Partnership Project

The Case of Denmark

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Partnership Project
The Case of Denmark

Henrik Halkier & John Evan Flockhart
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Introduction

This working paper reports the findings of three case studies undertaken as part of a comparative Nordic project on partnership and regional policy, using a common conceptual framework and research methodology. The project has been sponsored by Nordregio in Stockholm who will also publish the comparative Nordic report, including a substantial theoretical chapter on partnership, governance and regional development, four in-depth country studies and an extensive concluding comparative analysis.

By publishing the Danish country study as a separate working paper, we hope to draw attention to important developments in the governance of regional policy which have taken place from the 1990s onwards and which would appear to redraw the traditional division of labour between public and private actors in this particular policy area. Comments are, as ever, more than welcome and the authors can be contacted at Aalborg University’s Department of History, International and Social Studies by accessing the website www.humsamf.auc.dk.

The text falls in three parts and starts out by providing an outline of regional policy in Denmark with particular emphasis on partnership-type organisational forms, and also gives a brief introduction to the three regions selected for closer scrutiny. Then follows the by far longest section which for each of the three case study regions presents the overall institutional setting with regard to regional policy and then examines key aspects of partnership practice under the headings of inclusiveness, accountability and coherence. Finally a concluding section undertakes a detailed comparison of the three case studies and places these in the broader perspective of regional economic management in Denmark and the role of partnership in regional policy in general.

In terms of methodology the sections on Danish regional policy draws previous research and the existing literature in the area, whereas the case studies draws on field work undertaken in 2001, involving an extensive series of interviews with key actors supplemented by printed and not least web-based documentary sources produced by development agencies and other public bodies.
1. The National Context

In order to provide a background for the three case studies of partnerships in regional development in Denmark, this section gives an outline of the national setting. First the changing nature of regional policy is charted, then the current institutional set-up and its possible implications for partnership arrangements are laid out, and finally the relative position of the three regions within the spatial division of labour in Denmark is explored, focusing in particular on the presence of public and private resources of importance from a regional development perspective.

Since the beginning of the 1990s the aims and methods of Danish regional policy have changed dramatically.¹ In the 1960s central government began to operate financial incentives programmes designed to redistribute economic activity within the country by making it more attractive to invest in designated ‘problem regions’ with high levels of unemployment and a limited degree of industrialisation. However, as of January 1991 all central government incentive schemes were terminated, and since then the main components of spatial economic policy have been a host of regional and local initiatives supplemented by European Structural Funds. Policies tend to focus strongly on improving the competitiveness of firms within the region, and as sub-national initiatives in economic development can be found everywhere, the preferential treatment traditionally accorded to ‘problem regions’ has been eroded. In many ways it could argued that Denmark is an extreme example of more general trends in European regional policy, namely the decreasing role of national policy programmes of reactive and redistributive policies in favour of ‘problem regions’ and the increasing importance of a new paradigm in which regional policy involves many tiers of government in proactive intervention aimed at preventing labour market problems such as high levels of unemployment by making indigenous firms better equipped to operate in an increasingly competitive economic environment.²

The current configuration of regional policy is in other words fairly new, having only been in operation for a decade, and hence it is hardly surprising that the institutional arrangements have continued to evolve through the 1990s. The pre-1991 situation reflected the centralised nature of traditional regional policy in that both decisions on area

¹ Halkier 2001a.
² Halkier et al. 1998.
designation and individual grant applications were taken on the national level by central
government with only very limited input from regional advisory committees.\(^3\)

At the turn of the century the new institutional setting has been shaped by three tiers
of government which are now major actors in Danish regional policy, and the outcome is
clearly different from the pre-1991 situation in a number of respects:
C the number of actors have increased, eliminating the effective monopoly of central
government on regional policy and establishing a multi-tiered policy network with
extensive collaboration between public actors along horizontal and vertical lines,
C on balance, regional policy has begun to operate in a much more decentralised manner,
with subnational actors having a significant input into most aspects of the design and
implementation of regional development programmes and projects, and
C non-government actors have become increasingly involved in various aspects of the
policy process.

In the following section the institutional setting will be set out in greater detail, giving
particular emphasis to aspects which may influence the extent and nature of partnership
within regional development. The text is organised on the basis of the government tier
initiating policy programmes, starting with the European Structural Funds, then looking at
sub-national economic development activities, and finally turning to the role of central
government.

**Institutions and Partnership 1: European Programmes**

Distinct regional development activities emanating from the European level were of
marginal importance until the 1988 reforms of the Structural Funds which introduced a
programme-based approach and the principle of partnership between different tiers of
government and between public and private actors within the designated regions.\(^4\)
Originally Denmark was allocated two Objective 2 programmes and one Objective 5b
programme, and following the 1999 changes to Structural Funds regulations these have
now been merged into one Objective 2 programme with a somewhat reduced population
coverage of 10.2%. Both in terms of strategies and implementation the current programme
is subdivided into 5 regional ‘programme complements’ which set out the way in which
various parts of the country intend to use the measures and priorities entailed in the

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\(^3\) Halkier 2000a, cf Bogason 1982.

