

# **NORKOM 2022**

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**Book of Abstracts**

## **Linnéa Henriksson, Åbo Akademi University**

Working group 1

### *Local politicians, housing and climate*

Are there any local housing policies in Finland? What are Finnish local politicians' perceptions of priorities connected to housing and climate policies. Cities are in need of climate adaptation in order to remain inhabitable and operational in the future as the climate change proceeds. The bigger the city, the more topical becomes the question of housing, also with regard to climate targets. Housing and climate are closely connected, which is often well expressed on the strategic level. It remains to be demonstrated how climate issues and housing policies are integrated in the municipal decision-making in Finland. The integration of housing policy and climate policy is challenging in particular as climate policy targets are set in a multilevel governance framework, in comparison to housing policy which traditionally is set within a nationally or locally determined policy framework. Given the relevance of housing as a growing political topic, housing research has a surprisingly thin history in political science and public administration in Finland. Linkages between climate policy and housing in Finland have not been studied from the perspective of municipal decision-making. Traditionally housing issues are of subordinate rank compared to other policy issues (Rasinkangas et al., 2021:6) and Finnish politicians are not very interested in housing issues, at least not explicitly as such, while the interest in land use is much bigger and the interest in climate action is smaller.

## **Stine Lien, Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences**

Working group 1

### *Place-based policies - a literature review*

This paper provides a literature review of the research published on the development of place based policy for innovation and economic development in rural areas using key words and inclusion/exclusion criteria. Based on this methodological approach, the review includes selected articles in the final analysis.

The origin of place based policy can be traced back to the 1990s when several researchers started focusing on place and its importance as a key determinant of economic success (Beer et al., 2020). In his famous article Rodríguez-Pose (2018) shows the importance of taking place specific factors into consideration when developing and implementing policies, underlining the Barca report's (Barca, 2009) message about the need for a policy change in order to meet present and upcoming challenges.

This place based policy approach has received considerable scholarly attention during the last decade, and we seek to understand how this turn in policy development has evolved in the literature. Initial searches show very few review-articles on the subject. Hence, we discuss the literature based on a selection of peer reviewed articles, and their contribution to understanding the development and diffusion of place based policies. According to the literature, why have place based policies emerged and how have the policies been developed and diffused over the last decades?

### **Jo Saglie, Institute for Social Research, Oslo**

Working group 1

#### *Partier og lokale lister i norsk kommunepolitikk*

Mens 1960-tallets forskere beskrev hvordan norsk lokalpolitikk hadde blitt partipolisert i løpet av 1900-tallet, har oppmerksomheten senere blitt rettet mot de lokale listenes motstandskraft. Men selv om de lokale listene tross alt har overlevd, og utgjør en viktig del av partisystemet i en del kommuner, framstår listene likevel som en «underdog» sammenlignet med partiene. En årsak er at de har dårligere økonomiske rammebetingelser. Både lokale partilag og lokale lister gir sine bidrag til demokratiet. Noen er felles for begge, men partier og lister har også sine unike fortrinn. I denne artikkelen tar vi sikte på å kartlegge disse bidragene. Vi bruker kvalitative og kvantitative data fra en undersøkelse av lokale partilag og lister i Norge, og spør: Fører ulikhetene i rammebetingelser til at partier og lister i ulik grad klarer å utføre sine oppgaver?

### **Are Vegard Haug, Oslo Metropolitan University, Harald Baldersheim, University of Oslo, & Therese Sefton, Oslo Metropolitan University**

Working group 1

#### *Citizen satisfaction with local pandemic measures: Comparative analysis of the Nordic countries*

During the last two years, national authorities have recommended or imposed comprehensive measures to limit the spread and consequences of covid infection. Measures include intrusive interventions in people's everyday lives. This article investigates citizens' attitudes to the restriction during the entire Covid-19 pandemic in the five Nordic countries. Despite national covid commissions and emerging research, we know little about the citizens' experiences at the local level. How reasonable are various measures considered to be in relation to the burdens on the individual and society in general? To what extent are the interventions/restrictions perceived as proportionate to other considerations – where and under what conditions? The data for the

analysis come from surveys of representative samples of citizens carried out in the spring of 2022. The surveys cover the five Nordic countries (N =5674). Data collection was carried out by the research project POLYGOV: Crisis management in a polycentric Nordic local democracy: different governance structures – different results?

A key finding is that citizens across the Nordic countries are generally positive to the many measures that have been implemented to handle the pandemic (perceived reasonableness). But there are significant variations between countries. To explain variation, an initial theoretical point of departure is the so called 'decentralization theorem'. The theorem assumes that when the population's needs, interests and preferences for collective goods vary across localities, the distribution of such goods will be achieved most effectively through decentralized decision-making mechanisms. A second, alternative hypothesis is derived from variants of 'the rally around the flag effect'; the more serious the individual fear the pandemic to be, the greater the support for stringent covid measures. A third perspective is 'exposure'; the more exposed to (strict) measures the individual has been, such as restrictions on movement or visiting relatives in care institutions, the more dissatisfaction with the authorities' measures is expected. Finally, we can assume that trust, both in institutions and between people is positively related to how reasonable citizens perceive pandemic reduction measures to be.

**Harald Baldersheim, University of Oslo, & Are Vegard Haug, Oslo Metropolitan University**

Working group 1

*Local crisis management and citizen trust. A comparative study of five Nordic countries*

Is trust in government affected by the proximity or efficacy of crisis management? And how does the nature of the crisis as such – the shock effect- interact with proximity and efficacy? The covid pandemic has offered opportunities for exploring how the handling of the crisis affects trust in government as well as how citizen trust may facilitate crisis management. Consequently, quite a significant number of studies have analysed relationships between covid management and trust, both as dependent and independent variables. There are, however, fewer studies of the role of local government in covid management, and even fewer on how local citizens view the efforts of local authorities during the pandemic, despite the fact that municipalities in most countries have been important street-level actors for the containment and prevention of covid contagion.

The aim of the paper is to chart mechanisms that impinge upon the level of trust in (local) government in times of crisis. The study is carried out against the background of high levels of trust in government in the Nordic countries, and the expectation that the crisis situation of the pandemic will stress trust in government.

The paper is based on data from surveys of citizens in the five Nordic countries.

## **Patrik Renberg, Förvaltningshögskolan, Göteborgs universitet**

Working group 1

*Ett ömsesidigt beroende: Stat/kommun-relationer vid extraordinära händelser*

Jag är doktorand på Förvaltningshögskolan och jag studerar flernivåstyre (multi-level governance), kommunalt självstyre och gränsöverskridande kriser. Min avhandling syftar till att öka förståelsen för hur decentraliserade flernivåsystem med starka, självstyrande subnationella enheter bemöter – och utvecklas i – gränsöverskridande kriser. De spänningar och utmaningar som uppstår mellan de olika nivåerna är av särskilt intresse. Ett delsyfte med min avhandling är att studera relationen mellan icke-valda tjänstepersoner och politiker.

Frågor som jag tycker är särskilt intressanta handlar bland annat om hur flernivåsystemet upplevs under "ordinära" omständigheter jämfört med krissituationer, hur staten styr i stunder av kris, hur det kommunala självstyret påverkar och påverkas, samt de sätt som de olika aktörerna på de olika nivåerna samverkar.

