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THE NORDIC
COUNCIL OF
MINISTERS'
CROSS-BORDER
PROGRAMME
REGIONS –

*old challenges and
new opportunities* 



NORDREGIO
Nordic Centre for Spatial Development

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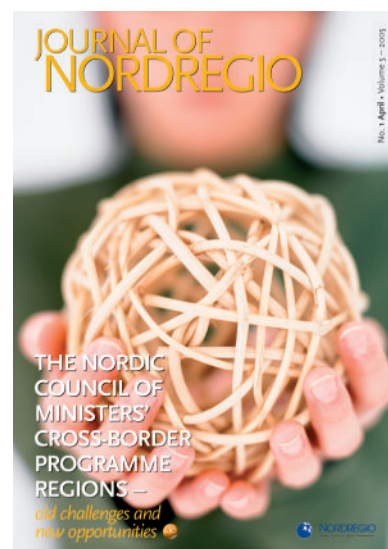
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JOURNAL OF NORDREGIO

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PRACTICAL NORDISM

This issue of the Journal of Nordregio in various ways highlights the issue of Nordic internationalism. The secretary general Per Unckel investigates the future of the Nordic institutional set-up, the researchers Bjørn Moen and Sigrid Skålnes offer an insight into their evaluation of Nordic cross-border cooperation, while the deputy director of the Øresund committee, Torben Åberg, comments upon the merits of practical integration as it takes place in the Øresund region.

And this is what it all boils down to, practical integration to the benefit of Nordic citizens. Nordism could be labelled a cultural trait of its own, fostered in mutual recognition of common values and nurtured by a geographical situation which is favourable to the exchange of goods, services, ideas and persons.

The climate for joint institutional arrangements may vary. Many deplore the fact that the vivid institutional Nordism of the initial post-war era is gone. In a globalised world however Norden has simply become too small to exist as a political and economic entity of its own, our needs have to be met in a wider context. So there is no longer any talk of a Nordic economic space, nor are there any serious politicians opting for a Nordic defence alliance. The label of Norvisioncooperation is also no longer to be seen on the television screens across our countries.

But this does not mean that the integratory steps taken within these former paradigms of cooperation were taken in vain. Many of the freedoms we experience in today's Europe, freedoms such as those connected with the movement of goods, services, labour and capital were in fact anticipated by various agreements set up under the umbrellas of the Nordic Council or the Nordic Council of Ministers. In fact, we have been able to travel without a passport for more than half a century between the Nordic countries.

Many of these arrangements are today catered for on a European scale rather than just a Nordic one. In the same way it is due to

gration in this cross-border region. In the case of Haparanda/Tornio moreover, on the border between Sweden and Finland a parallel development has taken place, notably also with the initial cross-border integration of local public services. Later this year a new motorway bridge will open to improve the connection between Østfold and Bohuslän and thus also between the cities of Oslo and Gothenburg.

When the general level of mobility in our societies is on the increase, this naturally favours further practical integration within the Nordic countries. The nearness between our countries should in the end be measured by the frequency of the multiple

And this is what it all boils down to, practical integration to the benefit of Nordic citizens.

decisions taken in a larger arena than the Nordic one that allows Norwegian and Swedish troops to train in common manoeuvres for future operations to secure Nordic interests.

While the institutional solutions to practical Nordic challenges thus opens up to a wider geography than that of the Nordic countries alone, practical integration as it is taking place, for example in terms of commuting, imports and export and the exchange of ideas, takes place in our own geographical context. And it should be noted that this practical Nordism is on the rise as communications are improved and various regulations hampering its progress are dealt with. The Øresund case as presented in this issue of the journal gives ample evidence of this interesting development.

The bridge across the Sound has provided a major stimulus to the acceleration of such practical inte-

transactions that take place across our borders and by the mutual understanding that guides the way we communicate and interact. The Inter-Nordic political elite conversation may be a less salient trait on the news agenda these days, but the popular and business-related Nordic communities are increasingly interwoven by a politically tacit mode of communication, which in the long run builds a strong and solid base for a new form of Nordism.

NEW PROGRAMME ADOPTED FOR THE ØRESUND REGION

The Øresund region is among the most vital cross-border regions in Europe. A new programme proposing further growth and integration has recently been adopted.

The Øresund region has over the last few years experienced a strong track record of integration as measured by several indicators. Passenger traffic by train has increased facilitated by the new bridge, as has the number of cars using the same bridge. Interestingly, ferry traffic is also on the increase. The number of commuters over the border is greater than ever, while the level of institutional cooperation has been reinforced notably within the university and hospital sectors. It also seems as if business acquisitions and establishing businesses across the Sound are more common than before.

These features occur in many respects as somewhat delayed effects of the bridge project. The disappointment concerning the effects immediately following the opening of the bridge has thus finally been overcome. Add to this last year's government agreement on taxation regimes in the border region, and the climate for optimism seems set to rise still further.

The new programme for the Øresund committee for the years 2005 –2006 points to an ambitious overall vision of turning the Øresund region into “the



The Øresund Region. Municipalities and Counties. 1.1.2005

most functionally integrated European cross-border region". This is to be accomplished by combining high economic growth within a framework of social welfare and ecological sustainability, by making it easy to cope with rules and regulation in everyday life across the border, and by aiming to maintain the region as Europe's cleanest big city region.

Strategically the programme points to three strands of activities that will be needed in order to accomplish these goals:

- to further sustainable economic growth
- to further everyday integration
- to bind the region together

Deputy director of the Øresund committee, Torben Aaberg, explains that a common citizen perspective on integration will be important for the years to come in order to follow up the track record of what he labels an almost explosive growth in integration over the last few years. At the same time he stresses the need to follow up the regions' role in an emerging Interreg IV A programme. We need to keep the Øresund region as a separate entity in such a programme context, he explains. This is compatible with the fact that the region of course has to find its place in a wider European and Baltic context.

Aaberg also expresses his satisfaction with the region's needs increasingly being met by national political initiatives in various fields in both countries. The follow up to the structural reform process in Denmark is, in that respect promising, Aaberg says.

By Jon P. Knudsen

IN SHORT...



New Municipal Structure under Way

Following the swift and heated political process over the transformation from the old county councils to five new regions, recent months have witnessed the emergence of a similarly heated debate over municipal reform, which proposes to reduce the number of municipal units substantially to 99. Both processes stem from the Structure Commission's report, which was made public a year ago and the subsequent initiative from the government to implement a new regional and local steering system. A national agreement involving the major political parties has backed the need for a municipal reform and created a climate where the need for change is now seen as inevitable. Only in two cases, the case of Farum and Værløse and the case of Holmsland and Ringkøbing-Skjern has the government dictated a solution where local agreement was not deemed possible. Both reforms, the regional and the municipal, will become operative from 1 January 2007.

KL Presenting Process Guide

The organisation for Danish municipalities, Local Government Denmark, has produced a process guide to help its members meet the practical requirements of the structural reforms ahead. The guide is primarily directed at coping with the transfer of several tasks from the out-phasing county councils. The guide goes into such themes as legal aspects, timing, organisational issues and staffing.



Regional Legislative Amendments

Several governmental proposals are in pipeline to be presented to the Parliament affecting the regional policy legislation:

- A proposal to strengthen policy and budgetary cooperation between the ministries concerned and between the ministries and the regional bodies involved.
- A project to enhance municipal cooperation in the Helsinki metropolitan region so as to further the region's competitiveness and balanced development. The project is proposed on the background of an in-depth evaluation of concerns and challenges to the capital region.
- Some amendments to strengthen the administrative capacity to meet with the changing challenges of the new EU structure funding period of 2007-2013.
- A proposal to continue the operation of several policy programmes beyond 2006, notably the Centres of Expertise Programme and the Urban Centre Programme.



New Regional Plan under Way

A new national plan for regional development is under preparation. The present plan expires this year and the next plan is designed to run for the period 2006-2009. The expiring plan drew much attention for its initial ambition to create a few regional development strongholds outside the capital of Reykjavik. The outline for the new plan is to follow up the decentralising tendency by setting an over-arching goal of strengthening living conditions in the areas outside the Reykjavik metropolitan region. In addition, an ambition will be set to increase the competitiveness of Iceland in the global context.

On a more detailed level three operational goals will be formulated: 1.

Regional centres shall be strengthened so as to create preconditions for permanent living in the areas outside Reykjavik. 2. Regions as well as municipalities should be empowered to adapt to rapid societal change, to the rapid changes in economic structure in society and to changes in the structure of labour markets. 3. Economic development in the rural areas beyond the Reykjavik region should be stimulated by means of raising educational levels and by nurturing cultural institutions in order to make economic development go hand in hand with enhanced social equality.



Government Pleas for Wider Policy Measures

In a recent letter to the EU Commission the Norwegian government argues for more flexibility concerning the future European state aid regulations to marginal regions. As these are about to be revised, the government expresses its satisfaction over the frameworks for investment aid and transport aid regimes, but raises questions over the lack of flexibility when applied to specific geographical criteria. Being a member of the EEA, Norway has to comply with the EU regulations in question on the same basis as full EU members.

KS Wants New Regions

The Norwegian Association for Local and Regional Authorities (KS) has spoken in favour of establishing a new directly elected regional level of administration to substitute for the existing county councils. Following a heated debate over possible reforms in local and regional administration, the Association has taken a stand in favour of a new regional administrative level arguing that the present county councils have become too weak and eroded to fulfil their historic mission. KS argues that the new regions, if established, should take on wide-ranging responsibilities within regional development and service provision, some of which are today state duties. It is fur-

ther argued that no duties or services should be taken from the municipalities.