Although Structural Funds procedures are relatively centralised with a key role given to central government as negotiator with the Commission, the degree of centralisation varies across the EU, and in Denmark both programme design and implementation have been undertaken in an increasingly decentralised manner, resulting for the current round of programming in the division of labour summarised in the adjoining Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIER</th>
<th>POLICY DESIGN</th>
<th>IMPLEMENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>* provides national regulatory framework</td>
<td>* matching funding for subsidies to firms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* forwards proposal to Commission</td>
<td>* legal control of ERDF applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* suggests overall policy profile</td>
<td>* undertakes ERDF payments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional government</td>
<td>* organises consultations with social partners</td>
<td>* matching funding for framework projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* develops policy initiatives</td>
<td>* processing of applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* drafts programmes</td>
<td>* recommends ERDF applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* decides ESF applications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local government</td>
<td>* represented in regional committees</td>
<td>* matching funding for framework projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* comments on draft proposals</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</table>


The lead in policy design is to be found at the regional level, with the counties organising the process of consultation, developing new policy initiatives and producing the draft version of the programme complement for the region. At this stage the main role of central government has been to ensure that programmes are in accordance with basic principles of national policy, and to ensure technical coordination with regard to the priorities and measures included in the overall programme. Within the national set-up a considerable degree of variation between the regions is allowed for with regard to the way in which the policy process is organised, but the key components of the partnership appear to be much the same across the various Objective 2 regions in that regional business organisations, trade unions, local authorities, and public research and training institutions continue to dominate the picture, both in the policy design phase and through various forms of input into the implementation process in the form of membership of steering committees and advisory bodies. Moreover, the degree of decentralisation varies between ESF and ERDF projects, where implementation of the former has effectively been placed on the regional level while central government still retains a limited role in the latter on the basis of its

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5 Halkier 2000a, 2000b.
6 Heinelt & Smith (eds.) 1996.
provision of co-funding for projects involving subsidies to individual firms. Although the latest Structural Funds guidelines have pointed towards an even more inclusive partnership through the incorporation of especially various voluntary sector groups, this has not given rise to major changes in Denmark, neither on the national level in terms of the Monitoring Committee nor in the individual regions.

All in all the Danish approach to administration of the Structural Funds can perhaps best be described as one of ‘controlled decentralisation’. Central government maintains a general role with regard to process management, legality and basic policy principles, but substantive issues are primarily dealt with by subnational actors, with regional government playing a pivotal role. Moreover, in areas designated for Structural Funds support an ongoing involvement of a broader network of social partners within the region has been institutionalised, and in the ensuing case studies the relationship of these European partnership arrangements to other development networks in the regions will be explored.

Institutions and Partnership 2: Sub-national Economic Development Initiatives

Regional and local initiatives in economic development began with the setting up of Development Committees, in the 1930s on the local level and in the 1950s on the regional level. These committees were in effect early examples of public-private partnerships attempting to promote the economic development of a particular area. However, as local and regional government gradually took on a greater role in the area of economic development, the importance of the committees decreased, although some were employed by the authorities in an advisory capacity.

Economic development is not one of the statutory functions of local government in Denmark, but an important impetus for the increased level of activity in the 1980s would seem to be the decentralised administration of labour market policies in a period of high levels of unemployment. Subnational initiatives can be found throughout the country, in well-off as well as lagging regions, and they involve both regional and local government organisations, a host of quangos and a wide range of public-private partnerships attached to individual development bodies and initiatives.

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7 Halkier 2000.
8 Halkier 2001b.
A number of factors have combined to produce this complex institutional pattern. On the one hand placing development activities outside mainstream government has often been argued as being an important confidence-building measure separating encouragement and support from the controlling and regulatory functions of local government. On the other hand, until the early 1990s the legal status of subnational development initiatives was unclear, and local and regional government can therefore have been inclined to think that formally supporting the activities of others would be a safer option. Whilst it was always crystal clear what subnational government was not allowed to do (namely grant financial subsidies to individual firms), what they actually could do was only clarified in 1992 where a new parliamentary act designated collective business services - the so-called ‘framework measures’ targeting all or a group of firms within its area - as the field in which regional and local authorities could engage.

Faced with an ever-growing number of sub-national actors launching initiatives designed to further economic development in their area, central government has attempted to improve the coordination between sub-national actors in economic development actors in two parallel ways in order to limit the risk of duplication at the regional level. In 1995 the concept of Business Nodes was introduced which involved limited financial support from central government for setting up a forum for discussion between development organisations active in a particular geographical area. This initiative did not involve the creation of a separate organisation or impinge upon the control of participating organisations over their own activities, and so far little more than a dozen Nodes have been supported and their long-term impact on coordination would appear to have been uneven. In parallel with this the production of regional development programmes has been given financial support from central government, aiming to bring actors within a region together to develop a common strategy. In the Autumn of 1998 the concept was relaunched in the shape of support for thematic development programmes, focusing on issues of general interest that will be explored through a series of pilot projects which individual regions can tender for but which carry an obligation to disseminate results on a national basis.

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13 Lov 383, 20.5.92.
15 Institut for Grænseregionsforskning 1998; interview with DATI.
Perhaps the current organisational pattern within bottom-up regional policy in Denmark could best be described as loosely coupled networks, overseen by central government but dominated by regional/local governments and their associated organisations. And, particularly important from the perspective of the current report, these economic development initiatives would clearly seem to have entailed a fairly extensive involvement of social partners, either on the overall strategic level or in relation to individual development bodies.

Institutions and Partnership 3: National Programmes
From its inception in the 1950s regional policy has been part of the remit of the government department responsible for trade and industry, and in 1967 a special Regional Development Directorate was established. In the beginning responsibility for administering regional subsidies were administered by central government itself, taking the advice of the Regional Development Committee set up in 1959. However, the membership and role of this tripartite committee was gradually expanded and by 1967 effectively all grant decisions were transferred to the Committee with the Regional Development Directorate acting as its secretariat.17 With the wind-up of central government grant schemes in 1991, the Regional Development Committee ceased to exist and most of its remaining functions were transferred to a new all-purpose tripartite committee with a broad range of functions in trade and industry development. In parallel with this the Regional Development Directorate has been integrated into the Danish Agency for Trade and Industry (DATI) and is now primarily involved in administration of the Structural Funds and overseeing subnational development activities.

