

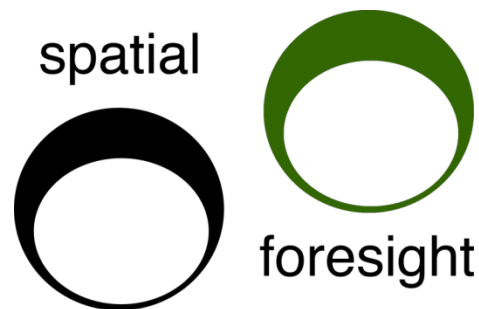
Foresight workshops in West-Nordic rural communities

CLIMATE CHANGE IN NORTHERN TERRITORIES

*Sharing Experiences, Exploring New Methods
and Assessing Socio-Economic Impacts*

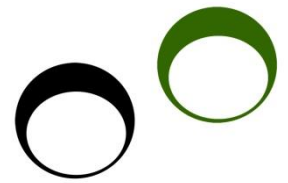
*Akureyri, Iceland
23. August 2013*

Erik Gløersen



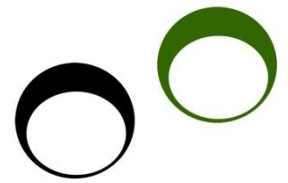
territorial policy support and [research](#)

Applying foresight methods in small rural communities



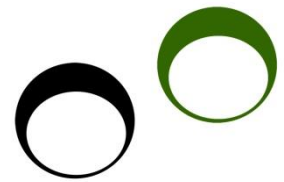
- Result of Nordic cooperation:
inspiration came from initiative
in the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA)
of Finland, Norway and Sweden
- Objectives:
 - Test whether Foresight-methods could become a
useful tool for policy-making in West-Norden
 - Identify how development challenges and
opportunities are identified by local stakeholders
 - Compare perceptions and ambitions at local, national
and transnational level

Method

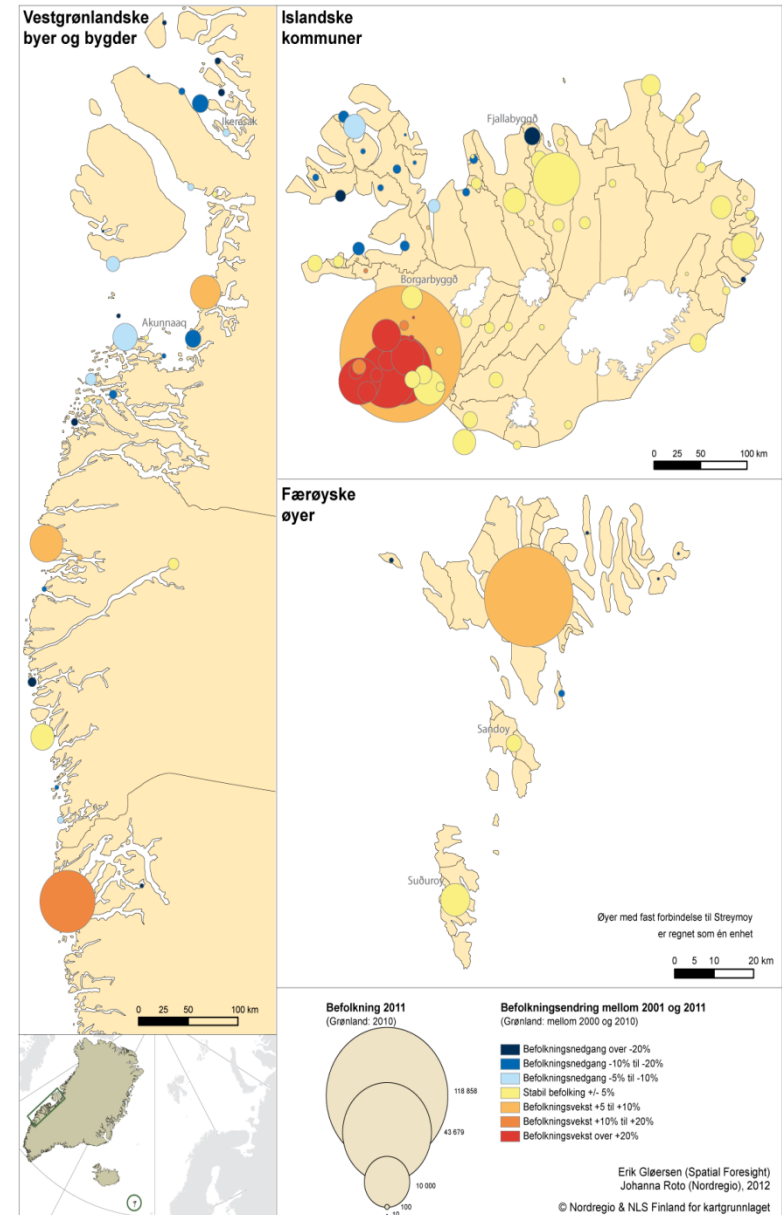


- Three level approach, with successive workshops at local, national and transnational levels
- Local level: Villages in Greenland, islands in the Faroe islands, municipalities in Iceland.

