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Scaling as a pluricentric coordination toolkit: the case of Danish Regional Development Policies

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Abstract

The creation of regional meso-level governments links in with the tendency of the 'new regionalism' and it opens for a plethora of plural processes, actors and levels assumed relevant to regional public policies. However, literature on regionalization and multilevel governance often refers to regions as closed entities or simply levels of governance. This paper counters that tendency by illustrating the multiple and relational constructions of regionality within the policy field of regional development and planning. It is argued that political-administrative regions are multiple relational constructions, marked by pluricentric public coordination and that scaling, defined as the creation of time-spatial horizons of action, is a central coordination toolkit in contemporary territorial governance. This theoretical argument is unfolded with reference to a study of the Danish regionalization processes. It is analyzed how the main regionalist scales is constructed and coordinated in the regional development policies. While previous research position regions as potential nodes of accumulation, which bypass the national state, this is not the case in Denmark. Here, the regions have few authorities and their 'broad' policy field of regional development appears heavily circumscribed by national, regional and local strategies for more 'narrow' entrepreneurial activities. (193)

Scaling as a pluricentric coordination toolkit: the case of Danish Regional Development Policies

Reforms of the public sector in European countries are increasingly creating a regional scale of public services. Relating to the discourse 'Europe of the Regions', regions are perceived to have the potential to transcend local and national scales and thereby solve wicked societal problems, which are multidimensional in their character (Keating et al., 2003; Le Galés 1998). Regional public policies are part of multi-level governance systems and involve multiple actors in tangled governance networks (Bache and Flinders, 2005; Loughlin 2007). During the last decades, this 'new regionalism' has influenced reforms of the public sector in the Nordic countries where it has created a multitude of potential actors relevant for the regional policies (Halkier et al., 2008).

A central and classic dimension of public policy, namely that of coordination, is further amplifyied by the rhetorics and the tendencies involved in the 'new regionalism'. This paper argues firstly that coordination should be viewed as pluricentric and reciprocal rather than hierarchical, horizontal or strictly positive or negative. Secondly it argues that scaling, defined as the time-spatial dimensions of public policies, is a central coordination toolkit, because it encourage an institutionalization of collective governance networks. These two arguments are unfolded with reference to a case-study of a Danish Regional Government and its formulation of regional development strategies. Contrary to the prevailing literature on regionalism (Perkmann & Sum, 2002), it is illustrated that the Danish regional governments are not strong powerful entities bypassing the national state. Furthermore the regional scope of action and its development policies are, on the main, circumscribed by both national and local entrepreneurial and innovation policies.

1. The new regionalism and pluricentric coordination

Discourses of the new regionalism ascribe regions a central role in involving a plurality of public and private actors and place regions as central relational 'imaginaries' suitable for responding to globalization and wicked policy problems (Schulz *et al.* 2001; Paasi 2004; Jessop and Osterlink 2008). Regions relate to the multilevel 'Europe of the regions' discourse, which opens up possibilities of bypassing the state and become global, transnational and interregional actors (Baldersheim and Ståhlberg 2002; Bache and Flinders 2005; Söderbaum and Langenhove 2005). Placed in between local and global processes, regional public policies are marked by a central dialectic between the bounded regional territory and globally oriented connectivities and networks (Amin 2004).

As regions and also local government (Hulst et al., 2007) face this escalation of scales and plural policy processes, the concept of coordination springs to the fore. Coordination is a well-known term in political science and public administration literature. As stated by Sørensen et al., 2010 theories of public administration and public policy have usually operated with two basic typologies of coordination. The first is the perspective on coordination defined as either vertical or horizontal. The vertical coordination typically takes place when actors adapt to conditions and demands set by other actors in a hierarchical setting. Horizontal coordination is defined as the coordination process where actors adapt in reciprocal processes (Orton & Weick, 1990). The second typology of coordination is that of negative and positive coordination. Negative coordination takes place when the coordinating partners aim for as little as possible contact with each other, in order to minimize transaction costs. Positive coordination refers to situations where coordinating actors engage with each other and collectively aim for promoting common ideas (Scharpf, 1994; Orton & Weick, 1990).