In terms of central government programmes with a direct and explicit bearing on regional development, three tasks have been seen as paramount since 1991, namely:

1. to ensure access to business and technological services also in disadvantaged regions,
2. maintain a fire-fighting capacity capable of alleviating the consequences of major industrial closures, and
3. to promote coordination of the plethora of subnational development initiatives which gradually emerged.

17Bogason 1982.
The former task is undertaken through a network of Technology Information Centres (TICs) which, although in existence since the 1970s, were officially heralded as a new form of national-level spatial economic intervention in the 1995 White Paper on regional policy.18 This nation-wide network has a presence in each of the Danish regions and provides various forms of advice to SMEs, primarily concerning technology and management issues. Each TIC is sponsored by central government but co-funded by subnational actors, and their boards are dominated by the appointees of trade unions and especially business organisations. Contrary to the traditional forms of regional policy their services are available in every region throughout the country, and thus the only element of preferential treatment involved would in other words seem to be that firms which are located in weaker regions where demand for such services may be limited will also have access to more advanced forms of business services.19

In addition to this proactive and future-oriented measure, a wish to alleviate the consequences of major industrial closures has gradually been translated into a system known as the ‘Notification Pool’ (Varslingspuljen); a fund administered jointly by DATI and the National Labour Market Authority. According to Danish labour market regulations, the local Job Centre must be notified in advance of major redundancies, and in such a situation the tripartite Regional Labour Market Council and the regional TIC can apply to the Notification Pool for funding for temporary local measures in e.g. training or business advice aimed at strengthening both local employment opportunities and the re-employability of the redundant workforce.20 In terms of partnership arrangements there can be little doubt that the nation-wide system of tripartite Regional Labour Market Councils in the adjoining, and in financial terms much larger, area of labour market policy has contributed to making the inclusion of traditional ‘social partners’ a ‘natural’ phenomenon in economic regional development because the regional branches of interest organisations had already moved beyond their traditional field of responsibility (industrial relations) and become involved in the making of public policy.21

Increased coordination has been the subject of a series of minor central government initiatives, including financial support for the production of so-called regional development plans and the setting up of business nodes, both of which are still in place but operating on

18 Erhvervsministeriet 1995.
21 OECD 2000.
a fairly small scale due to their voluntary nature. The most important attempts to coordinate subnational activities are what can now be termed *regional initiatives*, each involving an in-depth study of the strength and weaknesses of particular localities which then forms the basis for concrete development projects brought forward by local and regional actors in partnership with central government, primarily focusing on improvement of framework conditions for business development within the region concerned. The first rounds of regional initiatives covered the metropolitan area of Copenhagen and the trans-border Øresund region, and this has inspired similar initiatives elsewhere based on concerns about a perceived concentration of new investments in infrastructure in the metropolitan Copenhagen/Øresund area (i.e. the bridge to Sweden, rail-link to the airport, and the new cross-city light railway). The worries about ‘over-capitalisation’ was certainly a driving force behind the largest initiative by far, covering Jutland-Funen with 55% of the total Danish population, and, in the wake of this ongoing exercise, initiatives covering the rest of the country, the isolated Baltic island of Bornholm and Storstrom/West Zealand are now under way. The organisation of these initiatives is worth noting, involving all three tiers of government and using business representatives and knowledge institutions as providers of additional input in a loosely coupled partnership.

To the limited extent that central government still maintains a direct role in policy implementation, the preference for decentralised framework measures is very pronounced. In terms of partnership arrangements both TICs and the Notification Pool involve regional representatives of traditional stake-holders in economic and labour market policy on an ongoing basis - i.e. sub-national government, business organisations and trade unions - but the main thrust of the by now dominant coordination efforts would clearly seem to be to ensure coordination between public actors, i.e. regional and local government.

All in all the traditionally self-contained nature of regional policy as a central-government activity has been substituted by much more complex patterns in the new policy regime. Although the national level still maintains a role in policy implementation, the new set-up clearly involves a separation of the roles formerly concentrated on the national level; the authority to instigate spatial discrimination is now exercised via the European level, regional and local actors dominate the sharp end of the implementation process on the basis of their informational and organisational resources, and the critical contribution of central

22 Unlike their name-sakes in Sweden and Norway.
23 Erhvervsministeriet 1997a, 1997b.
24 Erhvervsministeriet *et al.* 2000, Erhvervsministeriet 2001, interview with DATI.
government would appear to be to promote and regulate initiatives emanating from the two other levels. The actual development of strategies, programmes and projects is in other words primarily undertaken by subnational actors, but it must also be stressed that such actors operate within an institutional setting established by national and European regulation - it still makes a difference whether a locality has been designated for Structural Funds support or not, and some policy instruments such as direct financial subsidies to individual firms are simply out of bounds. Moreover, the greatly increased number of actors involved in regional development activities has undoubtedly lead to partnership arrangements becoming much more prominent, both in terms of vertical relations between different spatial tiers of governance, horizontal development networks within particular regions, and in terms of ‘micro partnerships’ around individual development bodies and initiatives. There can in other words be little doubt that partnership plays an important role in regional policy in Denmark, but because this type of arrangements exists in so many different guises, it is necessary to investigate individual regions in order to illuminate the extent to which particular forms of partnerships, European or otherwise, have become the dominant organisational mode in this area of public policy.