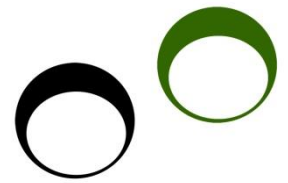
Selection of case study areas



- Faroe islands:
 - Sandoy
 - Suðuroy
- Iceland:
 - Borgarbyggð
 - Fjallabyggð*
- Greenland:
 - Ikerasak
 - Akunnaaq



What is Foresight about?



- Enable stakeholders to «look ahead» in a constructive way
- Describe a range of scenarios
- Identify oppositions and shared ambitions
→ Transforming a latent consensus into an explicit position
- Contribute to making strategic action possible

This is done by gathering a representative group of stakeholders, and applying a series of methods to make an open, balanced and time-efficient dialogue possible.

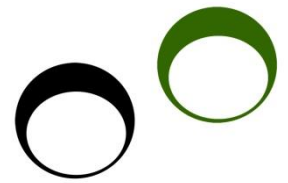








Implementation



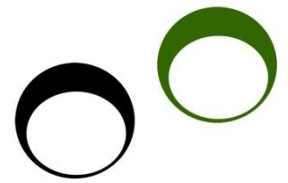
- Different methods, depending on previous experience and profile of the workshop participants:
- Results from local level feed into national workshop, when possible with participation of local stakeholders.

Objective: identify multilevel governance perspectives

- Results from local and national level feed into transnational workshop, when possible with participation of local stakeholders.

Objective: identify potential for transnational cooperation

Results

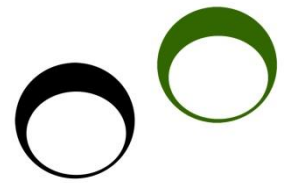


- The workshops confirmed that there is insufficient dialogue based on the local communities own perception of opportunities and challenges
- The «comparative advantage» of small settlements is not used

- There is a wealth of ideas and suggestions that could be drawn upon by policies at all scales

- There is a shared awareness of the unique qualities of the living environment, but often a contradiction between the ambitions for the village, and for oneself and one's children

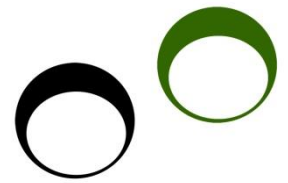
Results



- All villages identify a series of development opportunities, and often quite precisely identify some key reasons for which they have not been exploited yet
 - A number of potential levers for national planning and local development policies can be identified

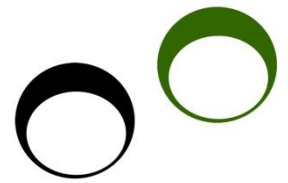
- The diversity of local situations implies that general principles are difficult to identify:
 - A “contract-based” policy, based on commitments of local, regional and national actors to contribute to a development process would be particularly adapted.

Results



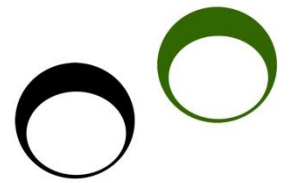
- All workshops identify a number of «market failures», and demonstrate that a liberal economic approach will not lead to an optimal allocation of resources
- The need for external interventions implies that there is a need to critically assess whether it is justified to maintain population in each settlement
- With increasing mobility, strictly opposing «villages» and «towns» is not necessarily meaningful

Results



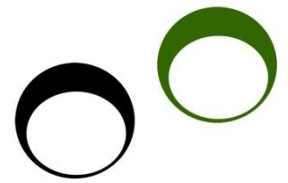
- Attractiveness for qualified persons is generally the main limiting factor for local development
- Local preconditions are very different
- Access to risk-capital is a shared concern in all areas, but local or regional solutions appear difficult to implement
- Local economies based on natural resource exploitation can develop in many different directions

Results



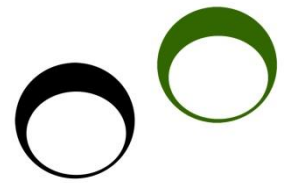
- Power relations in local settlements need to be addressed
- Dialogues with the local level can be difficult, in their interaction with these power relations
- Foresight methods can help overcoming these difficulties
- However, other challenges would arise if foresight methods were to be directly connected to policy design

Results



- Self-perceptions play a key role in development perspectives
- Isolation can be an asset in some respects
- Presenting West-Nordic village life as a choice of lifestyle, accepting more limited service provision
- More explicit positions on the type of rural community one would like to develop would help guiding policies: fisheries, hunting or agricultural society? Tourism hotspots? attracting commuting urbanites?

General conclusions



- The foresight workshops in many areas created an arena for open dialogue and consensus-building that appeared much-needed.
- Systematising this type of approach could significantly improve the capacity of these local communities to face future challenges, e.g. linked to climate change.
- There is a lack of expertise in the facilitation of foresight processes – this could be remedied through transnational course and initiatives