

JOURNAL OF NORDREGIO

Regional Development,
Work and Family Life:

a Gender
Issue? 

No. 2 June • Volume 4 – 2004

BETWEEN SCHYLLA AND CHARYBDIS

*If you want to make a career –
go south young woman or at least to the
nearest large city!*

 p.4



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Spatial Development

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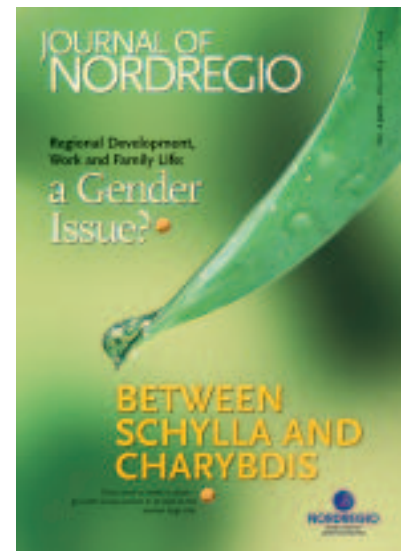
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JOURNAL OF NORDREGIO

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GENDER, PLANNING AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gender equality is a goal that will increasingly come to permeate regional development work. The EU now sets gender equality goals for the Structural Funds, while Nordic governments set them for almost every policy area. But what is this supposed to mean in practice, particularly for us in the Nordic countries famous for equal rights, the women's movement and the high participation rates of women in the labour market?

Historically, societies were usually patriarchal – men controlled governments, businesses and public life, while women tended to issues of private and family life. Cities have traditionally been designed and built by men, and our history is predominantly the history of men. Some advocate that school curricula should be added with herstory, and not only history. Much has of course changed, women demanded and received the vote, while stultifying gender bound roles are now less constraining as women now often enter technical universities while men regularly become nurses. But societal structures do not change overnight; our gender roles do to a large extent still determine working life, travel patterns, family life etc. In the Nordic countries women participate less in the labour market as compared to men, even though the gender cleavages in labour participation are less pronounced than in other European countries. Women are to a large extent employed in the public sector, they travel less, they continue to take more responsibility for nurturing our children, and yet they remain underrepresented in positions of power, as professors or on company boards.

Do such differences pose a problem? Do they raise issues in need of prompt action, or is it both understandable and indeed necessary that our gender roles should structure our lives? According to the essentialist perspective, the existen-

ce of gender differences do not pose a problem, indeed, the division of labour and of our roles within society is seen as something that stabilizes society, notwithstanding the various and rather obvious biological differences, each gender group is, they argue simply better suited to participating in different tasks. As such, there is no need for action on the argument goes.

Others however would argue that both the gender roles we assume and the existing societal structures that perpetuate them are in themselves inherently problematic. Some argue that the tasks, capabilities, experiences and perspectives that women possess are important in today's society and are not sufficiently incorporated into business, politics, governing etc. These "female" perspectives are thus important to highlight,

In the Nordic countries women participate less in the labour market as compared to men, even though the gender cleavages in labour participation are less pronounced than in other European countries.

facilitate and incorporate. Other would say: yes, in general men and women do possess different experiences and perspectives, but these are not given, they are rather socially constructed, a result of history and of today's societal structures and these structures are oppressive in the way that they train people into gender roles that are difficult to deconstruct thus limiting peoples potential. According to this perspective, liberation and progress entail abolition of the current gender determinism. Strategies here could for instance include the use of affirmative action policies until opportunities can be deemed to be equal.

So what do gender perspectives mean for regional development and planning? Among the currently debated issues in the Nordic countries are:

- Young women tend to move away from rural areas and men tend to stay. What does such a development mean for society at large? Is it perhaps so that the well performing rural schoolgirls heading to the cities are the winners in post-industrial Nordic societies? Or is it that the living environments in the periphery need to be better accommodated to the needs of women?

- What are the gender implications of regional enlargement? Living within commuting distance of a large labour market entails a greater choice of career

opportunities, but is it manageable for a family to have two commuting parents?

- Are there certain urban planning issues that need to be better accommodated to the needs of women – such as for instance issues relating to the question of safety?

- How do you integrate gender perspectives into regional development programmes? Is it simply a question of seeing to it that the number of women engaged in the programming process or projects equals that of men? Or is there more to it than that? The traditional regional development issues predominantly concerned roads, the technical infrastructure, industry and economic growth – all traditionally perceived as male issues. Today regional development goals are phrased differently –

with sustainable development, good living environments and equal opportunities becoming the new catchwords. Does this mean that the field of regional development has thus become effectively feminised? Additionally we can ask, in what ways do regional development strategies in the new economy relate to the traditional male or female skills and perspectives?

Working with a gender perspective in regional development and planning is about having an awareness of the fact that our current gender roles imply different abilities, power, needs, perspectives and interests. Thus, when planning and drafting policies one does not undertake to do so with the traditional dominant in mind, but rather one should attempt to take into account the diverse needs of and effects on men and women.

It is important to bear in mind that gender issues are not only women's issues; gender issues are about people's issues. Gender equality is about freedom of choice, of life style and career. It is about not facing discrimination if you as a man chose to work in a childcare institution, or if you as a woman pursue a career as a professor or a steel worker. If we take this as our template however we can definitely say that we are not there yet.

BETWEEN SCHYLLA AND CHARYBDIS



By **Tomas Hanell**,
Research Fellow,
Nordregio

Go west young man? No, go south young woman, or at least to the nearest large city! If you want to make a career, that is. Job opportunities for females are better and the dominance of the public sector is not as marked in large Nordic labour markets as it is in smaller settlements. It seems that Nordic females have done exactly this, while the periphery is now seemingly stuck with an ever ageing and primarily male dominated population. In accordance with this Journal of Nordregio Special Issue on gender perspectives, this article seeks to highlight some of the geographic patterns of genderisation with a special emphasis on local labour markets.

Let us begin with the basics. In all five Nordic countries the national division between males and females is almost equal with only a very slight plurality of females. As females in general have a higher life expectancy than males, this ratio is therefore exaggerated in the older age groups. However, due to immigration consisting primarily of males and these males being primarily of working age, the age group 15-64

years has a slight dominance of males over females. Yet, regardless of immigration, this near-equilibrium is very uneven across the Nordic area.

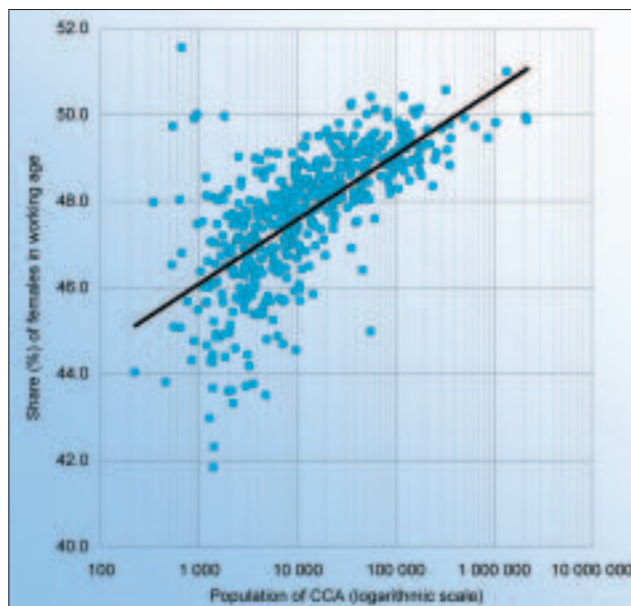
Flocking to the cities

Females of working age are to a large extent concentrated in a few major centres while most of the Nordic space has a marked predominance of males. Figure 1, which shows the size of the travel-to-work area or commuter catchment area (CCA) in terms of population on the x-axis and the share of females in the age group 15-64 years on the y-axis, reveals the strength of this correlation across all five countries. The larger the labour market the higher is the share of females of working age. There are of course exceptions to this pattern,

the most significant being extremely small (around 1 000 inhabitants or less) and mainly northerly Norwegian municipalities in Nord-Trøndelag or Nordland counties, which tend to have a proportionally larger share of females in the age group at hand, or e.g. Greenland (here treated as a single region) which displays the opposite pattern.

Areas with the lowest share of females are to be found exclusively in Finland, mainly in the problematic northern and eastern parts of the country. Apart from a number of ultra-small Icelandic municipalities that are not comparable in this sense, Savukoski in the Finnish region of Lappi holds the dubious Nordic record of having only seven females to every ten males in this age group. At the other extreme lie mainly the larger

Figure 1: Population and share of females 15-64 years in Commuter Catchment Areas in the Nordic countries



Data source:
National Statistical
Institutes

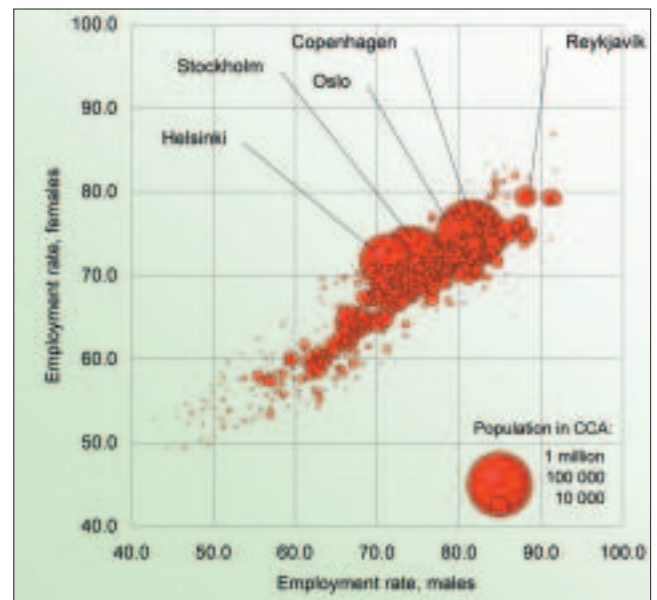
Finnish cities (Helsinki, Turku, Jyväskylä, Kuopio) and the Greater Reykjavík region where the share of females of working age well exceeds that of males.