Regional Development in Denmark and the Three Case Study Regions
The nature of the regional problem in Denmark reflects the economic history of the country, a history that sets it apart from its neighbours.²⁵ Contrary to the other Nordic countries, no large sparsely populated areas dominated by primary production existed, and unlike Britain to the West and Germany to the south, widespread industrialisation occurred late. With the exception of Copenhagen (and a few provincial towns such as Aalborg and Horsens), manufacturing as a major economic activity only took off in the late 1950s, and this economic pattern had important bearings on the existence and perception of the regional problem.

In the 1950s and 1960s regional disparities were primarily of an urban-rural nature, with a double-periphery situation where the west of Zealand was oriented towards the capital Copenhagen and the west of Jutland functioned as a backwater of economic and administrative centres on the east coast of the mainland. The emergence of a spatially concentrated unemployment problem was triggered by the rapid mechanisation of the export-oriented Danish agricultural sector in the 1950s, creating levels of unemployment in

²⁵ For an introduction, see Oscarsson 1989.
the worst hit regions (e.g. North Jutland) which were two to three times the level in Copenhagen.\footnote{Overviews are given in Illeris 1994 and Gaardmand 1988.} This situation was perceived as entailing two risks: depopulation of the periphery and congestion in Copenhagen and other urban areas to which redundant labour was gravitating. Hence a policy of peripheral industrialisation on the back of central government would seem to be able to at least partly alleviate this problem, and the first Regional Policy Act was approved by parliament in 1958.\footnote{See Bogason 1982 and Gaardmand 1988.}

Nearly 40 years after the introduction of regional incentives in Denmark, the overall picture of regional disparities has been transformed beyond recognition.\footnote{See Industriministeriet 1985 and Illeris 1994.} From an economic perspective the two key developments have been the marked decline of many of the traditional industries in the Copenhagen area and the concurrent growth of manufacturing in some of the previously disadvantaged areas: the West Jutland textiles complex, the strong presence of electronics around Aalborg, and the rise of a number of mono-industry towns like Billund (Lego), Nordborg (Danfoss) and Bjerringbro (Grundfos). Thus, around 1980 the level of unemployment in the worst-hit region was 1.6 times that in Copenhagen, yet by the early 1990s the gap had decreased to 1.15 times.\footnote{Illeris 1994 pp 24ff.} In terms of industrial production the situation has also been reversed in quite a dramatic fashion: while the Copenhagen area lost roughly half of its manufacturing jobs from 1960 to 1990. Formerly lagging parts of West Jutland are now far and away the leading regions with regard to employment in manufacturing,\footnote{For an overview, see Illeris 1994.} and although the Copenhagen area maintains its lead in terms of average level of income, the weakest parts of the country, such as rural areas in the southern-most islands and the far north west of Jutland, are still on 85 percent of the national average.\footnote{Erhvervsfremmestyrelsen 1996.} Add to this the spatially equalising effect of public sector services in a Scandinavian welfare model,\footnote{This point is particularly stressed by Oscarsson (1989) and Allen (1989).} and it is hardly surprising that the aggregate result has been a significant reduction in inequality between the regions.

For the current research project three regions have been selected on the basis of the “most-different design” on account of their different combinations of access to development resources, especially financial and organisational ones. On the one hand private resources such as firms and network of private actors are clearly important for
regional economic development, and creating positions of strength within the private sector has been regarded as the ultimate objective of public policies for regional development in the Danish context. On the other hand, public authorities and (semi-)public development bodies provide input into the development process in interaction with private actors: influencing the activities of private firms is often an integral part of public policy and private actors may also influence the strategies and implementation of public policies through various partnership arrangements.

The spatial focus of the study has been ‘administrative’ regions because the study aims to analyse sub-national forms of economic governance and, in Denmark as elsewhere, such governance structures would at least primarily seem to reflect political rather than economic boundaries. The three regions selected for case studies differ not only with regard to their economic structures but also the nature of public development activities, both currently and historically:

C Storstrøm situated on the Baltic south of Copenhagen has a long history of being supported by first state-level and then European regional policy. The region qualified for successive rounds of Objective 2 programming on account of the decline of shipbuilding, and is now dominated by few manufacturing industries mostly linked to agriculture (sugar beets). Public actors within the region itself have gradually taken a more active role in economic development, but public policies have clearly been hampered by the absence of major private or public knowledge-based institutions.

C North Jutland (Nordjylland), the northernmost part of mainland Jutland, has also been a long-standing beneficiary of national and European regional policy on account of a combination of a low level of industrialisation in some parts of the region and the predominance of declining industries (shipyards) in the major cities (Aalborg, Frederikshavn). Actors within the region have had a strong involvement in development activities dating back to the 1980s, including European programme, and helped by the presence of a university with a strong engineering faculty new industries have gradually begun to emerge on a large scale, especially around telecommunications and IT. This has to some extent fuelled tensions within the region between the now relatively successful Aalborg area and more peripheral localities.

C Vejle on the east coast of mainland Jutland exemplifies a region that traditionally was neither supported by national nor European regional policies to any great extent. Private economic activity, especially associated with a range of export-oriented agro-related manufacturing, has ensured that especially the Fredericia-Kolding-Vejle triangle has
become a national growth centre, but since the 1990s public actors have taken an increasing interest in supporting economic development through a network of institutions and policies.

