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Nordic Centre for Spatial Development

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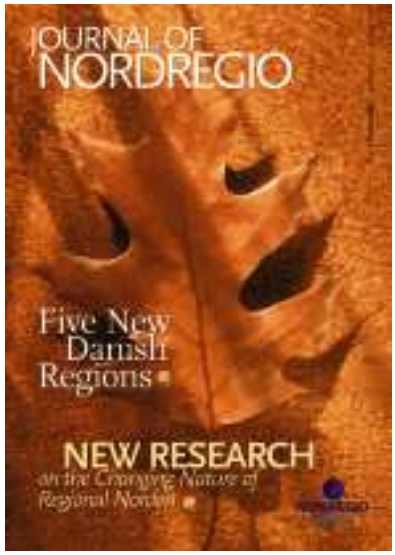

JOURNAL OF NORDREGIO

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ADRESSES:

NORDREGIO
Box 1658
SE-111 86 Stockholm
Sweden
Tel. +46 8 463 54 00
Fax +46 8 463 54 01
www.nordregio.se

JON P. KNUDSEN
Espevik
NO-4780 Brekkestø
Norway
Tel. +47 37 27 56 90
E-mail jon.p.knudsen@nordregio.se

MARGARETA DAHLSTRÖM
Nordregio
Box 1658
SE-111 86 Stockholm
Sweden
Tel. +46 8 463 54 00
Fax +46 8 463 54 01

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RESEARCH AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Regional development is a concept favoured by almost anyone. However, when it comes to establishing its scope and content, opinions and paradigms tend to differ according to political leaning, historical experiences and scholarly traditions. As with most encounters between research and policy development the realm of regional politics is constantly searching for new insights and policy initiatives. This quest for renewal is thus the umbilical cord that links researchers and politicians to each other. Politicians hunger for new policies, while researchers are expected to construct, if not the policies themselves, then at least their scientific underpinnings.

The Nordic Senior Officials Committee for Regional Policy (NERP) is no exception here. Having commissioned Nordregio to undertake the administration of its four-year research programme "future challenges and institutional preconditions for regional development policy", the committee undertook to renew the knowledge base of the field for future regional policy development.

The results of the second phase of the programme stretching from 2002 to 2004 presented in this issue of the Journal of Nordregio point to a range of challenges covering the main strands of innovation, demography and sustainable development. The printed reports from the projects covered will themselves soon be available, though whether their conclusions are to be implemented in future policies concerns not just the Nordic council of ministers, but also the various national, regional and local authorities accorded a role in the shaping of regional politics.

The relationship between research and politics in the context of regional development is twofold. Firstly, research and knowledge development in itself is considered crucial to securing future well-being. Increasingly knowledge has come to be understood as the backbone of development, socially and economically, as various parts of the regionalized global economy compete for excellence. The image of knowledge as an embedded factor in the strategy designed to help secure this future welfare has also made its mark on the European scene, most evidently so in the Lisbon document setting the goals for future EU achievements.

Secondly, applied research is an important tool in identifying, targeting and monitoring regional development strategies in the Nordic countries as well as in the rest of Europe. This is however not a new phenomenon, though the role and scope of research has changed over the years. In the immediate post-war decades, research was very much seen as a vehicle offering immediate solutions to equally immediate policy challenges in a linear and often simplistic fashion. Over the years however the complexities of modern politics as well as the tensions inherent in the relationship between what we may, after Machiavelli, term the Prince and his retinue of advisors, of which we can include researchers here, has become ever greater.

Currently however, unlike Machiavelli, many scientists now refrain from giving definitive advice on the important policy issues of the day. This is only logical given the insights of various epistemological and theoretical debates in the last forty years over the role of science, i.e. the positivist debate of the 1960s, the social relevance debates of the 1970s and 1980s, and the discourse debate of the 1990s.

As such however we are now undoubtedly confronted by a somewhat paradoxical situation. In much of the literature research is now given a stronger role than ever before as a development driver in its own right, while the actual contribution of research to the formation of viable political solutions to important societal challenges remains at best limited. It continues to be important, but just exactly how important? This is something that is still only vaguely grasped.

At the same time, echoing a move away from Machiavelli and back to a sunnier Aristotelian period, more holistic, normative, and value-based perspectives on the role of research in politics have reappeared with a vengeance. As such, at least two roles, often vastly differing, can be identified as options for the modern researcher.

Some scientists/researchers have lent themselves to assisting politicians ascend into the bright new light of the knowledge society, giving advice on which parameters are to be considered crucial to future growth and development, while others wave the banner of sustainability, trying to persuade politicians to consider the balancing forces influencing global as well as regional habitats.

Both camps of course have their merits, but their weaknesses should also be highlighted. The first group runs the same risks as those of the optimists of the 1960s, selling advice that in the end proves to be more contingent than calculated. The warnings of James Coleman that all theories should be considered "sometimes true theories" with limited bearing in new contexts can thus never be repeated often enough. The second group however often seem unaware of the ideological quicksand quality of the sustainability concept as it is transmuted from the natural sciences into the realms of the social science and particularly, to economics. To put it simply, any political system will automatically tend to think of itself as offering sustainable solutions to societal challenges, though this is not to assume that all such societies have the ability to pull off such feats of reflexivity in a dispassionate manner. What is changing from one system to the next however are the preconditions actually adopted. For science to pick a specific value-based point of departure in offering politicians sustainability receipts can thus be sanctioned in the first place by referring to pre-existing disagreements over the value choices adopted.

These arguments do not make current research within the paradigms cited above valueless, but they do highlight a debate that will necessarily grow in importance in the years to come. Like the Prince and his advisor then research and politics need each other, and thus though they often disagree over tactics or goals, the desire of each for their own kind of virtu, or renewal in this case, ensures that they will always remain umbilically linked.

FIVE NEW DANISH REGIONS

The Danish government has recently reached an agreement with the Danish People's Party over structural reform. Denmark will thus continue to have a three -tier administrative system.

Originally the government wanted to create a two -tier political and administrative system by getting rid of the traditional counties. The agreement reached on 24 June between the two government parties and the Danish People's Party implies that a directly elected regional level will be retained.

This compromise should be understood in the light of the explicit threat from the Social Democratic Party to alter any new system based on the two-tier principle.

The five regions will be as follows

REGION	ADMINISTRATIVE CENTRE
Nordjylland	*Aalborg*
Midtjylland	*Viborg*
Syddanmark	*Vejle*
Sjælland	*Sorø*
Hovedstaden	*Hillerød*

The regions will become operational form1 January 2007 and each will have an elected assembly of 41 representatives. A "chairman of the regional council" will chair each region, though they will not be authorised to levy taxes.

The new regions will be accorded the following tasks:

• Responsibility for the health care, including psychiatric treatment and the entire national health insurance service.

• Responsibility for the preparation of development plans including a general vision for the development of the region within the areas of nature and environment, trade and industry, tourism, employment, education and culture, as well as the development of the outlying areas of the region and the rural areas. The regions will be able to coordinate activities in these areas and provide secretarial services for the new regional growth fora.

• Responsibility for a number of institutions for vulnerable groups and groups with special needs.

• Establishment of transport companies throughout Denmark. The transport companies will be responsible for public bus services in the region as well as for the county railways that are not transferred to the state.

By Jon P. Knudsen

Norway Set to Have Seven Regions?

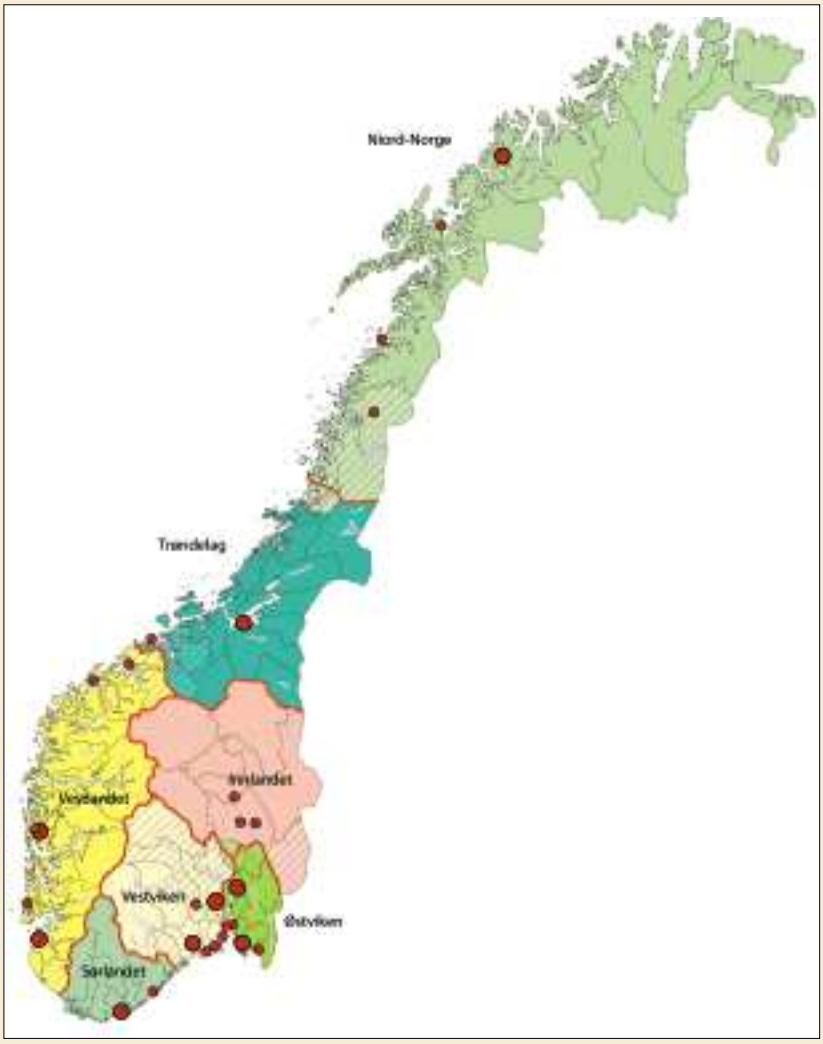
The Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities (KS) recently proposed a redesigned Norwegian political and administrative system of seven regions.