National Urban Contact Forum Established

Urban and metropolitan policies have come to the forefront in Norwegian regional policy development. In 2002 a governmental report on urban policy was presented and this year a similar report on the role of Oslo as a capital and metropolitan region is being finalised. In order to pursue and further elaborate future policy needs in the field, a contact forum has been established between the government and the municipalities of Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim, Stavanger, Kristiansand and Tromsø. The forum is being set up by the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.



Evaluation of Västra Götaland and Skåne

Two evaluations have recently been presented on the experiments with enlarged county council models in Västra Götaland and Skåne. One is written by the Swedish Agency for Public Management and the other by Jörgen Johansson from Halmstad University. Whereas the first deals with the broader administrative and regional policy responsibilities of the two councils, the latter discusses the more democratic aspects of the models.

Both evaluations conclude that the regions under review are large and point to the fact that both have had to sub-regionalise some of their work in order to fulfil their duties, this is particularly so in Västra Götaland. The Halmstad evaluation notes the irony of this as one of the main arguments for creating the larger regional units was cited as the need to cater for geographically encompassing policies across former regional borders. Both evaluations are however rather vague on the general conclusions to be drawn from the experiments concerning further administrative reforms.

White Paper on Transport Policy Ahead

A white paper on transport policy is currently being prepared, and will be due for release in May by the Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communication. The Minister for Transport, Ulrica Messing has just finished a series of six regional meetings to gather viewpoints for the closing round of work on the paper. The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions has on this occasion presented a position paper arguing for a more explicit economic growth orientation for transport policy. The association further advocates that the local and regional authorities receive a bigger say in the process of forming the policy field in question.

Solna Wins Growth Prize

Solna municipality outside Stockholm was awarded the prize as growth municipality of the year by ARENA cooperation involving the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions, and the companies FöreningsSparbanken, ICA and EuroFutures. Solna has in recent years undergone significant population and job growth, with the planning regime in the municipality generally being seen as welcoming to business development, the jury notes. Solna is also praised for its good international relations seeking to capitalize on initiatives such as the Baltic Sea cooperation, the Lisbon Agenda and the EU Regional Committee.

Lars Olof Persson in memoriam



Lars Olof Persson has passed away. He was ill for only a few weeks. Hardly anybody knew about it. Maybe he was out conferencing or editing the next issue of the journal of the Swedish Association of Planners. Perhaps he was preparing for his popular project course on regional development in the Baltic Sea region at KTH. Or was he, indeed, busy finishing the final report from one of his many research projects at the Nordic Institute of Spatial Development. The truth was that he was battling his unexpected cancer. And lost. He passed away before the age of 60.

Lars Olof Persson was filled with ideas and initiatives in his work. He was a very talented writer with a language that could be both scientifically precise and entertaining depending on what the situation required. He wrote extremely fluently. Texts seemed to flow out of his pen. He simply produced good quality in his work.

Lars Olof Persson worked his whole career with regional science studies. He produced around 150 professional publications. A highlight of his career was his work as the main secretary of the Government White Paper

Commission in 1997 on the regional role of the nation state. He became a respected expert in regional policy and regional science.

Lars Olof Persson commenced his career at the Swedish University for Agricultural Sciences in the 1970s. He was among those who coined the term of the “urbanised countryside” in the Swedish context. He later joined the Expert Group for Research on Regional Development (ERU) at the Swedish Ministry of Industry. There he worked on analyses of rural change in the 1980s and later became deeply involved in studies of local labour markets. The policy term “labour market enlargement” became attached to him long before it made the policy circles.

From the 1990s and onward Lars Olof Persson shared his time between the Royal Institute of Technology and the Nordic Institute for Spatial Development in Stockholm. In both roles he took the step from a national expert to an international authority in his field. At the time of his death he was intensively involved with managing international projects, such as the project on the effects of EU enlarge-

ment on the European town and countryside. He represented Swedish competence at its best.

For Lars Olof Persson the family was always at the centre. He enjoyed his family life and his fine manor house in Haninge south of Stockholm. There he gained the strength and inspiration to be as mobile in his own work as the labour markets he so successfully studied. Now he has finished his journey. We are grateful for having travelled with him a while.

For the colleagues at KTH and the Nordic Institute for Spatial Development

Hallgeir Aalbu, Göran Cars, Margareta Dahlström, Ole Damsgaard, Mats Johansson, Anja Porseby, Lisa van Well and Folke Snickars

THREE VISIONS FOR NORDREGIO



By Ole Damsgaard
Director of Nordregio

After taking over the position as director of Nordregio, I have been asked on a number of occasions what my vision is for the institute.

My first reaction has been, 'don't let them trick you into saying something you'll regret the day after tomorrow'. One thing is for sure, ones previous outside knowledge provides ones starting point. It is often a rather different thing to view the situation from the inside, as a part of the institution, which I can hardly say that I am yet after only some weeks in the job. But I'll give it a try nonetheless!

My first vision is that Nordregio, as an institution, should maintain and develop its sensibility concerning the background, the users and the subject of our studies.

The old certainties surrounding the world we study – the Nordic Countries and Europe – are currently in a state of flux, while the needs of our users are also changing.

At any given time, Nordregio, as an institution, should be able to grasp these dynamics, and analyze, interpret and mediate them.

The general perception of the Nordic Countries is changing. Last year's enlargement of the EU underlines the fact that Norden is no longer "the dead end of Europe" but is rather an integral part

of the Baltic Sea Region with its dozens of large and medium sized cities.

The reality of the Nordic experience however is that the centralization of economic activity and depopulation continues apace across the Nordic Countries, while the role of these large and medium sized cities is growing, or at least is perceived to be growing. This poses a significant challenge to the regional politics of the Nordic Countries in general, and for the Nordic welfare regimes in particular.

A further challenge for Nordic policy however remains the need to maintain a balance between our focus on the Baltic and our continuing commitment to issues relating to the North Western sphere, which from a historical and cultural point of view, continues to nourish our understanding of Norden.

In addition, the question of administrative structures is under review in most of the Nordic Countries. Not only are boundaries being moved between the different administrative levels, but also now even tasks and responsibilities.

This ongoing transformation of the Nordic countries' administrative structures could, taken together with the implications of the new EU Structural Funds regime, totally change the meaning and the content of regional policy and planning for some of Norden's members.

Nordregio could, and should, make a difference here by providing a fuller and more rounded contextual overview of such developments. Moreover, Nordregio remains better placed, through our commitment to innovative, comparative and practical research, than any single national institution, to decisively contribute, to the political decision making process at various levels.

My second vision is that Nordregio should always be situated in the hub of various disciplines and themes. We must therefore be able to synthesize between the different disciplines dealing with regional development and planning. As such, the content of regional policy should not be restricted to the traditional themes of economy, demography and employment. The regional policy of today also then demands an understanding of environment issues, as well as an appreciation of the wider cultural and social questions that now increasingly impact on our regional societies.

In recent years, significant developments have taken place in relation to the concept of planning. Functionalist structural planning and land use planning have been, in part at least, replaced and supplemented by rather more network oriented and liberal governance approaches, with common visions and development strategies in many cases taking over the function of more traditional plans.

One can therefore say, in more ways than one, that traditional planning and traditional regional policy are now converging, with the use of new labels such as spatial planning and spatial development aptly demonstrating this.

My third vision is that Nordregio should maintain and develop its position as an international institution. International in the way that work is organized and international in the thematic scope of our work.

Nordregio should therefore be in the business of working together with our partners from all over Europe, and with this in mind, our staff composition should in itself mirror the multinational field of our studies.



By Per Unckel
Secretary General
Nordic Council of Ministers

The Nordic countries are European trail blazers in the field of cross-border co-operation. This has given our countries a significant advantage and has managed to compensate for the small size of the individual countries and the normally more limited power of attraction that small countries have. Cross-border co-operation has made the countries larger.

greater than either the Copenhagen region or Skåne individually. The border region between Sweden and Norway, to the south from Värmland, is given a new stimulus for growth once we wipe out the national boundary in our minds. The same applies to the Haparanda-Torneå region in the north. The EU can naturally contribute economically to the development of these regions. But the result cannot be effectively maintained without close co-operation between individuals and authorities on both sides of the border.

Within the Nordic countries, much has been done through the years to improve the developmental potential of border regions, but this work has not concluded. That the situation remains as it is, is at least partly connected to a lack of vision on the part of the national authorities. It almost seems as if they do not really visualise what the border

Baltic States and Russia/Belarus, which hopefully will be initiated with EU financing this autumn. Over 30 partners will be working together to link up adjacent areas on the EU's new external border.

As mentioned, there is plenty of experience in the Nordic countries of this sort of work which we can pass on. At the same time, it should be emphasised that the Nordic countries, too, can learn from others. There is often a vitality and entrepreneurial spirit in the new EU countries which can enrich the Nordic environment and Nordic conceptions as well.

The involvement of the NCM in cross-border co-operation outside the Nordic countries should also be viewed in a wider European perspective. As a new and larger EU seeks new ways of working, co-operation within smaller groups of countries within the frame-

Nordic Challenges Moving Towards 2010

Nordic co-operation antedates current European integration. The Nordic countries could demonstrate concrete progress before the European Union in this area, which has now become the object of more pan-European solutions. In certain respects, this makes it possible to say "mission accomplished" - now EU co-operation takes over.

This is only part of the truth. It is also true, however, that co-operation in border regions now faces new challenges which the EU alone cannot handle.

One such challenge has to do with European co-operation as such. While the EU means increased co-operation, it also means increased competition. And when the competition gets stiffer, this is the time for smaller countries and regions especially to take advantage of common experiences and opportunities.

Nordic co-operation provides various examples that such co-operation can also yield significantly positive results. The capacity of the Øresund Region to attract companies and individuals is

regions have to contribute, not only for themselves but also for the countries. In other words, if the five Nordic nations are to become larger, it is not sufficient to place all the responsibility for accomplishing this on local action.