In statistical terms the regions shape up against the Danish national average as shown in Table 2 below, using a range of key indicators, and their position vis-à-vis one another can be summarised in an ultra-brief format as illustrated by the adjoining Table 3. We have in other words selected three regions where the configuration of development-relevant resources are different, and the following case studies will hopefully illuminate the extent to which these differences may have influenced patterns of partnership in regional economic governance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Storstrøm</th>
<th>North Jutland</th>
<th>Vejle</th>
<th>Denmark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population (1000)</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment (%)</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP per capita (DK = index 100)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Firm size (% firms with less than 5 employees)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominant private sectors</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>Agro-related</td>
<td>Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share of public employment</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main knowledge institutions</td>
<td>Technical college</td>
<td>Business college</td>
<td>Aalborg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main public economic development resources</td>
<td>Objective 2</td>
<td>County Council</td>
<td>Objective 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Danish case study regions - A statistical profile.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public resources</th>
<th>Strong</th>
<th>Weak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private resources</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Weak</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Danish case-study regions - Summary of key characteristics
2. Regional Case Study: North Jutland

The analysis of the role of partnership arrangements in economic development policy in North Jutland falls in two parts. First an outline is given of the institutional set-up, i.e. the main actors in regional policy and the way in which they are linked through resource dependencies, which is then followed by an analysis of the role of partnerships in the policy process.

The Regional Institutional Setting

Regional policy in North Jutland is currently characterised by the involvement of a plethora of actors, and merely mapping their relationship is a task in its own right. Two features would, however, seem to be pervasive and impose a fairly clear-cut overall pattern, namely:

- the importance of multi-level governance arrangements, i.e. collaborative relations which cut across different tiers of government
- the inclusion of private sector actors on the boards and steering committees of bodies established on a permanent or ad-hoc basis to design and/or implement economic development policies.

The adjoining Figure 1 attempts to capture the most important actors and the way in which they are linked through exchange of resources, and in the following commentary their roles and relationships will be briefly introduced.

The role of supra-regional tiers of government is primarily one of sponsoring specific development programmes through commitment of resources for a limited period of time; examples of this are the co-sponsorship of the

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33 For an earlier attempt, see Halkier & Damborg 2000.
Objective 2 programme by both DG REGIO and the Danish government,\textsuperscript{34} and the designation by central government of North Jutland as a \textit{Digital Lighthouse} (a full-scale experiments in ways of building ‘the digital network society of tomorrow’ in business, public administration and civil society).\textsuperscript{35} It is worth noting that these two non-permanent initiatives are clearly the largest programmes operating in the region in financial terms, although the sums involve are still very limited compared to the overall budget of e.g. the North Jutland County Council. The only examples of semi-permanent supra-regional involvements is the support given by central government to \textit{TIC Erhvervscenter Nordjylland} on account of the fact that this advisory body is a merger between a regionally sponsored entity and two subsidiaries of the national network of technology information centres,\textsuperscript{36} and the inclusion of \textit{North Denmark Invest (NDI)} in the nation-wide network of regional investment promotion activities associated with the recent Danish attempt to heighten the national profile in the international competition for inward investment.\textsuperscript{37} All of these bodies, permanent or otherwise, have boards and steering committees which comprise a spread of interests, public, private, regional, and, sometimes, local.\textsuperscript{38}

Sub-regional actors in economic development are primarily district councils, and most of these run small business advisory services in association with local business interests. These local development bodies have now grouped together in three regional networks; \textit{Region Aalborg} comprising the relative prosperous central parts of the region, and, partly prompted by this, \textit{Vendsyssels Udviklingsråd} (VUR) covering the northern periphery and \textit{Himmerlands Udviklingsråd} (HUR) covering the southern parts of the region. These networks mainly operate through a pooling of human resources such as mutual support in kind in terms of advisory services and the ability to attract funding from e.g. the Objective 2 programme for specific projects.\textsuperscript{39}

The North Jutland County Council has become the single most important economic development actor \textit{within} the region because it combines a number of roles: it is by far the largest sponsor in financial terms,\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{34} Halkier 2001a.
\textsuperscript{36} NUF 2000.
\textsuperscript{37} Halkier \textit{et al.} 2000.
\textsuperscript{38} Cf the discussion in the following section.
\textsuperscript{39} Interviews with VUR and Aalborg Commercial Council.
\textsuperscript{40} The budget of its Regional Policy Department is more than four times that of the largest business development body on the sub-regional level (interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division and Aalborg Commercial Council).
C it has by law been made responsible for running the Objective 2 programme within the 
C region,41
C it is the main political and financial sponsor of Nordjyllands Udviklingsfond (NUF), the 
organisation charged with coordinating development activities at the regional level, 
instigating new development programmes and projects across the region, and effectively 
functioning as the apex of Objective 2 administration within the region,42
C through its Regional Policy Department it provides the secretariat for both NUF and the 
Objective 2 programme,43 and
C through NUF it is the main regional sponsor of front-line business development bodies 
such as the advisory body TIC Erhvervscenter Nordjylland (including NDI), and the 
advise-cum-venture-capitalist Business Innovation Centre Nord (BIC Nord).44
The regional level of government would in other words seem to have extensive resources at 
its disposal which can be brought to bear on promoting economic development, but at the 
same time it is, however, also evident that despite the centrality of the County Council and 
its administrative arm, the development bodies sponsored from the regional level invariably 
operate on a partnership basis, at least from a formal perspective:45
C key committees and boards, including NUF, comprise a significant number of 
representatives appointed by sub-regional public bodies, and
C representatives of private sector interests are always included to a greater or lesser 
extent, either as appointees of regional branches of employers organisations, trade 
associations and trade unions, or, more rarely, in a private capacity.
The institutional set-up surrounding regional development in North Jutland would thus 
appear to depend on collaboration between actors from different tiers of government and 
across the public-private divide. But does this reflect genuine attempts to make the policy 
process open to new actors, or is it merely a question of living up to externally imposed 
demands for partnership, e.g. those entailed in the European Structural Funds regulations?
In order to illuminate this question, it is necessary to turn the attention to the way the policy 
making process functions in practice.