To fuel the national debate on the future regional division of Norway, KS commissioned professor Tor Selstad of Lillehammer University College to present a set up for a reformed regional political and administrative system. His report was presented on 25 August, and recommended a seven- region model to substitute for the present 19 counties.

In Selstad's model the new regions are to be built on historical and ongoing processes of regional cohesion, and they are supposed to take up such tasks as

- Regional policy
- Higher and secondary education and research
- Physical planning, environment and resource management
- Transport
- Culture
- Health and hospitals

The KS initiative is likely to be widely debated in the months to come, as the 2005 parliamentary election campaign is believed to polarize the theme. The minister for local and regional affairs, Erna Solberg, coming form the Conservative Party, may thus soon find herself representing the sole political party advocating a two- tier political and administrative system to replace the present county system



By Jon P. Knudsen

MALE EXODUS FROM RURAL SWEDEN

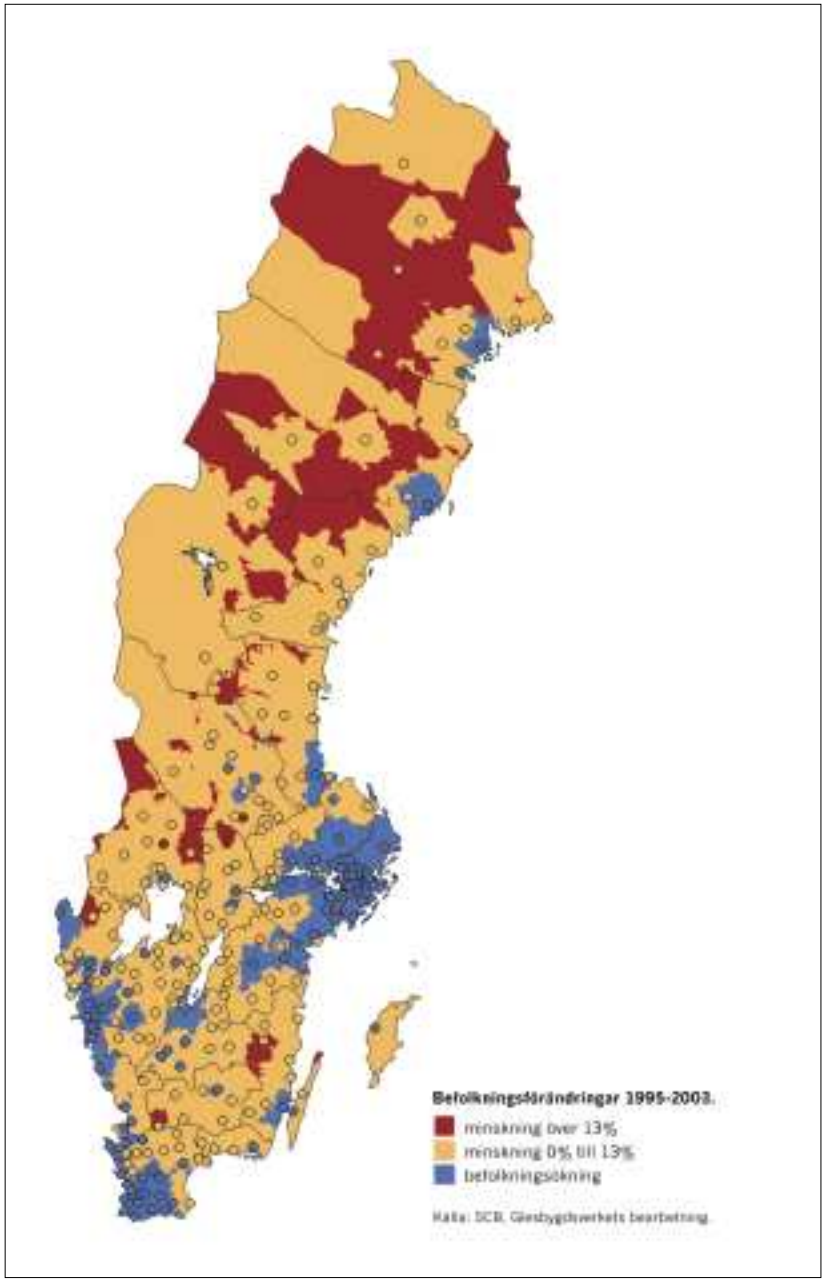
The strong female tendency to migrate to urban settlements has been well documented for more than a century. In Sweden the men are now following suit.

In its 2004 yearbook, the Swedish National Rural Development Agency expressed its concern about the continuation of regional population disparities, where the population continues to rapidly decrease particularly in the northern interior areas. Rural areas located in proximity to the larger cities on the other hand continue to experience significant population gains.

The situation in the Northern rural periphery is of concern, the Agency states, as the rural exodus affects service levels and the possibility of maintaining a sizeable workforce in the regions concerned. Thus the long-term viability of numerous rural communities is at stake.

What is new here however is the tendency for young men to leave the periphery in greater number. Last year the number of young men leaving peripheral and rural Sweden exceeded the number of young female out-migrants thus marking a tendency not hitherto registered. Whether or not this feature will establish itself more firmly in the medium term however remains to be seen.

The Agency does however note more positively that the trend for young couples with children to return to rural areas continues.



By Jon P. Knudsen

International Challenges to the West Nordic Region

By Kaspar Lytthans

Director of Nordic Atlantic Co-operation, NORA

The West Nordic countries are once again on the Nordic agenda. They have been so before, but this time the political focus of the debate, and the general trend towards internalisation opens up perspectives and visions of a far wider magnitude than ever before.

The 2004 Nordic chairmanship programme and the initial steps in the Nordic debate include a report outlining potential areas of increased Nordic co-operation on North Atlantic topics along with suggestion for developing co-operation with neighbouring countries such as Scotland, and the coastal areas of Canada.

The aim of the report is thus to "shed light on the possibilities of enhancing the political relevance of any West-Nordic activities under the auspices of the Nordic Council of Ministers". This is of course of obvious Nordic interest, but it may also be seen as a catalyst for more clearly defining the needs and visions of increased and extended cooperation within the North Atlantic region.

As for the West Nordic countries development trends reveal a picture of such areas undergoing the process of intense internationalisation, characterised by the high ambition of taming globalisation, in the context of striving to better manage their own resources and better utilise their intrinsic economic capabilities.

Resources – not least, renewable marine resources – being the key word here. Obviously this is the dominant basis of the economy of the West Nordic Countries and self-governing areas, but is also moreover a major resource in international terms, tied to a highly vulnerable and exposed environment.

The utilization potential of the resources is vast, but has to be managed with care. The challenge is multilateral, with the need to safeguard these resources against negative environmental impacts and overexploitation, ensuring biological and economic sustainability by optimizing the utilization of these raw materials. This is a particularly crucial point in respect of the survival of the North Atlantic fisheries in relation to the heavy competition – and needs - of the Far East

Another key term here is capacity building, which is an inevitable by-product of increased the international engagement of the West Nordic countries. Though very high in skills, the capacity and diversity of the fields covered are for natural reasons limited as regards international measures, especially in the Faroe Islands and Greenland, and thus need to be further developed and institutionalised in order that they may become the driving force behind the building up a self sustaining economies in these areas.

These challenges are of immense proportions for the smaller countries and of this region, and thus much can be achieved through institutionalised Nordic co-operation. The nature and importance of the resources and the striving for strong national development, however, also calls for a wider internalisation. As regards the wider promotion of this view, the map has to be drawn with the North Atlantic in the centre. This leads to the recognition that the areas of common interest and the problems to be addressed are larger than the three West Nordic countries, and more likely may be better seen in the context of the North Atlantic area as a whole, including Norway, part of the Arctic area and the neighbouring areas of Scotland and coastal Canada.

For the West Nordic countries this implies a need for more alliance partners. Moreover it requires a continuous effort to define the challenges and create the necessary understanding as well as ongoing political attention and interest. Albeit with a Nordic focus on solutions and within the context of a reinforced process of Nordic cooperation, engaging with international cooperation in respect of European programmes, and the Arctic Council, and the building up of relations with neighbouring countries, will be the main tasks of such a process.

The current Nordic focus on the West Nordic area offers a number of options for the visionary development of West Nordic and indeed Nordic cooperation more generally, though barriers remain, while there are also numerous challenges still to be addressed and taken into account. The above- mentioned need for capacity building and institutionalization calls for a stronger and more focused integration of Nordic institutions to make the combined Nordic resources available better constitute an internationally competitive contribution. With almost no institutions for regional cooperation in the area, this is a challenge for the different sectors of the Nordic cooperation process and may best be addressed though targeted research and development programmes.

For more than 20 years, the Nordic regional cross border organisation, Nordic Atlantic Cooperation, has been developing and supporting cooperation projects within the Nordic part of the North Atlantic area. Following the increasing internationalisation trends in the area, the organisational strategy is currently in the process of potentially being adjusted towards adopting the role of being a key actor in the increasing Nordic efforts in the North Atlantic, including cooperation with the neighbouring countries. A strong networking and project development organisation could be considered as a vital option in the drive to set up a regional framework for political dialogue and concrete cooperation - as an integral part of the wider process of Nordic cooperation, though with a strong national commitment from the other North Atlantic countries.

Despite the current focus of the Nordic agenda, the North Atlantic topic has to face up to stiff competition from other political agendas, many of which attract significant political attention due to their EU relevance and the involvement of a much larger numbers in terms of finance and population.

