

DYNAMICS OF POPULATION DENSITIES IN NORTHERN SCANDINAVIA, ARE THERE POLICY LESSONS FOR NORTHERN SWEDEN IN NORTHERN NORWAY?

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In the ongoing policy debate in Northern Sweden the development in Northern Norway often is given as an example of a successful spatial policy where people are allowed to live a less dense and more dispersed life in the countryside. In this paper we initially give a short background to the current development in Northern Sweden. One important input to this is the distribution of the population of densely built up areas. Given this we summarize the arguments for a more “Norwegian style of development” in the region. We also try to compare the basic similarities and differences in geography, technology, relative prices, preferences and, policies that may affect the settlement patterns in the two countries. Thereafter we present some investigations of the North Norwegian settlement pattern with data of the densely built up areas in Norway. Given the differences in prerequisites between the countries we would expect some major differences. Such differences are also easily observed. However, the more interesting observations are connected with the similarities in overall development between the two regions.

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