The continuing significance of intra-Nordic relations has gained a new dimension through the EU membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. New border regions have been added to those with which we are already familiar, border regions with completely different circumstances than the intra-Nordic ones.

Our Nordic experiences can be of good use in establishing these new border regions. This experience includes a good measure of pragmatism and practical and skilful dealing to overcome both major and minor obstacles to exchange and common endeavour. Here the Nordic attitude has something to share.

The Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordregio are two of the initiators in a large border project encompassing the

work of the wider community becomes more common. Sharing best practices is part of such co-operation.

Cross-border work on the far side of the Baltic can be viewed as the beginning of a wider exchange of experience within the EU of ways for co-operation between EU countries and the countries on the Union's external borders. In this work, both the NCM and Nordregio and the border region committees should make their expertise as widely available as possible.

If we succeed in doing so, we have not only contributed to an important advance for others and to the EU's possibilities of functioning rationally and effectively. We have also enhanced the reputation of our own region as an exciting trail blazer. In the final analysis this is exactly what is required to make Northern Europe stand out as sufficiently attractive for people and enterprises to make their future here.



THE NORDIC COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' CROSS-BORDER PROGRAMME REGIONS – old challenges and new opportunities



By Bjørn Moen and Sigrid Skålnes
Norwegian Institute for Urban and
Regional Research (NIBR)

Our main impression is that regional cross-border co-operation in the Nordic countries is conducted in a variety of ways, which is quite natural given the different conditions found within the Nordic area. Overall, we also feel we have a sound basis for characterizing the initiative shown as generally being good, and that it is suited to gaining useful experience of practical and pragmatic regional cross-border co-operation – “the Nordic way”.

I: Evaluation of the Nordic Council of Ministers' regional cross-border co-operation

In the spring of 2004, the Control Committee of the Nordic Council polled a representative sample of parties in order to investigate the work of the Nordic cross-border programme regions – or “cross-border regions” for short – over the last three or four years, by inviting them to answer a number of questions:

i) *Have the organisations contributed to identifying and removing cross-border obstacles in the region?*

ii) *Is it appropriate to receive Interreg and Nordic funds at the same time?*

iii) *Are the existing regions natural? Should they be extended/reduced?*

iv) *The organisations' role and co-operation with other parties in the region. Is there any overlapping and is there sufficient co-ordination?*

v) *Do the political priorities of the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers impact on the action plans of the organisations?*

vi) *Do the organisations generate Nordic benefit/Nordic added value?*

vii) *How good are the organisations' contacts at a regional and national level?*

The confines of space here prevent us from answering all seven questions equally thoroughly. We will instead concentrate on questions i), iii), v) and vi), but would like to mention briefly that the cross-border regions agree about the importance of Interreg, and that we found little – if any – evidence of any overlapping: co-ordination would appear to be good. The cross-border regions' contact with and channels to regional “centres of power” vary. It appears that the “Big Four” have easiest access to central, national authorities.

II: Cross-border regions – locations, partners and framework conditions

The Nordic cross-border programme regions differ widely from one another and are also faced with very different cross-border obstacles and challenges. There are essentially two types of cross-border regions: we find examples of small, compact and relatively densely populated regions and of large geographical regions that are rather thinly populated. This is both strength and a weakness as regards regional cross-border co-operation. On the one hand, it is demanding for NCM/NÅRP to co-ordinate its cross-border work to ensure optimal utilisation of such a complex experience base. On the other hand, such a constellation does produce a very broad experience base.

Inn omtrent her: kart og en av tabeller som forteller hvor grenseregionene er, hvem som deltar og hvilke rammebetingelser de arbeider under. Foreslår Tab z. Dette materialet ligger på en egen fil: nordregiojournal_figogtab.doc. Der ligger også ei lita liste over utvalgt litteratur.

The table above illustrates the wide range of diversity as regards the size, number of inhabitants and density of population of the cross-border regions. The Skårgården Regional Co-operation covers the smallest area, at just over 1,500 square kilometres, while the North Atlantic Co-operation (NORA) covers an area just over four times the

total area of all the seven other cross-border regions. In terms of size, the North Calotte Council and the Mid-Nordic Committee are the two next largest cross-border regions, while the others are all smaller in size, not only Skärgården but also ARKO and the Øresund region.

As regards population figures, Øresund is by far the region with the greatest number of inhabitants, with a population of just under 3.6 million and a population density of almost 172 inhabitants per square kilometre. None of the other cross-border regions come close to this figure; the cross-border region that comes nearest – the Østfold-Bohuslän/Dalsland Border Committee – has a population density of just below 44 inhabitants per square kilometre. The figures for the other six cross-border regions are all below 20 inhabitants per square kilometre, while NORA is the lowest, with a population density of one inhabitant per square kilometre.

Of the 14 Interreg programmes covering Nordic territory, nine of these concern co-operative programmes along the outer border of the Nordic countries, while five are intra-Nordic cross-border programme regions. Eleven of the programmes are Interreg III A initiatives, three are B programmes, one of which, the Northern Periphery programme, is the Interreg programme for the North Atlantic Co-operation (NORA), in addition to northern parts of Finland, Sweden and Scotland.

Sweden is involved in the largest number of cross-border programmes regions (seven out of eight), while Denmark only participates in one cross-border programme region. The same also applies to Iceland, Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland, while Norway is involved in five cross-border co-operative organisations and Finland in four.

III: The Control Committee's questions – four responses

The cross-border regions struggle with two types of cross-border obstacles – neither of which is more important than the other (1)

There are two types of cross-border obstacles preventing people and goods from passing national borders in the

Nordic countries more freely and easily:

- Type A barriers: Those relating to the Schlüter process: formal details, national rules and procedures, administrative practices etc., where it is extremely important to bring about effective and wide-sweeping changes.
- Type B barriers: Those relating to vast distances, deficient or incorrectly placed lines of communication and expensive, time-consuming transportation.

All eight cross-border regions have worked actively, and continue to do so – albeit in different ways and with different effects – in an attempt to remove cross-border barriers. The reduction of type A cross-border barriers is of greatest importance and relevance for cross-border regions that one could call “neighbouring regions”, i.e. the Øresund Committee, ARKO Co-operation and the Østfold-Bohuslän/Dalsland Border Committee. Cross-border regions that predominantly experience type A problems will benefit most from completion of the Schlüter process and the introduction of sound, practical solutions. In this respect, the cross-border regions have played a certain role in identifying practical cross-border obstacles. In particular, the work of the Øresund Committee has been characterized by such efforts.

In many ways, cross-border regions that predominantly experience type B problems have faced, and continue to face, a more difficult task. Here an active effort is required over a longer period of time, particularly in respect of national authorities and the financing of both costly investments and the operation of new and improved forms of communication. Efforts designed to alleviate the impact of type B cross-border obstacles are of greatest importance and relevance for cross-border regions with a stronger character of “transnational co-operation”: NORA, the North Calotte Council, the Mid-Nordic Committee, Kvarken Council and Skärgården Regional Co-operation.

The question of Nordic (regional cross-border) benefit and added value should not only be linked to the “limited” definition of regional cross-border initiatives in order to reduce formal, administrative cross-border bar-

riers (“the Schlüter process”) – even though this is very important in itself, and is unanimously welcomed by the cross-border regions. This question can – and should – be answered in a broader perspective. We do not share the view that the cross-border regions are doing too little about such “administrative” cross-border barriers. Such a conclusion is only “correct” if one defines the removal of barriers relating to customs formalities, tax issues, social security and pension benefits and other obstacles relevant to the labour market etc. as the only “type of regional cross-border problems”. Equally important – and in many cross-border regions even more important – is the combating of cross-border obstacles of a physical nature or relating to communications, e.g. vast distances, the removal of flights and ferry links, and linguistic barriers etc. We feel it is necessary to discuss the principles of the NC/NCM systems and/or to clarify whether “regional cross-border success” shall only be measured on the basis of whether one succeeds in pointing out or contributing to reducing national, formal and administrative cross-border barriers, or whether one should adopt a broader perspective in this respect. In our opinion, both of these perspectives should be considered.

The existing cross-border regions are voluntary organisations and there is room for extensions and reductions (III)

It is not possible to give one, clear-cut answer to the question of whether the existing regions are natural or not. The answer to this question cannot – or should not at least – come from outside or from above. All the cross-border regions – with the possible exception of NORA – are grassroots grown, by dint of the fact that someone in each region once realised the value of co-operating over national borders. The cross-border regions are also membership organisations, they are voluntary organisations and they receive financial support from their members – in many cases funding that is equal to, or bigger than, the annual grant they receive from the NCM.