Notwithstanding this however, from the point of view of the North Atlantic countries at least, ongoing internationalisation across the region seems to have reinforced the general level of awareness of the importance of the North Atlantic area and its resources. As such, our neighbours to the west show interest in further cooperation. The West Nordic countries and Nordic cooperation are then setting the stage in this context, not only for this year, but also for the years to come.

New Research on the Changing Nature of Regional Norden

Regional Norden is in constant flux. To monitor and analyse regional policy relevant societal changes and challenges, the Nordic Council of Ministers through its Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy (NERP) has conducted the research programme Future challenges and institutional preconditions for regional development policy. The programme has been in existence since 2000, and will conclude at the end of 2004. The first phase of the programme was reported in 2002 (see Journal of Nordregio 2002:2). In this volume we present the results of six projects marking the end of the programme. Nordregio will publish the written reports from these projects throughout the autumn of 2004.

Åge Mariussen

NATIONAL BUSINESS VARIETIES DEMAND DIFFERENTIATED INNOVATION POLICIES

General conceptions of innovation fail to grasp important national variations in business structure and mode of innovation. Hence more sophisticated notions of innovation and tools for promoting business performance are required

By using general statistical concepts, it seems that Iceland and Norway are laggards in terms of regional business innovation and development, whereas Denmark, Finland and Sweden excel in these fields. On closer analysis however it seems that mainstream definitions of innovation and the subsequent data gathered favour some country-specific forms of economic renewal. Variations in business composition and style may then account for such differences. Åge Mariussen form the Norwegian STEP Group chaired the project "From Regional Coalitions to Commercial Innovations" which aimed to unpack the innovation dynamics of the various Nordic countries.

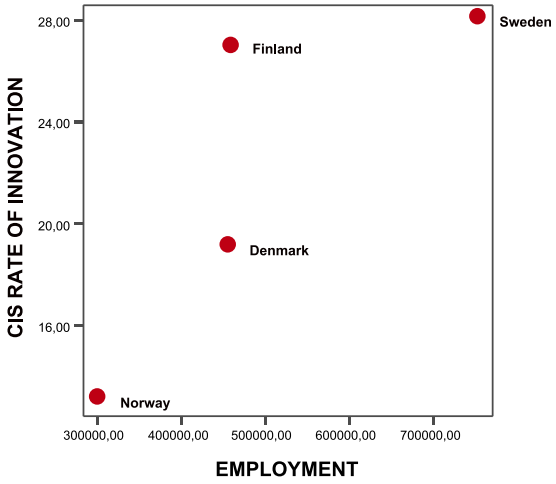
In the year 2000, total employment in the four Nordic countries, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Denmark was roughly 11.5 million (11,498,100). Of these, 4 million (4,059,300) worked in the private service sector, and some 2 million (1,967,400) in manufacturing.

The remaining 5.5 million worked in agriculture, mining, electrical supply - and in the public sector. Although there is growing awareness of the need for restructuring, cost cutting, and indeed innovation in the public sector, much of the debate on innovation has been directed at the private sector – with most of the interest focussing on manufacturing. The major reason for this is the fact that manufacturing generates the lion's share of these countries' national incomes from export. In other words, we are talking about one of the core mechanisms generating the global competitiveness of our national economies, our standards of living, and our levels of welfare. There are however many ways to keep the national economy globally competitive. One such approach, which remains important in the more peripheral Nordic countries, such as Norway and Iceland, is the exploitation of natural resources. Another is that of simply trying to keep the cost levels as low as possible. As the Nordic countries increasingly confront the new Asian tigers, such as China, competition through cost cutting measures alone is doomed to be a battle lost. Thus, innovation has emerged as a core strategy for industrial development in most Nordic countries.

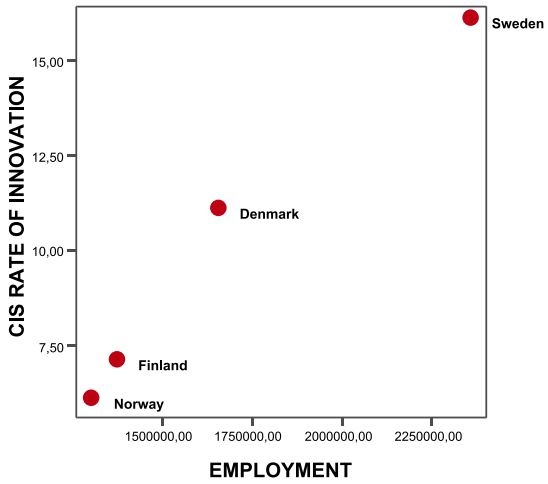
In the search for innovation policy tools, the question of appropriate innovation indicators thus emerges. One approach to this has become known as the "Oslo manual", which has directed a European wide survey, the "Community Innovation Survey" or CIS. The CIS is carried out in a number of European countries every fourth year, last time being in 2000 (2001 in Norway). In the context of the survey, a sample of firms are asked a set of questions - among them how much of their turnover is created by new or improved products – and how much they have invested in innovation to achieve this result. If we take these answers – and relate them to employment statistics, we get a pretty good estimate of the share of jobs in different industries that in some way or another are dependent upon continuing innovation. Currently our estimate can be pitched at the level of pretty good though there are a number of important points to be made in connection with this point. Most importantly, not all firms were of course consulted. All firms with more than 100 employees were asked, but only a sample of firms with 10-100 employees, and no firms with less than 10 employees were consulted. Since we know that innovation rates are generally higher in larger firms than in smaller ones, this may lead us to expect that the CIS rate over-estimates innovation levels. Leaving these worries aside for now, we have also to make a further assumption, namely, employment in production based on innovative products generates the same employment per unit of production value as employment in other products in the industry. As we all know, this may not be the case, as new products may well be less labour intensive than old ones.

The CIS has two definitions of innovation. The narrow definition being a product that is new to the market, while the broad definition is an improved product, which may or may not be new to the market – but is new to the firm. First, in looking at the Nordic level, and using the broad CIS definition, some 11% of employment in private services, and 23% of employment in manufacturing industries in the year 2000 was

MANUFACTURING IN NORDIC COUNTRIES: EMPLOYMENT AND INNOVATION RATE (BROAD CIS DEFINITION)



BUSINESS SERV ICES IN NORDIC COUNTRIES: EMPLOYMENT AND INNOVATION RATE (BROAD CIS DEFINITION)



based on, or related to, innovation. In terms of the number of jobs, we are talking about roughly 444 000 jobs in private services, and some 460 000 in manufacturing, a total estimate of roughly 900 000 jobs in the Nordic countries (excluding Iceland). Using the narrow CIS definition of products which are new to the market, we are down to 170 000 jobs in private services and 190 000 jobs in manufacturing, a total of some 366 000 jobs. Even though these estimates, for the reasons indicated above, might very well be too high, they do point in the direction that innovation most certainly is a dynamic force in the economy, and well worth attention.

In looking at the differences between industries and countries, CIS statistics confirm the idea that innovation is path dependent and determined by national specificities, what researchers and policy makers frequently refer to as "national innovation systems" and "national business systems". Broadly speaking, a national innovation system is the setup of institutions and practices that generates knowledge in a country – and leads to the application of knowledge for economically useful purposes. A national business system is the institutions and practices which determine how firms are organized, what kind of general strategies they follow, including the "culture" of the firm. Importantly, the study confirms that these differences are consistent across several industries, and not determined by structural differences. This finding indicates the significance of generalized and nationally specific forms of business organization. This has several implications. First, two Nordic countries stands out as "losers" as regards the CIS indicator, namely, Norway and Iceland. This is caused by the fact that most firms in Norway and Iceland, including most of the major national corporations, have a clear strategy to innovate through cutting costs in the processing of standardized natural resources. This kind of innovation is not measured by CIS. The outcome of this is that Norway and Iceland both have a low share of jobs related to new products – and a low absolute number of jobs related to innovation, measured in the CIS fashion. Considering for a moment the estimated jobs related to new manufacturing products, Norway had an estimate of just 9 000 in 2000, whereas Denmark had an estimate of 50 000 and Finland 110 000. Thus, Finland and Denmark together contribute 84% of all Nordic manufacturing jobs based on new products! This reflects the entrepreneurial orientation of the Danish and Finnish manufacturing industries. But whereas Danish entrepreneurialism is a generalized phenomenon, expressed through a high level of low tech new product creation in several industries, making Denmark the Nordic industrial district - the Finnish national performance is heavily dependent upon a single strong and research based cluster: ICT. Somewhat surprisingly, Sweden falls back when it comes to the creation of new products for the market. The estimated number of Swedish manufacturing jobs related to new products was surprisingly low at just 23 000. Instead, the Swedish strength is in new and improved products, both in manufacturing and services. Here, the Swedish total estimate is 437 000 jobs, with 211 000 in manufacturing. As a comparison, Norway has 89 000, Denmark 202 000 and Finland 177 000 estimated jobs related to new or improved products in services and manufacturing. In other words, of the 900 000 total Nordic jobs related to innovation, Sweden roughly takes half. This is as should be expected, given what we know about the Swedish orientation towards technology driven improvements in complex products, rather than Danish or Finnish entrepreneurialism and new product creation. Sweden is the Nordic version of Germany. The upshot of this is that Nordic private business actors are very different in their innovative performances. This indicates that there is much to be gained through Nordic comparisons. The report accordingly analyzes and identifies the strong Nordic clusters – and presents a set of indicators for Nordic regions, based on the comparative analysis.

By Jon P. Knudsen and Åge Mariussen

New Policy Measures for Stronger Labour Markets?

Lars Olof Persson

The Nordic labour markets are, nationally speaking, the most robust in Europe. Regional variations are nevertheless enormous with the numerous smaller labour markets being hardly viable. This may call for a specific Northern Dimension policy measure to be adopted.

A research group from Nordregio, led by Lars Olof Persson, has recently forwarded these interesting and highly policy relevant conclusions. The group studied the relationship between demographic changes and labour market dynamics in local labour markets throughout the Nordic countries in a project entitled, "Economic Renewal and Demographic Change".

