

The evolution of territorial governance in Finland: learning from Europe?

ENECON workshop, Joensuu 19.10.2012
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Background

- European Union – 20 years of a “spatial planning agenda”
 - Europe 2000/Europe 2000+
 - ESDP process
 - Territorial Agenda
 - ESPON
- Finland – a testbed for processes of Europeanization in spatial planning and territorial governance?
 - From relative isolation and Nordic co-operation to proactive engagement in European integration, including territorial governance
- How have these two levels of governance or categories of practice influenced each other?
- Interactive and co-operative process between researchers, policy-makers and practitioners



Invoking the Concept of 'Europeanisation'

- Europeanization (Olsen 2002)
 - ...as the development of institutions of governance at the European level
 - ...as central penetration of national and sub-national systems of governance
- Top-down influences (downloading) & Bottom-up influences (uploading) (Wishlade et al. 2003)
 - Misfit between EU and domestic processes
 - Adaptational pressure
 - Hegemonic discourses (Böhme 2002)
- Horizontal and circular processes (cross-loading) (Lenschow 2006)
 - Collective deliberation
 - 'sharing and learning'

Topical Issues in Finnish Territorial Governance since the 1990s

- Territorial re-positioning as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union and EU membership in 1995
 - Northern Dimension, Baltic Sea Co-operation
- Re-orientation in Finnish regional development policy during the 90s against the background of a strong recession
 - From cohesion between the regions to urban centres as engines for growth (Antikainen & Vartiainen 2005)
 - From welfare provision in the entire country to innovation-driven development in urban centres and regional clusters (Jauhiainen 2008)
- Tools: Centre of Expertise programme, Regional Centre Programme
- Rise of Finnish urban and metropolitan policy

European Influences in Finnish territorial governance: *Adapting Institutions to EU requirements*

- Initial misfit with EU requirements related to the Structural Funds
- Partial strengthening of the regional level of governance, Finnish variant of "European regionalisation"
- Integration of regional development policy and regional planning at the regional level
- At the national level, separation between the two spheres remains

European Influences in Finnish territorial governance: *A Europeanised Finnish policy debate?*

- Acknowledgement, adaptation and adoption of European concepts and notions in the Finnish planning vocabulary
 - “[t]his vision is based on interactive preparation and on the study of national and international plans and research documents” (downloading!)
 - “[t]he aim is also to make an impact at the international level by presenting Finland’s views and needs of co-operation” (uploading!)
- However: spatial realities; conformance vs. performance



European Influences in Finnish territorial governance: *A territorial epistemic community?*

- "network of professionals with organized expertise and competence in a particular domain and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge within that domain" (Haas 1992: 3)
- Finland exhibits a rather decentralized and - arguably – non-specialised epistemic community
- No dedicated research institute on spatial development and planning
- Pooling resources and providing a Nordic voice at the European level: Nordregio
- 'joint Nordic uploading'?
- Nordic engagement with ESPON

Conclusions

- Finland represents complex processes of Europeanisation at the level of an individual country; not an automatic indication or a significant process of convergence of spatial planning or territorial governance processes
- Adaptation to institutional requirements with indirect effects on spatial planning and territorial governance
- Active Finnish engagement with the European policy debate resulting in selective adoption and adaptation of policy concepts

Kiitos!



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