municipalities were transformed into servants of the state, in order to promote economic modernisation and building of the welfare state with equal service for every citizen. It was primarily the crisis of this system, beginning with the recession of the 1970's, which once again led to a regime shift in regional policy.

Firstly, from about 1980, the governments in the Nordic countries were stimulating economic development initiatives at the municpal level. In Norway, for example, most of the municipalities outside the big city regions received economic support to build their own economic development departments and to give financial assistance to entrepreneurs and business start ups (Bukve 1994). In many cases, municipalities and players from the private sector joined in establishing development agencies at arm length from political control. There is evidence that many muncipalities succeeded in creating viable networks with the businesses during the 1980's and 1990's (Bukve 2001). Many of them still do this, even if the national states now have lost much of their interest in local governments as development actors. On the average, however, the municipalities were too small to be the forces behind growth efforts. For a short period of time, the states tried to promote intermunicipal cooperation. However, this did not prove succesful outside Finland. Intermunicipal development bodies often became arenas for struggle between the municipalities.

From about 1990, the main strategy of the Nordic states was to locate regional development work at the county level. An obstacle to this was the bad reputation of the county

level due to their not to successful involvement in regional planning. And some of the counties who tried to introduce new ideas and arrangements, found that the national bodies still were caught in the old rule oriented paradigm and disapproved much of what the counties tried to do. The adaptation of central policy measures to local needs were not always easy.

Finally, the regions of the European Union came to be an important source of inspiration for the Nordic countries in their search for new approaches to regional development work. In EU, the regions had been powerful players during the 1980's, and after the reform of the Structural Funds in 1989 they got considerable financial resources for development work. EU required that regions who wanted co-financing from the Structural Funds, developed their programmes in cooperation with businesses and private sector organisations. The keyword is partnership. The core actors often were regional developments agencies with a relative independence from the political bodies.

As an EU member since 1972, Denmark was pioneering on the Nordic road towards partnership in regional development. In Denmark, development agencies with participation from public and private actors grew up in every county. Since the Danish state offered no direct financial aid to businesses, only aid to broad programmes, the RDA's in Denmark had freedom to make their programmes in their own way. Finland and Sweden followed up the partnership model required by EU after they became EU members in 1995. Also in Norway the Minstry of Local Affairs tried to introduce a kind of partnership planning at the county level.

In a study of partnership in the Nordic countries, Östhol and Svensson (2002) find that Denmark is the most succesful country in building partnership from below, followed by Finland. In Sweden, with its more centralised traditions, building partnerships has taken more efforts. In some cases, counties were reluctant towards what they firstly viewed as another new command from the state. But Sweden is making progress. In Norway, however, partnership still is mostly about cooperation between public actors. In a more recent study, Bukve (in print) finds that some of the Norwegian counties are making progress in the creation of public private partnerships. He also finds that there are many viable networks between cities and businesses, which are not necessarily connected to the obligatory partnership planning in counties. In brief, regions in all the Nordic countries are on different paths towards the governance or network style of regional development. The big question for the years to come is whether this development also will result in mergers of counties to bigger regions.

Area and sector-the difficult relation

In the 1970's, the champions for regional planning hoped to make regional planning into a tool for coordination between the functional and the territorial aspect of public policy. Today, we have to admit that the goals of the planning champions were not reached. However, it is important to bear in mind that the kind of political considerations which are

made when sector policies are outlined, may have substantial effects upon the territorial impact of those sector policies. Making a comarison between Sweden and Norway is interesting in this respect. Sweden has for centuries been the most centralised of the northern countries, which a strong central state stemming from the 17th and 18th centuries, when Sweden was a main European power. In Norway, under Danish and Swedish rule for almost five centuries, there never developed a strong sentral power of the Swedish type. The Norwegian state and constitution were developed in the 19th century when democratic currents were strong. Peripheral areas have an overproportional share of seats in the parliament, and parliament members have strong connections back to their wards. Territorial impacts of national policy have always been important in the debates of the Norwegian parliament. During most of the 20th century, agricultural policy and fishery policy were aimed at improving the quality of life also for the small scale farmers and fishermen in the peripheral areas (Brox 1966). Swedish farmers and forestry workers did not get the same protection from national policies. From my viewpoint, this is the most important explanation of the more depopulated periphery in Sweden.

In the expansion period of the welfare state, between World War II and 1980, Nordic peripheries received many new jobs in the welfare sector. Schools, social welfare and health services were distributed to even the most remote places. Many well educated people moved to the periphery during this period. The rural areas were changed in many respepcts. They became less dependent on the primary industries, more on the state budget. Today, however, the global competition makes it difficult to maintain the most expenisve welfare services in all communities. The newspapers often report about cases of school closure and reduction in the numbers of hospital. Welfare services today cannot be considered as a stable growth force in the peripheral areas.

The most important change in the balance between sector and territory, however, seems to be the deregulation efforts in public policy due to the growth of neo-liberal ideas. Today's politicians are not willing to interfere with the market in the same way as the politicians of the after war period. EU legislation and EU courts are also requiring that competitive market forces are not hindered by political obstacles. The fashionable ideas of New Public Management means that the politicians leave more discretion to their administration. Public companies are privatised or given new organisational forms which remove them from political control. When sector agencies like post services, railways, road and hospitals today decide to close branches in the smaller regions, politicians are often not entitled to interfere. Politicians voluntarily have abdicated from many of the important decisions. Consequently, territorial forces are weakening in comparison to sector forces. This is probably the main single factor which today make the Nordic peripheries more vulnerable than they used to be in the post war period.

Conclusion

I would like to make my conclusion very brief. Firstly: The Nordic countries form an interesting laboratory if one wants to study the change from a distributive to a developmental regime in regional policy. There are many varieties in this transition to be found in the Nordic countries. Secondly: In the study of regional development and regional policy, one ought never to focus upon regional policy in the narrow sense alone. The balance between the territorial and the functional forces in the making of public policy may often be more important than what happens within the regional policy field in the narrow sense. And in order to understand this balance, we have to address the big questions about the distribution of societal power. Particularly we have to focus the strength of the democratic forces which try to shape society from below, compared to the bureaucratic forces trying to manage society from the top.

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