The reasons for the female exodus from the peripheries are well known. Younger females generally perform better at school than their male counterparts and these females, taken as a group, often have higher ambitions with regard to future education and employment. Thus the lure of the city lights seems stronger for women, whereas many young men are less inclined to leave their childhood surroundings. Apart from the obvious social consequences that this lack of females in the periphery creates, the future livelihood of these areas is in a sense also at stake. On the whole, fewer females in these areas mean fewer families and fewer children, and in the long run a further weakening of the already precarious settlement structure. One positive here is the fact that in many peripheral areas (particularly in Finland and Norway) the reproduction rate is higher per resident female than in the countries on the whole, although there naturally is no guarantee that these children will stay put in their home areas once they come of age to enter the educational or labour markets.

Labour market participation

Societal change in general and structural changes with regard to labour markets in particular have considerably altered the pattern of labour market participation in the Nordic countries over the last two or three decades. For instance in Denmark, nearly nine out of ten Danish males of working age were in the labour force in 1980 while the equivalent figure for females was only seven out of ten. Twenty years later the Danish male labour force has only increased by slightly more than one percent whereas the female labour force has grown by more than 12%, thus considerably narrowing the gap with their male counterparts. A similar equalisation process is also discernable between the sexes in the other Nordic countries. Nonetheless, at the beginning of 2002 and based on register data, the employment rate of males was still between one and ten percentage units higher in

Figure 2: Total population and employment rates for males and females for the age group 15-64 years in Nordic CCAs



Data source:
National Statistical
Institutes

all five Nordic countries than comparable data for females. The largest differences between male and female employment, when measured as a share of the 15-64 years age group, were in Iceland and Denmark. On the other hand, given, in the Nordic context, the particularly high unemployment rate for males in Finland, the smallest variation between the sexes can be found there.

When compared to the rest of Western Europe however, these Nordic differences seem rather small. In southern European countries such as Greece, Spain and Italy, male employment rates are some thirty percentage points higher than the corresponding rates for females; while in Luxembourg and Ireland they are between a fourth and a fifth higher. Looking at all EU15 member states (plus Iceland and Norway), we can see that the differences between the sexes in this regard are clearly smallest in the Nordic countries. On the country level there is a strong negative correlation between the two variables, i.e. the higher the employment rate in general, the smaller the difference between the sexes. This leads to a probable conclusion that in order to obtain a high general employment rate (such as in the Nordic countries), increased female labour market participation seems inevitable.

Introducing a spatial pattern to these figures reveals that there is a much weaker relationship between the size of the CCA and the rate of employment for the females living in these areas. Although many of the larger CCAs de facto do have a predominantly high female employment rate, at the same time these areas also have correspondingly higher rates for males, thus levelling out this gender equalisation. Having said that, a look at figure 2, depicting on the x- and y-axis male and female employment rates as well as the total number of persons employed in the region (size of circle) reveals that among the larger CCAs, more females are in employment in Helsinki, Stockholm, Oslo and Reykjavík in particular than in many smaller settlements in these countries. Moreover, among the large cities Helsinki is in this respect a separate case as there are in fact more females employed here than males.

The extremely small CCAs in the lower left corner of the graph that can also be seen to diverge from the fairly linear trend are nearly exclusively to be found in northern Finland and Sweden, where male unemployment is particularly serious. Out of the 493 CCAs in the four Nordic countries (plus Greater Reykjavík), 94 have a female employment rate that is higher than the corresponding male one. Of these, 65 are in

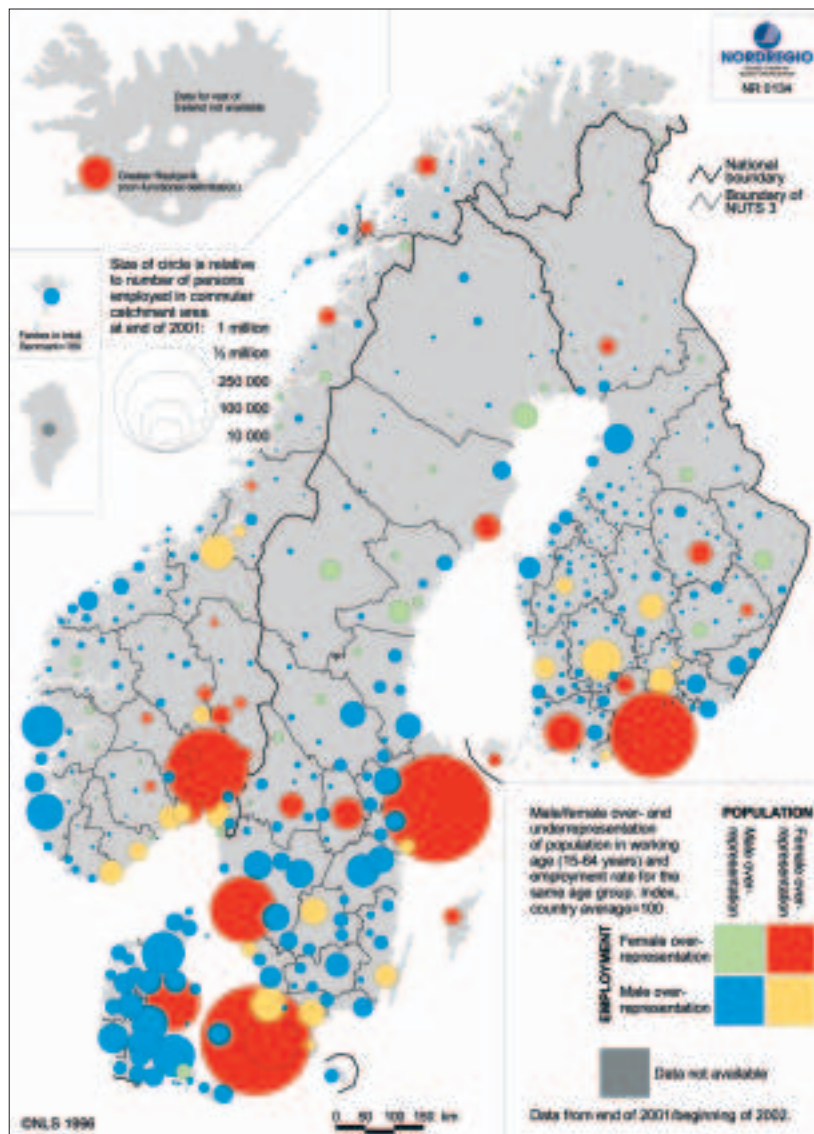


Figure 3: Male and female population and employment in CCAs Data source: National Statistical Institutes

Finland and 19 in Sweden with the remaining ten in Norway. The extreme case is the Finnish municipality of Pelkosenniemi, where the female employment rate in nearly 17 percentage units higher than the male one. In Denmark on the other hand all CCAs have a higher male than female level of labour market participation. The gap between the sexes is particularly high in Jutland, whereas in e.g. Greater Copenhagen the difference in the employment rate is merely 6.5 percentage units.

The data from the two previous graphs is combined in Figure 3. Here

all Nordic CCAs are divided into four classes with regard to the demographic balance and labour market participation. The number of persons employed in the CCA is reflected in the size of the circle. In order to circumvent the problem of large differences between the countries, all data is presented as indexed to the respective country average, thus giving us the ability to observe spatial patterns rather than mere dissimilarities between countries. The CCAs coloured red are those where females are overrepresented both in population of working age and in employment frequency in comparison

to the respective country average. Not surprisingly all capital regions belong to this class. Other large labour markets such as Gothenburg and Malmö in Sweden, Turku in Finland and Århus in Denmark also adhere to this rule.

The labour markets in areas coloured blue are representative of the prevailing male-female ratio of the region. Most CCAs in Denmark, southern Sweden, western (coastal) Norway and the rural areas of central and southern Finland, including some larger towns, are in this class. The Faroe Islands also belong to this group, as in all likelihood does Greenland, though no comparable employment data exists to confirm this. In contrast, there are relatively few CCAs where, despite the presence of a large number of females of working age, the labour market remains dominated by males (yellow). These are typically medium-sized regional administrative centres, though they are also to be found in some large cities, such as Tampere in Finland or Trondheim in Norway, each of which displays this pattern. In these areas the labour market seems to have absorbed a proportionally lower share of females in comparison to the national averages in the countries involved. Many are university towns or regions dominated by basic industries or manufacturing, which partly explains the discrepancy, as both sectors are typically male dominated. In the fourth (green) category we have regions where the share of females of working age is comparatively low, yet the labour market continues to be dominated by them. Most of these CCAs have in common the fact that public sector employment predominates in the local economy.

The public sector runs on females

The public sector as an employer is the subject of much debate. From a gender perspective the general arguments put forth are that females are trapped in public sector positions that are poorly paid and of low-esteem predominantly within the primary care sector and in lower grade public administration positions whereas males, in general, are oriented towards better paying jobs within the private sector. An examination of the distribution of employed males and females in the

public sector reveals, to some extent, the width of this gap, although strict comparison between countries is difficult as varying definitions as to the data hinder full comparability.

In the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden between 28% (Finland) and 34% (Denmark) of all jobs were based within the public sector. This definition includes all state functions, the local and the regional sector as well as national boards and other civil service departments, though it does not include such semi-public units as externalised municipal functions etc. As the general notion is that Sweden clearly has the largest public sector in the Nordic countries, the discrepancy in the figures above probably stems from the narrow classification used here. Indeed, looking purely at private sector employment, in Sweden this share is as low as 59%, compared to 62, 65 and 68% respectively in Denmark, Norway and Finland.

These then are the basic settings. Looking at the gender balance in the public sector, defined as above, male-female differences are most prominent in Sweden. For every one male public sector employee in Sweden there are nearly three corresponding female ones. The equivalent number in the other three countries is substantially lower. Moreover, as employment rates in all four countries are lower for females than for males, this discrepancy is further aggravated. In Denmark more than half of all employed females work in the public sector while that share in the other countries is between 40 (Finland) and 47% (Sweden). In sharp contrast to this, less than a fifth of all employed males have their livelihood in the public sector in all four countries, with as little as 15% in Sweden.

Local labour markets in central and northern Sweden, eastern Jutland and the Danish islands, northern Norway and eastern Finland all have a profoundly high share of employment within the public sector. On the other hand, the capital areas as well as the other large centres in Finland, Norway and Sweden remain as areas of private sector dominance.