42 NUF 2000.
43 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
44 NUF 2000.
45 NUF 2000; interview with BIC Nord.
Inclusiveness in the Policy Process

The majority of the actors interviewed generally described the policy process within the region as being based on ‘consensus’ and ‘partnership’, and although the latter term in particular can refer to many things in the context of North Jutland, it was also clear that in principle collaboration between different public institutions and between public and private actors was generally seen as a positive thing in its own right. Indeed, when asked the question “Has the partnership mentality come to stay?” not one interviewee answered ‘no’ to this question, suggesting that individuals have an expectation that this would continue also in future.

It is possible to distinguish between at least three different types of partnerships relating to regional policy within the region:

C strategic partnerships such NUF and the sub-regional development networks (Region Aalborg, VUR and HUR) which involve a significant element of coordination of activities between different actors,

C institutional partnerships tied to individual development agencies, e.g. through the inclusion of private sector representatives on boards and steering committees of bodies sponsored by local or regional government,

C project partnerships, i.e. short-term arrangements which are terminated after particular tasks have been completed.

Although individual partnership may be more or less consensual, no distinction would seem to be made between them by the interviewees with regard to the persistence of partnership as an organisation principle.

The strategic partnership on the regional level is NUF, chaired by the County mayor and comprising representatives appointed by the County Council, the association of district councils, the three sub-regional development networks, employers associations, trade unions, knowledge institutions and private entrepreneurs.\(^{46}\) This set-up clearly aims to establish a framework for both inter-tier and cross-sector collaboration, and a rather similar pattern can be found in the sub-regional development networks where boards are dominated by district councils, their local business development agencies, and representatives of local employers and trade unions.\(^{47}\) In terms of more short-term project partnerships the picture is

\(^{46}\) NUF 2000.

much more varied, but often with individual private enterprises in a much more prominent role.

In other words it has not been difficult to ensure involvement from neither different tiers of government nor from private sector representatives. The mobilisation of local public interests would seem to be a form of territorial politics which reflects the polarisation of the region in a dynamic core around Aalborg surrounded by more peripheral areas, and thus ‘dividing the spoils’ or at least making sure that other parts of the region do not monopolise public development resources would seem to an important motivation for e.g. participating in NUF and indeed for forming sub-regional development networks.

In contrast to this, the role of private sector representatives would seem to differ according to types of partnership. Private sector organisations may play a role in lobbying for support for particular projects with a fairly direct economic benefit (e.g. infrastructure, an international school, or a particular form of advisory service) whereas support for other types of infrastructure where the economic benefit is more diffuse (e.g. a new concert hall that could improve Aalborg’s smoke-stack image and make the city more attractive to foreign IT executives) may be more difficult to drum up. It is, however, also conspicuous that both employers and employees are represented on boards and steering committees, albeit not always in equal numbers. Thus the organisations traditionally playing a prominent role in labour market policy in Denmark also maintain a high profile in relation to regional policy partnerships within North Jutland. At the same time it would, however, also appear that the role of these organisations is primarily a reactive one, i.e. screening proposals put forward by public actors. Although ‘cultural differences’ and communication difficulties are sometimes cited by interviewees, the general view would clearly seem to be that the disadvantages of private actor involvement are few and that they are certainly outweighed by the advantages of their presence.

In the numerous cases where the County plays the role of initiator and is thus able to formulate the working practice of the partnership, making sure that ‘all interested parties’ are involved is still important because forgetting an actor is a serious faux pas which the omitted organisation may see as a general judgement on their abilities or an attempt to

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48 Interviews with Aalborg Commercial Council and Member of NUF board; one example of this is *Futura Park* in Aalborg, a three year project involving Aalborg University, NOVI, Aalborg City Council and several IT companies (*interview with Aalborg Commercial Council*).
49 Halkier & Damborg 2000.
50 Interviews with Aalborg Commercial Council, NDI, and North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
exclude them.\textsuperscript{51} Such comments would seem to suggest that an expectation exists among
key actors within the region that they will be invited to join a partnership if they could have
relevant input. But while the County plays a major role in terms of being a driving force
with regard to regional development, it is probably more accurate to speak of the main
source of inspiration being the ‘Greater Aalborg’ area which include the headquarters of the
County Councils, Aalborg District Council along with some of the surrounding districts, the
University of Aalborg with its strengths in engineering, communication and business
studies and the associated NOVI science park.\textsuperscript{52} If one has to contrast ‘cores’ and
‘peripheries’ in North Jutland, this metaphor is therefore relevant along at least two
dimensions:
C spatially with the divide between Greater Aalborg and the rest of the region, and
C socio-politically the core would seem to consist of the major public organisation (the
County, Aalborg District, and their associated development bodies), the main interest
organisations associated with labour market policy (employers and trade unions), and,
depending on the specific context, particular groups of private firms and public
knowledge institutions.