On the whole, the Nordic labour markets appear sound. Unemployment, with the exception of Finland, is well below the EU average, while the employment rate is consistent with the Lisbon target for 2010 of 70% ranging between 84.6% for Iceland to 68.1% for Finland.

On delving deeper into detail the picture however becomes more nuanced. Noting that the most important flows in the labour market are local job-to-job flows, the ability of these labour markets to generate overall population growth varies considerably. The local mobility factor is striking on any labour market, with some 20-25% of the labour force changing position during the year. In larger markets, most of these changes are voluntary and also beneficial for the individual, as more people change careers by trading-up to a better job. Additionally, more people take time-out to undertake a period of continuing education. In small markets however, such transitions are less frequent and less voluntary – e.g. often leading, when they do occur, to seasonal unemployment, a less well -paid job, or to long -term sickness leave. Essentially, the narrow sector structure of such labour markets offers few alternatives to those seeking to enter or re-enter the labour market, and thus many are trapped into undertaking poorly paid menial tasks often in the service sector, the result being that long-term sickness periods and early retirement are frequent exits from many of these small Nordic labour markets.

It should however be noted that 60% of all local labour markets – there are in total some 500 more or less independent commuter catchment areas in Norden - are defined as small or "micro". They contain altogether less than 10% of the labour force in the common Nordic market.

Figure 1 (p.11) shows the results of the regionalized population growth patterns when divided into the natural change and the migration components respectively.

The pattern that emerges here is one of size mattering, with the larger labour markets generally showing better population gains, while those falling into the negative categories tend to be smaller in size. When analysing the labour market components this picture is further enhanced. Especially well endowed are the capital regions, the metropolises, and the regional centres with universities, while what are labelled micro labour markets have serious problems in this regard.

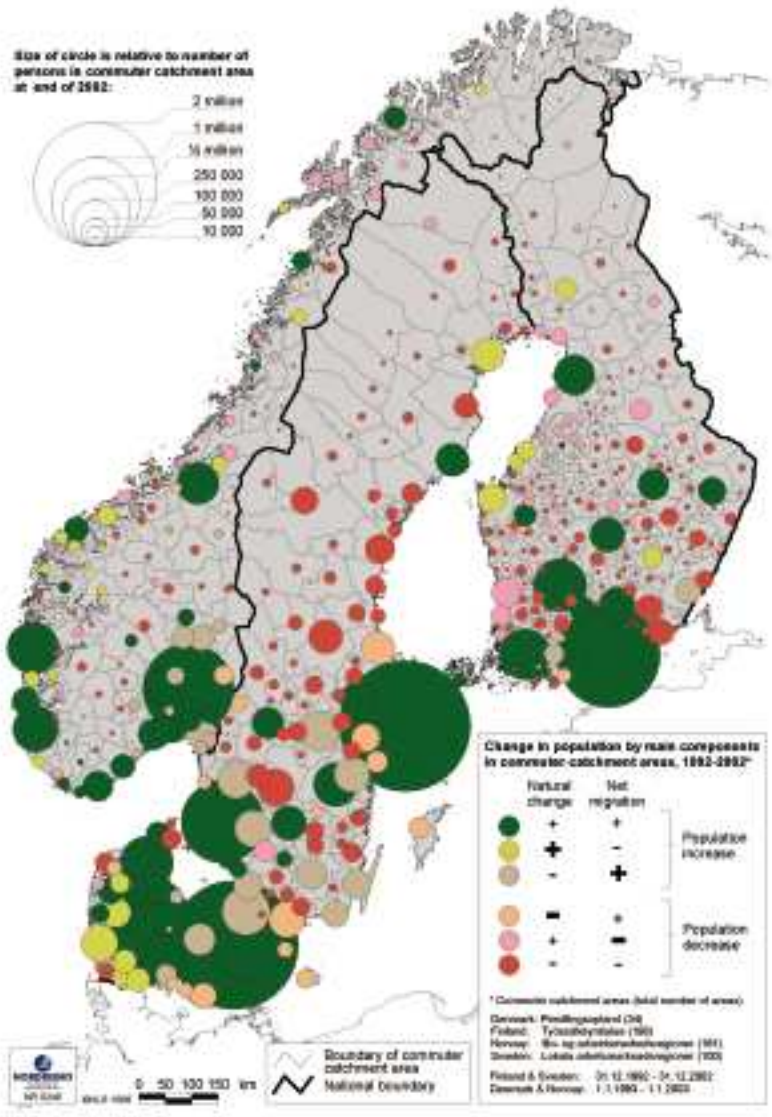
Policy consequences

Generally it can be concluded that the national employment policies in the Nordic countries are able to activate the larger local labour markets, while their inability to do likewise for smaller labour markets suggests that a more precise policy is needed for such areas.

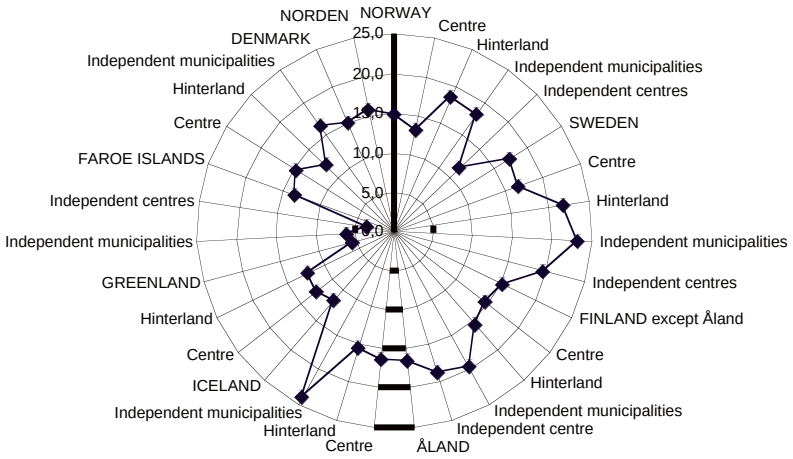
This conclusion does however pose a number of problems, as the options for good transitions in these regions are extremely limited and indeed we can even say, are decreasing over time. Traditional policy instruments have not been able to maintain such labour markets above a critical mass, and indeed it can be questioned whether any of these small labour markets will ever become functional labour markets in the real sense of the word. They thus seem destined to continue to be dominated by what is in effect a secondary labour market, based on publicly subsidized employment, while the ageing populations in these regions continue to demand services from the shrinking – and also ageing – local labour force.

The future challenge for policy-makers as for academics then is to attempt to chart how it could ever be possible to "make transitions pay" in these parts of the European space. In a wider context, the challenge could be to develop a Northern dimension to European policy development seeking out a broader framework that will help attract young, well educated workers to such areas, the researchers note. The need for closer cooperation between - and not least more flexible practices in – all relevant policy systems at the local level is obvious, including social policy, the schools, the service providers and the employment agency. The reality of outlining the detailed content of such a policy scheme however remains as yet some way off.

By Jon P. Knudsen



AGEING IN THE (EASTERN) NORDIC PERIPHERY



Share of the population 2003 aged 65 years or more. Country avarages and types of periphery. Percent.

Long-term demographic patterns have led to a situation where the population base of the Nordic periphery is ageing. The situation is more aggravated in the Eastern than in the Western part of Norden, while policy options are even less likely to be forthcoming from the regional level than they are from the national level.

Olaf Foss and Dag Juvkam from the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) have recently conducted a project on the Territorial Patterns and Implications of Socio-Demographic Change", with the aim of identifying the main trends and challenges related to demographic change in the Nordic peripheries.

Their primary conclusion is that present ageing patterns on the national scale can be attributed to long-term international demographic movements related to the phenomenon of demographic transition. Although this phenomenon has been recognised by policy-makers for decades, the ongoing process of demographic transition has not proven to be a sufficiently exact science such as to be able to lend itself to forecasting. In fact, most forecasts of overall demographic development in recent Nordic planning have proven to have been rather wide of the mark when viewed in retrospect.

Dividing the Nordic countries into the categories presented in table 1 below, the picture of a mixed peripheral situation emerges. Denmark is labelled as generally "not peripheral", whereas The Faroe Islands, Åland and Greenland have been categorised as entirely peripheral. Using municipalities as units, the periphery is then further divided into categories of increasing peripheriality.

When applying this model to the analysis of ageing as was done in the figure below, where the relative number of persons aged 65 + is presented according to their municipal category, the picture that emerges contains two distinct features. Firstly the West Nordic countries of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and Iceland have younger populations than the East Nordic countries. Moreover, the ageing periphery is not a salient feature in Western Norden. Secondly the proportion of elderly people generally increases as one moves from the relative centres of the periphery to what could be labelled the periphery of the periphery. The most extreme cases are found in Sweden and Åland where the populated outskirts have a substantial representation of people in the retiring age groups.

The policy consequences of these observations could be divided into national and regional policy challenges. On the national level, the general concerns seem to be hinged on the 'dependency debate', i.e. on the socio-economic balance between the work force and so-called dependent segments of the population especially as they relate to the financing of future welfare arrangements.

In a regional setting, a debate on future service provision in sparsely populated areas is already taking place, but as Foss and Juvkam note, the important future domestic migration patterns of elderly people are almost impossible to foresee, and thus also to plan for.

NORDIC COUNTRIES	Not Periphery	Periphery Total	Centre	Hinterland	Independent municipality	Independent centre
DENMARK	100,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0	0,0
FAROE ISLANDS	0,0	100,0	57,3	20,7	22,0	0,0
FINLAND exc. Åland	90,5	9,5	3,6	1,7	3,2	1,0
- ÅLAND	0,0	100,0	40,5	50,6	8,9	0,0
GREENLAND	0,0	100,0	0,0	0,0	74,8	25,2
ICELAND	68,5	31,5	10,3	21,1	0,0	0,0
NORWAY	84,0	16,0	6,7	6,5	2,3	0,6
SWEDEN	88,4	11,6	6,2	1,9	2,3	1,1
NORDIC AVERAGE	89,9	10,1	4,5	2,7	2,2	0,8

Table 1. The size of the Nordic periphery and its different types, by country. Number of inhabitants in 2003 as a % of all inhabitants in the respective country.