Turning now to the particular position of females, in all four countries the lar-

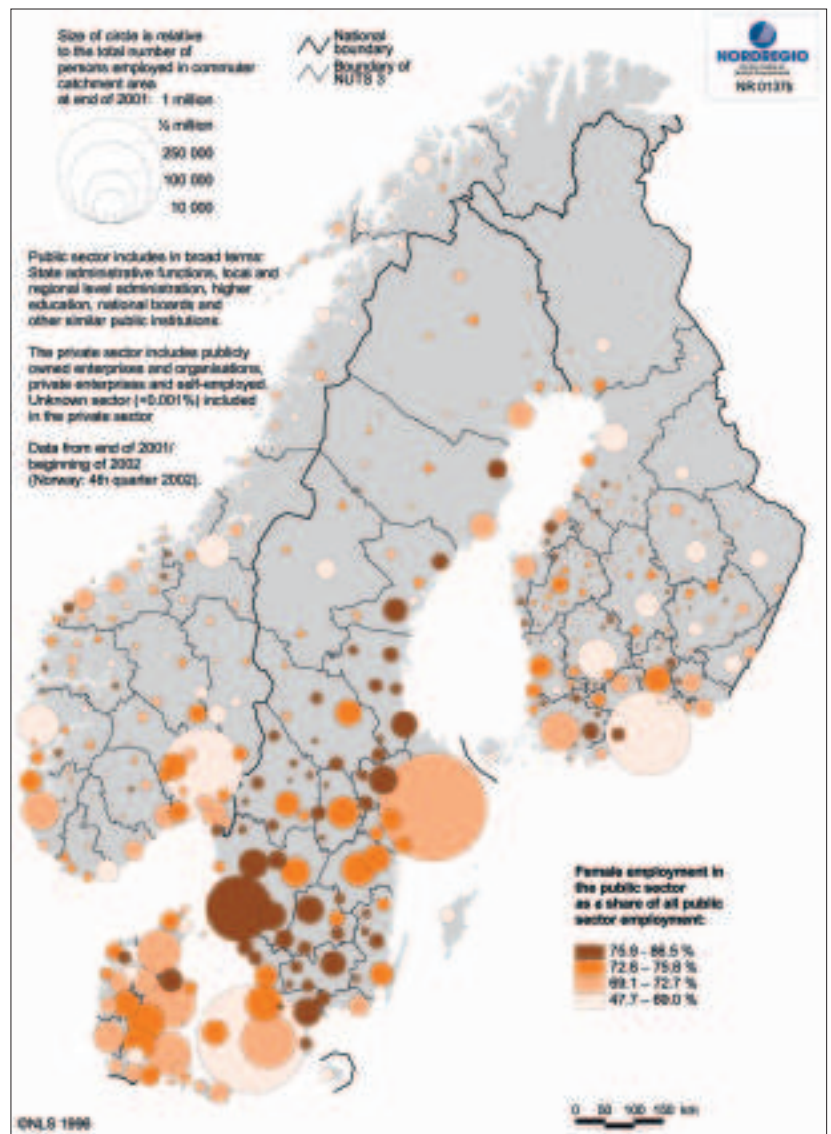


Figure 4: Share of female employment in the public sector Data source: National Statistical Institutes

ger the share of the public sector in any given CCA, the smaller is the share of females employed in the public sector there. Or conversely, females seem to dominate the public sector in areas where the public sector is not a dominant feature of the economic structure of the region. This correlation is strongest in Sweden, but Finland also displays similar characteristics.

Figure 4 displays how substantial female employment in the public sector is comparable to total employment in the public sector. Once more, the total number of persons employed (both public and private) in the region is

reflected in the size of the circle.

The share of females in the public sector is very high in most Swedish CCAs, especially in the southern and western parts of the country, but also along the Bothnian Gulf north of Stockholm. In Denmark as well, and particularly in Jutland, the public sector is run primarily by females. The pattern in Finland and Norway is more differentiated, though local labour markets in the northernmost parts of these countries have, in general, a lower level of female dominance in public sector employment than their more southerly counterparts. A joint commonality here is the very

low rate of female employment in the public sector of the capital regions. Moreover, we can see that other large towns in Norway (Kristiansand, Bergen, Trondheim, Tromsø), and in Finland (Tampere, Oulu, Jyväskylä, Kuopio, Joensuu) also adhere to the pattern.

On the country level on the whole it seems that the gap between the sexes is widest in Sweden, which has a large public sector run primarily by females. In Denmark the public sector is also large, but the level of female dominance is not as manifest as in Sweden. Greater Copenhagen also differs markedly from most of western Denmark. In Norway and Finland the public sector is both smaller and not as dominated by females as in the other two countries.

**As Tammy Wynette once implored, ...
Stand by your man!**


It thus seems that the Nordic labour markets are divided not only by gender and by sector composition, but that geography also plays a role here, albeit not a very large one. What then are the implications of these multiple divides? The precarious position of the periphery with regard to the lack of females is serious. The need to persuade females to remain in their native surroundings rather than flocking to the cities thus remains a substantial challenge, but is increased public sector employment the answer? On the evidence thus far reviewed it does not seem so, and especially not from a fiscal point of view, particularly as it appears that many females consciously move to the greater private sector labour markets in the large Nordic cities. Furthermore the dominance of the public sector in female employment is already today very prominent. On the contrary then, the challenge seems to lie in how to better integrate the female labour force into the private sector, not only in the large cities but also across the country as a whole. On a more general level it seems that in order for the rapidly ageing Nordic populations and societies to maintain healthy dependency ratios, increased levels of female participation in the labour market seems both desirable and inevitable, even though the Nordic countries already differ substantially from their more southerly European counterparts in this regard.

Maps and graphs in this article can be downloaded from www.nordregio.se



FROM PLAYING TO PLANNING

In the next generation of planners there are quite a few who owe their interest in planning to their PC, though not to the computer itself, but to SimCity, a game that makes you the most powerful urban planner in modern history.





Ulrika Gunnarsson

Henry Grew

Textbooks have already noticed the trend. Edward Soja in his book *Postmetropolis* cites the manual of *SimCity2000*: "You're in charge...If your city is a nice place to live, your population will increase. If it's not, your Sims will leave town. And be assured that they'll let you know what they think about you and your policies...One of the toughest challenges of *SimCity 2000* is to maintain a huge city without sacrificing your Sims' quality of life, without going broke maintaining the infrastructure, and without raising taxes so high that businesses relocate. *SimCity 2000* lets you face the same dilemmas that mayors all over the world are facing. We've all said it at one time or another that we could do a better job than our elected officials - here's your chance to prove it...*SimCity 2000* is primarily a "building" game, where you create and try to increase the size of your cities - but you also have plenty of opportunities to destroy. From bulldozers to earthquakes to air crashes, the implements of destruction are only a mouse-click away. But remember, it's a lot more challenging to build than to destroy, and the lives, hopes and dreams of millions of Sims are in your hands."

The message has certainly reached the Nordic universities as well. At the Swedish Royal Institute of Technology (KTH) several planning students mention *SimCity* as a source of inspiration in their coming to the discipline of planning. Henry Grew, originally from Finland, admits that it all began with *SimCity*.

– It happened when I was about 15 years old. I got the game from my parents. My father is an architect, so

there is perhaps a disposition towards planning in the family as well, but *SimCity* takes you further than architecture. It gives a broad overview of the elements that need to be in place for an urban community to become successful. I liked it so much that it had a significant impact on choosing planning as my field of study. But I have to admit that the most recent version of the game is so complicated that it seems more like work and less like a game.

– *Is it the aspect of manipulation that appeals to you?*

– Perhaps, or maybe it is the ability to experiment with various components given certain preconditions. The game urges you to make certain choices concerning zoning, the allocation of resources et cetera, which all ends up in a scenario-like development of the city in question. As a player you are also rewarded or punished for your dispositions, and that I find very instructive. As opposed to other computer games, where your actions have an immediate effect, *SimCity* allows you to see what might happen in the long run. A choice that may have a negative short-term effect, such as loss of revenue, can indeed turn into a long-term positive effect, such as increased quality of life over time.

– *How can you compare these processes of fiction with real life planning processes?*

– Of course everything works more slowly and one must consider many more elements in a real planning situation than one does in the *SimCity*-context. There is also no omnipotent single planner in the real world. Nevertheless to learn how complex any planning task

is, even in this simplified setting, is to learn something of great value, Grew says.

Ulrika Gunnarsson has a slightly different attitude towards *SimCity* than does her fellow student. She began her career as a planning student independently of her experiences with the game.

– I play it as a leisure activity every now and then, she says.

– *Is it instructive to your planning interest?*

– Yes, but I find it interesting to see how much ideology lies hidden in the rules of the game. If you are to succeed, you have to divide functions and perform strict zoning of different activities. If you try to physically integrate functions that are supposed to be kept apart, you fail. I would say the game is very engineer-like in its approach and thus that it lacks a social component. It is so to speak rather American in context and style.

– *Could it have been otherwise, could a European or Nordic version of the game have been conceived?*

– Of course, the nature of the game is reflective of the basic assumptions and rules set by the creator. As it is now, you are punished for not securing water supplies or electricity, and also for spoiling the environment. This list could have been extended to other sectors as well, while the game could have been made more rewarding to those who achieved the physical integration of activities.

By Jon P. Knudsen

IN SHORT...



Regional Report Concern for the Periphery

The annual Regional Report presented by the Government to Parliament declares its satisfaction that the polarisation of regional socio-economic indicators that emerged in the late 1990s has now given way to a renewed state of regional balance. The report however expresses concern for the economic future of the most peripheral areas, i.e. scattered coastal communities in the northwest, the smaller islands, and Bornholm.



Regional Service Cooperation Lagging Behind

Regional cooperation on service production continues to remain behind schedule, a new Finnish report concludes. Whereas Finnish municipalities have excelled in regional cooperation on regional development policy, planning and certain support services, their ability to cooperate on basic public services remains less developed. The report notes that a lack of political leadership seems to be one of the main obstacles to the better integration of service provision in the Finnish regions. This is a particularly interesting conclusion as the Finnish two-tier model of administration, with regional cooperation substituting for a proper regional political level, is often pointed to as being a useful model for other Nordic countries. A research group at the University of Tampere, led by professor Arto Haveri, produced the report.

Optimism in the Municipal Sector

The spring edition of the Regional Barometer presents an optimistic outlook in respect of the Finnish municipal sector. Municipal leaders believe that

their economic situation will improve somewhat in the year to come. The same optimism can be detected with regard to their estimates for future regional cooperation. They further believe that the next year will also bring more jobs and a further increase in the number of new houses being built. Moreover, one in four municipal leaders holds the view that their own municipality will undergo the merger process within the next ten years.



Regional Research Programme Closed

The results of a special research programme focussed on the study of regional development in the non-central parts of the country (REGUT) was summarised by a closing conference in April. The conference also saw the unveiling of four different books offering an overview of the programme's main perspectives and findings.