It would appear there are two interests or forces that drive the cross-border regions’ voluntary initiative:

"Demografi og geografi"			
	Befolkning per 1.1.2004	Landareal (km ²)	Innbyggere per km ²
Grenseregion			
Nordkalotten	902.686	298.617	3,0
Finland (mål 1-området)	186.917	93.044	2,0
Sverige (mål 1-området)	252.874	98.245	2,6
Norge (3 fylker)	462.895	107.328	4,3
Russland (2 regioner)	–	–	–
Kvarken	748.555	88.030	8,5
Finland (Österbotten)	437.649	26.419	16,6
Sverige (Västerbotten og Örnköldsvik)	310.906	61.611	5,0
Norge	–	–	–
Midtnorden	1.565.432	161.495	9,7
Finland (Österbotten, Södra Österbotten, Mellersta Finland, Södra Savolax landskapskommuner)	795.443	51.852	15,3
Sverige (Jämtland og Västernorrland)			
Norge (Nord/ Sør-Trøndelag)	371.750	71.027	5,2
I alt	398.239	38.616	10,3
Skjærgården	68.178	1.527	17,0
Finland (Egentliga Finland, Nyland)	28.276	–	–
Åland	26.008	–	–
Sverige (deler av Stockholms län, deler av Uppsals län)	13.894	–	–
ARKO	115.467	12.971	8,9
Norge (Eidskog, Grue, Kongsvinger, Nord-Odal, Sør-Odal, Våler, Åsnes)	53.606	4.982	10,8
Sverige (Arvika, Eda, Sunne, Torsby)	61.861	7.989	7,7
Østfold-Bohuslän/Dalsland	352.675	8.090	43,6
Norge (Østfold, 8 kommuner)	199.750	1.854	107,7
Sverige (Vestra Götaland, 11 kommuner)	152.925	6.236	24,5
Øresund	3.583.403	21.203	171,7
Danmark (Lolland, Falster, Bornholm, Sjælland = 100 kommuner)	2.430.706	9.834	247,2
Sverige (Skåne = 33 kommuner)	1.152.697	11.369	104,5
NORA	2.435.196	2.430.820	1,0
Færøyene	47.704	1.399	34,1
Island	290.570	102.806	2,8
Grønland	56.854	2.116.086	0,0
Norge	2.310.334	217.221	9,7

• A genuine interest in, a belief in the benefit of and a joy in being involved in Nordic co-operation

• The experience and feeling that things do work, that it is possible to co-operate with one's neighbours on the other side of the border, and that more can be achieved when working in a team.

Some of the cross-border regions have adjusted their "geographical boundaries" based on their own evaluations of what was correct and appropriate. The most recent instance of this was when the Østfold-Bohuslän/Dalsland Border Committee included the Dalsland region among its "list of members" several years ago.

Like most voluntary organisations, the cross-border regions must bear in mind that co-operation of this type in general – and probably to an even greater extent in cross-border co-operative organisations, where both the barriers of distance and language create major obstacles to co-operation – has to follow the pace of the smallest of partners. This creates a need for almost continuous motivational efforts, since co-operation must be forced under the old adage "a chain is only as strong as its weakest link". This "systemic coercion" means that one prefers tried and trusted methods rather than experimenting with territorial adjustments that may produce unexpected results and consequences.

Political priorities in the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers can be communicated to the cross-border regions in a clearer and better way (v)

The cross-border regions do not consider NÄRP to be a particularly "demanding principal". They regard the NCM regime as a far softer and considerably more flexible system than, say, the Interreg regime. Admittedly, some of the cross-border regions do state that they feel "thoroughly evaluated", but this probably also has something to do with the fact that most of them have been subjected to all three periodical and mandatory Interreg evaluations. Our general impression is that NÄRP – if we disregard the relatively clear signals enshrined in the current programme of action – has in its "ongoing" management of the regional sector and the cross-border regions sent out few strong management signals. For example, we have not noted that NÄRP/NCMS have communicated clearly to the cross-border regions any changes in priorities with a basis in the changing leadership programmes.

Having said this, it should be added that the cross-border regions themselves state quite clearly that are willing to "listen to" NÄRP, but that it is not always that easy to understand if – and if so what – the NÄRP wishes to change during the action plan period.

The cross-border regions feel that neither they nor the activities in which they are involved are particularly well known in other parts of the NC and the NCM systems. Nor do they have many good contacts with other sectors in the NCM system. In the opinion of some, this situation is unfortunate, but the time and resources available to each cross-border region provide little room for seeking out and making contacts, since the benefits of such activities are uncertain.

It is not only the cross-border regions whose understanding of the terms Nordic benefit /Nordic added value is unclear (vi)

The terms Nordic benefit and Nordic added value appear to be relatively new in respect of the NC and NCM. It would also appear that the terms currently

function more as a “mantra” than as clear requirements or operational performance indicators.

As regards operationalisation of what constitutes “Nordic cross-border regional benefit or added value”, different levels of ambition may be found. Level I, which is the lowest level, can be defined in line with the EU’s former level of ambition in Interreg A programmes: the requirement that each project or measure must be clearly linked to border issues, involve partners from both/all sides of the border and, first and foremost, be an instrument for creating a sense of regional solidarity and co-operation. Measured in these terms, there is no doubt in our minds that most of the work carried out by the cross-border regions under their own direction, or as a co-financer in other parties’ projects, would clearly score high marks in respect of regional cross-border benefit/added value.

One question must be asked, however: Is this a satisfactory level of ambition for NCM’s cross-border programme regions? In our opinion, the answer to this question is no. And our reasoning for answering this way lies in the long traditions this form of co-operation has, and the vast range of experience that NCM and NÄRP have gleaned, or should have gleaned. In most cases, NCM’s cross-border regions had already gained a great deal of experience as practitioners of concrete, cross-border co-operation when the EU made its first, fumbling attempts to achieve the same thing in the early 1990s. We feel that the efforts of the NCM in respect of regional cross-border co-operation should be measured against a yardstick that can be formulated or operationalised in this way:

“Nordic regional cross-border benefit, or the production of Nordic added value, occurs when something that is of value to

the inhabitants or the environment of the Nordic countries is created through common solutions based on, or supporting, regional cross-border solidarity. This effort would not be possible without a certain amount of support from the Nordic Council/Nordic Council of Ministers.”

Although it is not perfect, this definition largely corresponds with the official definition used by the Nordic Council/Nordic Council of Ministers in respect of their general operations.

Measuring the cross-border regions against this yardstick, it is our opinion that they actually achieve good results, even though it can hardly be claimed that they themselves have any clear idea of how the terms should be operationalised. The cross-border regions appear to be in “good company” here, however, since it is our firm impression that the same applies to most – if not all – of the other parts of or players within the NC and NCM systems.

Grense-regioner	Deltaker-land	Område	Språk	Ansatte i sekretariatene	Interreg-tilknytning
Nord-kalotten	Finland Sverige Norge	Lapland – 1 län og 21 kommuner Norrbotten – 1 län og 12 kommuner Finnmark, Troms og Nordland – 3 fylker og 89 kommuner tornedals-finsk	finsk, svensk, norsk, samisk,	2 – sekretariat i Rovaniemi	Interreg IIIA Nord, som dekker samme område, i tillegg samarbeid mot Russland
Kvarken	Finland Sverige	Österbotten – 1 landskap og 16 kommuner Västerbotten og Örnsköldsvik kommune – 1 län og 57 kommuner	finsk, svensk	6 – sekretariat i Vasa og Umeå	Interreg IIIA - Kvarken -MidtScandia– som dekker samme område, i tillegg Nordland fylke
Midt-norden	Finland Sverige Norge	4 län i Finland, 2 län i Sverige og 2 fylker i Norge	finsk, svensk, norsk	1 - sekretariat i Jyväskylä	Mulighet for å delta i flere Interreg-programmer
Skjær-gården	Finland Åland Sverige	1 län i Finland, 2 landsting, 1 miljösentral, landskapet Åland, 3 län og 3 landsting i Sverige	finsk, svensk	1 – sekretariat i Mariehamn	Interreg IIIA - Skjærgården
Østfold- Bohuslän/ Dalsland	Sverige Norge	1 län 11 kommuner i Sv., 1 fylke. og 8 komm.uner i Norge	svensk, norsk	1 – sekretariat i Uddevalla	Interreg IIIA - Sverige- Norge
ARKO	Sverige Norge	4 kommuner i Sverige, 7 kommuner i Norge.	svensk, norsk	1 – sekretariat i Torsby	Interreg IIIA Sverige- Norge
Øresund	Sverige Danmark	133 kommuner og 1 län i Sverige, 100 kommuner og hovedstads-regionen i DK. (3 komm.& 3 amt)	svensk, dansk	15 – sekretariat i København	Interreg IIIA - Øresund
NORA	Færøyene Grønland Island Norge	Hele Færøyene, Island og Grønland, 9 fylker i Norge (Vest- og Nord-Norge)	dansk, færøysk, islandsk grønlandsk norsk, samisk	3 – sekretariat i Torshavn (Stavanger, Bodø)	Interreg IIIA - Nordlig Periferi – dekker deler av området (ikke Vestl.andsfylkene), + deler av Skottland, Finland og Sverige.

IV: Four recommendations – potential for improvement at a regional and central level

NÄRP can improve its control of the activities in the cross-border regions

NÄRP should consider adjusting its own organisation and its “management” of the cross-border regions. There are certain deficiencies in the way the NC and NCM communicate their strategies and overarching objectives downwards and out to the regional sector. It is necessary to secure a better link between the activities operated in the cross-border regions and the policies that overarching and professional bodies in the rest of the NCM system stand for. Operations need to be more goal-oriented. NÄRP and the NCMS should work to include as a routine that the annual leadership programmes for the regional sector are communicated quickly and clearly to the cross-border regions.

“Mid-term evaluation” of the cross-border regions in 2003 failed to trigger the full learning potential

Work on so-called self-evaluation – “Self-evaluation report 2003” – which NÄRP took the initiative in introducing took the form of a one-way interview. This survey method can hardly be said to have triggered the learning potential that such a mid-term evaluation can and should provide. There is little to indicate that the cross-border regions have since become more aware of the importance of publishing the Nordic results achieved by their operations. One important task for NÄRP – in collaboration with the cross-border regions – is to pave the way for more awareness and a firmer grip on what type of operational content one should include in the performance targets.