Avhandlingen fokuserar på Sverige och fallen av gränsöverskridande kriser som är tänkta att studeras är flyktningmottagandet 2015 och coronapandemin. Kommuner, regioner och länsstyrelser är av särskilt intresse och de är tänkta att vara de huvudsakliga aktörerna att studera.

## **Katarina Roos, Umea University**

Working group 1

*Skolledares lojalitet - en fråga om auktoritet?*

En skolledare behöver i sin vardagliga yrkesutövning balansera och navigera mellan olika förväntningar. Oavsett var i den kommunala styrkedjan en skolledare befinner sig, är det många intressen som på olika sätt tar sig uttryck i förväntningar, staten, myndigheter, huvudmannen, "politiken", chefer, underställda, medarbetare, kollegor, föräldrar, barn, elever, sakägare, organiserade intressen, opinionsdrivare, media. Det handlar om exogena förväntningar, från grupper, individer, institutioner och intressen inom såväl som utanför den egna organisationen, men också om endogena förväntningar i form av personliga normer och värderingar. Samstämmiga mål och samverkande intressen är sällsynta och mål- och intressekonflikter tillhör skolledares vardag. Sådana behöver inte nödvändigtvis innebära lojalitetskonflikter, men genom att studera hur skolledare beskriver lojalitetsförhållanden kan vi också förstå hur de hanterar

förväntningar i relation till styrning och ledning i den kommunala styrkedjan. Här förstås lojalitet som en övertygelse som riktas mot något, ett objekt och som sådan vägleder och påverkar skolledares handlande (jämför med Rutgers & Yang 2019). De (preliminära) frågeställningar som söker besvaras i papperet är följande. Vilka typer av lojaliteter vägleder skolledares handlande och vilka objekt riktar lojaliteten sig mot? Är det samma typer av lojaliteter och objekt som skolledare som befinner sig i olika delar av den kommunala styrkedjan beskriver som vägledande? Hur kan skolledares lojaliteter förstås och vilka implikationer kan lojalitetsförhållanden få för styrning i den kommunala styrkedjan?

Med skolledare menas i det här papperet inte bara rektorer i kommunal för-/skola utan också funktioner som har mer eller mindre formaliserade funktioner vilka innebär lednings- och/eller ledaruppdrag i den kommunala styrkedjan, såväl på huvudmanna- som skolnivå. Det datamaterial som används baseras på 43 kvalitativa samtalsintervjuer som genomfördes hösten 2019 med totalt 72 informanter i två svenska kommuner. Studien ingår i forskningsprojektet STAR, Systems Thinking Actions and Relations vid Centrum för skoledarutveckling, vilket finansierats av Lärarhögskolan vid Umeå universitet.

## **Mona Strand, Høgskolen i Innlandet**

Working group 2

### *Regionreformen i Norge: Folkeavstemningen om Innlandets framtid*

Debatten om antall nivåer, antall kommuner og antall fylker har preget norsk politikk i større eller mindre grad i flere tiår. På tross av dette, har antallet stått relativt stille etter den store kommunereformen på 60-tallet, og innføring av direkte valg til fylkestinget i 1975.

I Solbergs første regjeringsperiode ble kommunereformens første fase gjennomført, med reduksjon av antall kommuner fra 428 til 356. Parallelt med kommunereformen, ble det også gjennomført en regionreform, hvor antallet fylker ble redusert fra 19 til 11. Blant disse var tidligere Hedmark og Oppland fylker, som ble slått sammen til Innlandet.

Fylkestingene i begge fylkene gikk i imot sammenslåingen. I Hurdalsplattformen, regjeringserklæringen for Ap/Sp regjeringen fra 2021 står følgende:

- Regjeringen vil: «Oppløse tvangssammenslåtte fylkeskommuner som sender søknad etter vedtak i fylkestinget innen 1. juli 2022.»

Dette åpnet for reversering av sammenslåingen. I desembermøtet i desember 2021 fikk forslag om folkeavstemning om den videre framtida for Innlandet flertall. Med dette startet en interessant

politisk prosess, hvor en i tillegg til folkeavstemningen også ville gjennomføre en høringsrunde, samt en undersøkelse blant de ansatte i fylkeskommunen.

Resultatet av avstemningen var ulikt i de to tidligere fylkene – det ble flertall for å oppløse i Oppland, mens flertallet gikk inn for å beholde i Hedmark. I sum bikket resultatet til flertall for oppløsning, 50,8 prosent.

I norsk politikk har folkeavstemninger kun rådgivende funksjon. På nasjonalt nivå har resultatet alltid blitt fulgt opp av Stortinget. De lokale folkeavstemningene har også stort sett blitt fulgt opp – dog i litt mindre grad for de som gjelder krets og identitet.

I mitt paper ønsker jeg å drøfte denne prosessen ut fra demokratiteori om direkte og indirekte demokrati (Rasch) og om folkeavstemninger som strategisk virkemiddel, ut fra Bjørklund (1982) sine begreper «mindretallsvåpen», «meklingsinstrument» og «lynnavleder».

### **Kurt Houlberg, VIVE**

Working group 2

*Democratic recovery: negative effects of municipal mergers do not last*

How do citizens respond when their municipalities are merged into larger jurisdictions? Previous studies have found municipal mergers to have negative effects on internal political efficacy and trust in government. These results have been interpreted as a causal impact of jurisdiction size. However, effects of municipal mergers are not necessarily only permanent size-effects; they may also be transitory reform-effects. Using a comprehensive dataset of four surveys conducted from 2001 to 2021 (n=17.433), we show that the negative democratic effects of Danish municipal mergers in 2007 were transitory. While the municipal mergers did indeed have short-term negative effects on citizens' satisfaction with local services, trust in local governments, and the general perception on local democracy, these effects have mostly vanished 14 years after the reforms. These results suggest that the negative democratic effects of municipal mergers are transitory reform effects.

### **Yngve Flo, Universitetet i Bergen**

Working group 2

*Nordens merkeligste kommune: Hvordan kunne det gå an?*

Pressen har for lengst stemplet den som Norges rareste (dvs. merkeligste) kommune – og den er kanskje også en god kandidat til tittelen Nordens merkeligste kommune: Kinn kommune med

sine drøyt 17 000 innbyggere ble etablert i 2020, gjennom en sammenslåing av kommunene Flora og Vågsøy lengst vest i Norge. Det merkelige med kommunen, er at den ikke henger sammen. Midt mellom de to kommunedelene (som har hver sin by) ligger det ikke bare en fjord, men også en annen kommune, og kommunikasjonene er vanskelige: Det tar 126 minutter mellom de to byene i kommunen, om føret er godt og du treffer godt på ferjeavgangen. Kommunen fungerer ikke som et felles bo- og arbeidsområde, og i begge deler av en kommune står man økonomisk og sosialt mye nærmere sine nabokommuner enn de som bor «i den andre delen». Et kommunaldepartement som ellers var en pådriver for kommunereformen, advarte i 2017 tydelig mot sammenslåingen, og den folkelige motstanden mot kommunen var – og er fortsatt – sterk. Så hvorfor eksisterer Kinn kommune?