Government Skips Approving of County Plans

The ministers for planning (Børge Brende) and regional affairs (Erna Solberg), both from the Conservative Party, decided not to seek the obligatory national approval of county plans, installed in 1976. Their argument here was the need to reduce the amount of resources spent on central planning administration and to prepare for a future where county planning was no longer compulsory. The decision should also be viewed in light of the explicit desire of the Conservative Party to abolish the county councils.



Structural Funding of Little Importance

A Recent report presented by an international research group on behalf of the Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies (ITPS), concerning the effects of EU structural funding on Swedish regional growth levels and patterns

shows disappointing results. Whereas previous reports have maintained that EU structural funding has had a revitalising impact on Swedish regional policy, no such effect can be spotted with regard to the regional growth impact from the SEK18 billion spent in the years 1995-99.

Government to Reinforce Regional Development Programme

The Swedish Government has urged 13 governmental bodies from various ministries to come up with proposals to enhance the performance of the regional development programmes. The initiative is particularly directed towards reinforcing the coordination of national and regional goals across different sectors of society.

Stockholm no longer taking the lead

A report from the Institute of Growth Policy Studies benchmarking regional growth indicators from all over Sweden has concluded that Stockholm has lost pace as a national growth engine both when compared to other European growth regions, and when compared to other urban centres in Sweden. The report has naturally sparked a heated debate in the press on the role of capital in national economic and innovation policy.

For just over a year now, all of Sweden's counties have been working on drafting and fixing in place regional growth programmes. The background to these programmes lies in the adoption by the Swedish parliament of a new regional development policy, to replace the earlier regional policy. An important assumption behind this policy is that national production and growth is the sum of regional (and local) production and growth. All areas of the country contribute to the total growth. A key aspect of our own programme in the county Värmland is therefore that Värmland should become of greater significance for Sweden as a whole.

The counties' proposals for regional growth programmes were analysed in the spring of 2003 by the Swedish Institute for Growth Policy Studies (ITPS). ITPS's judgements, not least with regard to the lack of a gender perspective, were experienced as quite categorical. We regarded their criticism as a challenge and increased our efforts to clarify as best we could the gender perspective in the programme's analyses, ambitions and actions.

The government approved the regional growth programmes for implementation just before Christmas 2003. The

made and the reservations which the government included with its decisions to the counties. All of us wondered just how high the bar had been set – when not a single one of Sweden's 21 counties had managed to incorporate the gender perspective sufficiently well. On both sides we thus felt the same uncertainty as to what comprised a good performance and the same responsibility and desire to achieve this. We also had questions concerning the leadership. The government can perhaps be compared to the boss who claims he (or she) has all the employees behind him, far behind him ...

By Bengt Dahlgren, Head of Economic Development and Maritha Johansson, Maritha Johansson, Expert on Gender Equality, County Administrative Board of Värmland



SEARCHING FOR A CLEAR ROLE MODEL – SOME REFLECTIONS AFTER A MEETING BETWEEN GENDER EQUAL RIGHTS OFFICERS AND PLANNING OFFICERS

The programme is to be developed and principally implemented regionally. National funding and instruments are naturally important resources for this work and its guidelines have therefore been drawn up by the government, i.e. the Ministry of Industry. Important issues taken into consideration in these guidelines include the so-called horizontal dimensions, one of which is gender equality.

The programmes are to be created through and their implementation be characterised by a common vision and cooperation. According to our experience, if many people – both men and women – are involved in processes it broadens their perspectives and those things which are taken for granted become less self-evident. The growth programme in Värmland is based, in our opinion, on just such a broad process, which has in turn resulted in a programme with a variety of points of departure and objectives. The programme's central point of departure is that to create regional growth it is not sufficient to merely provide support within industry and for enterprises. In addition to such support, we also need to boost competence, infrastructure, quality of life and strategic leadership.

approval was made with certain provisos. Generally speaking, for all counties, these concerned treatment of the so-called horizontal dimensions (or objectives). No county had, according to the government, successfully managed to incorporate these sufficiently well. From our side, we were once more puzzled as to what had been expected.

The idea of a joint meeting

Prompted by the above assessments and our feeling of inadequacy, we took the initiative of arranging a joint meeting between the gender equal rights and planning officers of Sweden's County Administrative Boards. The overarching aim of this initiative was to acquire a better common vision of "gender equal rights and regional development".

The meeting, held at the end of February 2004, was attended by our colleagues from 15 of Sweden's 21 counties. We were pleased by this good attendance. To direct our conversation we had enlisted the services of Professor Gunnell Forsberg from Karlstad University.

As we see it, both groups were surprised at the outcome of the evaluations

We believe that those evaluating and setting conditions top-down fail to really understand the process under which a programme develops and the complexity involved in implementing it. For others to read a programme from above and from outside, with only one type of focus, often seems unfair. We also believe that there is a risk that all of those people who took part and are engaged in this work may feel that there are too many demands made and reprimands given – that planning and developing counties is difficult enough in the first place. Overly specific and, in the mind of the receiver, unfair reproofs can definitely dampen the enthusiasm of many people, both programme developers and actors. The demand that various different aspects be taken into consideration must, in our opinion, be understood and accepted, and not experienced as too much of an external factor.

At the same fact is that those of us who are responsible for gender equal rights, on the one hand, and planning, on the other, discuss our counties' premises and ambitions, as well as what are the important questions and actions, in slightly different ways. We have the fee-

ling that those in charge of planning feel they know more about gender perspectives than they think gender equal rights officers know about growth and industry. On the other hand, the gender equal rights officers claim that gender equality is a knowledge field which includes both breadth and depth. It is not something that can be simply treated haphazardly. Planning officers perhaps speak more in overarching programme terms and superordinate structures while gender equal rights officers more often take their point of departure in examples from what could be called everyday situations and the significance of the “softer” and more reproductive and social infrastructure. And planning officers seem to be more concerned with clusters and innovation systems, as modern concepts in regional development work. Whereas the gender equal rights officers focus more clearly on the significance of the public sector and welfare questions in a wider context. To this could be added the fact that the vast majority of planning officers are male and the opposite is true with regard to gender equal rights officers.

Our initiative and the meeting caught the attention of the government. In our opinion, the government has to become better at communicating models to be followed and not simply guidelines and instructions. We believe we have much more to learn, and that there is a need for competence upgrading in the area of “gender perspectives and regional development”.

Sustainable growth energy in Värmland – some gender reflections

The title of the Värmland growth programme is “Sustainable Growth Energy in Värmland”. It implies a clear consciousness of the three dimensions of the concept of sustainability – economic, social and ecological. The formulation of

the programme is based on utilisation of or consideration for both women’s and men’s experience and knowledge to contribute to the ultimate goal of Sustainable Growth Energy for Värmland. Actively working towards gender equality is, in the Värmland programme, a means of regional development.

We believe that using statistics with a gender breakdown to describe counties and regional development is important. Such descriptions provide important additional information on the way things are and on the situation of individuals. In the table below we have attempted to describe, in a Värmland perspective, some clear distinctions between the sexes.

We can use the above table to reflect a little on the distinctions and how we can perhaps deal with them.

Probably no other country has as high a percentage of women active in the workforce as Sweden. In Värmland as well, the proportion of women in the workforce is almost as high as for men. But here the similarity ends. If we look at the actual workforce participation, each gender clearly has a different character and different premises. For instance, the proportion of women employed part-time is four times that of men. The gender-segregation of the labour market is also very evident. In sectors such as caring for children, the elderly and the disabled, around 95% of workers are women. In health care the proportion is almost 85% women. At the same time there are eight industrial sectors where men comprise over 85% of workers. On the basis of the definition of equal representation, there are nine female sectors and 26 male sectors. This gender-segregated labour market perhaps presents one of the really major challenges if we intend to utilise our total competence and get more people working.

Many attempts have been made during recent decades to break up this pattern. To judge from the overall picture, these attempts have not been especially successful. Perhaps one of the reasons is that far too many barrier-breaking projects have focused on the unemployed, or persons with a weak position in the labour market in one respect or another. Perhaps it is misconceived to expect that it is these individuals or type of persons who can be enabled to break new trails or open up new paths. And perhaps we have also underestimated the difficulties and have not consciously made the actual trailblazing intention of the projects sufficiently clear to the participants. One evaluation of a trailblazing project in Värmland, which was considered to have been successful in getting men into higher education within the non-traditional male sectors, asked the question as to whether the question of what was involved in breaking into a female-dominated profession had been discussed in this project and with the men who took part. The response from the project leaders was that they intentionally had not touched upon this question to any major extent since they “did not wish to wake the hibernating bear”¹.

Värmland can be regarded as a traditionally male county. The industries and means of production which have dominated the county have been male domains. Until only a few years ago, Värmland had never had a female county governor. At top political level the county now has female leaders for Värmland Region, the County Council and the municipality of Karlstad. Even the university’s Vice-chancellor is a woman, and the Chamber of Commerce just recently got its first female leader. Perhaps things are trying to happen in Värmland to break with the traditional male power structure.

If we look more closely, however, the power structure is still gender-segregated – and in favour of men. With regard, for example, to the gender

Table. Examples of gender perspectives

	Active in the work force (%) Year 2001	Percentage part-time employed (1-34 hrs. weekly) Year 2001	Unemployment (%) Q1 2004	Absent due to illness (Days) Year 2002	Percentage with higher education Year 2002	Members of mun. administration (%) Year 2004	Percentage self-employed Year 2002
Female	72.0	40.6	2.7	59.4	25.2	32.4	4.1
Male	74.7	9.7	4.7	38.8	19.7	62.7	9.2

¹ Ulrika Jansson; *Brytande män? – En utvärdering av ett brytprojekt i Hagfors och Munkfors kommuner (Pioneer men? – An evaluation of a trailblazing project in Hagfors and Munkfors municipalities). Working paper. Karlstad University, 2004:3.*

representation on municipal boards and committees, the elected council members are often gender-balanced, but only five of Värmland's 16 municipalities have executive councils with balanced gender representation². The majority of committees also clearly have a gender bias. This was pointed out, for instance, in the periodical *Kommunaktuellt* – with regard to the predominantly female social committee and the predominantly male building committee in Kristinehamn municipality. It was somewhat interesting to note that the female members of the social committee did not see this as a problem, while the men in the building committee were of the opinion that a different arrangement would have been an improvement.