The cross-border regions fail to make known the results and benefits of their work in a proper manner

There were deficiencies in the way the cross-border regions reported on their activities in last year’s status reports. It emerges that it is difficult to describe in a brief and concise manner the professional and political results achieved. Some of the cross-border regions have – at the initiative of NÄRP – begun work on producing measurable indica-

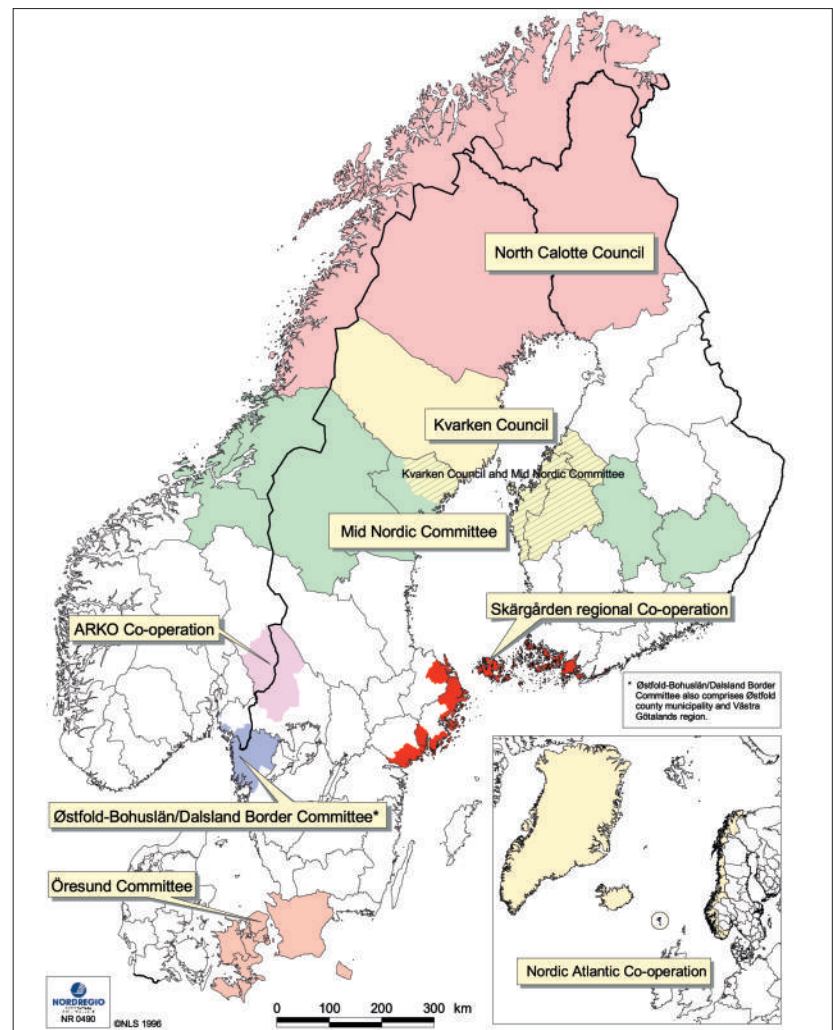
tors, but NÄRP has made no attempt to standardise this work, so individual cross-border regions have tried to produce their own performance indicators. As far as co-ordination and comparison across the cross-border regions is concerned, this is not the right way to go about things. NÄRP should focus on requirements relating to material content and clear, precise language rather than efforts to “refine” quantitative performance indicators.

NÄRP and the cross-border regions must work together to systematise the unique experiences they possess in the field of practical cross-border co-operation

The cross-border regions have a potential for improvement in several areas. With the aid of NÄRP and NCMS, they must make a monumental

effort to gather, gain an overview of and systematise the knowledge and experiences that each of the cross-border regions have acquired over the years in respect of practical and pragmatic co-operation on cross-border projects. In sum, this comprises a formidable cache of knowledge – a database of experiences – which is currently not operative, and which cannot therefore be utilised to its full extent, neither in respect of the EU system in general or in respect of the Nordic Council of Ministers’ regional strategy.

Source: Sigrid Skålnes and Bjørn Moen (2004): Nordisk grenseregionalt samarbeid – gamle utfordringer og nye muligheter. Anbefalinger og dokumentasjon til kontrollkomiteen i Nordisk råd. NIBR Notat 2004:122, Oslo.



Nordic cross-border programme regions



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Urban-rural relations in Europe

The theme of urban-rural relations in Europe formed the context of an ESPON-project (thematic projects 1.1.2) of the same name. The initial idea behind this topic is allegedly formulated in the slogan “urban-rural partnership” of the ESDP (policy options 19-23), indicating a functional relationship that needs to be recognised. The problems with such an approach are manifold: a distinction between “urban” and “rural” is increasingly difficult to make on the basis of functional diversification or differences in the administrative status of towns and countryside. In addition, such functions are increasingly difficult to manipulate through policy means in a situation of de-regulated markets and de-centralised decision-making. Here it is argued that instead of labelling regions according to functional diversification and specialisation, territories can be characterised according to their structural properties on a scale from urban to rural. A typology of urban-rural Europe was developed, which allows for renderings at different scales where the various geographical levels are still comparable with each other. The typology implies both structural and functional urban-rural relations. There is a correspondence between the two forms of relations as structural urban-rural relations form the precondition for functional relations, and functional relations turn structural over time.

What is urban and what is rural?

The initial problem in trying to identify urban-rural relation in Europe is that the concepts of “urban” and “rural” do not correspond to standard definitions that could be applied across

Europe. National definitions are different and in the new Member States the definitions have been based on administrative decisions, not on defined criteria as in the old Member States. A consequence of this was that harmonised criteria for “urban” and “rural” could not be elaborated on the basis of national definitions and other criteria for classification had to be found. The actual problem was, however, potentially even greater: in essence we can ask, does it make sense to try to draw a distinction between urban and rural Europe?

In most countries, urban centres have long since lost their particular privileges and there is no longer a clear difference in administrative status between town and countryside, or at least it is now significantly blurred. Economic enterprises locate where they want to, and the functional division of labour between town and countryside is increasingly indifferent. Only activities of a very space-consuming and bulky type clearly prefer the countryside. The mental map is also blurred, as rural life is urbanised by transcending commodity relations and life styles are appropriated according to mass consumption patterns regardless of location. Ideas concerning mental setups particular to urban or rural environments have been refuted and even the assumption that the urban environment fosters creativity while the rural environment favours more stable social relations is increasingly questionable.

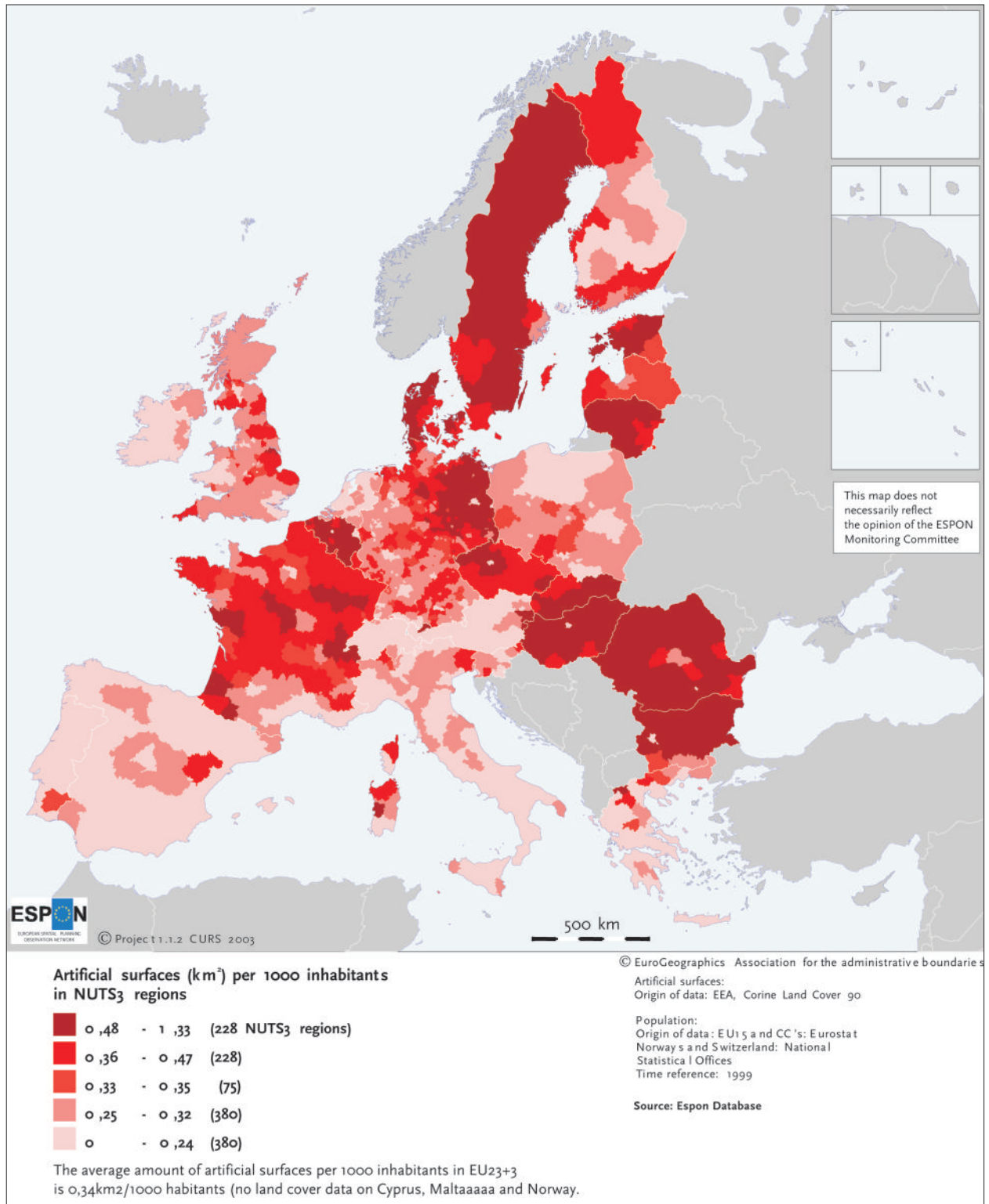
What then is left to discuss? Is the urban-rural divide totally anachronistic? Is it altogether sensible or even possible to divide Europe on these lines? If the

divide is possible, how should it be done and what are the criteria? Does it make any sense to become engaged in designing policy recommendations on the basis of urban-rural relations? If the divide makes sense as an intellectual exercise, does it make sense in terms of politics? These and related additional questions are the focus of this study.