I realiteten fungerer Kinn kommune, til tross for at det er en avviket i kommune-Norge – som et spennende inntak til den norske kommunereformen – og ikke minst som en illustrasjon på den særegne dynamikken mellom formelle og reelle spilleregler for kommunal reform i Norge. En lang rekke prinsipielle dilemma blir satt på spissen gjennom den langtrukne og konfliktfylte prosessen. Formålet med bidraget på NORKOM, er å prøve ut hvordan Kinn kommune kan fungere som case, og få innspill på hvordan caset kan utnyttes på den faglig sett mest fruktbare måten.

**Sebastian Godenhjelm, University of Helsinki, & Therese Sefton, Oslo Metropolitan University**

Working group 2

*Theorizing state-citizen in contemporary Nordic governance: The case of COVID-19 pandemic policies and divergence*

The aim of this research is to make a theoretical contribution in explaining why the Nordic countries should not be seen as a monolith and that these countries entail a diversity in governance arrangement concerning the nexus state-citizen. This was put in the spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic. When a crisis such as COVID-19 appears the first questions that is begged to be asked – who should do what to which extent? Overall, the government will have to decide on questions of what could and should be done and most importantly not done. Hence, balancing competing interests that exist within each society. Some scholars point out to the challenges of government in governance capacity, legitimacy as well as informal values and norms. The chapter will outline and link the different measures of COVID-19 policies and restrictions in relation to the state-citizen nexus. We will develop the notion of citizenship starting from the discussion around the political discourse around statist individualism and the power relations in modern Nordic welfare state as developed in Henrik Berggren and Lars Trägårdh, “Pippi Longstocking: The Autonomous Child and the Moral Logic of the Swedish Welfare State”. We aim



to flesh out a governance discussion using the pandemic restrictions and by exemplifying the communication of key national and regional governmental agencies in Sweden, Finland and Norway as a way to understand divergence in the Nordic governance model.

**Kurt Houlberg & Søren Kjær Foged, VIVE**

Working group 2

*Local government covid-19 management: patterns, actors and local adjustments*

Local governments are the implementing agencies of national policies in the Nordic welfare states. This multi-level governance setup was also the framework for handling the covid-19 pandemic. Local governments accordingly had a degree of autonomy to adapt organization, management and handling of covid-19 to local conditions, needs and preferences. Though Denmark implemented a more centralized system of covid-19 management than most of the other Nordic countries, Danish municipalities still had some local autonomy regarding how to handle and implement national policies. In this paper, we study patterns and variations in Danish local governments' management and handling of covid-19, including variations related to differences in population size, dispersal of settlement and the demographic-socioeconomic characteristics of the population as well as variations across policy areas.

**Eva Marín Hlynisdóttir, University of Iceland**

Working group 2

*The introduction of sub-municipal units in Iceland: the first evidence*

In the past three decades new tasks and responsibilities have been decentralised onto the Icelandic local level. The local government system is synchronised as all local authorities are by law supposed to provide their citizens with the same type of services irrespective of size. Currently the municipal size ranges between 40 and 130000 citizens. The heavy emphasis on decentralization has also led to a flood of largely voluntary amalgamations in the past decades. Again, leading to problems for many newly established municipalities as they struggle to provide services to a vast territory with a low population density. Concurrently this has also led to many communities feeling left out and alienated within the new municipality leading to feelings of low levels of democratic legitimacy in many newly established municipalities. To tackle this problem a new type of municipality with sub-municipal units was established for the first time in October 2020. There a large municipality in the rural east of Iceland was amalgamated with three very small municipalities. In each of the original four municipalities a sub-municipal council was established

with a mixture of directly and indirectly elected members. They were given responsibilities in the field of local planning as well in issues directly concerning individual communities such as opening hours of recreational facilities. The paper explores the first evidence of the success of the experiment of applying asynchronised measures in a largely synchronised system, based on survey data collected in March 2022. A survey was sent to all members of the local council as well as the four individual community councils. In addition, the survey was sent to key members of the public administration.

**Fredrik Malmberg, Åbo Akademi**

Working group 2

*Multiple-mandate holding and trust in local government: A vignette experiment*

Political trust is said to be in a global decline. Meanwhile, Finland is one of the countries where the practice of multiple-mandate holding, i.e., the holding of more than one directly elected mandate simultaneously on different government tiers, is said to be embedded in the political culture on a scale that is exceptional in a comparative perspective. However, much is still unknown about this highly controversial practice, especially in a Finnish context. One important unanswered question is; how does it reflect on the opinions of ordinary citizens and their confidence in political actors and institutions? The aim of this paper is therefore to examine this question utilizing a population-based survey experiment. This project would therefore contribute to shining a light on the potential consequences of this practice for political trust. In turn, this could help political elites become more aware of the processes through which negative evaluations of politicians are formed.

**Elin Wihlborg, Linköping universitet**

Working group 2

*What has to be local in a digital global context? An analysis of potential ways to re-arrange public e-services in a multi-level government system with illustrations from Swedish municipalities*

Local governments rely on the fundamental idea that people meeting daily in local communities have common interests, and thus they have reasons to share common resources to solve local problems and challenges together. This idea has formed the tradition of local governance in municipalities and regions and is reflected in the principle of subsidiarity in a multi-level governance setup. In the Scandinavian countries local governance has been a constitutional core

value almost since medieval ages. Local self-government based on powerful local autonomy are still a common ground for governance of the universal welfare states in Scandinavia.

Digitalization makes it possible to almost do anything anywhere, it raises new questions on what can be done locally. In today's advanced digitalisation in local governments, that use of digital systems for efficient, transparent and accountable public administration, there is less need for local adaptation to meet local conditions and needs. Using such global and standardized technologies raises questions on the role of the local autonomy and what is the local uniqueness. In this paper we argue that advanced digitalisation raises issues on what can be seen as the fundament of local governments and the role of municipalities.

The argumentation builds firstly on a research overview of local governance in a digital era and secondly by a re-analysis of two case studies of critical digital government in local governments in Sweden. Based on the two lines of arguments we conclude that there is a need to conceptual revisit and re-design how the local level is formed in the digital multi-level government systems. From this conclusion we open for both practical and policy implications as well as for further research.

**Asbjørn Røiseland, Oslo Metropolitan University**

Working group 3

*Urban governance of disaster response capacity: Institutional models of local scalability*

Increasingly confronted with the acute risk of large-scale disasters, local governments across the globe are searching for effective and efficient strategies for scaling their disaster response capacity. Emergency management research has examined such strategies in various urban settings, but still suffers from the lack of proper theoretical frameworks for studying how institutionalized modes of governance condition local scalability in different national contexts. Building on the research tradition of urban governance, this article develops a conceptual framework for conducting institutional analysis of overarching values, norms and practices that shape the local scaling of disaster response capacity. It demonstrates the analytical value of the framework by applying it in an illustrative case study of disaster response systems in the three Scandinavian countries of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway. The framework proves useful for systematizing and discussing nuances within and across institutional contexts

**Therese Sefton, Institute for social and welfare research, NOVA and Oslo Business School at Oslo Metropolitan University**