The theory of pluricentric coordination transforms these two traditional typologies of coordination. It states that contemporary public policies are marked by a reciprocity between a multiplicity of actors who constantly need to adapt to each others expectations in order to solve public policy problems. During such a policy process all actors are interlinked and despite the fact that some seem to be more central coordinators than other, none of the actors

are in a position to control and command over longer periods of time (Sørensen et al., 2010). The tendency to pluricentric coordination is a central aspect of the contemporary shift from 'government to governance' and it is reflected in the literature on contemporary planning and regional development as well as in the strong body of literature on governance networks.

Governance networks consist of a plurality of public and private actors and they are geared towards tackling complex problems (Rhodes 2000, 355). By negotiating in self-regulating networks, the networks are excellent in pooling resources together and also in exchanging resources between the network participants. Such network processes are often effective in providing innovative solutions to public policy problems. Knowledge and resources can be mobilized in ways that differ positively from purely market based new management solutions or traditional hierarchical government (Kickert et al., 1999; Sørensen and Torfing 2007). In sum, governance networks are often found to have a positive effect upon many regional policy problems including regional performance and innovation (Amin 1999; Keating et al., 2003; Sagan and Halkier 2005; Statskontoret 2007).

Coordination is one of the most central characteristics of governance networks and a prerequisite for their efficiency and effectiveness (Peters, 2007:74). However coordination is not confined to taking place only in governance networks. Pluricentric coordination takes place between a multiplicity of actors, who are not necessarily as interdependent and trustfully interacting as in governance networks (Kickert et al., 1999; Rhodes, 2000; Pierre, 2000). Rather, pluricentric coordination simply describes the fact that a plurality of public policy actors are interlinked and continuously need to coordinate their tasks with reciprocity and emergence as the defining process.

Continuously emergent and reciprocal coordination is a central part of contemporary policies such as planning and regional development. During the last decades planning theories has increasingly emphasized the need for collaboration and mutual adjustment between wide arrays of actors in complex settings (Innes & Booher, 2010; Healey, 2007). Adding to this regional development in Western Europe has been described as a 'networked polity' in which state-led hierarchical coordination has been replaced by non-hierarchical self-coordination

between public and private actors across all levels of government (Ansell, 2000: 313). Christoffer Ansell illustrates that the European Commissions structural funds programmes contains a 'networking imperative across policy sectors' (Ansell, 2000:320), which further adds to the need of coordination and networking capacity at the regional level. Hence the Commission as well as the regional development agencies at the local and regional level has acted as creators and managers of a web of interorganizational networks oriented towards specific planning, service delivery or innovation projects. (Ansell, 2000:321).

While networked polities are characterized by complex webs of inter-organizational networks, some actors will temporarily stand out as more central to the network than others. These actors have a centrality for coordinating the policies and processes in the polity. In essence, what Ansell describes, is a situation of pluricentric coordination: the role of actors with network centrality is to facilitate, broke, and act a 'gateway' rather than a gatekeeper. In doing this they coordinate reciprocal and emergent relationships between a wide variety of public and private actors, in a non-centralized, or top-down hierarchical manner (Ansell, 2000:310).

This current scene of pluricentric coordination requires soft modes of governance, such as the formation of common frames of references. Formal or informal institutionalized 'mental maps' (Denzau and North, 1994) and logics of appropriateness (March and Olsen, 2000) ease coordination and guide the multiple reciprocal relationships. This paper argues that a central dimension in a pluricentric coordinated regional policy setting is the activity of scaling. Scaling refers to the political practice of mentally associating, organizing and discussing time-spatial dimensions. The continuing (re)construction of regional history and the ongoing (re)construction of space, place and the 'whereabouts' of spatial activities, are central dimensions in regional development policies. Hence scaling is suggested to be a central coordination toolkit in new political-administrative regions.

The policies and politics of scaling

The concept of scale has a long and winding history with tenets both in the political-economic regulation school and in human geography. The scaling perspective has not been used in

public administration or political science, despite its political connotations. This paper argues that the scaling perspective contributes with an important theoretical conceptualization of the bottom-up practices that constitutes spatial governance. This argument builds on perspective from human geography, rather than from the political-economic regulation school.