From urbanisation to rurbanisation

Can we apply one single concept to help us better understand the changing nature of urban-rural relations? If such a concept exists, it would undoubtedly be urbanisation, which describes the changing relationship between urban and rural areas. Urbanisation has been comprehended as demographic change, as structural changes in the economy and as the ideas, images and behaviour of people. Urbanisation in terms of demographic changes usually refers to the growth or decline of urban settings of a certain size in relation to the growth or decline of rural settings. In technical terms, demographic urbanisation studies require clear-cut delineation of urban areas in contrast to rural areas. As classification criteria change over time, the study of urbanisation as a process is then always a proxy.

Urbanisation in terms of structural changes in the economy relates to the movement of people between various sectors of the economy, some of them significantly rural (agriculture) and others mainly urban (commercial services). In some European countries this is taken into account in the national classifications of urban and rural population. A particular problem for research in this context however is that



many of the branches and sectors of the economy no longer need to remain tied to particular physical settings across the now artificial scale from urban to rural.

The third meaning of urbanisation is related to behavioural patterns and lifestyles as well as to the images and ideas related to them. Such images are often produced or exaggerated, and subsequently employed for commercial purposes. Images of urban and rural lifestyles

are made commodities and traded on the market in the mode of various tangible and intangible objects, sports and entertainment as well as housing preferences. Already in the 1960s, the notion of the rural was coined, indicating the merger between urban and rural lifestyles.

Urbanisation is not only a way for the society to adapt to new functional and economic requirements, but an eco-

nomical activity in its own right, which involves landed interests, credit institutions, producers of construction materials, developers, construction firms, real estate agencies, the purchasing of dwellings, etc. Urban-rural relations are then dependent on the prospects for lucrative investments, and those vary over time and according to the national and local context. The nationally and locally developed systems of land exploitation and real estate markets are cru-

cial in understanding urbanisation in any particular place, even at the national level. Urban sprawl is a token of such incongruous interests, encompassing land speculators on the one hand and common interests on the other.

Currently, it is not so easy to argue in favour of the traditional split between the two spheres of urban and rural Europe, making, from a technical point of view at least, studies on urbanisation increasingly difficult to undertake. The clear-cut divide is simply gone, having been replaced by rurbanisation, a process where the physical environment loses qualities that were traditionally associated with either urban or rural settings.

The model

The task of the ESPON project was to carry out statistical analyses and cartographic renderings of European regions (NUTS₃) in order to identify the character of regions on a successive grading from urban to rural. The analyses and the elaborated typology imply both structural and functional urban-rural relations. There is a correspondence between the two forms of relations as structural urban-rural relations form the precondition for functional relations, and functional relations turn structural over time.

The procedure of the investigations was as follows. First, national definitions of urbanisation were analysed and tested. On the basis of this work an initial, not fully harmonised typology of urban-rural Europe was developed. Subsequently, a set of indicators was chosen and investigated by applying a multivariate statistical analysis. Based on the results a smaller set of indicators was chosen for further analysis, and interrelations between the various indicators were identified. A final, harmonised typology of urban-rural Europe was elaborated (*see map*) and this typology was compared to a set of indicators concerning the socio-economic development of Europe. The model was further tested on the national level by means of employing a number of case studies.

The elaborated typology is based on the idea of two main dimensions, that is, the degree of urban influence on the one hand, and the degree of human

intervention on the other. The degree of human intervention was determined by the relative share of land cover according to the main land cover classes of the CORINE data set. The main classes are artificial surfaces, agricultural areas, and residual land cover. The European average of artificial land cover is 3.48 percent of the total land cover. The corresponding figure of agricultural land is 50.36, while the residual group covers 46.16 percent. The different land cover types were transformed into relative shares on the territorial scale of NUTS₃. High human intervention corresponds to a situation where the share of artificial surfaces (and possibly one of the two other land cover categories) is above the European average. Medium human intervention equals those cases where the share of agricultural land (and possibly the share of residual land cover) is above the European average. Low human intervention concerns all those cases where only the share of residual land cover is above European average.

In determining the degree of urban influence, two factors were taken into account: population density and the status of the leading urban centre of the region. Only two classes were defined, i.e. high urban influence, which included all NUTS₃ areas with a population density more than the European average (107 persons per square km) and/or the areas where the leading urban centre of the NUTS₃ area has been labelled a "Metropolitan European Growth Area (MEGA)". The rest of the NUTS₃ regions were classified as being of low urban influence.

The two classes of urban influence and the three classes of human intervention were combined into a six-type model where the main division is in two classes of urban influence, that is, high and low, and a three-class subdivision into high, medium and low human intervention of the two main classes. The two-class main division indicates functional (status of urban centre equalising functional specialisation, population density equalling size of markets) as well as structural properties (population density equalling built up areas) and the three-class subdivision is based on the structural properties of the physical environment (relative share of the

various kinds of the land cover) as well as function properties (land use).

Is however this harmonised typology of urban-rural Europe actually rather rigid or indeed, static? No, the model is dynamic in two respects. On the one hand it provides for the employment of statistical time series according to which changes over time can be visually represented. In this study, time series data were available in only a few cases, and therefore later complements have to be managed in order to bring in the aspect of change. The model is also flexible in another sense: it can be applied to different geographical levels in a way that the renderings of the different levels are comparable with each other. The harmonised model was tested on the country level with the results indicating the flexibility of the harmonised typology. Applying the same logic (above/below average) it is possible to switch from one geographical level to another and still get cartographic representations that are somehow comparable. Although the scale changes, the logic of the rendering remains the same and this provides for comparability.

The distribution of different regional types

The distribution of regions across the six regional types is uneven. Altogether 691 NUTS₃ areas belong to type 1 (high urban influence, high human intervention). The rest are distributed more evenly among the other types. The distribution of the different regional types across the new Member States and accession countries is however also uneven. In the regional type 3 (high urban influence, low human intervention), the EU10+2 countries are represented by only one NUTS₃ area while in type 4 (low urban influence, high human integration) their relative share is more than half of that category. Because of this uneven distribution, the profiles of these two regional types are heavily influenced by their geographical location. Consequently the model, however, identifies some of the crucial differences between East and West.

The regional type 1 (high urban influence, high human intervention) covers only 19 percent of the total area (29 countries), but houses 60 percent of the

population and produces 72 percent of the total GDP. The corresponding figures for the sum of all the three types with high urban influence are 27 percent, 69 percent and 78 percent. This means that nearly four fifths of the GDP of Europe is produced in slightly more than one fourth of the territory that is under high urban influence. The regional types 5 and 6, with low urban influence and medium or low human intervention, count for 53 percent (22 + 31) of the total territory but only 20 percent (12 + 8) of the total population and 16 percent of the GDP.

The share of EU15+1 (Norway missing) is 68 percent of the total area and 77 percent of the total population, while the share of the EU10+2 counts for 23 percent of the total area and 21 percent of the total population. In terms of GDP the difference between EU15+1 and the rest is striking: the former countries account for 95 percent of the GDP while the rest, that is, the new Member States and the two accession countries, account for only 5 percent of the GDP.

Conclusions

Are there then lessons to be learnt from the structural properties of regions in Europe? The answer would undoubtedly seem to be yes. What is truly noteworthy about land cover/land use in Europe is that the relative amount of agricultural land is so stable, being an attribute of areas with high as well as low population density, and being an attribute of all kinds of regions regardless the status of leading urban centre. The share of agricultural land does not decrease with the increasing share of artificial surfaces either. Of course there are numerous examples of regions with a very low share of agricultural land, but on average, the share of agricultural land remains very stable. This indicates the fact that agriculture is an integrated function across all of the different parts of Europe, even the most urbanised areas. Agricultural land loses in relative importance only in those parts where residual land cover is prevailing.

The prevalence of agricultural land across Europe is an asset of tremendous importance. Firstly, it provides for

the option to produce food locally. Consumers could then potentially have the ability to literally control the production of the food they consume. This could also prove to be an economic advantage as the demand for locally produced secure food is on the rise. Secondly, the abundance of agricultural land in regions of high urban influence provides for the possibility to utilise agricultural land for recreational purposes. It is an environmental asset that cannot be underestimated. Consequently, the protection and conservation of agricultural land and green-field land in general in the densely populated parts of Europe in particular should be a high priority.

The degree of human intervention was judged according to the relative share of artificial surfaces of the total land cover. On average, this criterion correlates with population density, but there are remarkable deviations, which are closely connected to national territories. The east of Europe, (excluding Poland) as well as Sweden, Denmark, Belgium and parts of France are characterised by a high share of artificial surfaces per capita: the degree of human intervention is considerably higher than population density would otherwise indicate. This could be conceived as an ecological indicator, which places the above-mentioned countries in an unfavourable position, and should initiate new policies for a more prudent management of land. A high share of artificial surfaces also indicates a high share of dis-continuous urban land, which indicates urban sprawl.

One could argue, however, that even if the share of artificial surfaces per capita may be conceived as an ecological indicator, it does not add much to the issue of sustainable development, which should also include the economic dimension. In order to better scrutinise this question, the share of artificial surfaces (per capita) was compared to economic output (GDPpps per capita), which could be conceived of as an indicator of sustainability. According to this criterion, the situation in Eastern Europe as well as in Sweden and Belgium is depressing.