A more enterprising Värmland has been perhaps one of the clearest objectives of regional development work for decades now. The gender dimension in the objectives set or actions to achieve this was for a long time unclear. To a growing extent, however, the significance of women's entrepreneurship has been made clear, just as the often very different premises of men and women when it comes to starting up and operating companies. This has resulted in placing emphasis on both female business consultants as resource centres for women. For the latter, there is a state contribution at national level, both in

the form of basic financing and project contributions. This assistance is handled by Nutek, the Swedish Business Development Agency. The principle of equity observed in providing basic financing is interesting. It has been regarded as preferable and more equitable for all applicants to receive a little assistance than for a few to receive more substantial assistance. This would scarcely have been the approach followed if it were a question of boosting other areas, or for example had been a question of male entrepreneurship.

In general, we interpret the facts as showing that it is difficult to really increase both new business start-ups as such and to increase the share of women starting companies. While advances or progress do occur, experience indicates that this requires patient efforts. We also believe that it is a question of making one's living – breadwinning companies – which is perhaps the most important motivation for starting a company. This is no doubt true for both genders but perhaps especially so for women. In our estimation this entrepreneurship should not be underestimated in regional development work, even if its growth ambitions are not so evident³.

With our examples we have attempted to show several dimensions where clear gender perspectives give a fuller picture

of regional development work. Additional examples could be given – for example on the theme of educational choice and mobility patterns. Our examples have implications for the vision of growth. We believe:

- that recognising the gender-segregated labour market challenges the picture of a public sector which we can only afford if we get economic growth moving again;
- that actively working to encourage more women to start their own companies implies recognising the breadwinning companies' role in a more entrepreneurial Värmland;
- that the question of power hopefully is not just a question of equity but is also important for how we view issues and where we place our actions.

² *Är det hon eller han som bestämmer? – En kartläggning av makt och inflytande i Värmlands kommuner (Is it her or him who decides? – A mapping of power and influence in Värmland's municipalities).* County Administrative Board for Värmland, Report 2003:14.

³ *Äran större än pengarna – En utvärdering av Viljastipendiet under åren 1995 – 2003 (More the honour than the money itself – An evaluation of the Vilja grants 1995-2003).* County Administrative Board for Värmland, Report 2004:2.



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Gunnel Forsberg

Professor in human geography especially planning at Department of Human Geography, University of Stockholm and guest professor of Gender Studies at Karlstad University

The question of gender and regional development has traditionally been neglected nevertheless it remains an important field that needs to be moved up the research and policy agendas. Unfortunately, the particular topic in hand is also not currently at the top of the list in terms of gender studies either. In the recently published book on gender studies in Sweden, Britt-Marie Thurén (2002) almost never mentions the question of regional development in her overview of topics addressed in contemporary gender research in Sweden. This lack of research has moreover significantly impacted on developments within the field, where planners with concrete problems to solve seek assistance and help, yet the scientific milieu seems to have few answers.

As we noted above however the topics and the empirical material are of scientific significance. Relationships between males and females constitute themselves in different spaces and places resulting in a situation where relations between the sexes are produced and reproduced in everyday praxis within the framework of different cultural discourses. The place thus becomes an 'actor' that creates the social order of specific gender relations. As we have seen, all gender relations are variations of similar kinds of unequal power relations. This problem then constitutes a significant scientific challenge, for how can we understand the general structure creating asymmetrical conditions for men and women while taking regional variations into consideration?



Gender Mainstream and Regional Development

Within a geographical perspective, one can easily cope with this dual approach. There is an overall gender structure that has clear and deep roots in the construction of human societies. No matter what economic or socio-political form of organisation, there is a gender ranking system. Regardless of that, space still carries meaning. The general structure articulates itself in various shapes. What is supposed to be meant by male and female in different places is a spatial process, a space-based process of genderisation. Identity construction as man or woman, i.e. the forming of self-images, mainly takes place in a local context. Moreover, what is

particularly important for gender-based geographical research is the conceptualisation of the local level used here.

Surveying the situation of women in various part of Sweden however one notices that it is not only a question of local variation but also one of regional policy and regional analyses. Through the use of local studies it is possible to identify different forms of gender contracts, each with its own specific set of gender relations, as gender relations develop as a social phenomenon, in a local context. One explanation of how gender relations are shaped lies in the use of resources at the local level, and this, in turn, helps to construct the specific local structure, which together constitutes specific regional, gender contracts.

This becomes obvious when looking at the way in which gender mainstreaming is processed within the EUs Structural Funds programmes. Here we have the principle of gender "mainstreaming", which means that the 'equal opportunity' objective shall be integrated within every set of policy aims and priorities in all objectives. In this respect, it is of importance to notice the varied situation that women experience, due to their different living conditions.

To measure the outcome of equal opportunity projects, one needs to begin by identifying the underlying 'inequality problem'. Such problems fall into two different categories, the short-term problem of high unemployment and/or under-employment among women, and the long-term problem of a gender-segregated labour market. One aspect that we need to be aware of here is that ready to hand 'remedies' for each of these problems are actually rather difficult to integrate. As such, progress towards one goal can often be seen as counter-productive in respect of the other. As such, solving the short term problem, by find job opportunities for women, often entails finding traditional female work with low status, low salaries, and a low degree of security, and few possibilities to improve and/or begin a career. Such short-term fixes often result then in merely keeping women tied to this kind of low-pay/low-value sector. As such then these short-term fixes can quickly become an albeit

unintended way of maintaining women in a subordinate position in the labour market.

The strategy chosen here is in line with the analysis of the problem, while the target of the evaluation is to analyse the consequences related to the problem analysis and the strategy. For instance, if the problem is analysed as being gender-segregation, a focus on simply 'finding jobs for women' can quickly turn into a dead-end in terms of furthering the higher goal by inadvertently reproducing relationships inherent to the traditional labour market. On the other hand, working out a strategy for long-term change, which would entail encouraging men to take up 'traditional female work', can be difficult to defend if women are out of work.

Another difficult task is the question of vertical vs. horizontal integration. While horizontal integration is a question of many women joining a traditional male sector, vertical integration is concerned with a few women taking up more decision-based occupations, such as those at a management level. Even here however it remains a question of short and long-term effects.

Even more complicated perhaps is the aim, heavily stressed in both Sweden and other EU-countries, that women should be able to have both a working and a family life while also having a job that makes them economically independent. This is the individual effect of successful equal opportunity programmes. To be able to assess these kinds of questions however one needs to go out and ask people about their family arrangements and their income situation. Ultimately however enshrining the principle and practice of equal opportunity is more important than simply finding work for women in the short term. This goal is however only achievable if both men and women are part of the structural change process.

On the structural level, there is a need to analyse the labour market effects, and the effects on companies taking part in the project. To what extent has the company gained from employing people with different competences? Usually women, due to the fact that often it is they who take care of the family and run the household, have

developed some specific skills, which can be of use in firms and organisations. Integrating women into the labour market can thus have numerous positive benefits. But this is an efficient strategy only when the project as a whole is a gender integrated, both at the vertical and horizontal levels.

Sweden is now in its second round of regional policy programming within the context of the EU Structural Funding regime. The results of the first period have been evaluated and monitored. Sweden has decided to make the gender mainstreaming policy an official strategy across all public policies and programmes. This implies that a gender perspective will be envisaged and considered across all parts of governmental operations and in all state organisations and authorities. Consequently, one can now expect gender mainstreaming to develop into one of the most important objectives in respect of the implementation of the EU Structural Funds.

It is however important to distinguish between "general" regional problems and gender equality problems in different regions. Regional policy is a question of gender equality in the sense that the official aim of creating equal living opportunities, whatever ones geographical location should be fulfilled as much for women as for men. Moreover, as far as regional policy is a question of democracy, full democracy demands that women participate in decision-making about regional and local development—on their own terms—just as much as men. It is not enough to be a target for projects, women also have to be centrally involved in the decision making process as well.

This is also an analytical question. Regional inequalities are usually examined in gender-neutral terms, and this often hides the problems affecting the female section of the population. It is necessary to analyse living conditions from a women's point of view and to identify the needs, preferences, and potentials that are gender-specific. Otherwise there is a risk that policies will continue to "reform" the situation merely by trying to fit women into an unsuitable male structure.

The overall findings with regard to the evaluation of the first period of the

structural funds were that there has been no direct focus on gender issues in any of the programmes, despite the ambitions laid out within the context of gender mainstreaming. This is only in part due to a lack of interest; it is also due to a lack of knowledge. The question raised by people involved in programme initiatives is then how can gender mainstreaming can be realised.

We should not be surprised by this conclusion. There are however a number of contradictions that need to be taken into consideration here when discussing gender mainstreaming:

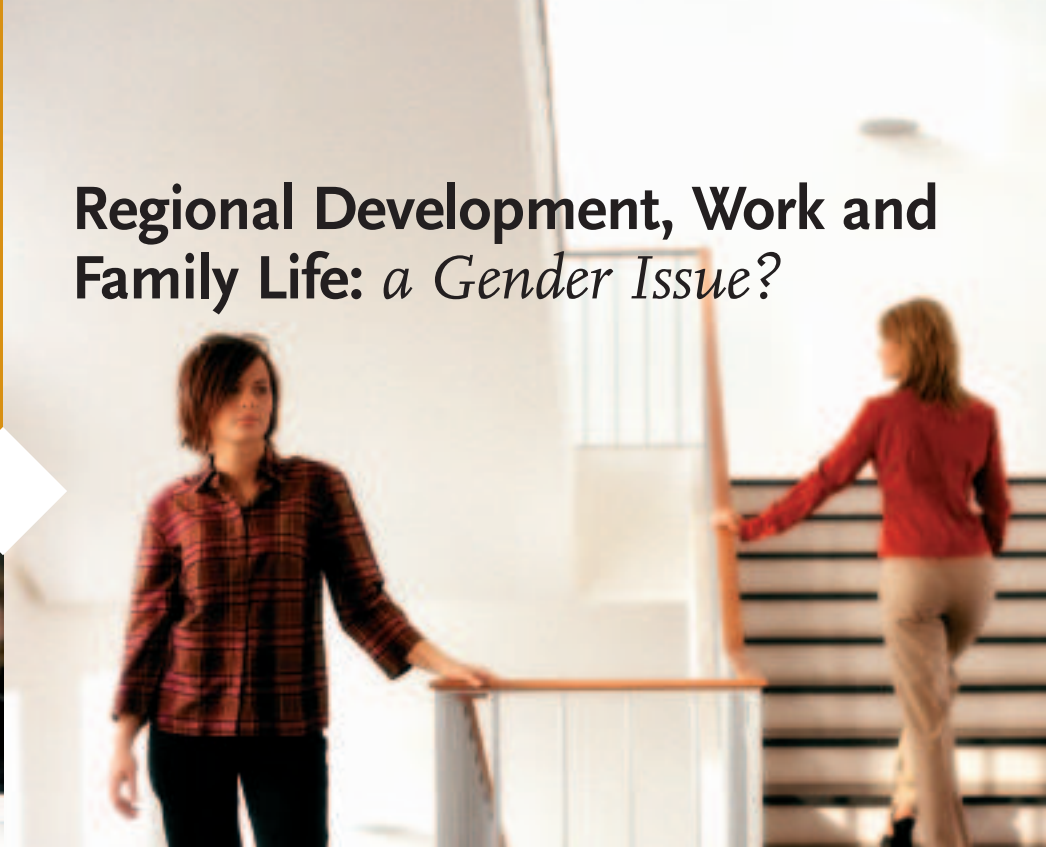
1. Is the objective to support women or to change the structure? The first strategy runs the risk of cementing in place an unequal gender structure rather than changing it. As an example, cultural heritage conservation has been part of many of the projects and it has been seen as a way to provide work for women. At the same time this initiative runs the risk of locking women into traditional gender roles and relations.
2. Which is most effective – to use quantitative or qualitative measurements? Is it at all possible to find indicators that can measure qualitative changes?
3. What kind of support is most relevant for women (and men)? Is the idea to support physical and social infrastructure, day care and care for elderly people, or to support women's private business ventures?