The political-economic regulation school has used the concept of scaling to refer to the ways that especially national states, reorganize time-spatial activities in order to retain power. One way of reorganization time-spatial activities is by the creation of regions, and the regulation school often emphasize scales as distinct levels of government enrolled in a hierarchical system (Brenner 2000; Jessop, 2002; Nielsen and Simonsen, 2003).

Applying the concept of scale to bottom-up studies of coordination in spatial governance should, however, privilege neither governmental levels nor specific actors such as the state. From the human geography perspective scaling is an epistemological dimension, constructed whenever thinking, associating and reflecting about space, and past or future activities (Nielsen and Simonsen, 2003). In this obviously more social-constructivist approach, scale functions as an 'epistemological prism' (Paasi 2004) in which political practices construct and relate lines of time and space, resembling how a scale of music invoke certain tones and associations (Howitt 1998). Described with the political science vocabulary, scaling would refer to the informal cognitive processes of institutionalization which reduce insecurity by constructing 'shared mental models' of how to act in given situations and contexts (Denzau and North, 1994).

Hence scaling is the time-spatial 'horizons of actions'. It serves as formal or informal imaginaries, which involves both past-present and future constructions of given territories and processes as well as the relational 'where-abouts' of spatial activities and policies. Scales can be fixed and formalized as time-spatial imaginaries in maps, plans and policy documents (Jensen and Richardson 2004; Healey, 2007). Both in its informal and formal dynamics (re)scaling appears potentially as a strong coordination tool; it ease coordination by institutionalizing common frames of references to past and future spatial regional activities.

There is a need however, to address how power, representation and democracy is constructed in the production of scales. The construction of time and space, with its past and future trajectories and complex webs of locally and globally intertwined relations, is in essence a political question, which points towards questions of accountability and democracy (Pugh 2007). Regional governments have authority of a formally fixed territory (with jurisdictional borders surrounding a regional citizenry), but regional policies are intertwined and influenced by multiple other local, regional, national and trans-national authorities. This continuous bundling and unbundling of overlapping territorial authorities transgress traditional Westphalian and Weberian notions of territorial sovereignty (Skinner and Stråth 2003, 211).

Regional governments thus have to manage the scaling of regional policies in a dialectic process, involving both the 'inward turf' that is the formal regional polity, as well as the multiple and potential connectivities arising from global flows, EU funding possibilities, and strategies for networking in a global space (Healey, 2007). Scaling regional policies and temporarily defining 'the regional' imaginary, thus contains a central mediation between local and global processes. A balanced mediation between the 'inward' and the 'outward' is often suggested to be a prerequisite for successful regional development (Amin 2004).

The analysis presented in this paper illustrates that Danish regional development policies is marked by various scaling activities, which serves to coordinate the initiatives of various regional actors. However, the case also illustrates that the traditional relatively inclusive and 'broad' perspective in Danish regional policies has been transformed to a more 'narrow' neoliberal economic focus. During the process, the regional government have been circumscribed by both national and local growth strategies.

2. Interactive research of a Danish Regional Development Policies

The New Regionalism came somewhat belatedly to the Nordic countries (Mydske 2006; Halkier *et al.* 2008, 8) and Denmark was the first Nordic country to have a top-down, quickly implemented reform of local government (completed 1.1.2007). The reform amalgamated 14

Danish counties into five regions and 274 municipalities were merged into 98. The reform completely reorganized the Danish public sector and the regional governments somehow doomed to failure already from the beginning and the regional political scope of action is limited in several ways. Firstly, the regional councils are not able to collect taxes and secondly, the politicians are not allowed to have a seat in standing committee for more than one year at a time. As a consequence, they do not have the possibility of nursing their individual interests and competence. Finally, many of the previous county-authorities have been allocated to the municipalities and both central and local governments have been relatively strengthened by the reform (Law on Regions, 2005; Christiansen and Klitgaard, 2008; Blom-Hansen *et al.* 2006).