### Working group 3

#### *Perspectives on proportionality: managing uncertainties in long-term health crises. A scoping review.*

The COVID-19 pandemic placed the role of the state and local government, its crisis management performance, and questions about acceptable regulations at the center of scholarly and popular attention. A key question from literature on crisis and crisis management is how to strike a balance between the measures to combat a threat and the means to combat it. This includes the key challenge of handling proportionality. Striking a good balance relates to what regulations are acceptable by citizens, and in turn, how regulations are justified, their legitimacy, suitability, and necessity. These are all, central aspects to consider for the legislative, executive, and judicial power as part- and parcel of proportionality. The overall ambition of the study is to better understand a key concern emerging from the fast-growing literature on crisis management, namely problems of proportionality considerations within democratic decision-making. This is an exploratory scoping review of the concept of proportionality in managing health crises. It is based on an analysis of peer reviewed articles, anthologies- and theoretical books, case studies and grey literature (n≈80) within several academic disciplines but within the context of decision-making in crises. Furthermore, this study aims to develop a theoretically grounded framework for studying proportionality considerations in the exercise of discretion at the municipal level in the Nordic region, as part of crisis management. A preliminary finding is that proportionality discussions are highly relevant in a series of disciplines and contexts. Although most studies are within the legal disciplines, we do see an emerging focus on proportionality challenges within public administration. However, focus on local level decision-making is seldom. Thus, a vital part of welfare production and crisis management goes under the radar.

### **Caroline Leppänen, Förvaltningshögskolan, Göteborgs universitet**

#### Working group 3

#### *Skapandet av socioekonomiska kalkyler och systematisk mätning i kommuner - en redovisningsförändringsprocess*

Återkommande i samhällsdebatter, utredningar och delbetänkande beskrivs hur välfärdssektorn behöver en perspektivförskjutning till mer förebyggande insatser för att stärka den social hållbarheten och minska utanförskapet. Att betona vikten av förebyggande insatser är i sig ingenting nytt utan dess relevans lyftes fram redan för 40 år sedan, till exempel i samband med införandet av socialtjänstlagen under 80-talets början. Däremot finns det flera faktorer som uppges sätta käppar i hjulen för det preventiva arbetet. En del av problembeskrivningen riktar ljuset mot krav på effektivisering och besparingar inom välfärdssektorn, där de preventiva

åtgärderna prioriteras bort till förmån för det lagstadgade arbetat och hanteringen av uppkomna situationer i sitt akuta läge.

Ett av försöken för att ge större prioritet åt det social hållbarhetsperspektivet är skapandet av social hållbarhetsredovisning, vilken ska möjliggöra för systematiska mätningar och analyser över hur kommunernas insatser bidrar (eller inte bidrar) till den sociala hållbarheten. Fler talet kända utmaningar finns med att relatera ekonomiska och operativa problem, kring att knyta an redovisning till social hållbarhet och kommunens verksamhet. En av utmaningarna är att redovisningen inte är ämnad för att motivera utfall, inte heller kan redovisningen erbjuda någon fullständig beskrivning eller bestämmande av handlingar. Däremot kan redovisningen ha positiva effekter genom sina medlande egenskaper där redovisningen kan länka samman olika aktörer, ambitioner och domäner (åtminstone tillfälligt).

Med avstamp i ett actor-network perspektiv kan redovisnings förändringarna betraktas som en tillverkningsprocess, där redovisningens inskriptioner ses som konstruktioner byggda på en osäkerhet vilka upprätthålls av organisatoriska intressen med hjälp av ett brett spektrum av sociala, ekonomiska och politiska element. I studien följer jag ansträngningarna att skapa en intermediator i gränslandet mellan politik och redovisning, mellan en ständig mediator (politiken, som är ständigt oförutsägbar) och en ständig intermediator (redovisningen, som motiverar sin existens genom sin förutsägbarhet).

## **Lena Aarup Kjeldsen, VIA University College**

Working group 3

*Organizational outputs of political reforms: the case of the disability keyperson in the municipal job centers*

Recent perspectives within theories of social policy aim to explain the outcomes of policy reforms by exploring how governance and managerial reforms effect the implementation of policy. Yet, studies have primarily focused on areas characterized by high degree of political attention. This study examines how political intentions regarding the enrollment of disability in the Danish public employment system have been realized organizationally more than a decade after the large-scale 2007 structural reform. In particular, we focus on role of the disability keyperson as this was the only requirement of the structural reform. We report on a document analysis of policy papers and a 2019 survey with managers, caseworkers and disability keypersons (N= 453). The analysis shows a mismatch between political intentions and the actual implementation of the keyperson role which is exhibited through heterogeneity between job centers both in regards to the placement and the tasks of keypersons. We argue that, despite political intentions, the actual implementation

of the keyperson function turned into a case of organizational contingencies within the job centers rather than deliberate, strategic decision-making.

**David Karlsson, Förvaltningshögskolan, Göteborgs universitet, & Louise Skoog, Umeå university**

Working group 3

*Political conflicts on location of local services*

The degree of party political conflicts in terms of the location of local public services varies greatly in Sweden. In this paper, we explore the extent and explanations behind these kinds of conflicts in relation to conflicts in other policy areas in Sweden's municipalities.

**Jörgen Johansson, School of Public Administration, Gothenburg University**

Working group 3

*Coordination and alternative political organizing in Swedish municipalities*

The article highlights the growing contradiction in public policies managing 'wicked' problems in political systems characterized as sectorized. By the means of a case study, the article analyzes how Swedish municipalities have attempted to introduce alternative organizational models replacing a sector-based model in efforts to improve values of coordination. The local self-government in Sweden has traditionally been organized as a sector-based model, i.e. a political organization that beyond the directly elected Municipal Council and the Executive Committee, consists of Standing Committees organized functionally with sector-based responsibilities. This model has been institutionalized in Swedish municipalities since the 1960s. In the last two decades, several municipalities have introduced alternative organizational models motivated by arguments concerning coordination and to produce seamless municipal services. The aim of the article is to describe and analyze the introduction of de-sectorized models in Swedish municipalities. The most significant results of the analysis show: Firstly, that 66 out of total of 290 municipalities in Sweden have created a centralized or de-sectorized municipal organization since the end of the 1990s. 11 of these municipalities have, after some years as de-sectorized, return to a traditional sector-based model. Secondly, the de-sectorized organizations introduced implies that the number of elected positions as well as elected representatives decreases significantly. The involved actors regard this as a negative democratic side-effect of the re-organization. On the other side, justifications among the actors assert positive effects concerning values of general coordination, reduced transactions costs, and shortened decision paths. Thirdly, the re-

organization also bring to the fore a bundle of organizational dilemmas regarding political and administrative processes, particularly in the relations between the Executive Committee and the Municipal Board.

### **Eva Edström Fors, Linköpings universitet, avdelningen för statsvetenskap**

Working group 3

#### *Det generella statsbidragssystemet - en radikal reform i en extrem tid*

Jag är doktorand i statsvetenskap vid Linköpings universitet och närmar mig nu slutet på min forskarutbildning. Under konferensen avser jag att presentera mitt inledande kapitel till avhandlingen för diskussion.