By Jon P. Knudsen

Innovations and Institutions in the North

The northern periphery is commonly thought of as being poorly endowed in respect of its innovative capacity. Nils Aarsæther and his research team argue that this is not true, while innovation processes may actually take other forms and directions than those often set out in text books and other policy schemes. This in itself offers new challenges to policy development.

Nils Aarsæther

Nils Aarsæther chaired a research group consisting of social scientists from Finland, the Faroe Islands, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Their task was to investigate and compare innovative processes as they emanate from the local level in the northern Nordic periphery. Taking as a point of departure the notion that innovative processes are intimately coupled to institutional preconditions, the research group sought to investigate exactly how such processes occur within three different institutional spheres, namely within the business, public and civil sectors of society.

The research group chose a number of municipalities in the five countries represented in the project to look for cases. Using snowballing interviews as a technique for detecting innovative process, the team registered a total of 311 innovations within the studied communities, of which 66 were chosen for further investigation as shown in figure 1.

Looking at the cases and the processes surrounding them, the project team noted that mostbelonged to a category of municipalities that should, so the conventional theories tell us, have displayed few of the necessary preconditions for innovation, whilst at the same

Community	Sector				
	Business	Public	Civil	Other	Total
Tornio	Steel Studio	Border City	Bothnian Market	–	3
Ylitornio	Concrete products	Elderly Gym	Shooting Centre	Kantele instruments	4
Pello	Long Winged village shop	Lively Life municipal plan	Across river marriages	Science history site	4
Kolari	Health Hotel	Tourism strategy	Village house	Mountain Opera	4
Muonio	Holiday Centre	Ski trails	Housewives organisation	–	3
Enontekiö	Holiday Camp	Distance education	Ice fishing event	Sámi Culture Centre	4
Kiruna	Stone cutting centre	MRI Space and Environment	Sámi Dev. Centre	–	3
Pajala	Electronic industry	Care of Disabled	Village tourism	–	3
Övertorneå	Potato processing	Strategic mobilisation	Arctic march	–	3
Haparanda	Business incubator	Barents Road	Community feast	–	3
Kalix	Evonet industrial partners	UniverCity	Village cooperation	–	3
Storfjord	-	Disabled employment	Market event revival	–	2
Kåfjord	Coastal tourism	Homepage	Indigenous festival	–	3
Kautokeino	Mobile phones centre	Planning and herding	Music organisation	–	3
Røst	Cod farming	–	Italian town twinning	New hotel	3
Vestvågøy	High-tech sea navigation	Viking museum	–	Food production	3
Isafjördur	Snerpa Internet	School-family office	–	Multicultural centre	3
Hornafjördur	Galdur Internet	Nyheimar Centre	–	Arts Centre	3
Leirvikar	Marine products	Old people's home	Cultural house	–	3
Göta	Normek	Old people's home	Musical association	–	3
Fuglafjördur	Fish protein	Bus route	Cultural house	–	3
Total	**20**	**20**	**18**	**8**	**66**

Figure 1. Innovations studied according to place and sector

time being able to muster little in the way of adequate resource levels to do so. Lacking in human resources as well as in the necessary institutions, and being remotely located in the thinly populated northern rim of Europe, the notion of periphery thus points to more than the mere geographical location of the communities in question.

On concluding the study the research group was nevertheless able to point to a considerable amount of innovative activity currently taking place in the communities studied, thus challenging the mainstream concepts of scholars and planners. This conclusion hinges on two important observations.

Firstly, the study notes an important east-west dichotomy in the cases in question. The western cases consisting of those from the Icelandic, Faroese and coastal Norwegian areas experienced a climate of opportunities where the marine and maritime resource foundations offer a horizon for private business development. This is so despite the rather meagre public development support offered especially in the Faroe Islands and in Iceland. In the eastern cases, that is to say in Finland, Sweden and the Inland Norwegian areas, the prospects for private business initiatives were found to be much poorer as the resource bases, with the exception of tourism, have already been largely exploited by industries in the sunset phases of business development. On the other hand, these eastern communities have at hand a range of public support arrangements made up of national and EU regional development schemes.

Secondly, the study points to the crucial role of the municipalities in question and to the public sector in supporting and catalysing innovating activity, thus modifying the common image of innovation as a predominantly private-sector oriented phenomenon. In the northern peripheries, the authors note, the municipalities, who often play the role of the sole large actor on the social scene, are often able to aggregate the common solidarity and creativity at hand, thus offering a different societal constellation of innovation to that found in more central and populated parts of the Nordic countries. As such, the post-war expansion in welfare development and local administration is scrutinized as having had a positive impact on social capital formation in the peripheries.

The policy conclusions offered are fourfold:

Strengthening local government: As local government is playing such a crucial role in the innovative process, it should be offered increased opportunities to act with flexibility in such local innovation processes. A vibrant local self-government system seems to be important in itself, both in order for ideas to materialize and for their successful integration into daily-life practice.

Empowering the innovators and supporting innovative activities: For the innovators, networking and competence are the essential elements, and they may be strengthened by, for example, regional level education courses, for would-be entrepreneurs and innovators to develop their ideas and projects as part of the course, at the same time profiting from the experience of other colleagues.

Building links and communications infrastructure: In order for local innovation to be successful, out-reaching mobility must be underpinned, both physically and electronically. More of the export activity from these locations is likely to be linked to tourism in the future, so access from the outside will be as important as out-going links and networks. At the same time, problems of per capita costs are real and should be countered by innovative ways of providing adequate transport and mobility systems.

Towards a broader concept of innovation: A broad definition of innovation is useful as it points to the interplay between commercial, public and civil society elements in various innovations. The usefulness of a broad innovation concept is also important with regard to ensuring that future policy-making is more informed.

By Jon P. Knudsen

SMALL MUNICIPALITIES
HOSTILE TO AMALGAMATION

Gestur Hovgård

Grétar Eythórsson

Katarina Fellman

In what must be the first research project ever to compare the development perspectives of municipal leaders in the Faroe Islands, Iceland and the Åland Islands, a research team consisting of Gestur Hovgård (Faroes), Katarina Fellman (Åland) and Grétar Eythórsson (Iceland) have recently presented interesting findings on the attitudes to structural challenges in these small Nordic countries.

Using the survey method the researchers asked the elected as well as the administrative leaders of the municipalities in these three countries about their views on future challenges to local development.

Interestingly the general municipal preoccupation seems to be with insufficient municipal revenues, whereas the classical structural problems of the periphery such as the lack of inhabitants, national regional policies and a one-dimensional local economy seem only to be a problem in communities situated beyond the daily commuting range to a central place. Moreover, it should also be noted that this also applies to countries that for several reasons can be labelled peripheral in their own right.

The research team explains these findings partly by referring to the relatively favourable position of the countries in question with regard to their recent business cycles. Furthermore, communications have been improved over the years, with previously isolated communities now increasingly being better connected.

As for the future, communication improvement will continue to remain high on the agenda for the municipalities asked, as will the question of the reform of municipal revenue systems. Concerning size, there seems however to be a marked hostility to the policy of municipal amalgamation among the persons interviewed. Instead the interviewees forwarded increased municipal cooperation as an alternative future strategy. This should be read within the context of the ongoing process of the amalgamation of Icelandic municipalities and the debates taking place in the Faroes and Åland Islands on the desirability of municipal mergers.

Furthermore it should be noted that the general attitudes to contemporary solutions such as privatisation, outsourcing and general rationalisation are reluctant to put it carefully.

The conclusions of course vary from one country to the next depending on national trends and preconditions. Nevertheless, the idea has been to offer some general results from a part of the Nordic municipal mosaic that is seldom covered by comparative research. In so doing, the findings made, and their interpretations may also find relevance in a wider Nordic context.

By Jon P. Knudsen

Table 1. Local leaders views on the Causes of the Problems in their Municipalities, by peripherality. (Weighted percentages)

The Five Main Explanations to Municipal Problems	Central Place	Within daily commuting to central place	Outside daily commuting to central place
Lack of People in Community	26	28	57
Government Regional Policy	32	42	74
One Sided Local Economy	34	35	60
Insufficient Municipal Revenues	66	59	43
The National Economy	32	37	39
Government Policy in Agriculture	10	16	26
Bad Municipal Economy	31	37	36
Lack of Municipal Autonomy	29	30	36
Gov. Communication Policy	38	26	31
Municipality Sparsely Populated	19	18	19
Government Fishing Policy	23	13	19

Note: Reasons mentioned by more than 50 percent are shaded.

Table 2. Local Leaders views as to the Best Solutions for the Problems in their Municipalities, by Peripherality (Weighted percentages).

Best Solutions to Problems	Central Place	Within daily commuting to central place	Outside daily commuting to central place
Communication Improvements	84	26	72
Privatizations	-14	-38	-64
Outsourcing	12	-14	-26
General Rationalizations	30	-2	-8
Increase Support to Businesses	40	10	34
Revision of Division Tasks State/Local	92	68	66
Increased State Funding to Municipalities	92	36	64
Increased Municipal Cooperation	54	54	72
Municipal Amalgamations	38	20	16

Note: The scores show the differences between those who agree or strongly agree and those who do not agree or do not agree at all with the solution mentioned. The shaded cells show the values where leaders agreed to the greatest extent (over 50% difference). Here a positive value means that the respondent agrees with the mentioned solution.

Mixed Record on Institutionalising Sustainable Regional Development

Finland and Sweden seem to lead the way in Nordic terms as regards institutionalising SRD. Norway is the obvious laggard here, with Denmark and Iceland in intermediate positions. Comparing the Nordic experiences with recent Canadian achievements may offer new ideas to the field in question.