Left to the regions are the main tasks of restructuring the health care sectors and the drawing out of regional development plans. A rough description of the regional policy portfolio could describe the regional development plans as only visionary documents with no law-based authorities. They are instruments of coordination, both in relation to the individual local government policies and in relation to the regional entrepreneurial strategy developed by the regional Growth Forum The analysis focuses on the processes formulating the regional development plan and the ways that scaling is used as a coordination toolkit during the process. As 'the region' is a relational entity, the analysis is based on the perspectives of several actors: politicians from the regional council (in which 41 politicians are seated); administrators from the regional government; politicians and administrators from the 17 local governments/municipalities in the region; a wide array of representatives from the Growth Forum including both regional and local government politicians, private entrepreneurs and representatives from the educational sector and the labour market organizations.

Material for the analysis presented in this paper was collected in 'real-time' during the period autumn 2006 – ultimo 2008. This was the central period in which the Regional Government drew out its Regional Development Plan and the Growth Forum drew out its entrepreneurial strategy and made the first calls for funding regional projects. The analytical approach focussed on the coordination of the regional development policies and on the interests (such as

broad citizen participation vs. entrepreneurial activities) that the constructed scales served to represent.

The analysis is part of a larger research scheme, which has not been finalized yet. Since 2006 a team of eight researchers has had several analytical foci in the Zealand Region (such as the transformation of regional development, the relationship between politicians and administrators, health policies and international policies). With an interactive methodological approach these researchers has conducted 70 interviews and observed hundreds of meetings, conferences, small seminars etc.. Documents, such as policy-documents, minutes and referendums from both past and present times have been analyzed. The research was especially informed by theories of network governance, meta-governance and new types of planning and it aimed at developing the incipient field of interactive research methodologies.

3. Scaling and coordination in regional development policies

The Reform of Local Government by 2007 initiated several changes in the Danish Regional development policies. On the main, the reform reallocated a lot of the portfolio from the previous counties to the local and national government respectively (Blom Hansen et al., 2006). While the Danish history of urban and regional planning has been characterized by a strong state and hierarchical governance from both the national state and the county authorities, it is now guided much more by a decentralized network perspective (Halkier, 2001; Bogason ed.. 1996; Gaardman, 1988). The Regional Governments has the responsibility of drawing out Regional development plans and, during the process, coordinate these with both the individual municipalities and with the regional Growth Forum. The regional Development plan is a coordinating device, which serves to scale the overall intentions for a future development of the region. The Law on Planning states that:

> *'Regional development plan should be based on a general appraisal of the desirable future development of the regional cities, countryside and periphery, as well as for 1) Nature and environment, including recreational functions; 2) Enterprises, including*

turism; 3) employment; 4) Education; 5) Culture. Furthermore: The Regional development plan must demonstrate 1) the relation between future development and the national and municipal infrastructure policies; 2) The relation with eventual regional cooperation with authorities in neighbouring countries about planning and development issues and 3) those actions that the regional council will undertake consequential the Development plan.' (Law on Planning 813, 21/06/2007, § 10 a, stk. 3 and 4).

The Regional Development plan is not a mandatory instrument with which the regional government can direct local municipalities in certain directions. Rather the Regional Development Plan is a coordinating device with relatively inclusive intentions and with the ambition to include multiple interlinked policy areas. Administrators and politicians from the Zealand Region interpreted this mandate with a positive mind and began the drawing out of the plan already before the Regional Governments were formally implemented. However, as the following analysis illustrates, their positive intensions were somehow brought to a halt by various internal and external coordination barriers.

An intended deliberative participatory process

'Networking' and 'Bridgebuilding' were the main metaphors that regional administrators and politicians used for scaling their policy initiatives when drawing out the regional development plan. The metaphors were used both as a coordination toolkits for initiating relations between widely dispersed regional actors, such as private and public partners, representatives from the periphery and the central areas, country side and urban areas, culture and industry as well as municipal and regional partners etc. (Zealand Region, 2008). The region was scaled as a future, networked entity with trust-full relations between all these quite dispersed actors.