In terms of exclusion it is clear that voluntary bodies and NGOs play at best a very minor
role in economic development partnerships. For example the tourism development agency
might ask the advice of local hunting and fishing associations, but these are not considered
active partners as such. It is therefore safe to conclude that NGOs such as feminist and
ethnic organisations are effectively not considered players in the game at all,\textsuperscript{53} especially
once formalised partnerships have been established and standard operating procedures such
as subscription charges and legally-binding contractual agreements start to kick in.

In terms of entrance into partnerships most respondents claimed that partnerships
were open to new actors, in no small part because a new partner will have its own
‘platform’ to offer in form of financial, organisational or informational resources, or e.g.
bureaucratic abilities of an actor to make contact with a particular part of the EU
Commission.\textsuperscript{54} Moreover,

\textsuperscript{51} Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
\textsuperscript{52} Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
\textsuperscript{53} Interviews with North Jutland County Mayor, BIC Nord, NOVI Science Park and NDI.
\textsuperscript{54} Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division and Aalborg Municipality.
one should be aware that when one gets a partner involved in a partnership, then one gets access to their network and platform.\textsuperscript{55}

From this perspective the undeniable ‘institutional thickness’ of regional development networks and partnerships within North Jutland becomes an asset in its own right. However, if it is indeed true that new actors with relevant resources are readily included, then this way of organising economic development efforts would seem to be a dynamic one rather than an ‘iron triangle’ defending existing vested interests.

\textit{Accountability in the Policy Process}

The entire institutional set-up has been created through actions of tiers of government which are all democratically accountable through an election process, albeit in the case of DG REGIO in a very indirect manner, and thus although individual development bodies or partnership projects are not directly democratically accountable through an election process, their political sponsors invariably are. Some interviewees, especially those closely associated with the new IT cluster, stress that it has been important to persuade key politicians to shift attention away from old declining sectors.\textsuperscript{56} Contrary to this other interviewees, often officials in charge of major public development programmes, claim that elected politicians play a minor role, and that a very large part of regional development policy in North Jutland is actually determined at the operational level by consultants and civil servants.\textsuperscript{57} But with the channels of democratic accountability in place (mayors chairing or sitting on the majority of partnership boards within the region) officials and programme administrators still need to engage in a certain amount of guess work in order to determine what they think the elected politicians want them to do.\textsuperscript{58} This suggests that although the parliamentary mandate of e.g. NUF is clearly of a somewhat indirect nature, a system akin to ‘passive screening’ would seem to be in place because the elected County Council could withdraw financial and organisational support if it judged the partnership body to be completely out of order. All in all this points towards the conclusion that the legitimacy of the overall strategic partnership and that of individual development bodies is primarily of a functional nature, i.e. as long as reasonable results can be shown in terms of

\textsuperscript{55} Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
\textsuperscript{56} Interviews with Aalborg University Dean, NOVI Science Park and Aalborg Municipality.
\textsuperscript{57} Interviews with Aalborg Municipality and Member of NUF Board.
\textsuperscript{58} Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
jobs, innovation, or whatever standard is applied by elected political sponsors, then “there are no complaints”.

With regard to individual projects carried out through partnership arrangements, the question of accountability depends on circumstances particular to that arrangement. Generally, however, actors are not only held accountable in terms of any legally binding partnership they have entered into but are also subject to a ‘moral’ or political responsibility that goes beyond any contractual agreement. In a relatively small area like North Jutland, a good deal of networking goes on informally and key actors know each other in many different guises, and thus one’s reputation as a reliable partner who can be trusted goes well beyond formal obligations.59

**Coherence in the Policy Process**

The strategic partnership built around NUF would seem to have been effective not only in terms of mobilising external resources but also in terms of maintaining economic development as a policy area prioritised by the County.

In terms of overall development strategies the region has focused on improving the competitiveness of indigenous firms through innovation as the overarching goal since the mid-1980s, both in Structural Funds programming and economic development plans and initiatives for the entire county.60 This high degree of continuity may be seen as surprising given the extent to which the region has undergone economic restructuring in the very same period, and the two main challenges to this strategy will have been:

- **C** sectoral (and spatial) interests associated with old industries which have felt that the focus on new technology and innovation often implicitly lead to a premature abandoning of traditional sectors instead of attempts to preserve or indeed modernise them, and
- **C** spatial interests outside the core Greater Aalborg area which have been concerned about what could be construed as an over-concentration of public development resources around the new IT cluster.

A third challenge to coherence, albeit a less strategic one, has been periodical spats of inter-organisational rivalry between the County and the regional capital of Aalborg,61 but currently this appears to be of minor importance.

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59 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
60 Halkier 2000.
61 Halkier & Damborg 2000.
Some interviewees argue that in fact no ‘strategic blueprint’ or ‘overall vision’ exist, and that instead public and private actors are simply working together in an incremental fashion in order to make sure that they do not work against each other. On a detailed level of policy development and partnership formation this self-styled pragmatism would certainly seem to prevail, but at the same time it is equally clear that the overall direction in terms of regional development and its underlying values has been maintained since the mid-1980s: indigenous modernisation through innovation has been pursued instead of e.g. preservation of traditional industries or attraction of investment from abroad. All the main institutional partnerships surrounding individual development bodies at the regional level (i.e. BIC North, TIC/ECN and NOVI) clearly reflects this development strategy, and in fact it could be argued that the limited inward investment promotion that takes place through NDI would seem to fit the pattern, too, due to its focus on high-value functions rather than unskilled manual jobs. Despite the extensive partnership arrangements the consensus around these goals may not be all-embracing or permanent, but it has still been dominating regional policy within North Jutland for nearly two decades, both in terms of actual polices and the discursive terrain in which they are set.