An overall question thus emerges as to whether gender rearrangements and structural changes are contradictory or corresponding processes? Or, to put it in a more normative way: When are gender rearrangements in line with the reinforcement of regional development and vice versa, and when do they counteract each other? Such questions provide a real challenge for gender research.

Reference: Turén, Britt-Marie (2003) Genusforskning - Frågor, villkor och utmaningar. Stockholm: Vetenskapsrådet

Regional Development, Work and Family Life: *a Gender Issue?*

Tarja Cronberg



As with most issues within our societies today, regional development is not gender blind. This becomes apparent in the articles elsewhere in this journal reflecting the migration and labour market situation in the Nordic countries, as well as the development work undertaken in some regional contexts (e.g. Värmland in Sweden). In some cases it may be men who are disadvantaged, in others women, nevertheless gender does make a difference in regional development terms. Whilst the articles in this issue represent only a limited number of the potential empirical aspects, theoretical perspectives and normative understandings of the multifaceted gender issue within regional development, and do not as such allow us to draw broader conclusions on the vulnerabilities and challenges that each of the sexes face in trying to promote regional development, they may nonetheless provide further food for thought in this area. One issue where regional development and gender are clearly interdependent is that of entrepreneurship, which has often hitherto been addressed as if it were in fact a gender-neutral issue.

Not only the structures and working practices, but also the language of regional development is gender-biased, which soon becomes apparent when the language and objectives of regional development are looked at. The regional development vocabulary is constituted by themes such as economic growth, job-creation, frameworks, programmes, measures, authorities etc. Language is never gender blind and neither is it here. As far as regional development is political in nature, it is always essential-

ly the meeting between competing narratives and discourses, not simply a matter for the exercise of rational choice between quantitatively evaluated alternatives. Whose discourse is most powerful and most convincing is thus an important question, but it also requires considerable mobilization and work from the public authorities responsible for regional development to make sure that all discourses get their fair share of the publicly administered discussion, as well as trying to ensure that the different discourses get a chance to meet and exchange views, thereby gradually leading to better understanding between opposing or distant views. How this is to be done is an important question for both regional development, and more broadly, for gender equality as a whole. As has been argued in a number of evaluations and studies on gender equality in regional development and on the Structural Funds, a paradigm change may be required. As long as the mobilisation of women takes place within the traditional paradigm of regional planning and development, little is likely to change.

Why is gender equality important in regional development? Without delving too deeply into the debates and theories about gender equality, it seems justified to argue that in order to maintain the sustainability of the Nordic regions, many of which are faced with challenges of out-migration, a special focus on gender is required. Addressing gender issues and identifying working practices and positive role models or 'best practices' within regional development is important because they can provide tools for promoting competitiveness

and regional attractiveness while also improving the quality of life in Nordic societies, independent of their geographic or population profile.

In the interview reported below the Journal Of Nordregio posed this question to a Finnish politician who has seen and experienced the regional development dilemmas from a variety of perspectives, namely Tarja Cronberg. Before becoming the first Green Party MP in the Finnish parliament from Northern Karelia in 2003, Cronberg was the first woman to be the Director of a Finnish Regional Council (North Karelia, 1995-2001) and between these two postings the Director of COPRI (Copenhagen Peace Research Institute, 2001-2003). In her position as regional director in the Eastern Finnish region of Northern Karelia, Cronberg was faced with the record-levels of high unemployment, as well as the subsequent out-migration and economic renewal challenges that became matters of life and death for this region.

– Is there room for gender in regional development?

TC: Absolutely. I see three dimensions in this: the actor-perspective, the structure-perspective and the mobilisation perspective. It is important to address the official power structures and language, but at the same time also take into account the needs of the individuals, the women that are mobilized and that need to be mobilized, their aspirations, tears and enthusiasm. When it comes to the structures, in the case of regional development programmes taking the gender perspective seriously means, for instance, that the deci-

sion-making structures also reflect women's interests and concerns, and that women are represented in decision-making, at the same time as they also become involved in the concrete projects financed and implemented. In the early stages of the Structural Funds implementation for instance this was certainly not the case, with very few women being represented in the key organizations and decision-making structures, and subsequently women were far removed from the programme work and did not feel it was relevant for them. Men drafted the programmes, decided on the priorities and measures and got funding for projects as well. Gradually this had to change.

When the regional development structures were reformed and the regional management committees introduced, there was an opportunity to influence the gender balance of decision-making in the regions and for regional development. The three partners involved (the state, the municipalities, and the social partners) were each to make sure that the 40% threshold (referring to the representation of both sexes in the RMCs) was met. It was problematic to ensure this for the social partners, but we managed to get around this problem by empowering the organization for women entrepreneurs. Women need to be represented in the organizations where decisions are made, but also, and perhaps even more importantly, they need to see that such activities and decisions are of relevance to them.

– And how did it change? What are the main issues here? What is the difference between women and men's projects, and by extension between women and men's regional development, in the end?

TC: Women's projects are often more holistic in nature, and not as strictly connected to business development as the majority of Structural Funds projects tend to be. Rather, projects planned by women often tend to address every-day life aspects. I'll tell you an example: When we in Northern Karelia tried to include a measure addressing "every-day structures", i.e. those structures that are developed in order to enable the better reconciliation of work and family life in regional development activities into the Structural Funds Objective 1 Programme for the period 1999-2006, this turned out

to be a long and difficult process. The four eastern Finnish regions drafted this programme together and at different stages of the drafting, I kept arguing for the inclusion of "every-day structures" as a separate priority. My male colleagues kept objecting and saying "but what does it mean?" I said it means those activities that increase regional attractiveness and competitiveness and by so doing also mobilize women. All through the drafting process there was great scepticism amongst my male colleagues, though in the end I managed to get it through by saying that you will just have to trust me and other women here – we know what this is all about! This is important – not even mainly because of the financial opportunities that it entails, but more importantly in bringing this important issue into those arenas where decisions are made and financing allocated. Concepts and financial structures are still highly gender-blind and technocratic: whatever we can do to improve this is positive. Let the work speak for itself in making the "every-day structures" known. Our understandings of regional development, technology and innovation thus all need to be reconsidered in order to ensure that women's entrepreneurship and innovation is not over-looked or simply passed over as a potential regional development resource.

– So your experience then was that the women's perspective was simply not visible enough, and not that it was deliberately obstructed by the men? There is no conspiracy here?

TC: Regional development is not gender blind in any of its aspects, and as such not when it comes to the strategic choices, financial structures or to eligibility. Once we realize this, the main issue becomes making women, and women's perspective within regional development, visible and taking women's experiences in everyday life seriously as a starting point in regional development. Regional development has been a largely male-dominated issue, it has not appealed to women, while the men who have historically made most of the decisions have not always had the competences required to address gender issues. The industrial areas promoted for instance have all too often been limited to traditional industries, while entrepreneurship was perceived largely as a male issue. As such, small,

often self-employed service sector businesses such as restaurants, hairdressers or the family care sector have often not been eligible for support within traditional regional development thinking. Yet the beauty of women's entrepreneurship often is that it does not require major investment: though women's businesses may not always create large numbers of new jobs, they cost relatively little and can have major implications for regional attractiveness. Positive changes have taken place here and women's entrepreneurship is today better supported through the trade and industry support structures.

– Are there good examples of regional development promotion that address the issue of gender equality and women's entrepreneurship?

TC: A good example from the Finnish context is to be found in the work of the Kareli Resource Centre for Women, which has helped to bring women into the regional development arena in Northern Karelia while helping to inspire people to think differently about regional development. We have to bring enthusiasm into regional development. Here the mobilization effects of women's resource centres can be really important in utilizing the resources that women have, for example in innovation policy. This can also mean that innovation is seen in a different light, and as something where women can make a difference. For instance in the field of care and welfare businesses, as well as in culture, a lot of expertise and competence is to be found at the grass-roots level – this has to be acknowledged and further enabled through the funding structures within innovation. Women's assets and knowledge need to be made eligible in regional development programming and this can only be done by getting women involved in the process. We need to make policies and plans that make regional development interesting to women by ensuring that they genuinely address their needs. There is no point in addressing these things on a technocratic level if we do not take into account the realities upon which people act every-day. This is the whole point of the focus on "every-day structures".

By Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith 



Karelli: Women's Resource Centre

Karelli Women's Resource Centre functions as a centre for information and guidance on issues concerning women's entrepreneurship and employment. It was first launched as an EU project, but has since been established as a Limited company. Karelli has functioned as a regional development organization, and a forum for meetings and training activities, and as an administrative support centre for projects concerning women's employment and entrepreneurship. Some of the innovations introduced, such as the Puotiska-model, which provides a network of temporary staff that can stand in to help out female entrepreneurs if they have children who are sick or other similar situations have found broader appeal and have subsequently been copied elsewhere.