Avhandlingens forskningsproblem handlar om reformen om införandet av ett nytt kommunalt utjämningsystem med generella statsbidrag från 1993. Den innebar att tidigare öronmärkta statsbidrag till kommunerna slopades och ersattes av ett generellt utformat och utjämnande statsbidragssystem med uttalade mål om en ökad kommunal självstyrelse, bättre möjligheter till effektivisering och en samhällsekonomi i balans. En tydlig målsättning med reformen var att riktade, öronmärkta statsbidrag fortsättningsvis endast skulle förekomma undantagsvis – en intention som inte infriats av olika regeringar över tid.

Före reformen spelade riktade statsbidrag en viktig roll i statens styrning av kommunsektorn. Detta gällde särskilt på välfärdsområden där nationella krav på likvärdighet och jämlikhet länge setts som motiv för öronmärkning och utformningen av statsbidrag. Reformen – som i avhandlingen studeras som en institutionell förändring - tillkom inte i enighet och i avhandlingen undersöks drivkrafter och motstånd bakom reformen samt frågan om varför riktade statsbidrag har ökat över tid och beslutats av olika regeringar trots intentioner om motsatsen .

En konsekvens av detta vägval blir att avhandlingens fokus riktas mot Regeringskansliet där beslut om riktade statsbidrag bereds och beslutas – perspektivet på stat-kommunrelationen i avhandlingen utgår således från den styrande, centrala nivån i stället för den lokala. I avhandlingen kopplas också frågan till hur denna långtgående reform om riktade statsbidrag påverkade stat-kommunrelationen och särskilt utifrån målkonflikten mellan begrepp som kommunal självstyrelse och nationella likvärdighets- och jämlikhetsmål – en relation som blivit alltmer polariserad över tid (Strandberg, 1998, 2016).

Avhandlingens analysram vilar på historisk institutionalism och reformen ses som ett fall av institutionell förändring, olika typer av källor används (processpåring) för att på djupet förstå ett långt historiskt skeende fram till nutid och där målkonflikter mellan olika synsätt och värderingar spelat en viktig roll. Regeringskansliet är en politisk organisation och uppvisar de särdrag,

exempelvis förekomsten av konflikter och maktrelationer, som har betydelse för hur institutionella förändringar kan initieras men också bekämpas (Thelen, 2004; Pierson, 2016). I avhandlingen undersöker jag vilken roll underliggande maktrelationer spelat för hur den institutionella förändringen gått till och hur den utmanats av fortsatta beslut om riktade statsbidrag trots reformens intentioner om motsatsen.

## **Torill Ringholm, UiT Norges arktiske universitet**

Working group 3

### *Innovations viewed as encounters*

In the research area of public sector innovation we have observed a certain development over the last years, from a dichotomous and even “mechanical” understanding of what impacts the innovation process, into more multi-faceted approaches. The early research on public sector innovation, has to a large degree been focussing on identifying the drivers and barriers for innovation (Bason, 2007; Aagaard, 2011; DeVries et al. 2016; Clausen et al. 2020), and sometimes almost giving the impression that they are fixed. Recent contributions have, however, emphasized that factors that serve as drivers in certain contexts can work as barriers in other. One example is co-creation, which in some instances can be a barrier and a driver in other innovation processes (Torfing and Triantafillou 2016a, 2016b). A dynamic, contextualised perspective on public sector innovation is emerging, also underpinned by contributions such as the translation perspective (Røvik 2016; Røhnebæk and Lauritzen 2019; Myklebø 2019). What the translation studies have in common, is that they also focus on the innovation idea itself, an issue not often questioned in the earlier studies.

In order to capture this development, we are in the process of developing a dynamic theoretical framework for studying “encounters” that take place when innovation ideas meet the various institutions that frame public sector activity (Holmen and Ringholm, 2019; Holmen and Ringholm, forthcoming); “The Idea Institution Encounter Model”. This paper presents an empirical study based on this theoretical framework. The data stems from an innovation project gathering four municipalities that started out from a common idea of enhancing the innovation capacity.

As one critique that can be raised towards the model is that it does not take into account that the meeting between idea and institutions, the paper also aims to develop this perspective and possibly launch a revised version of the model.

**David Feltenius & Jessica Wide, Umeå university**



Working group 4

*Abolishing the Act on System of Choice in Swedish home-care services: A case of re-municipalization?*

Marketization has pervasively changed Swedish elderly care. Since 2009 the municipalities may adopt the Act on System of Choice in the Public Sector – hereafter referred to as LOV (lagen om valfrihetssystem) – in, among other things, home-care services for elderly people. It has given Swedish municipalities the right to decide about marketization by introducing so-called ‘choice systems’ in home-care services with a welfare mix with different type of providers. In October 2021, 156 of 290 municipalities had adopted LOV in home-care services.

During the last decade, research has noted that marketization and privatization are not irreversible nor a linear development. The case of marketized home-care services in Sweden is no exception. During the period about twenty municipalities have made decisions to abandon LOV. In the literature, this type of activity has been described in terms of re-municipalization – that is, a transfer from the municipality as a provider to the private sector, and then back to the municipality again.

Previous research has explained the occurrence of re-municipalization by either ideological or pragmatic drivers. It has been suggested that ideology (i.e., resistance to for-profit providers) might be more evident concerning the re-municipalization of social services than of technical services. If so, we would expect that the case of abandoning LOV represents a clear-cut case of re-municipalization. However, if the pragmatic drivers (for example, transaction costs or misuse) are prominent, the case of abandoning LOV does not necessarily represent a case of re-municipalization. Rather, other regulatory systems for creating choice systems in home-care services could be introduced instead of LOV with preservation of a welfare mix with private and public providers.

In this study, we analyze the arguments put forward by politicians to abolish LOV in home-care services during the period 2011-2022. The following research questions are being dealt with: Firstly, are decisions to abandon LOV taken for pragmatic or political reasons? Secondly, does the case of abandoning LOV represent a case of re-municipalization? If not, how can the concept of re-municipalization be developed to cover also other types of changes?

**Jessika Wide & David Feltenius, Umeå university**

Working group 4

*Hård eller mjuk styrning? En textanalys av nationella överenskommelser inom svensk hälso- och sjukvård*

Den offentliga maktutövningen i Sverige har genomgått betydande förändringar under senare decennier. Traditionella, formella styrmedel har i allt högre grad börjat kompletteras med mer informella styrmedel. Ett exempel på ett sådant styrmedel inom områden där kommuner och regioner har ett verksamhetsansvar, är så kallade nationella överenskommelser. Särskilt vanliga är överenskommelser inom hälso- och sjukvård. Överenskommelserna träffas mellan regeringen och organisationen Sveriges Kommuner och Regioner (SKR), som representerar den regionala och lokala nivån. Till överenskommelserna knyts så gott som alltid riktade statsbidrag. I forskningslitteraturen om governance klassificeras överenskommelser som "mjuka" styrmedel. Det har dock diskuterats om överenskommelser i praktiken skiljer sig åt från "hårda" hierarkiska styrmedel, som lagar och förordningar, vilket i så fall innebär att de riskerar att kringskära regionernas självstyre.

I denna uppsats utforskar vi om nationella överenskommelser mellan regeringen och SKR kan hamna i konflikt med det kommunala självstyret inom hälso- och sjukvården. Syftet är att analysera innehållet i ett urval överenskommelser inom hälso- och sjukvård. Vi använder textanalys för att undersöka om överenskommelserna präglas av hård eller mjuk styrning. Vi ser styrningen som "hård" om detaljeringsgraden i överenskommelserna är hög respektive som "mjuk" om den är låg.