Participatory seminars were conducted during the early phases of the regional development planning process. In the fall 2006 a kick-off seminar with about 170 stakeholders participated and 'future scenarios' initiated a dynamic interactive building process. Observations at the seminar illustrated that the public and private stakeholders had a positive experience of being brought together. The scenarios were produced within four broad preset themes of 'working,

dwelling, service and living'. The themes were relatively inclusive: the themes of 'work' related to economic growth; 'dwelling' to the character of housing, nature and infrastructure; 'services' related mainly to the public health services; 'living' related to broad themes of learning and culture facilities.

The spatial visions produced in the future scenarios were summoned up by regional administrators and appeared in a first draft of the regional development plan. This draft was then discussed in two rounds of thematic workshops with a new group of regional stakeholders and the administrators then drew out the final plan.

From a deliberative democratic perspective, the process can be criticized for not being inclusive and experimental enough. Administrators framed the process with preset themes and it was only stakeholders, not ordinary citizens, who were included. This kind of criticism is well known in the literature on participatory planning processes (Hajer, 2005; Friedmann, 1987; Forester, 1999). By way of example Hajer (2005) elaborates how the specific design of physical settings influence the conditions of staging deliberative dialogues. Young (2000) elaborates how processes of internal exclusion of specific interests and voices inside the deliberative fora, are just as important as external exclusion, where rules of attendance is decided. Supplementing these exclusionary dimensions is the process of sorting, filtering and transforming all the original material into a final plan, a process, which is often in the hands of administrators.

The participatory process was intended to create relatively autonomous governance networks amongst the regional stakeholders, and these networks were perceived to implement the regional development policies. However this did not happen. Interviews with the regional administrators and politicians throughout the process illustrated a wide disappointment and especially the entrepreneurial and municipal stakeholders were not committed to the broad participatory process. Part of the reason is that despite the rhetoric of participation, networking and bridgebuilding, the process had been marked by relatively traditional hierarchical, top-down planning rationalities. Furthermore, several politicians, administrators and entrepreneurial stakeholders, felt that the dominating focus was, or had to be, in the

entrepreneurial strategy. The coordination between the regional development plan and the entrepreneurial strategy is elaborated below.

A more positive, first glance on the regional development plan would however state it as relatively broad, inclusive and visionary plan. It presents five themes, which all address regional development potentials. On the other hand, reading the specific themes, illustrates that they are all implicitly or explicitly oriented towards economic growth. The five themes scales the future region as: 'The Accessible Region' with improved infrastructure enrolled in policies for transnational transport corridors; 'The Learning Region' with an improved educational level in order to meet future challenges and innovation capabilities; 'The Innovative Region' with a focus on entrepreneurial activities; 'The Healthy Region' stressing the effectiveness of hospitals and 'The Sustainable Region' focusing on the need for innovation in alternative energy.

While the Regional Development Plan is broad and with many divergent intentions, the five specific themes illustrates a focus on functional growth; the region is an entity, which needs to perform and proof capable of addressing neoliberal economic challenges. The need for innovation and growth is presented as relevant to the entire regional population. Previous research has illustrated how Nordic regional governance is enrolled in a business inspired discourse (Fotel and Hanssen, 2009), and the Danish case is no exception. Part of the explanation is the strong position of the regional Growth Fora, whose entrepreneurial strategy underpins the Regional development plan.

Coordination with the Regional Entrepreneurial Strategy

The Reform on local Government also contained several changes in entrepreneurial policies. First of all, the national government streamlined entrepreneurial policy by making it obligatory for all the Danish Regions to develop an entrepreneurial strategy, which should emphasize the general conditions necessary for innovation and growth. This is a break with the tradition of reallocating funds to the geographical periphery, which has guided the national

Entrepreneurial policies since the 1950s (Halkier, 2001). Secondly, the current entrepreneurial strategies must be developed and implemented not by the national state as previously, but by regional autonomous networks, especially Growth Forum. The Growth Forum is a formal and autonomous regional governance network, whose portfolio is based on a partnership agreement between the specific region and the national state. The forum has 20 members, 3 politicians from the regional council, 3 from the educational institutions, 6 politicians from the municipalities, 2 representatives from the regional labor market organizations (Law on Entrepreneurial policy, nr 602, 24/06/2005).