Although there are women's resource centres in a number of European countries (for instance Sweden has a network of 150 women's resource centres, Northern Italy, Spain and the UK are also active in this field), Finland has not been particularly active in this field and the projects have rarely led to more long-term activities. Nevertheless, there are aspects of the Karelli model that have attracted a wider audience with, for instance, the Ministry of Trade and Industry supporting the pilot stage of building the network model for the resource centre, while the Ministry of Labour itself utilised the Puotiska-model. In addition, The Ministry of the Interior decided recently to finance a study on developing a national resource-centre network, based on the positive experiences of the Karelli centre. This support comes in the context of the governmental programme for entrepreneurship, which otherwise has seen little focus on gender issues.

More information on Karelli:
www.karellikeskus.fi

VIOLENCE, WOMEN AND PLANNING

During the spring of this year numerous reports appeared in the Swedish media concerning women being attacked and raped in public places. Does planning have anything to do with this? Around the world, women often avoid walking alone in cities at night or feel insecure when they do so. The mere presence of an unaccompanied woman in the city is, in certain situations, seen as an invitation to sexual harassment, robbery or rape. In some cities, such as Mexico City or Bombay, this has led to the establishment of train cars restricted to women only. In this way our gender determines our movements, our fears, whether we can walk alone at night, whether we can take the shortcut through the woods or whether we are restricted to the home and to private spaces.



By Karin Bradley, Research Fellow and Moa Tunström, Research Assistant, Nordregio

A number of diverse issues are dealt with in the field of gender and planning, issues such as transportation, labour markets, the involvement of women in planning, parenthood, and eco-feminism. In this article however we discuss the issue of fear, women and planning.

Planning for (women's) safety

The situation in the Nordic countries might not be as severe as that in India or Mexico, but issues of gender, fear and the city have certainly become a hot topic in recent years. In 2001 the Swedish police disseminated pioneering guidelines on how to plan for crime prevention. This was after the Swedish National Board of Housing, Building and Planning (Boverket) had conducted a study on crime, housing and planning (1998) and another study on gender equality and planning (1996). The issue of safety is often, but not solely, connected to women's fear. Carina Listerborn (2002) is one researcher who makes this connection and in her studies of women's fear in Gothenburg one of her interviewees tells us:

"... the women I know in Bergsjön, they don't dare to go out on the town. Several of them would really like to go to a ceramics course in town, but they don't because they do not dare to go back home to the bus stop and walk to Tycho Brahegatan."

The story of urban theorist Dora Epstein (1998) is similar:

"I often find myself making choices about my exploration of the city based on my ideas of what is safe or unsafe. I avoid certain routes because they are unlit at night, certain buses because they take me too far from areas I know, or certain places because of stories of danger from media and fri-

ends. [...] Like so many women in the city I fear rape. Like so many gays and lesbians, I fear bashing. Like so many middle-class citizens, I fear assault and robbery."

Generally the dark, deserted and run-down public streets, tunnels or parks are described as crime-friendly places. Consequently, planning efforts directed towards counteracting violence and sexual assault include increasing the amount of street lighting, increasing the presence of people day and night in previously deserted areas through the mixing of housing, work and service functions, densification, and the removal of dead-end streets. At the same time these efforts, as well as the installation of surveillance cameras, the removal of graffiti, general refurbishment, and the turning of public market places into privately controlled indoor shopping areas, are policies that have been pursued in the rhetorical context of 'cleaning up the streets'. Writer and urban theorist Mike Davis (1990) describes this trend in the book "City of Quartz":

"This obsession with physical security systems, and, collaterally, with the architectural policing of social boundaries, has become a zeitgeist of urban restructuring, a master narrative in the emerging built environment of the 1990s."

Davies continues by describing measures implemented in Los Angeles, such as automatic sprinkler systems preventing people from sleeping in parks, public benches without support for the back so that you cannot rest or sleep on them – all in order to create safe environments. This is however not only an American paranoia; it is now a reality in Europe and Sweden as well. For instance, in the Netherlands the creation of safe environments is now set up as the national number one priority for physical planning. In Stockholm new park benches, such as those for example just outside our window at Nordregio, are without backrests. The lighting around the building is now discernibly brighter than before. A local park known for its gay cruising culture has recently seen its bushes cut down so that people cannot hide or conduct activities there which might scare other people.

Safety yes, but at the expense of excitement and diversity?

Differing interpretations exist as to what characterises a safe urban environment. It is often the case however that order, light, tidiness, the presence of people who know or care about each other, and a sense of belonging are emphasised (Listerborn 2002, Newman 1972 and 1996). For Oscar Newman, a prominent crime-prevention figure, a safe urban environment is characterised by small neighbourhoods with low-rise housing – as in the traditional small town. Paradoxically though, is it not the social control of the small town that contemporary young women flee, seeking the larger and more dynamic anonymity of city life? (See the article by Tomas Hanell.)

For instance, Elizabeth Wilson (1991) argues that urban life helped to liberate women compared to rural or suburban life. According to Wilson however the focus on security and safety issues is problematic as it tends to recreate the patriarchal order. For both Wilson and Epstein, encounters with strangers, the unknown, disorder, dark places, and anonymity, are important dimensions of city life, for both men and women. Removal of these dimensions entails a loss of excitement and a loss of diverse forms of life, particularly as places representing these hidden, run-down and dark sides of the city could be seen as particularly important for alternative life styles and marginalised groups. So, the increasingly lit, populated, renovated and controlled urban environments might make some people feel safer and thus freer, but this freedom is perhaps at the expense of the freedom and safety of the homeless, the alcoholics or the gay cruisers and teenage skaters.

In this way, the struggle for safe spaces for women coincides with the gentrification and privatisation of public and democratic arenas. As Listerborn points out, there is a risk that the understandable concerns and fears that women have in relation to personal safety will however be used to legitimise the privatisation of public spaces and to support further increases in the level of social surveillance and control. Paradoxically then under this schema society comes to control its citizens

more closely, and consequently, in a patriarchal society, the male norm controls the female deviant.

The view of woman as different and vulnerable

Through our reflections on planning for safety we wish to draw attention to the fact that, when planning for the physical environment, in particular with the needs of women in mind, it is necessary to reflect upon the definition of woman, of femininity, and of gender politics. Why plan for a specific gender? What does it imply to define women's needs as something different from those of men? In what ways are the needs of men and women different and why does the discourse of protection now loom so large? Is the most important characteristic of women the fact that they need to be protected? Protecting them can also be seen as stressing and accepting the fact that women are primarily to be allotted the role of victims. This however comes close to the essentialist view of men and women, and thus to the opinion that the female perspective is primarily a result of biology.

The usual measures deal with the protection of women from (violent) men. But could one not instead imagine a planning approach that attempted to calm the violent men? Or one that made men travel in certain train cars, thus ensuring that it was not only women who were corralled into these separate and supposedly "safe" spaces. The idea of constructing such spaces for women can be seen in an historical perspective. Wilson in "The Sphinx in the City" (1991) tells us the history of the role of women in urban public life, on the stage of the city:

"Woman is present in cities as temptress, as whore, as fallen woman, as lesbian, but also as virtuous womanhood in danger ..."

Here she describes the cultural clashes of the late 19th century Paris when women started to occupy public space – the streets, the new department stores, the cafés etc. As public life was something for men, the female flâneur was at her entrance viewed as a prostitute, as disorder.

In "Hela Samhället" (1997) Boverket tries to draw a picture of women's needs in relation to planning, or of the female perspective on societal development. In spite of the ambitious aim, the book is foremost an example of the view of woman as being different and vulnerable. Not neglecting the importance of safety against rape, or ensuring better access for prams in public spaces etc., but to present this as a female perspective does not necessarily help women's participation in planning in general. However, according to Boverket the female perspective on, and female participation in, planning are intertwined, since if men had or took as much responsibility for the everyday life of the family and for home related issues, female participation in planning would be higher and the so called female perspective would not be defined as such. This is an important standpoint. In the same sense as women can act as the male planner and according to the male norm, men can represent the female deviant.

Safe in the dark

The fact that women are victims of sexual assault and crime, as well as their mere feeling of fear in public places clearly need to be dealt with. One radical strategy, as in the British and American movement "Women take back the night" is for women to collectively enter the dark parks, the empty back-streets and the tunnels, instead of surrendering to private safe spaces, surveillance cameras, car use and indoor shopping malls. Such civil action, however, can be interpreted as anti-planning and a disbelief in planning solutions. In addition, it is not primarily the dark and run-down streets as such that create the criminals or individuals that would seek to harass others. Attempting to address issues such as violence and fear through urban planning measures can be seen as end-of-pipe solutions where the symptoms rather than the root causes are tackled – something that perhaps become increasingly handy, as welfare-systems are dismantled, psychiatric care downsized and youth recreation centres closed down.

Nevertheless, planning does play a certain role and a key question is how we can plan for increased safety without

victimizing women and without limiting the lives of the groups inhibiting and enjoying the dark sides of the city. To be aware of the complexity, gender implications and the side effects of physical planning for safety is crucial. The socially sensitive planners of today should thus be able to handle the issues of vulnerability and safety whilst also addressing the need to acknowledge the positive benefits of the excitement and the unpredictability of city life simultaneously. It should not be a question of either/or.

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THE NORDIC REGIONS AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Nordic Regions and the European Union. Edited by Søren Dosenrode and Henrik Halkier. Ashgate, Aldershot, 2004. 234 pages.

By Bue Nielsen, geographer, M.Sc., Spatial Planning Department, Copenhagen.

Over the last 15 years the Nordic countries have seen many changes take place in the field of regional policy, with regional organisations and the tasks performed by the regions having also been subject to significant changes. Moreover, these changes occurred at the same time as Sweden and Finland became members of the European Union and were undoubtedly influenced by the debates and negotiations on how regional policy in the Nordic countries should be managed under new institutional circumstances. It is also true to say that the 1990s saw a general revitalisation of regional policy in the European Union with more money distributed through the Structural Funds and the creation of new interregional and cross-border initiatives. The question that this book seeks to answer then is how far these changes in regional organisation in the Nordic countries can be ascribed to, or explained by, the need to adapt to EU policies.

The book is the result of a project on Nordic regions and the European Union, itself an offspring of a workshop held by the Nordic Political Science Association. It contains a number of contributions on this issue, mostly written by political scientists, but also by scholars from within the disciplines of economics and planning.