Den empiriska undersökningen visar att det finns en variation mellan de överenskommelser som studerats. I ett fall fanns detaljerade krav kopplade till ett presentationsbaserat ersättningsystem. I det andra fallet gavs regionerna en större frihet att själva definiera insatserna, utan detaljkrav. Resultatet av undersökningen placeras in i en bredare diskussion om överenskommelser som styrmedel. Vi argumenterar för att överenskommelser generellt inte kan klassas som ett mjukt styrmedel. Istället är det viktigt att uppmärksamma förekomsten av en betydande variation mellan överenskommelserna sett till själva innehållet och dess detaljeringsgrad, med olika implikationer för regioners självstyre som följd.

## **Grétar Thór Eythórsson, University of Akureyri**

Working group 4

*Covid-19 handling strategy in an Icelandic municipality. The case of Akureyri. Covid-19 handling strategy in an Icelandic municipality. The case of Akureyri.*

The paper I propose to present at the conference is based on data from the Nordic research project Crisis Management In A Polycentric Nordic Local Democracy: Different Governance Structures – Different Results? (POLYGOV) financed by the Research Council of Norway, started in the fall 2021 and will go on until 2024. The project is a comparative study of the crisis management, organisation and functioning of local democracies in Iceland, Norway, Sweden,

Finland, and Denmark against the backdrop of the divergent handling of the COVID-19 pandemic. The project compares the local and regional coordination and management strategies employed as the pandemic has unfolded from March 2020 to date, including the vaccination strategies.

In the paper I will use a case study based on interviews in Akureyri municipality in north Iceland to shed a light on how and which governmental level decisions or recommendations on crisis-reactions, were made and how actors at different levels reacted to them and implemented them. The interviews conducted in Akureyri show clearly that the decision making on the Covid-19 reactions was highly centralized at the state level and the role of the local level passive and to a high degree in implementing. The mayor of Akureyri who turned out to have a very good oversight over the process was interviewed and further the person leading the primary school and kindergarten sector. Further, a leading person in the political system in Akureyri was interviewed. I will with these interviews seek to answer how the top-down decisions were met. Were they met with local loyalty, with voice or did even anyone refuse to implement? This will all be looked at in the light of how Iceland succeeded in fighting the pandemic.

### **Thomas Myksvoll, NORCE Norwegian Research Centre**

Working group 4

*A Universal Solution to a Specific Challenge? A Study of the Leisure Activity Card Programme in Norway*

Structured Leisure Activities (SLAs) are considered important for early life socialisation and development among children and youths. Studies have documented variation in SLA participation, correlating with economic, demographic, and cultural factors. This study investigates how SLA participation challenges may be addressed by local governments with a universal policy approach. Between 2019 and 2022, several Norwegian municipalities were selected to undertake a trial project of providing a Leisure Activity Card (LAC), subsidising SLA payment for every child and adolescent in the municipality. Heads of the trial projects were interviewed to relate their perceptions and experiences of the LAC programme. The contributions of the paper are threefold. First, it provides local authorities' perspectives of LAC programmes and the challenges of adopting and implementing them. Second, it relates the experiences among key municipal actors to whether the introduction of a universal subsidising programme affects SLA participation. Finally, it discusses, by relating to the local actors' own perceptions and experiences, whether a universal policy tool is seen as suited to tackle challenges based on specific segments of the population.

### **Marika Engblom, Åbo Akademi**

Working group 4

*Relationer inom utbildningssektorn i Norden. Från medborgare till kund och tillbaka?*

De nordiska länderna beskrivs ofta i studier som homogena, men nationella skillnader förekommer. Skolan berör många i samhället även utanför skolans organiserade verksamhet där utbildningen kan ses som ett spel mellan politiker, medborgare, pedagoger, skol- och förvaltningsledning. Historiskt sett har de nordiska länderna en tradition av att organisera utbildningen genom en kombination av den byråkratiska och professionella logiken, men en ökning och införandet av marknadslogiken har kunnat ses i nordiska studier. Skolan har som ett led av marknadsinfluerade tendenser gjort att bland annat marknadsföring av utbildningen blivit en vara där olika aktörer samlas på skolans marknad.

Studiens syfte är att studera relationer inom utbildningssektorn i de nordiska länderna, vilka likheter och skillnader som finns och varför. Med relationer avses här det samspel, samarbete, delaktighet och inflytande som sker mellan skolans olika aktörer. Studien är en del av min doktorsavhandling (monografi). Pappret jag presenterar på konferensen kommer alltså beröra valda delar av min doktorsavhandling. Den övergripande forskningsfrågan i min avhandling är: Hur och varför påverkas relationerna i skolan av styrlogiker på olika sätt i de nordiska länderna?

För att kunna förklara varför skolans relationer ser olika ut mellan länderna förväntar jag mig att finna dessa med hjälp av styrsystemen och mer specifikt genom institutionella logiker. Därtill studeras elevers, föräldrars och lärares uppfattningar om de relationer de har i skolan.

För att studera relationer inom utbildningssektorn har kommuner i Finland och Sverige valts ut för att undersöka varför skolans relationer påverkas olika i länderna. Empirin görs inom den grundläggande utbildningen med fokus på klass 1-6. Aktörer i fokus i denna studie är elever, föräldrar och lärare i kommunala skolor och friskolor (privata skolor).

**Carl-Johan Sommar, Karl Johansson, Elin Wihlborg & Fredrik Garcia, Linköping University**

Working group 4

*School's (not) Out! - A study of differences in leadership and management for digital transformation in Swedish schools during the Covid-19 Pandemic*

The partial closure of schools became a core pillar in the national Swedish strategy to combat the Covid-19 pandemic forcing schools to take a swift shift towards using digital distance education. The fragmentation and devolution of the Swedish school system rely on both municipal public schools and independent schools under alternative management, and make principals, as middle-managers, intermediaries for policy and practice. With schools and principals tasked with balancing the need of adapting to the virus spread with the different national and local recommendations, we argue that the types of schools (i.e., public or independent) creates

differences in outcomes for pandemic management. As a part of the PolyGov project, this paper analyses the leadership of schools during the pandemic; more specifically the differences in how principals in municipal and independent schools responded to the pandemic and adapted to digital distance education. We do so by drawing on a multi-methods approach departing from a survey sent to principals in both municipal and independent schools from a structured sample of Swedish municipalities. We also turn to interviews and policy documents to further analyse the competencies, activities, and abilities needed for a leadership of digital transformation in a fragmented system during a crisis. We can see how distributed responsibility leads to differences in the crisis management, complicating accountability. Also, learning within the organizations is limited.