Europe as a whole is an example of a territory that is not composed of only one integrated territorial system, but,

for historical reasons, includes various relatively independent (national and regional) subsystems. It is important to underline that the effects of globalisation are not uniform in territorial systems of different types. As such, some of the effects of globalisation may have a uniform impact on the whole of Europe, while others may influence the various subsystems in very particular ways depending for instance on the maturity of the urban system under consideration. Therefore it is always important to study the effects of European integration and globalisation in clearly defined local, regional and national contexts, that is to say, in contexts that make sense. On the whole, it is doubtful whether the emerging patterns of urbanisation or ruralisation can be influenced in any reasonable way by policy measures. The instrument of land use planning may be the only effective means for regulating urban-rural relations, and this instrument is increasingly lost in the context of de-regulated markets and de-centralised decision-making. Deliberation becomes a substitute for communication.

The distinction between "spatial" and "territorial" is crucial and necessary –but it remains sorely lacking from ESPON studies. Human endeavours and their externalities, or natural processes for that matter, can be rendered as spatial models, but they always have a material basis as well. They turn "territorial" when considered in the context of factual settings and particular locations. The Lisbon strategy is complemented by the European (Gothenburg) strategy for sustainable development, and this implores us to realise that environmental considerations are impossible to imagine in a purely spatial context, they also need a territorial perspective.

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URBAN VILLAGES AND THE MAKING OF COMMUNITIES

Neal, Peter (ed.) *Urban villages and the making of communities*, London & New York: Spon Press: 2003.

Reviewed by Moa Tunström, PhD student at Örebro University

This book is an anthology with contributions from British, American and Australian researchers, writers and practitioners. The idea is to describe “the principles and process of creating attractive, socially diverse and economically sustainable mixed-use neighbourhoods”, with multiple aspects of this being brought up including, physical design, transportation, social structure, project implementation and management. The ambition is to cover both the theory and practice of urban villages. The introduction and the first part of the book deal with the ideological background to, and context of, the urban village idea. Part two deals with more concrete “design principles” while the third part discuss the actual implementation of the urban village idea. Finally, a number of case studies on planning projects in line with the idea of the urban village from Europe, North America and Australia are presented. The concept originally comes from Prince Charles, and in the foreword to the book he defines it as “a vision of a neighbourhood, of co-vivability and character, with an urban environment on a far broader scale than the rural village”, as “traditional, or sustainable, urbanism” and also as “a model for the sensitive and sustainable extension of historic towns”.

The book functions both as a ‘coffee table style’ work on urban village planning projects and as a hands-on collection of best practice examples for developers. The sections that concentrate

on giving advice to developers appear to be relevant predominantly in the British context, and they are in general the weakest parts of the book. The impression given here is that planning is the easiest thing in the world to do, with citizen participation, transparency, public-private partnerships and sustainability all being unproblematic and undisputed concepts. In addition the advice given is primarily directed to private developers, which seems a bit odd when reading from a Nordic perspective. There are however also a number of examples of rather more analytical contributions that are generally not as obviously supportive of the dominant urban village ideology, which discuss issues such as transportation and the use and effects of new technologies when planning. In combination, this makes the book interesting as a planning handbook (for British planners), as a high-quality picture book and as a useful pointer to current planning trends.

Concepts recurrent in the book include, “urban renaissance”, “smart growth”, “new urbanism”, “authentic urbanism” and “the traditional city”. The idea of the urban village is related to the American New Urbanism movement, and this is made clear in the book, e.g. in the fact that Andrés Duany, a pivotal figure in the New Urbanism movement, is one of the contributors. His Transect concept (defining different categories of landscapes, and suitable building types and structures for each category) is referred to several times. Peter Hall comments in his contribution that the New Urbanism and urban villages are very similar ideas. Duany and others’ design-oriented contributions however appear to have too few nuances. Indeed the introduction quickly states that “[t]he following chapters focus on the design, connectivity and social facilities that, when combined, create vibrant and sustainable urban districts.” Again, the question must be raised as to whether it is right that the planning debate, and indeed planning itself, is portrayed as such a uncomplicated and indeed unproblematic process.

The only female contributor, Roberta Brandes Gratz, refers to Jane Jacobs and her ideas as “authentic urbanism”

(p.24), and considers these ideas as being not sufficiently recognized. Naturally Jacobs has been an important advocate of urbanism, but can we really postulate that there is actually something such as authentic urbanism? Similarly, the concepts of the urban village and of New Urbanism are presented as having a distinct, and agreed, meaning. This could however be seen as a problematic and somewhat dogmatic viewpoint, especially as the definitions of the concepts used in this particular work are often rather “fluffy”. Peter Neal defines New Urbanism as proposing necessary new solutions for a changing society, land-efficient planning methods and quality of life. This can be reached through “diversity, pedestrian scale, public space and structure” (p.8). Who could not agree with this analysis? The Urban Village Group in turn talks about “adequate size”, “pedestrian-friendly”, “mix of uses”, “varied architecture” and “sustainable urban form” (p.11). It should however be noted that this does not necessarily have to result in an “urban village”, as the majority of the contributors seem to indicate.

It is clear then that this book was conceived in the main to support the urban village and New Urbanism concepts, and thus that it is necessary to keep this in mind while reading it. New Urbanism and the urban village are two (similar) ideas for the development of the city. We should however also be mindful of the fact that other ideas from around the world exist in this area, each with different applicability in different contexts.



DET DIGITALE NORDJYLLAND – IKT OG OMSTILLING TIL NETVÆRKS- SAMFUNDET?

Lone Dirckinck-Holmfeld, Bent Dalum,
Jens Ulrich and Egil Boisen eds. (2004)
*Det Digitale Nordjylland – IKT og omstilling
til netværkssamfundet?* Aalborg:
Aalborg Universitetsforlag.

By Jon M. Steineke
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In 1999 the then Danish government launched the Digital North Jutland Programme (Det Digitale Nordjylland - DDN). The objective of the DDN programme was to gather experience on the use of information and communication technologies useful both in terms of regional development in North Jutland and for the Danish nation as a whole. The county authority of Nordjyllands Amt administered the programme.

DDN was structured in projects arranged in four strands: digital governance, ICT and e-business, competence and education, and ICT infrastructure. In total, 89 different projects received funding within the four strands of the DDN programme. All projects were co-funded in that only a third of project costs could be financed by state funds. The DDN project portfolio required a total financing of some DKR 655 million, which corresponds to more than ff 100 million.

In parallel to the DDN programme, a group of researchers at Aalborg University was set up to follow the initiative using trail research methods, in the hope of integrating the separate experiences gained. A prime concern here was to see if and how the various projects interacted. In this edited volume, the Aalborg researcher team present some of their reflections on how information and communication technologies can be applied to boost regional development.

The book is organised along the main strands of the programme, so there are contributions assessing the DDN impacts in terms of digital governance, ICT and e-business, competence and education, and ICT infrastructure.

Dahlum and Pedersen start with an introductory chapter on the making of the DDN programme. They basically describe here the attempts to create a profile for the DDN initiative, while they neatly illustrate how the grand vision of creating an industrial ICT 'lighthouse' in Northern Denmark had to yield to a more general initiative, aimed at improving the willingness of citizens, organizations and institutions to change, renew, learn and collaborate in developing new (ICT) competencies and networks. From a purely industrial/cluster profile, the DDN initiative was softened to create a profile that allowed for the inclusion of projects with a footing in the humanistic and social sciences.

Dirckinck-Holmfeld then presents the trail research methodology in the DDN context. The methodological chapter is followed by seven chapters in which various authors – researchers as well as doctoral students – presents samples from the project portfolio in greater detail.

In the following seven chapters, different authors then illustrate how e-government, e-democracy, e-health, e-commerce, e-learning and other issues have been integrated into the DDN project portfolio. There is a strong focus here on projects aimed at improving ICT competencies and testing out e-learning in different organisational settings. E-learning is presented both in an educational as well as a health perspective. Several case studies are also presented, displaying how ICT is being integrated into the educational system at the secondary school and university levels, as well as in the training of adults with speech difficulties.

The book also provides a complete list of the DDN project portfolio, which includes projects such as 'the digital chamber of commerce', 'ICT-assisted environmental control for the handicapped', and 'the interactive citizen'.

In the concluding chapter, Dirckinck-Holmfeld and Dalum summarize the

experiences gained in these ICT projects. They argue that the projects have made a significant contribution to knowledge by qualifying the actors involved both technically and organisationally in terms of the implementation of ICT. Although the rather lax approach followed from the outset could be deemed a success, a continuation of DDN activities calls for a more applied and focussed approach in the future. This is an argument that is repeated in the formal evaluation of the Digital North Jutland programme (Teknologisk Institut 2004), where the evaluator concluded that the institutional and inter-organisational learning potential of the programme had not been fully exploited during the DDN programme period.

Dirckinck-Holmfeld et al. (2004) provide a broad and detailed presentation of a major Danish e-Europe initiative that successfully complements similar initiatives funded through Community Initiatives and the Structural funds across the EU. They provide a good level of insight into some of the major obstacles involved in creating thematic regional development and innovation partnerships. In this way they complement nicely the more standardised evaluations of Information Society initiatives and the programmes being published at the various national and international levels. One of the major obstacles to be overcome has been the need to ensure a good level of collaboration between public and private sector actors. It is to be hoped that some of the major conclusions made on the regional impact of the DDN initiative presented by the Aalborg team in this book can also be made available in English, particularly relating to the urgency of integrating such initiatives into regional planning strategies in general.

Other sources:

Teknologisk Institut (2004), Evaluering af regeringsinitiativet Det Digitale Nordjylland. Report to the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Development (September)



THE COMPETITIVE SOCIETY – HOW DEMOCRATIC AND EFFECTIVE?

ESSAYS ON EUROPEAN EXPERIENCES

The Competitive Society – How Democratic and Effective?
Essays on European Experiences

Noralv Veggeland
Kristiansand. Høyskoleforlaget, 2004
(122 p.)