Tuija Hilding-Rydevik

Keith Clement

When considering the institutionalisation of sustainable regional development (SRD) in the Nordic countries a research group led by Tuija Hilding-Rydevik at Nordregio notes that none of the five countries in question have an explicitly designed institutional set-up to cope with the challenges of sustainable development at the regional level.

Norway can point to nothing at all that could qualify as SRD institutionalisation, and while Iceland has already produced a rhetorical basis for the further implementation of SRD,

Table 1. Summary of the results and experiences thus far of the 'tools' implemented in each region. (Mainly based on the statements of the interviewees in each region.)

REGION	TOOL	RESULTS FROM AND EXPERIENCE OF TOOL IMPLEMENTATION
Päijät-Häme	SEA (Indicators)	• Tools use started in 1999 with an EIA-group which was later transformed into the SEA-group • The adaptation of the tool to the regional needs • The formation of a skilled and broad SEA (SD) group • SEA of regional development programme made by the SEA group • Early assessment that feeds into the regional development programming work. • Continuous assessments of projects in Objective 2 Programme as an important basis for funding decisions. Assessment made by the SEA group. • Seems to be a general appreciation of the work of the SEA-group and also a level of pride in the achievements and the integration results. • Results from SEA used actively by regional development officials and politicians.
North Jutland	SEA	• SEA implementation started as a pilot project in 1995 in relation to the regional land use planning (including regional development). • Adaptation of tool to regional context. • Limited integration of the SEA work in relation to regional planning work • Assessment work conducted late in, and separate from, the planning process • Environmental assessment a theme in the Regional Plan 2001 but results are perceived as "passive" and not used in the daily work. • The SEA work did not have much impact on the contents of the regional plan. • Awareness of environmental impacts among professionals at the county administration has been raised. The awareness of impacts between actions in different sectors has also been raised. • Active users of SEA results seem to be few in relation to contents in regional development work.
Västra Götaland	SD-SWOT SD-Indicators	• SD indicators revealed new facts that were draw-backs not previously recognized in the regional development work • The above facts inspired people to become further engaged in the work with the broad goal of SD as the basis for regional development • In general, the tools have created increased knowledge and awareness of SD among key regional actors. • In general the tools have contributed to the acceptance of SD among key regional actors, not least among politicians. • Tools input was/is a foundation of the development of the Regional Growth Programme and for the Revision of the Regional Development Strategy. • Integration of tools work in regional development work. • Users are both civil servants and politicians.
Södermanland	SD-Indicators	• An initial indicator model has been developed and adopted to the regional situation. It is however perceived to be too all encompassing at present and will thus need further development before it will be used. • No user experiences yet available.

The researchers noted that several general traits seemed to influence the way the work was conducted. Notably, there seemed to be an overspill from the national policy styles from the regional development sector. This would explain why the Finnish case seems to be geared to an instrumental and effective approach to policy formation, while the two Swedish cases lend themselves to the national virtues of discourse and broad processes.

Whether or not national policy emphasises SD at all seems to be of paramount importance, as illustrated by the Norwegian neglect of the policy field.

Furthermore, the ability of producing a legal framework for policy development seems to make a difference. In this case the Finnish tradition of regulating regional development practices should be emphasised.

Denmark clings to its tradition as a strong environmental planner on the regional level broadly missing the transformation from environmental to sustainability concerns. Only Sweden and Finland have regionalized experiments, which qualify as SRD proper in addition to the North Jutland case from Denmark where the initiative was based more on the specific regional resources at hand than on a national framework favouring SRD development.

Therefore the tools and approaches employed vary from case to case as do the experiences gained. Delving into the four cases of SRD implementation, or perhaps we should call it experimentation, the tools and the results can be summarized as in table 1 (p.16).

Finally, whether or not guidelines for the national promotion of SD have been adopted, especially in relation to regional development work, influences the likelihood of SRD practice evolving.

The overall conclusion from the Nordic part of the study is that SRD as a strategic policy instrument has until now been put into practice in only a rudimentary fashion, despite strong popular and EU policy initiatives. Whether or not the future will see any change in this respect remains at present unclear. In the meantime it is important to search for new and appropriate tools with regard to SRD development and implementation.

The Canadian case

In order to compare strategies and stimulate the debate on alternative policy tools on the Nordic scene, an evaluation of the Canadian tools for SRD implementation was added to the study. This part of the project was led by Nordregio associate, Keith Clement. The project set out to describe the work of the federal Commissioner for Environment and Sustainable Development located within the Auditor General's Office, as well as the SRD tools adopted in the provinces of Manitoba, Nova Scotia and Quebec.

In respect of the tools observed in Canada, they can be listed as in table 2.

As regards the Canadian results and experiences observed, a similar table to that dealing with the Nordic regions (above) was produced. The main conclusion here was that at the federal level, an institutional debate over the mandate and limits to the CESD is evolving, whereas at the provincial level a more content -oriented political debate is taking place over the scope and importance given to SD.

Concluding remarks

Though able to inspire the Nordic debate, the differences between Canada and Norden should not be forgotten. No Nordic country has a federal system of government. In recent years regional policy schemes have been substantially downsized in Canada, whereas (some of) the Nordic countries have witnessed a renewed interest in regional development questions following EU entry. Regional development policy in Canada seems to be more geared towards generally stimulating growth rather than the more problem region oriented regional policy approach used across Norden. In conclusion, one practical suggestion here could be the establishment of a Nordic Commissioner for Sustainable Development following the Canadian CESD example.

By Jon P. Knudsen

MEASURE OR TOOL USED IN CANADIAN PRACTICE	EXPECTATION ON PURPOSE AND FUNCTION
Commissioner for Environment and Sustainable Development (CESD)	• federal institution designed to hold federal government departments (including regional development agencies) accountable for environmental protection and SD in policy implementation; • assessing effectiveness in implementing SD dimension in already agreed regional development policy, but not challenging or making new policies; • making recommendations on how to improve performance, in terms of economy, efficiency and mechanisms used; • enforcing legislative requirement that departments produce and submit sustainable development strategies
Commissioner for Sustainable Development (CSD)	• provincial institution yet to be initiated; • to be modelled on federal CESD and go beyond the environmental remit of similar commissioners to audit provincial departments and ensure effective SD integration
Sustainable development charter/ strategy/action plan/	• for federal or provincial department or authority, to provide an overall framework for SD comprehension action fund and management, and facilitate integration; • to explain SD concept, the need for associated SD indicators, and provide overview with sectoral goals for sustainability; • to create a launch-pad for legislation and guidance for strategic objectives linked to SD issues; • to identify and support general SD projects and specific SRD projects
Sustainable development/ sustainable community indicators	• to raise the awareness levels of the general public and decision-makers on the means needed to bring SD into the mainstream; • to measure regional social, environmental and economic sustainability; • to measure environmental, social and economic and institutional performance towards or away from sustainability • to measure progress beyond GDP, incorporating natural and social capital in full-cost accounting; • to distinguish between positive economic impacts and negative economic impact

CITY OF QUARTERS:
URBAN VILLAGES IN THE CONTEMPORARY CITY

David Bell & Mark Jayne (editors): City of Quarters: Urban Villages in the Contemporary City, Ashgate, 2003, 287 pages.

By Jan Linzie
Senior Advisor

Office of Regional Planning and Urban Transportation, Stockholm

There is a revival of international interest in developing urban neighbourhoods – urban villages or quarters - with a distinctive character. This book contains a wealth of examples of such efforts with a focus on Europe and on the role of culture in catching the 'soul' of such areas. It is a thought-provoking book for planners, dealing more in practical examples than in theory. The authors of the 16 essays each have a different point of departure, though there is much common ground between the essays. My reading is of course coloured by my own interests and thus does not give full justice to the breadth of practice covered in the essays.

In one of the essays – rethinking neighbourhoods from urban villages to cultural hubs – Chris Murray makes critical comments on the definition of an urban village. An urban village as it is usually defined, "should be small; combine residential with work, retail and leisure units; aim to be self-sustaining; mix different social and economic groups; have efficient transport and be well designed and managed". His criticism is linked to the fact that culture and the larger urban context are missing from that definition and that some of the other criteria are hard to achieve.

"Views of village and rural life are littered with stereotypes." In Sweden - as in Britain, from which most of the examples in the book are derived – rural village lifescapes are seen as idyllic places close to nature, and enjoyed by new Arcadians. Urban villages differ from that stereotype as they have a symbiotic relationship with their core city and their region. City quarters discussed in the book often occupy industrial and harbour areas that have fallen into disuse, or the run-down backstreets of the central business district; areas which are suitable for developing the environment and lifestyles attractive for "the creative class". They become attractive for cultural workers and creative businesses due to low rents and their, often abundant, stock of buildings that can be converted to studios, workshops and 'loft' apartments. Such use seems to have positive externalities for the whole city. In other cases they are rebuilt as new chic extensions of the central city without reference to their history.

Creative businesses are mainly small scale – even if their customers often are large-scale businesses or public institutions - and rely on a supportive environment of likeminded individuals as business partners and idea generators. Cultural quarters often rely on both the production and consumption of culture and apart from attracting new residents, often have a function as magnets for cultural tourism, and are seen by the city authorities as a useful way to brand their city. If such areas become too successful however they can fall prey to gentrification, with the area ultimately losing its soul as rising rental costs displace the cultural workers.

The creation of vibrant cultural quarters seems to rely more on building upon historic precedents and the symbolic importance of parts of the city than on cultural mega-projects. Mega-projects can become cathedrals in the desert if erected in the wrong places. The partly imagined /partly real city can be just as powerful a magnet as the real city itself, as an essay on the James Joyce industry in Dublin shows.