**Fredrik Garcia, Erik Järnland, Elin Wihlborg & Carl Johan Sommar, Linköping University**

Working group 4

*What's WISe about Swedish Crisis Management? - Swedish Multi Level Crisis Management Coordination Through Situational Reports During the Covid-19 Pandemic*

During the pandemic of Covid-19, Sweden's handling of the crisis was subject to much debate and ire due to the absence of harsh restrictions on mobility and freedoms. Sweden is, not least in its crisis management, characterized by high levels of regional and local autonomy, which makes a centralized national strategy difficult at best. Thus, in an effort to stay up to date with the pandemic and its region-specific repercussions, the Government tasked its regional branches, the County Councils, to gather recurring situational reports from municipalities regarding transmission rates, logistics of medical supplies, and the economic impacts on the private sector. The medium for these reports was the publicly developed information system called WIS. Owing to the aforementioned local and regional autonomy municipalities had historically not been mandated to use WIS until the pandemic struck.

As part of the PolyGov-project, this study aims to examine how the use of WIS affected the coordination of the different public, private and civil actors during the pandemic. It consists of three distinct questions:

1. Why is WIS and the approach of situational reports formulated as they are and what was the respected results from them?
2. What was the outcome when WIS and the situational reports when they were actually used during the pandemic?
3. Why was the outcome different from the prior expectations of the systems use?

The analysis is theoretically grounded in earlier research on crisis management that puts organisational character, networks and learning at the centre of inquiry. The material will consist

mainly of interviews with public administrators that worked with WIS on both the county and municipal level, as well as the WIS-reports themselves.

**Linda Hye & Morten Ögard, University of Agder**

Working group 4

*From High Reliability Organizations (HRO) to High Adaptability Networks (HAN)*

Our paper is related to a Nordic research project on the handling of the CV-19 Pandemic (POLYGOV ). The project focuses on the Nordic countries by comparing local and regional coordination and management strategies as the Covid-19 pandemic unfolded from March 2020 to date. In this paper we raise the question: how have the municipal directors managed the crisis? Has the crisis been managed through an "HRO" model? Or is the pattern of action more of a "HAN"?

The theoretical ambition is to develop a typology of local crisis management that can help understand and categories different ways of coordinating action taken by the municipalities in their handling of the pandemic at the local level. Our starting point is the continuum between the High Reliability Organization (HRO) and the High Adaptability Network (HAN), which consist of the concepts «reliability - adaptability - network». We combine these concepts and present to other models for crises management. Named High Adaptability Organization (HAO), and High Adaptability Network (HAN). High Adaptability Organization (HAO) is oriented towards stimulating and facilitating continuous learning and development processes. Established mindsets are constantly challenged by mobilization processes that foster a diversity of professional knowledge and individual skills in the organization. But we go further and combine HAO with network thinking and present a fourth type of crisis management. The High Adaptability Network (HAN). This crises management are a cross-sectoral efforts, but partners are not defined in advance. No fixed structure, or plan. It is ad-hoc based and learning along the way.

Second in the paper we want to see if we can empirically identify the different types. The Polygov project is in the middle of the data collection process, so the empirical material that we present in this paper is from the initial focus group interview with 9 municipal directors (CEO`s). In addition, we draw on a preliminary survey material among Nordic, municipal directors.

**Linda Hye & Morten Ögard, University of Agder**

Working group 4

*Forholdet politikk og administrasjon under krisehåndtering*

Innenfor de ordinære rammene av et demokrati vil ledelse alltid innebære en balanse mellom demokratisk legitimitet og faglig ekspertise (Jacobsen 1977). Det er en betydelig avhengighet mellom disse to elementene, og det betegnes i litteraturen som to overlappende og komplementære sfærer (Svara 2001, Mourtizen og Svara 2002, Baldersheim mfl. 2021a). Perspektiv tar for gitt at det ikke eksisterer en klar og entydig arbeids- og ansvarsfordeling, og at dette kan variere mellom ulike situasjoner. I enkelte situasjoner foreligger det en klar forståelse av ansvarsfordelingen, mens i andre situasjoner er dette uklart. Det kan være nye situasjoner som kommunen ikke har behandlet tidligere, eller det kan være situasjoner der det er ulike oppfatninger av hvordan ansvaret er og bør være fordelt. Vår interesse er å studere hvordan samspillet mellom politikk og administrasjon arter seg i krisetider. Der hvor den tradisjonelle kommunale organisasjon går over til å være en midlertidig konstruksjon. Der krisestaber og faglig autoritet kan framstå som å overstyre de tradisjonelle demokratiske arenaene. Hvilken samspillmodell råder i det kommunale topplerskapet under krisetider? Finner vi administrativ styring uten demokratisk legitimitet (teknokrati) eller et politisk lederskap uten faglig ekspertise? Videre: eksisterer det ulike samspillmodeller på tvers av kommuner, regioner og land? Artikkelen bygger på surveyer gjennomført blant ordfører og kommunedirektører i de nordiske land. De er blitt spurt om hvordan de har fordelt ett sett av skisserte oppgaver mellom seg.

### **Gissur Ó Erlingsson, Linköping university**

Working group 5

*Center-periphery polarization within municipalities? An inquiry into intra-municipal geographical political tensions*

Municipal amalgamations between 1952–1974 changed the geography of Swedish local government, reducing the number of municipalities from 2,498 to 278. The reforms were infused by the ‘central-place theory’, the purpose being to identify a larger town as the ‘local capital’ (centralort). This centralort was made the municipalities’ administrative centre and responsible for providing services to surrounding settlements. Taking this historical legacy as our point of departure, we ask if intra-municipal center-periphery tensions are present in today’s municipalities. Do we observe differences in satisfaction and trust when comparing the centralort with its local peripheries? Using two unique datasets – Statistics Sweden’s citizen survey from 241 municipalities and Trustbarometer from 49 municipalities – we find that citizens in centralort are more satisfied with democracy than those in peripheries, that different issues are perceived as salient in centralort compared to surrounding settlements, but – somewhat surprisingly – no significant differences regarding satisfaction with output of welfare services. Since policymakers in a wide range of countries have carried out amalgamation reforms the past decades, and a few are in the process of taking steps toward such reforms, our findings ought to infuse debates about the consequences of merging municipalities into larger areas.

**Jurga Bucaite Vilke, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania**

Working group 5

*Why location matters: territorial capital, place-based approach, and rural municipalities*

The paper seeks to answer the question of whether location matters and if we could suggest a place-based policy approach critical to specific municipal areas and their social-demographic and economic context. The concepts of territorial governance and territorial capital are beneficial for defining the capacity to act and the potential for strategic forms of policy coordination concerning local problems (Sevillo, Atkinson, and Russo, 2012). The academic discourse on territorial capital refers to the complex understanding of how locality matters in different contexts, referring to important territorial resources (local policies and institutions, services provision, local engagement, and bottom-up community collaborations and initiatives) (Cox 1998; Cox, Mair 1988). Territorial governance suggests a relational approach to strategic policy coordination forms and potential for policy bundles. In our presentation, we use the example of the early childcare (ECEC) policy as a governance response to the demographic decline in a rural municipality in Lithuania. We rely on the empirical data (qualitative interviews with local stakeholders and key policy documents analysis) from the rural case study in Lithuania that represent the diversity of territorial development approaches, both examining territorial capital and suggesting specific local governance arrangements. The paper discusses how territorial capital is mobilized, considering relevant issues such as intra-regional connections, economic development issues, social polarization and life chances, and demographic decline. Our results indicate that the collective initiatives are concentrated on a territorial level and mainly on delivering public services and local quality of life. Looking from the territorial capital perspective, the rural municipality has different access to territorial assets and resources compared to urban areas. The rural actors prioritize consolidating territorial identity, trust, and viable local communities as a crucial strategy for developing realizable and high-quality childcare services for remote areas. The results are a part of COHSMO research project "Inequality, Urbanization and Territorial Cohesion" funded by Horizon2020 Grant and implemented in the period from 2018 to 2021.