The contributions to the book can be divided into two parts. Four chapters describe the regional issues in each of the four big Nordic countries. Five other essays introduce special topics

related to the theme: Lobbying in Brussels, integration in the Baltic Sea Region and in the region of Öresund, and governance and partnerships in Danish and Norwegian regional development. The editors have written an introduction to the theme of the book and also a concluding chapter. Four brief appendices summarise the regional organisation in the four countries.

Søren Dosenrode gives a brief introduction to the Danish administrative system and how decisions in relation to EU policy are made. He shows how counties often find themselves neglected in the decision-making process. Interest in EU co-operation is of course largest where the issue of financing is at stake, as in the counties eligible for EU regional policy aid. Thus direct lobbying of the EU in Brussels is generally regarded as an interesting option for some counties in order to make themselves heard. It remains unclear however just how much influence such counties are able to garner in Brussels, and in which fields.

Dosenrode's Danish analysis can be advantageously supplemented by reading Henrik Halkier's contribution on multi-level governance and Danish regional policy strategies, which appears later on in the book. Halkier demonstrates that the changes that occurred in Danish regional policy around 1990 that put an end to national support schemes not only led to the increased involvement of regional actors, but also enhanced the capacity of these actors to pursue their own preferences within a system of multi-level governance.

Jan Olsson and Joachim Åström concentrate their description of the regions' role in the Swedish administrative system on the experiments with regional self-government initiated in the 1990s. According to the authors, these experiments cannot be ascribed to EU influence even if they were initiated almost simultaneously with implementation of Swedish EU membership in the regional field. The experiments reflect the fact that the central government "instead of top-down planning encouraged process-oriented, experimental learning from below." (p. 83). This, the authors find, is a gradual transformation that began back in the 1980s, and, as such, it is not related to EU per se.

The Swedish experience seems to be that the possibilities opened up by the EU function as a tool that can then be used by regions that are already strong and wish to pursue their own initiatives independently of the central government. Other regions with weaker economies are however more dependent on their relationship with central government, and they neither wish, nor are able, to do the same.

Contrarily, in Finland, rising awareness of European integration and the adoption of active regional strategies can in part be explained by the growing importance of the Structural Funding after 1988. According to Kaisa Lähteenmäki-Smith, the need to adapt to the Structural Funds regime led to regionalisation in Finland, and this included the introduction of programme based regional policy and later also regional development programmes. EU adaptation is not the only reason driving such changes in the Finnish context however, as some were already anticipated and discussed as far back as the 1970s. As such, Lähteenmäki-Smith may be right in her claim that "it is more accurate to speak of internationalisation, of which Europeanisation of the region is one important aspect (p. 50).

Jan Erik Grindheim gives a rather detailed historical outline of regional management in Norway highlighting a long tradition of central control where regional self-government in the late 20th century is only a short interlude. According to Grindheim, the decision in 2001 that public hospitals should be managed by the central government has had a devastating effect on the legitimacy of the counties. In contrast to Finland, the role of the regional level thus seems to have been reduced in Norway. The significance attached by central government to regional co-operation with other countries and to participation in international regional development programmes is thus however difficult to mirror in the regions themselves.

Together, the four contributions on regional government in the big Nordic countries show the wide variety that currently exists between the Nordic countries as regards the relationship

between state and region in each. Even if the authors seem to agree that EU membership has led to greater self-confidence in some counties, they have different opinions as to the role of the European Union in their own country. Nevertheless, each of these chapters deploys important arguments in the ongoing discussion on the influence of EU harmonisation on the tasks of, and opportunities for, the regions in the Nordic countries.

Even if most of the chapters in the second part of the book are not so clearly connected to the main subject of the publication as the chapters in the first part, they do highlight interesting aspects of the theme. I would in this regard like here to draw particular attention to Andreas Cornett's discussion of the potentials for regional integration in the Baltic Sea Region, with the regions as participants and perhaps promoters, as well as the demonstration by Ole B. Jensen and Tim Richardson, that the "Öresund region is a loosely defined institutional and territorial arena for those players who want in on the global game" (p. 153).

In line with the main theme of the book, Henrik Halkier and Arild Gjertsen discuss the growing role of partnerships in regional policy. This fact is often explained with reference to EU regional policy and prompted by the demands of the Structural Funds' regulations, but, as the analysis in this chapter shows, the way this organisational device operates in reality actually reflects national and regional circumstances.

The editors' final discussion of the fundamental question in the book is a balanced and useful one. On the one hand they see that adaptation to EU regulations has triggered fruitful discussion of structural reform at the regional level, particularly in Finland, while it has also entailed minor changes in administrative routines. On the other hand they admit, more in accordance with Swedish experiences, that for the Nordic regions, the nation-state continues to play a pivotal role. The relative weakening of the Norwegian regional level might of course be ascribed to the fact that Norway did not become a member of the European Union. The editors do however hesitate before drawing this conclu-

sion, because important endogenous factors seem also to be at play here.

Despite numerous changes, the variety in regional structures and tasks that exists across and between the Nordic countries is as large today as it was twenty years ago. Even if the impact of European Union regional policy is easy enough to recognise, the harmonisation of regional government and governance is still some way off.

The experience of the Nordic countries may be of relevance for the new member states of the EU. As such, can we expect their regional administrations to be reformed in order to cope with the management needs of the EU structural funds regime, much as the Finnish system of governance was? Or will the changes be less radical? This edited work by Dosenrode and Halkier has no crystal ball in this regard, and as such it leaves the door open to many possibilities.



THE CONSTRUCTION OF BUILT HERITAGE

Angela Phelps, G.J. Ashworth & Bengt O.H. Johansson (editors) 2002. *The Construction of Built Heritage: A north European perspective on politics, practices and outcomes*. Ashgate, 2002, 282 pages.

By Christer Bengs,
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Among a growing literature on heritage, books applying a comparative perspective are interesting in the sense that they render such matters relative, which tend to be grand issues in the national context. In part one of their

book, Phelps, Ashworth and Johansson give an account of the national systems for preserving the built heritage in the UK, The Netherlands and Sweden. In part two, which comprises most of the book, a series of 13 case studies are examined within the context of four different headings. The book ends with a conclusion written by Ashworth. The reader is well served throughout by the fact that the editors/authors are very experienced in their field.

The chosen national cases are very interesting with regard to differences in intentions and the actual outcome of conservation measures. Both in the case of UK and The Netherlands, the formalised public concern for the built heritage started rather late. The conservation measures subsequently undertaken have, however, been fairly successful. To mention but a few brief examples from these two countries: in the UK the number of listed buildings amounts to some 520 000, which comprises 2.25 percent of the entire building stock. In addition, more than 9,000 larger entiti-

es are designated as conservation areas. Most owners view designation as preventing unwanted change and enhancing property values. The Netherlands has had both the machinery and the political will to implement conservation policies. Monument preservation has become an integral part of urban conservation, and almost all of the central areas of most Dutch cities are conserved. Neither urban motorways nor out of town shopping centres were ever built in the country.

In comparison, the bulk of buildings in Sweden come from the period 1960-75, that is, close to 80 percent. Older buildings have, as a rule, been thoroughly modernised. The urban renewal of the 1960s hit the country particularly hard. Close to 50 percent of housing units built before 1900 was knocked down in the process, applauded by the liberally oriented Conservative Party and the Social Democrats alike. Weak legislation and the strong position of landowners in the planning process is a token of prevailing preferences. The

number of listed buildings includes only some 2000 pieces, and listed areas are very rare, as each building has to be listed individually.

The case studies are grouped into four parts with a brief introduction to each. The theme of the first section is heritage, identity and urban regeneration. "Place identity" is in the focus and "heritage" defined as "a conscious use of past associations and references". One fundamental question that emerges here is how place identity is conceived, constructed, acted upon and displaced. Here, the communicative perspective is applied. Another question of some magnitude regards the effects and limits of the regulating context in which conservation and heritage planning is performed. Ingrid Holmberg who wrote the introductory pages, believes that the highlighting of "identity" as a separate theme opens up a serious discussion of the conditions under which parts of the built environment are transformed into heritage in urban regeneration.

The second section deals with the heritage site as an attraction. Angela Phelps believes that in previous centuries owners had little compunction about demolishing outdated buildings, and that the idea of restoring buildings to their original appearance is very new. On this point one may remark that effects should not be taken for causes. Continuity is not threatened by psychological faculties, but by the overall increasing speed of change and the means the perpetually increasing productivity of labour has provided. Phelps points out that a forward-looking renewal stra-

tegy is now advocated. The objective is to find multiple function re-use, which will not simply preserve the building but bring back energetic use. Where forms and functions are closely related, changing the function may of course seriously undermine the understanding of the surviving forms. However, the opening up of such sites to public access creates conflict with the demands of conservation.

The third theme concerns heritage as a strategic policy option. A prevailing strategy is to turn heritage into distinct place images that may help to regain a sense of pride among citizens in their environment. This is supposed to be a necessary requisite for attracting business and tourists. Tourism is labour intensive, which means work places, but mostly local at the same time, which means that attractions should be fairly centrally located with respect to the bulk of consumers.

The last part of case studies section of the book deals with heritage and the restructuring of symbolic places. The issue at stake here according to Bengt O.H. Johansson seems to be who "owns" the right to interpret the heritage and enjoy it as such. Who decides on its values and what it represents? The replacement of the word "monument" with "heritage" actually indicates a switch from the idea of an objects capacity of communicating memories (monument) to the idea of situating an object in a contemporary social context (heritage). Conservation vocabulary is thus not neutral. The concept of heritage refers to an obligation towards earli-

er generations and persuades us to embrace prudent management. The Burra Charter introduces the word "resource", which stresses the cultural environment as a potential wealth.

The authors indicate more than once in the book how costly conservation is. - Costly for whom? In my experience, the poorer a society is the less it invests in building in particular and the more it conserves built structures. The finest examples we have of historical city centres we find in places where investments have been frozen for centuries. Impecuniousness seems to foster conservation, not wealth. Average people can afford conservation, and actually I think that it is to their economic advantage as well. Maybe it is the investors in current society that cannot afford not to invest?

In the concluding chapter G.J. Ashworth actually addresses the question of the economic setting of conservation in a straightforward way:

"The dilemma is that what may be condemned as undesirable speculation or the utilisation of public subsidies for enhancing private profits, is a necessary means of harnessing private investments in a restoration tasks whose dimensions would be well beyond the means of public authorities and whose benefits accrue both to individual investors and the collective interest. Thus local authorities not only need gentrification: they must seek out possibilities for it to occur." (p. 251)

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