By Jarle Trondal,
Professor
Centre for European Studies,
Agder University College

"The Competitive Society" is a small book of 122 pages targeting the large issue of European democratic governance. It is a readable collection of papers for graduate students and researchers as well as practitioners. This short review aims to do two things, while at the same time acknowledging the difficulty of doing justice to all themes covered in the book. The first section provides a short review of the main themes, questions and empirical observations of the book. Secondly, some of the shortcomings of the book are discussed.

The book is in reality an edited volume of six papers written with somewhat different research focuses in mind. Chapter one introduces the concept of 'distributed public governance', defined as "a restructured state hierarchy and public sector in general, and reflect policies for exposing public services to more competition. In some cases it even means organisational reforms that lead to public service institutions being regulated by private law as enterprises and not by public law" (p. 16.). The author goes on arguing that distributed public governance based on agreement-based logics contributes to a democratic deficit that challenges the existing Westphalian normative nation-state order. The empirical support for

this claim rests overly on the OECD report; "Distributed Public Governance - Agencies, authorities and other government bodies" (2002). One democratic challenge advocated by this report is that the processes of the downward devolution of competences from nation-state institutions to regional authorities are supplemented by an outward devolution of competences to semi-autonomous and non-elected institutions at arms-length distance from parliamentary scrutiny. The democratic challenge is arguably increased by this outward devolution process. Governance by vertically specialised institutions at the EU-level, within national central-administrative institutions as well as at regional tiers, for example in the case of the Norwegian Health Regions, has increased sub-institutional autonomy and decreased the potential for democratic accountability and transparency from the centre. The general claim of the author is that the OECD diagnosis of distributed public governance threatens the existing democratic order as well as the potential for integrated territorial governance in European nation-states.

The next five chapters discuss different aspects of the general claim outlined in the first chapter. Chapter 2 introduces the term 'competitive governance' centred on technocratic governance structures "staffed with experts and professions, ruling on behalf of settled treaties, agreements and contracts" (p. 46). The empirical laboratory for studying competitive governance is concentrated to the regional level. Arguably, we are witnessing a de-territorialisation of regional politics where authority is vested within sectors rather than within territorially integrated institutions. Chapter 3 aims at studying so-called 'multilevel governance games', denoting governance dynamics that cut across existing government levels, such as the state, region and the supranational level (i.e. the EU). Chapters 4 and 5 study 'the new regionalism'. This term seems to incorporate several trends, notably the emergence of functional, economic regions that transcend existing territorial regions, "Euroregions" that transcend nation-state borders, as well as the development of independent state agencies at the regional level. Finally, chapter 6 discusses the ongoing debate on European

democratic governance. Focus here is centred at the constitutional discourses that materialised during the constitutional processes around the EU Convention, as well as on the challenge of technocratic governance more generally.

The claims or diagnosis that the author makes, as well as the empirical observations presented in the book are not original. Moreover, the either/or analysis misses the more complex processes currently evolving within the context of European governance. The author draws several sweeping generalisations that, if tested empirically, are easily challenged or at least modified. For example, technocratic governance in the EU is argued to occur within the so-called comitology committees. Empirical research strongly challenges this conclusion, showing a more complex picture than that provided in this book. More generally, the book claims that we have arrived at a post-Westphalian phase where territorial nation-state governance is replaced by negotiated partnership institutions and contractualised governance. This argument is however more complex than the author cares to admit. Moreover, it is unclear whether this general conclusion is valid for all European states or only for some states, or whether regional authorities as well as international governmental institutions (like the EU and the WTO) are also covered by this argument. Moreover, the book does not systematically limit the empirical validity of the claims forwarded. Empirically, the conclusions drawn by the author seem to be heavily based upon the findings of one Report, OECD (2002), while the existence of other less supportive documents such as the Danish power study, for example, which argues that parliamentary governance is not severely weakened nor obsolete (Togebly et al. 2003) are ignored.

Finally, the author does not provide an overarching theoretical toolbox for explaining the alleged weakening of the Westphalian order. Instead, several pragmatic explanations are suggested, such as state preferences (p. 72), imitation from the OECD (cf. all the references to the OECD Report (2002)), EU regulations, and general economic glo-

balisation. A tightly knit theoretical argument is not arrived at by repeating several paragraphs throughout the book. Finally, the author should have made more effort to operationalise complex terms and claims, such as: “fusion will over time create institutional convergence” (p. 77), and “Governance is a form of government...” (p. 102). As such then, notwithstanding the interesting and provocative subject matter targeted, the book lacks a coherent theoretical argument that can be systematically tested and illustrated through a body of primary empirical data.

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Togeby et al (2003) *Magt og demokrati i Danmark. Hovedresultater fra Magtudredningen*. Aarhus: Aarhus Universitetsforlag.

in the subjects of the different sections, which can be read separately by those with only a limited or specialised interest in the specific topic.

In the first section Valsson builds upon previous work (in particular *City in Nature – An integrated whole*, 2000 and *Land as Resource*, 1993), where he explores the connection and relation between the built and natural environment and presents his theories on the way natural forces have shaped the pre-conditions for human settlement in Iceland. The second section provides an analysis of the natural and societal factors that shape settlement in Iceland, including physical attributions, aspects of governance, religion, transportation, economic and educational systems. In the third section, an overview is given of the evolution of the planning system as a whole as well as of the planning of the different settlements across the country, both with regard to the building of larger agglomerations as well as the development of towns in the countryside and regional planning. Dr Valsson then continues by providing an overview of the development of spatial planning systems on a countrywide scale and concludes by giving an insight into the current planning debate and also presenting his own views on planning in Iceland today.

The book’s extensive coverage assembles in one place an impressive wealth of material, (both in written form and in terms of illustrations, maps, photographs and drawings) all of which is presented in an accessible way, and can serve as an introduction or a reference book for those interested in planning in Iceland, as well as a basis for further study.

This scope in content is in a way the major strength of the publication, though paradoxically also its major weakness in some sense also as to some extent its wide scope blurs its focus and makes it more difficult to define its target audience. For the non-Icelandic reader, some of the chapters require background knowledge to make full use of the information provided, both with regard to the geographical area in question and/or the functioning of Icelandic society and the planning system in particular.

In the introduction to the book, Valsson stresses that one of its tasks is to provide the public with a basic knowledge of planning and “(it) is therefore almost intended to be a textbook for the general public”. Furthermore, the author states that particular emphasis has been placed on presenting the material of the book in as straightforward a way as possible. This goal is also reflected in the numerous illustrations that succeed in lightening the weight of the publication, making it much more reader-friendly, though this is achieved, to some extent, at the expense of its academic credence.

Throughout the publication, the author expresses personal views and standpoints on “good” and “bad” planning and he combines facts and personal views in an often carefree manner, with limited references to his conclusions in the text. This approach results in often interesting and original points of view and the author has a talent for making pertinent connections between natural, economic and cultural developments and physical changes in settlement patterns, often in quite an ingenious way. It is however in the final section, “The developments of Today”, that Valsson is really in his element, giving us a personal reflection on the current state and future of planning in Iceland.

Trausti Valsson should be lauded for his initiative. Compared to the other Nordic countries, research on planning in Iceland remains rather limited, though public debate was stirred recently as a number of planning issues have recently attracted interest nationwide, such as for instance the location of the domestic airport, the hydro-electric power plant at Kárahnjúkar and the revitalisation of Reykjavik’s old town, so much so in fact that they have become political bones of contention.. Planning in Iceland. From Settlement to Present Times forms an important contribution to the Icelandic planning literature and will doubtlessly spark an interesting public and academic debate on planning in Iceland.



PLANNING IN ICELAND - FROM SETTLEMENT TO PRESENT TIMES

Planning in Iceland - From Settlement to Present Times.

Trausti Valsson, University of Iceland Press.

Dr. Trausti Valsson is a professor at the University of Iceland and has published several books on the topic of planning in Iceland. In his latest publication, *Planning in Iceland. From Settlement to Present Times*, Dr. Valsson gives an overview of the development of settlements and urban development in Iceland from 874 to the present day. The author addresses spatial planning in its broadest sense, touching upon disciplines such as history, geography, human geography, regional development, urban design and architecture.

The book is divided into five sections each containing a number of different sub-chapters. There is a clear division

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Internationalisation of regional development policies – needs and demands in the Nordic countries

A Nordic Council of Ministers Research Programme 2005-2008

The Nordic Senior Official's Committee for Regional Policy (NÄRP) has assigned Nordregio to coordinate the research programme entitled 'Internationalisation of regional development policies – needs and demands in the Nordic countries'.

The aim of this research programme is to research key issues in need of new knowledge for the benefit of regional development policies and debates in the Nordic countries. The programme has three prioritised themes; 'Regional governance', 'Innovation and regional growth' and 'Demography and labour migration'. An overarching challenge for regional development policies in the coming years is the enlargement of the EU. This topic is therefore a cross-cutting theme in the research programme. The wide topic of the three dimensions of sustainable development; social, economic and environmental sustainability is also identified as of cross-cutting character.

We hereby invite researchers in the Nordic countries to submit applications for funding from the programme. For more information and application forms, log on to Nordregio's home page www.nordregio.se.

Deadline for applications is Tuesday 3 May 2005 at 17.00.

Welcome to submit research proposals!

*Margareta Dahlström
Senior Research Fellow
Programme coordinator
margareta.dahlstrom@nordregio.se*

In the next few years it is of fundamental importance to increase our knowledge in these areas. Many regional development issues and research questions overlap themes although they may be firmer based in one particular area. It is also likely that most research projects within this programme will involve one or both of the cross-cutting themes, but it is not an absolute condition to gain research funding.

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- *The Nordic countries and EU enlargement*
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