The risks of segregation along the lines of ethnicity, sexuality or income are treated by a number of the contributors. The flipside of the desire for a tight-knit community, which is one of the central aims in creating urban villages, could potentially see the exclusion of groups that are not seen as fitting in. The book illustrates this with examples of gay communities, chinatowns and coketowns.

The examples in the book are sometimes mirrored by historical precedents as for example with bohemian quarters such as the Latin Quarter, Montmartre and Montparnasse in Paris; Soho in London; Greenwich Village in New York and Kreuzberg in Berlin. They are also mirrored in the planning precedents relating to model villages like Saltaire and Bournville and the German and British arts and crafts and new towns movements.

Reflections from a Stockholm Regional Planner could then easily relate the discussion to developments attempting to create distinctive "villages" in our region, such as the building of Djursholm and Saltsjöbaden at the end of the 19th century, the industrial enclave in Gustavsberg, Villastaden (the villa town), or suburbs that aimed to be more 'self-contained' dating from the 1950´s and 1960´s such as Vällingby and Farsta, the gentrification of parts of the southern part of the inner city, the revitalization of the quarters around Medborgarplatsen, Fältöversten and Ringen as centres in the inner city, Hammarby Sea City, culture as a magnet in Botkyrka and Sickla and so on. Some lessons could also be drawn here in respect of the discussion on the planning of the regional cores proposed by the Regional development plan. As stated by many of the book's authors, the scope of planning needs to be widened if planning is to cater for the needs of a multicultural society and for different life styles. Perhaps here we can see that the London Plan is interesting in this regard as it contains such a focus.

WHAT IS NORDIC HUMAN GEOGRAPHY?

Voices from the North - New Trends in Nordic Human geography, edited by Jan Öhman and Kirsten Simonsen. Ashgate, 2003.

By Seija Virkkala

Chydenius Institute, Kokkola, Finland

The book consists of 16 chapters representing a wide selection of issues and themes relating to the contemporary human geography of the Nordic countries. The contributions deal with the relationships between production and social institutions in local development, the role of the welfare state in the Nordic countries, issues of social practice and identity and their relationship to spatiality, new approaches to landscape and environment, and the significance of difference and relations of power.

The editors of the book, Jan Öhman and Kristen Simonsen, are very familiar with the direction taken by human geography in the Nordic countries. Both have been active in Nordic networking and Jan Öhman was the chief editor of the journal Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift for well over a decade. Kirsten Simonsen also has long experience of editing Nordic publications as well as of initiating and organising Nordic forums for geographers and planners.

"Voices from the North" is a continuation of an earlier Swedish language collection "Traditioner i Nordisk Kulturgeografi" edited by Öhman in 1994. In that book a group of authors explored the different traditions of human geography and discussed them from a philosophical and epistemological perspective. Almost every author from the earlier book returns to contribute to "Voices from the North", with the actual amount of contributors actually increasing for this updated volume.

The biggest change between the two books is in the approaches of the contributions. The first book is based in critical realism and the emphasis was on structures and structurations. "Voices from the North" shows how the critical human geography in the Nordic countries has changed and developed as a reflection of the 'cultural turn' in geography which has given more emphasis to subjects, language, culture and discourses. In my mind the result is interesting as it highlights something new both in the international discourses and with regard to Nordic practices such as planning, regional development and school geography.

The contributions are organised into five parts each dealing with different issues. The first part consists of three articles on production, social institutions and local development. Anders Malmberg and Peter Maskell focus on the impact of geographical location on the ability of firms to create and sustain competitiveness. The specific combination of localised factors that influence the distribution of economic activity in a country or a region constitutes the area's localised capabilities. Localised capabilities must adapt and transform in order to remain valuable. Globalisation gradually converts previously important locational factors into ubiquities that are available everywhere at more or less the same cost – this is seen as a process of "ubiquisitation". One way to challenge globalisation is to enhance knowledge creation, particularly in respect of the crucial realm of tacit knowledge. The codification process of such knowledge gathering and assimilation is also part of the ubiquitification process. The end result is that the development of localised capabilities should promote learning processes.

Bjørn Terje Asheim's chapter also focuses on the knowledge creation process and on globalisation. The author examines how to adapt the concept of clusters and the competitive advantage of regions, innovation as culturally and institutionally contextualised processes, forms of knowledge and localised learning as well as different types of regional innovation networks, to the opportunities and constraints of globalisation. The different approaches on the role of the regional level for innovations are examined. The author suggests a multilevel approach to innovation systems. Both of these chapters argue throughout for a renewing of the old concepts of economic geography. However, they avoid the question of what happens to regions that are not able to create localised capabilities in a knowledge- based economy.

Jørgen Ole Bærenholdt and Michael Haldrup examine in their chapter how the economy-culture nexus has been conceptualised in economic and social geography. They critically reflect on the concept of "ubiquisitation" and the use of the concept "culture". "Culture", they argue, seems to simply replace the concept of "space", as it is one of the few assets of production that does not seem to have yet become ubiquitised. As such, culture is becoming the factor most often used to explain the capabilities of the area, which also include the social construction of natural resources as localised capabilities. The concept of culture is thus the 'black box' for generating different spatial systems of innovation, networks and trust. The authors present a model focusing on the intersection between social regulation, processes of economic innovation and cultural identity formation. The dynamic between cultural and economic elements are illustrated in cases studies.

The second part of the book focuses on the issues of the welfare state and planning. Frank Hansen discusses the relationship between welfare state regimes and social polarisation. He critically comments on the welfare regimes theories of Esping-Andersen. Hansen develops his own framework grasping different regulation complexes' significance for social polarisation. The model outlines welfare regulation; families and family ideology; regulation of working life, and the regulation of civil rights and equality. Hans Thor Andersen and Erik Clark deal in their chapter with 'ghettoisation' in Scandinavian cities. These cities have, since the early 1980s, experienced an increasing level of social polarisation and segregation, and they argue that housing policies have become part and parcel of the underlying processes of "ghettoisation".

Jan Öhman examines the relationship between planning and Swedish geo-

graphy. Human geographers have been experts in planning and spatial development but they have also affected the content of the research with emphasis on empirical and quantitative research. Municipal planning is seen as a form of the production of the space. The nature of planning is changing in the 20th century with society being profoundly reshaped. The changes can be characterised by an orientation towards development planning which also requires research which contextualises these processes and concentrates more on local and post-structural humanistic studies.

Undoubtedly however the book as a whole would have benefited greatly if this very interesting article have been followed by an evaluation of similar trends in the other Nordic countries.

Ann-Cathrine Åquist in her contribution reviews the various perspectives of 'le quotidian' - every day life. Here the world is seen as a whole, the way it appears to the individual, situated in specific place - in time-space. She found a representation of everyday life in reading the master plan of Örebro. The organising of everyday life was in focus in the foundation of the welfare state in Sweden from the 1920s through to the 1950s. Åquist argues for an approach to urban planning based on an everyday life perspective, which is different from the earlier one that aimed at the control the everyday life. Different types of individual citizen's daily programmes are important in understanding this everyday life. Moreover, they can be used when the planners are involving citizens in urban planning.

The third section consists of four articles each of which discusses socio-spatial practices and spatial imaginations. Jouni Häkli and Anssi Paasi discuss the social construction of identity as related to social spatiality. They deconstruct the concept of identity and examine the social construction of places, regions and nations as centres for territorial identity. Their critical approach is very interesting and helpful even for planners and will no doubt help them to reflect more deeply on such issues. However, instead of the description of the historical process of regional administrative reform in Finland that is provided, it would have been more interesting to use the conceptual framework in examining the Nordic identity and thence to deconstruct "the Nordic" as a social construct.

Kirsten Simonsen studies the concept of social practices in her philosophical contribution . Here she develops an approach to human geography based on social practice. The emphasis is on embodied or practical knowledge and its formation in people's everyday lives, with the world of emotions, desire and imagination. Her discussion of the gendered character of bodies/practices and of the spatiality of the body as constitutive of an understanding of social spatiality, are interconnected. Simonsen's "embodied city approach" deals with the relationship between spatial/moving bodies and the construction of cities. One example of this is walking practices which are spatialising and which create a diversity of subsystems.

Nina Gunnerud Berg and Gunnel Forsberg deal with discourses on rurality and gender in Britain and Scandinavia. Spatial imaginations, such as rural idyll or gender idyll, are quite different in Scandinavia and in Britain, due to differences in the material basis of the construction. Berg and Forsberg unpacked the rural idyll in Scandinavia and found that elements in the material basis are embedded in the construction. These are low population density and low land prices in the countryside, the dominance and long tradition of the family farm, the prescriptive law, the industrialisation of the countryside rather than the cities and the summerhouse tradition. The gender idyll in Scandinavia is a mixture of national arrangements and international and global inputs. The concept of a gender contract is a concept that matches the gender idyll. The authors' argument is very clear and this chapter is a useful introduction for those who seek to apply theory in this way. The authors argue that a reflexive awareness should permeate all theoretical exchanges. The concept of rural idyll is fruitful in Scandinavian research as long as one acknowledges the situated nature of knowledge and the fact that relations of power are embedded within the social constructions of knowledge and discourse.

Anders Löfgren's chapter discusses the socio-spatial life projects of young people. The dis-embedding of lives and the increasing number of scripts for life implies that a life project is not limited to one place or one region. The relationship between place and life has become reflexive and open to negotiation. Places and regions are experienced as requiring different scripts for life. The relationship between youth and place is expanded through the notions of home and venturing. According to Löfgren, most young people do not actually think in terms of urban and rural as such but rather in term of specific conditions, resources and scripts that different places have to offer. The framework of the article offers a new perspective when studying youth migration, local youth culture, young people and housing and the role of the young in regional development.