**Antonio Tavares, University of Minho / United Nations University - UNU-EGOV, & Katarzyna Szmigiel-Rawska, University of Warsaw, Poland**

Working group 5

*Political Institutions, Interest Groups and Governance: Using Remote Sensing Data to Analyze Land-Use Changes in Sweden*



If politics is a competition about who gets what, when, and how, in no place is this competition for the distribution of value more evident than in local land use policy. In fact, land use policy is one of the dominant items on the agenda in local politics and previous research has shown that decisions by local officials tend to reflect the balance of conflicting interests and pressures in this policy area. Despite this relevance, prior studies have rarely examined the role played by political institutions in facilitating or hindering the preferences of land use-based interests. This article investigates land use changes in Sweden by employing the political market framework to discuss the role played by local political institutions and actors in mediating the pressures exerted by interest groups in the political market for developable land. The study describes the land use management system in Sweden and analyzes remote sensing data illustrating the major land use changes during two periods of analysis (2006-2012 and 2012-2018). Using a Land Use Change Index (LUCI) calculated for each municipality and measuring changes towards more intensive land-uses in the years 2006-2018, we test the key hypotheses derived from the political market framework using spatial econometrics models. The evidence suggests that local political institutions interact with land-based interest groups to influence land use changes over the study period. Specifically, we find that municipalities where mining interests are present experience more intensive land use changes, except in cases where the share of votes for the Green Party is higher. The results also indicate that more competitive local elections contribute to less intensive land use changes. Our study provides important insights into the complexity that the heterogeneity in political institutions and land use interests add to public policy aimed towards sustainable development.

**Antonio Tavares, University of Minho / United Nations University (UNU-EGOV), & Gissur Erlingsson, Linköping University**

Working group 5

*Close actions speak louder than distant words? The effect of local parties on voter turnout*

How does the presence of local political parties affect voter turnout in local elections? In this article, we examine the impact of the growth in the number of local party lists on voter turnout in Sweden. We test the 'best of both worlds' hypothesis, which predicts that the presence of local parties, alongside the local organizations of national party lists, increases choice for the voters and thereby increases voter turnout. The empirical tests employ data from 7 election cycles of Swedish local elections (1994–2018). Contrary to findings from several other contexts, our preliminary results suggest that the presence of local parties does not lead to higher voter turnout in the Swedish case.

**Kiran Auerbach, University of Zurich**

Working group 5

*Place-based attachments and political preferences: Evidence from Norway*

How do geographic attachments shape political attitudes and policy preferences? Previous scholarship has identified a rural-urban divide and measured place-based resentment in the American context. We bring another geographic division into the debate: center versus periphery. Leveraging original survey data from Norway, we construct latent measures of rural/urban and center/periphery identities based on the strength of an individual's attachment to these places. We then compare how these identities map onto policy preferences and perceptions of political legitimacy. Using regression analysis and survey experiments, we find that stronger rural and periphery attachments are associated with greater discontent with central-level political authorities compared to people who identify as urban or have an Oslo identity. Rural and peripheral attachments also predict preferences for smaller-scale public service delivery rather than centralized and larger service options. Looking more closely, we find that rural and peripheral citizens are significantly more negative toward decisions made by central authorities compared to local authorities even when a policy decision benefits one's material interests.

**Vífill Karlsson, Bifröst University, University of Akureyri, and The Federation of Municipalities in West-Iceland, & Bjarki Þór Grönfeldt Gunnarsson, Bifröst University**

Working group 5

*On local communities size and attractiveness: The role of environmental issues regarding attractiveness of local communities and municipalities in Iceland.*

Regional development has been a challenge for authorities world-wide for many decades and all other bodies of concern, such as regional development offices. Attractiveness is a concept that is again more frequently discussed in the field of regional development, in Iceland. It is related to the discussion of the quality of life or amenities in the same field that can to some extent be traced back to Tiebouts (1956) work. A recent paper of Karlsson (2021) suggested that the attractiveness of the most remote regions of Iceland was attached to a varied, wild and pure natural environment along with tranquillity that is in line with work of Graves (1979) and Roback (1982). Climate changes is of great concern to people world-wide and it seems to be growing among the public. Therefore, present paper will be devoted to the environmental issues and their possible role in interregional migration decisions and possibly as an attractiveness. The work of Karlsson (2021) will be revisited and the analysis repeated where local environmental factors will be added to the former analysis. The analysis is based on an even better data sample than in the Karlsson's (2021)

study, a survey of more than 10,000 respondents conducted in 2020. The results of present paper suggest that environmental issues are factors of attractiveness to low populous communities of all kind in Iceland.

## **Anni Jääntti, Tampere University**

Working group 5

### *Local government and local governance in sustainability transformation*

Promoting sustainable development is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Climate crisis and biodiversity loss force local governments to strive for sustainable future and to adopt sustainability policies. Through their decision-making, local governments play a crucial role in both contributing to and combating ecological crises. Cities are estimated to be responsible for 70-80 % of greenhouse gas emissions (see e.g., Hoornweg et al. 2011; IIASA 2012) and the consequences of global warming and biodiversity loss are felt locally. Thus, local governments are key agents in sustainability transformation, in building just, sustainable future within planetary boundaries.

The purpose of this paper is to present, combine and summarize research from three papers in progress all contributing to research on local government and governance in the context of sustainability transformation. In this paper, the research problem is addressed from three aspects:

- 1) Agency of local government in sustainability transformation: focus on the enabler and boundary-setter roles of local government (analysis of interviews with civil servants in two Finnish municipalities),
- 2) Framing sustainability in city strategies: focus on how the concept of sustainability is used in city strategy documents (analysis of city strategies of the 10 biggest cities in Finland),
- 3) Management of sustainability in local government: focus on the management practices and capabilities of local government in transformative sustainability governance (analysis of workshop observation data and interview data from a Finnish case city).

Sustainability transformation affects local government organizations and their agency. Enhancing sustainable development in local governments requires attention at strategic, operational, and tactical levels. The aim of the paper is to address local government in the context of sustainability transformation by illustrating some of its different aspects and by discussing how these are manifested in local government and local governance.

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Working group 5

*Explaining the occurrence of municipal amalgamation reforms in Europe – preliminary results of a cross-national study*

A clear trend towards territorial consolidation of the municipal tier has been observed in Europe and even accelerated in the recent decade. However, the cross-national comparisons of the municipal amalgamation reforms are still underdeveloped: various reforms have been identified and categorized, but the occurrence and absence of amalgamation reforms in particular countries at a particular time are still difficult to explain in a systematic manner. We follow the preliminary work of Askim et al. (2016, 2017) and present a comparative study of municipal amalgamation reforms in post-1990 Europe. In our study, based on the registry data, we attempt to identify the structural pressures increasing the probability that municipal amalgamation reform occurs in a country: high levels of territorial fragmentation, demographic change, financial crisis, and increasing effective political discretion (new tasks).