The Growth Forum is an interesting hybrid between national, regional, entrepreneurial and municipal interests and several regional politicians describe it as ‘a state in the state’. Each year it reformulates a partnership agreement with the national state. On the main it follows the directions laid out in the National Strategy for Globalization (Danish Government, 2006) and supplements it with yearly calls for specific initiatives in the region. The Danish tradition of including the geographical periphery is continued, because the Growth Forum is obliged to promote growth in the periphery. This inclusion is primarily done with an overall focus on potentials of experience economy and innovation in sustainable energy.

In principle, the Regional Development Plan presents a spatial vision, which should integrate and coordinate also the entrepreneurial activities. However, the Growth Forum appear as having a rather strong ‘network centrality’, and it presents a strong entrepreneurial scaling of regional activities. As illustrated above, the themes in the regional development plan has an implicit and explicit focus on economic growth. Furthermore the majority of financial means for regional development is directed to the Growth Forum. ¾ of the financial resources allocated to regional development is directed to the Growth Forum (10 Mill. €) and only ¼ of the means is used for addressing general cultural and educational activities in the region (3.3 Mill.€). The Growth Forum further allocates 9.7 Mio.€ From the European Structural Funds, Objective Two (Zealand Region, 2008).

As a central coordinating actor, the Growth Forum scales regional activities in two ways. Apart from marking the regional development policies with its entrepreneurial strategy, the

Growth Forum further makes four yearly calls stating which specific activities it wants to fund. The funding of regional activities must be approved either by the Regional Council or by the national 'Danish Enterprise and Construction Authority. Interviews and observations illustrates that the Regional Councils has approved almost all projects so far. The administrative control of the Growth Forum and the Regional Council is relatively strong and this technocratic guidance of the regional agenda leaves a minimum of political control to the Regional Council. Not surprisingly a recent survey of the regional government structures, illustrated that four out of five regional politicians in Denmark are widely dissatisfied with their conditions and the regional democratic legitimacy (Mandag Morgen, 2009).

In conclusion, the political control and the democratic potentials of regional development policies appear rather bleak. Interviews with both regional and municipal politicians illustrates that despite intentions of integrative democracy, none of the actors perceive it realistic to have wider participatory and deliberative processes in the regional development policies. Rather regional development is anchored in various stakeholder governance networks such as the Growth Forum. The Growth Forum represents a wide array of entrepreneurial interests in the region. Because of its institutional set-up, by which the Growth Forum represents a wide array of local and regional stakeholders and has strong linkages to the national state, the entrepreneurial strategies of the Growth Forum dominates the regional development policies. The broad inclusionary and democratic intentions with the regional development plans, ends up being reduced to functional growth policies.

Some of the regional politicians have tried to scale the region in a more global orientation, which directs focus away from the entrepreneurial policies. Despite the fact that they have not been successful in this endeavor, the international literature on regional governance states that the dialectic between the 'inward' and the 'outward' scales is a central dimension in successful spatial policies (Healey, 2007; Amin, 2004).

Coordinating inward and outward scales

It is often pointed out that successful regions and planning in general should be able to manage the dialectics between inward and outward policies and between fixed and fluid policies (Amin, 2004; Healey, 2007). A narrow political focus on the internal regional territory involves the danger of 'bounding' regions as territorial closed entities. Hence a focus on the connectivities of global connections and networks could be a valuable supplement for creating a dynamic in both policies and planning (Healey, 2007).

The regional development plan for the Zealand Region elaborates two parallel cross-sectoral perspectives, which scales the region as: 'the coherent region' and 'the international region' respectively. These two perspectives serve to coordinate the 'inward' and the 'outward' regional activities respectively, but again the entrepreneurial policies mark the inward perspective, and the international perspective is only an implicit dimension.