The fourth section of the book consists of two contributions dealing with nature and landscape. Kenneth Olwig reviews the history of landscape conception and the particularity of the Nordic landscape. Landscape is an expression of both history and art, and it has long played a role in the creation of regional and national identities. Olwig juxtaposes the Nordic approach to landscape with that of the British pictorial scenic approach and the German layered "Blood from soil" perspective on landscape. Olwig argues that the older pre-state conceptions of landscape and the Nordic approaches can be characterised by a concern with history, custom/law, language and culture, as they work together in forming landscape polity and its geographical place. This contribution is very good and provides much that is of interest, though adding something on divergent developments in different parts of Norden after the collapse of pan-Scandinavian idea would have added immeasurably to his analysis. For example in Finland, as well as in Norway, national landscapes have played an important role in relation to the development of each country's national identity.

In his chapter Ari Lehtinen reviews how Nordic human geographers have gradually become informed by the layered existence of socio-cultural and eco-social hybrids regarding nature. This discourse has become increasingly integrated with the Anglophonic schools

but even then it has kept its specific Nordic intonation, coloured by contact with continental streams of thought. The Nordic environmental turn is connected to the politicisation of natures, which is integrally linked to the current contested networking of socio-spatial identifications and community activities stretching from individual (embodied) and local practices (landscaping) to global "projectisations" and rankings. Lehtinen thoroughly discusses the concepts of bio-politics and environmental justice. He adapts the framework in relation to the contemporary restructuring of the Nordic forest industry. Lehtinen also challenges geographers to participate in the strengthening of those voices from the socio-spatial margins.

The contributions in the final section of the book deal with issues of difference, "othering" and power. One of the starting points of critical geography is the presupposition of a homogenous population as an implicit basis of the ideology of the welfare state. Roger Andersson and Irene Molina challenge this in their contribution that deals with ethnic residential segregation in Sweden. They define a racialisation of the city as a process that lead individuals, groups and institutions to think, act and discriminate based upon a notion of race in such a way that the housing market is differentiated spatially according to imagined racial difference. The authors explain the process in ideological, political, discursive and spatial-material terms. Ethnical segregation is linked by ides and notions about housing and "the others". The ways to "othering" are very implicit and unintentional. Andersson and Molina also present a dynamic migration model focusing on the mobility of individuals and groups in the city and thus on the dynamics in the generation of segregated urban patterns. This useful chapter thus provides us with a thorough understanding of racialisation processes and segregation processes in general in a country that many regard to be one of the more open/tolerant and multi-cultural societies in the world. There is lot to learn from this contribution particularly for countries such as Finland, which in the last decade has become more open to immigration.

Hille Koskela in her contribution discusses the geography of fear and the issue of safety. The issue of safety is now a major public issue, not just a private one. Here the emergence of gated areas provides a clear negative statement against the planning traditions and values of the welfare state. Across Scandinavia video surveillance has been introduced in order to control crime and increase safety. Such surveillance entails panoptic power relations, which exaggerate our visibility while also being profoundly gendered. Koskela argues that emotions as well as micro-politics should be taken into account with regard to the production of space. The final chapter of the book is a wise contribution by Gunnar Olsson who explores a set of dichotomies and the limits of translation between them. As a cartographer of power he maps the power of categorisation and naming, ultimately seeing power as a game of ontological transformation.

"Voices from the North" is then almost like a handbook of some 300 pages in length. Altogether twenty-two geographers have contributed to the book, nine from Sweden, seven from Denmark, four from Finland and three from Norway. The selection is very good but for example from a Finnish point of view I know that there are very many younger Finnish contributors who could also have been included.

The editors stress that there is no one Nordic human geography, no unitary focus in Nordic geographical discourse. Differences in methodological approaches are overlaid by the differences in national discourses in the making of a web of different interests and ideas. The contributions to the book represent the post-positivistic, post-Marxist and post-structuralist trends in different fields of human geography. Many contributors thus try to combine social constructivism and the critique of essentialism with some kind of ontological realism.

In the introduction, the editors refer to Benedict Andersson's concept of "imagined community" and point out that the Nordic identities are discourses that are constructed in different times. Acknowledging that the notion of 'the Nordic' is itself a construction does not however mean that this construction does not work in a material sense. The editors refer to the long history of Nordic cultural cooperation rooted in civil society. Moreover, while this official cooperation between formal organisations is acknowledged, it is also important to highlight the fact that there is significant cooperation between social movements and between different groups of professions, scientists, painters and writers.

Even if we can no longer speak of a "Nordic model", we may contend that the Nordic countries have probably undergone a smoother modernisation than many other countries in Europe, and the welfare state has reasonably stood up reasonably well to ongoing developments such as globalisation.

In relation to this it may be apposite to highlight one specific feature in the Nordic co-operation: after the emergence of pan-Scandinavian ideas in the 17th and 18th centuries no efforts were undertaken to create a trans-Nordic institution similar to that which is now occurring in respect of EU integration policy. As such, the 'Nordic level' has not been an influential level of governance. This is one important issue that is lacking analysis in "Voices from the North". Also missing is perhaps a critical analysis of the European Union, as well as of the notion of the meaning of "Nordic" in the extended EU – an area awaiting a critical geographical analysis.

What, then, is the "Nordic", and how does it influence the authors? It was interesting to read how the authors envisage their own positions, Nordic geography and the Nordic countries. It seems to be easier to say that the background and context influences the content of each contribution. The "Nordic" seems to be the social and cultural context of the authors. The welfare state seems to be one of the most common denominators. Some authors directly address the welfare state, including its uncertain situation, while for others, welfare issues are more indirectly linked to their particular topic. Many of the writers also have normative aspects, which it can be argued, have been one of the traditions within Nordic geography. The normative aspects raised here point to questions of regional

or environmental inequalities as well as to class and gender-based discrimination.

Nordic human geography is becoming increasingly integrated into Anglo- Saxon debates, but this book proves that human geography in Nordic countries still has a character of its own. As such we can say that Anglo-Saxon and continental debates related to landscape, segregation, gender, rurality and learning, have all gained a specific Nordic articulation in the contributions of "Voices from the North".

"Voices from the North" then is an excellent and comprehensive collection for students and practitioners alike, and as such it can be recommended to everyone that is interested in the contemporary discussion of regional and local development and in issues of planning.

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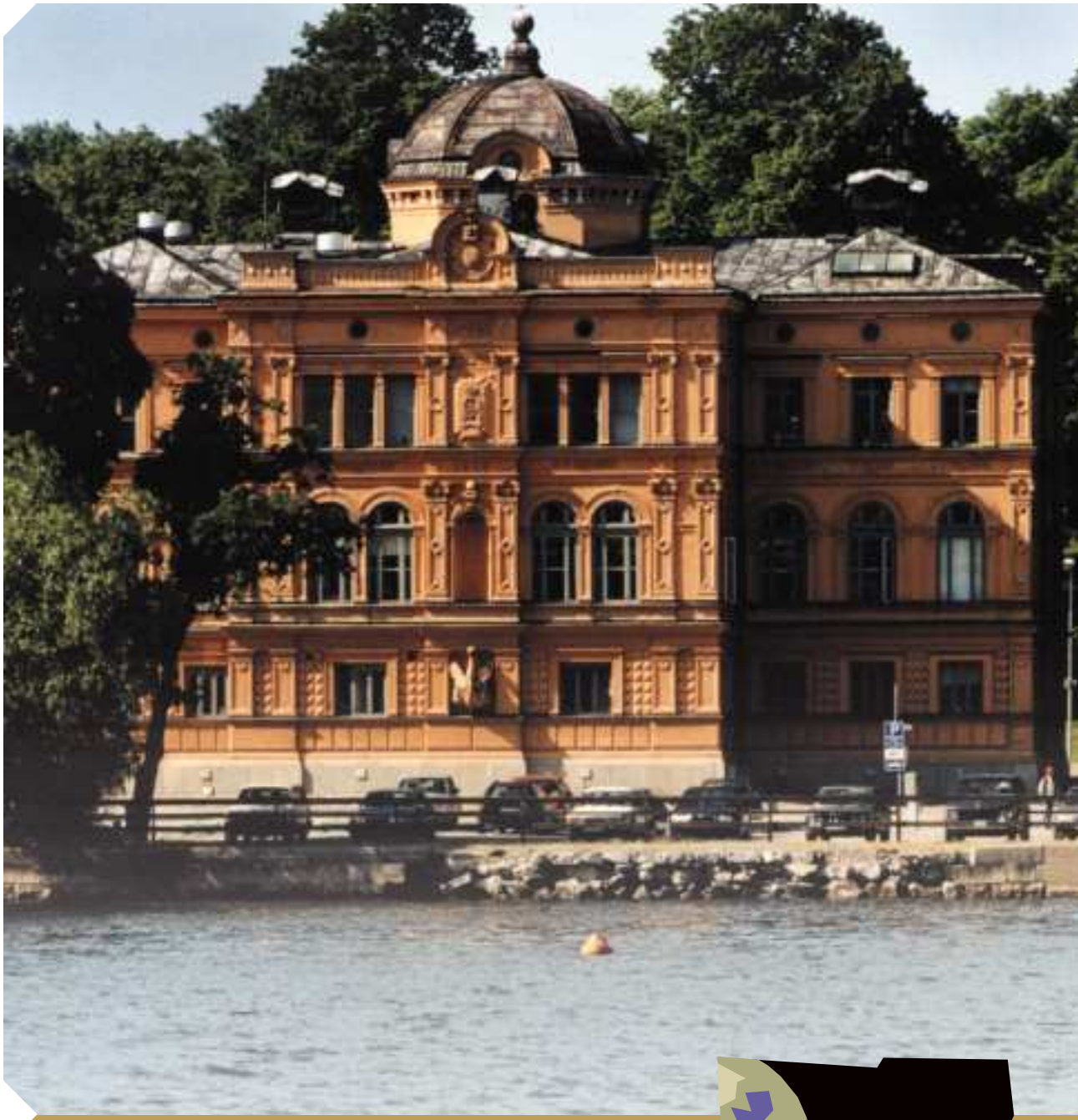

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