Observations and interviews with the politicians specifically engaged in the development of the international perspective illustrates that there have been several institutional and political barriers towards the international policy field. Politicians grouped in the standing committee called 'Fora for Globalization' have persistently pushed forward a strategy for international politics. During this process, the territory of the Zealand Region is constructed and represented as a relational object, and at the same time used as a political actor. This double role of contemporary regions is also reflected elsewhere (Hudson, 2005:620) and it strongly confirms the thesis that regional policies are marked pluricentric coordination. In order to illustrate just a small amount of the coordination which takes place in the Zealand Region, a map with a few of the time-spatial scales which involves the region as a territorial object, has been produced:

Map 1: Illustrates how the Zealand Region (marked with grey) is scaled in some of the Nordic interregional networks. The total sum of networks is much larger and constantly changing. Amongst the illustrated networks are the Fehmarn Belt, the Öresund Regional Cooperation, String, Scandinavian Arena and the southern Baltic network, which is part of the future European Macroregion, called BSSSC. The map is produced on behalf of information in the Zealand Region Development Plan 2008:25 and www.bsssc.com.

Politicians grouped in the Fora for Globalization states that a general global scaling of the regional development policies would strengthen the regions position, as both an object and an actor. According to their international strategy, a global outlook would produce general value added; not in terms of traditional EU-funding, but as a way to 'buttress other policies' and as 'a platform for politicial and strategic development' (Zealand Region, 2007: 10; Mandag Morgen 2007). Furthermore, the politicians state that the international perspective have a broad and democratic potential, because initiatives such as international educational networks would produce cultural competences amongst the general regional population.

The interesting puzzle in this process is the conflicting priorities in the Zealand Region. The Growth Forum, the regional council and the municipalities are all related and they need to coordinate their policies. However, they continue to be in a position where neither of them takes control. The regional politicians are internally dispersed; the chairman of the Regional Council, including the executive committee supports the relatively inward looking policies of the Growth Forum. The group of regional politicians who wants to develop the international perspective is on the hand, supported by the municipalities. While the municipalities in general ascribe the regional government a rather superfluous role, they would actually like the

region to boost an international perspective, because they need a general regional coordination of their own international activities.

In conclusion, the scaling of regional policies appears to be rather conflicting, overlapping and filled with coordinating initiatives, which however, neither increase the democratic potential of the region nor strengthen the position of the regional politicians. The case illustrates the flip-side of pluricentric coordination, which is a process of policy overlaps and reduced scope of action. The Danish regions are neither strong nodes of accumulation, which bypass the national state nor producing inclusive democratic development policies.

4. Conclusion – scaling as toolkit for pluricentric coordination?

This paper has explored how the tendency of the 'new regionalism' opens for a plethora of plural processes, actors and levels assumed relevant to regional public policies. The central argument has been that regions are not closed entities or simply levels or scales of governance, as is often assumed in the literature on regionalization and multilevel governance. Regional public policies are marked by multiple processes of pluricentric coordination, which necessitates an ongoing relational awareness amongst a plural set of actors. None of these actors are in a position to take full control, because the premises of coordination are emergent and continuously changing. Scaling appears as a central toolkit because it creates common time-spatial frames of reference, suitable for guiding processes of coordination in regional spatial governance.

This theoretical argument has been unfolded with reference to a study of the Danish regionalization processes. It is illustrated that while previous research often position regions as rather strong nodes of accumulation bypassing the national state, this is not the case in the Danish Regions. As a result of the reallocation of formal authorities in the Reform of Local Government the regional governments are left with few authorities. Their 'broad' policy field of regional planning is heavily circumscribed by both national and local government 'narrow'

strategies for entrepreneurial activities. Some regional politicians see an international scaling of regional policies as one of the ways in which the region could strengthen its position and develop a broad and autonomous perspective on the regional development policies.

While the international literature on spatial governance stresses the merits of a dialectic between ‘inward’ and ‘outward’ scales, the analysis in this paper illustrates that the Danish regional policies has mainly had an inward focus on entrepreneurial activities. While scaling is a central coordinating device, the flip-side of pluricentric coordination is however that none of the regional actors, and especially not the regional politicians, feels capable of governing the regional polity. The analyzed period 2006-2008 rather illustrates a strong entrepreneurial focus enrolled in a general neoliberal growth imperative and backed by national and local government strategies.

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