The interviews pointed towards several possible explanations for the stable strategic consensus and the pervasiveness of partnership arrangements in North Jutland, namely:

1. The limited size of the region, making the key public and private decision-makers a fairly small group of people; something which could facilitate the building of trust and cross-sector/inter-tier relationships,

2. The widespread perception of a common fate in the wake of the sudden crisis of traditional industries in the mid-1980s, which created a strong sense of urgency about promoting growth and structural change within the region, coupled with the notion of being peripheral and far, far away from the corridors of power in Copenhagen,

3. A pragmatic recognition of resource inter-dependencies, i.e. that no one actor, public or private, would be able to shoulder the governance of regional economic change single-handedly.

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62 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division, Aalborg Municipality.
63 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division, North Jutland County Mayor, Member of NUF Board, and NDI.
64 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division, Aalborg Municipality, and VUR.
65 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division, Aalborg Municipality, and VUR.
Some interviewees specifically link the importance of partnerships to the impact of Structural Funds regulations, while others hint that the collaborative tradition may predate the advent of the NORDTEK and Objective 2 programmes or have been important from other policy areas (corporatist labour market governance on the regional level), and thus more in-depth, and not least historical, research is needed in order to establish the origins of the present situation.

_In Brief: Partnership in North Jutland_

Partnership arrangements are an integral part of the institutional set-up in North Jutland with regard to regional policy, both along vertical and horizontal lines. In terms of inclusiveness they appear to be based on pragmatic considerations about the potential usefulness of individual partners and the resources they can bring to the policy process, leading to a dominance of traditional public and private sector organisations supplemented by innovative private firms and knowledge institutions. The general impression is one of relatively dynamic forms of collaboration which maintain their (functional) legitimacy through the results they (claim to) create while still operating under the gaze of their public sector sponsors. The degree of strategic coherence has clearly been high and indeed stable over more than a decade, but could potentially become contested in a not-too-distant future, either because the economic gap between the increasingly well-off core and the outlying (especially northern) periphery within the region increases, and/or in the wake of a significant reduction in external resources for regional development purposes after the current round of Objective 2 programmes ends in 2006.

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66 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division, Aalborg Municipality, and VUR.

67 Interviews with North Jutland County Industrial Policy Division.
3. Regional Case Study: Storstrøm

Also in the case of Storstrøm the analysis of the role of partnership arrangements in economic development policy falls in two parts. In the first part, an outline is given of the institutional set-up, i.e. the main actors in regional policy and the way in which they are linked through resource dependencies, which is followed in the second part by an analysis of the role of partnerships in the policy process.

The Regional Institutional Setting

Like North Jutland, a large number of actors are involved in economic development initiatives within the region. The adjoining Figure 2 attempts to capture the most important actors and the way in which they are linked through exchange of resources, and in the following paragraphs their roles and relationships are briefly outlined.

The role of supra-regional tiers of government is primarily that of sponsoring specific development programmes through commitment of resources for a limited period of time. The Objective 2 programme of the Structural Funds is co-funded by DG REGIO and the Danish government, and TIC Storstrøm Erhvervscenter, which, like its counterpart in North Jutland, was formed through the merger of a regionally sponsored business advisory service and the subsidiary of the nationwide TIC network located in the region, is co-sponsored by central government. Although, as in North Jutland, Objective 2 is the largest single development initiatives in the region, its lead in relation to other programmes and institutions is much less pronounced than in the first case study region.

Figure 2.
Regional policy actors and interaction in Storstrøm.
The size of individual bodies is a graphic depiction of the relative size of their budgets.

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68 Unlike in North Jutland, inward investment attraction is handled by part-time staff in the County’s Regional...
Also in the case of Storstrøm the most important sub-regional actors in economic development are the district councils, but the way this is organised differs between the various part of the region. In the least well-off parts of the county, the islands of Lolland and Falster, a joint Business Development Council has recently been established, while the picture in the southern parts of Zealand is a more fragmented one with smaller groups of districts working together to provide advisory and other forms of business-oriented services.69

On the regional level Storstrøm County Council has become the single most important economic development actor because it combines a variety of important roles:

C it is the largest sponsor in financial terms and has established a number of more or less specialised business development bodies such as Storstrøms Erhvervscenter (now merged with TIC Storstrøm), Syd-Tek, Green Centre, and Tourism South,70

C it has been formally made responsible by national government for running the Objective 2 programme within the region,71

C it has assumed responsibility for the coordination of economic development activities within the region by setting up two committees, the ‘political’ Business Development Committee which advises the County Council, and the ‘administrative’ so-called External Secretariat responsible for ensuring collaboration in policy implementation,72

C through its Regional Policy Department it provides the secretariat for both the Business Development Committee and the Objective 2 programme.73

The County Council would in other words seem to have significant resources at its disposal which could be used for economic development purposes, but at the same time it is also evident that the development bodies sponsored from the regional level invariably operate on a partnership basis by including representative of sub-regional and/or private business interests.

The overall picture in Storstrøm is in other words in many ways similar to that uncovered in the first case, namely that collaboration between actors from different tiers of government and across the public-private divide are important features of economic

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69 Interviews with Storstrøm County Mayor, Storstrøm County Industrial Policy Division, and Næstved-Egnens Business Development Agency.


71 Interviews with Storstrøm County Industrial Policy Division and Storstrøm County Mayor.

72 Storstrøms Amt 2001. On the composition of the two committees, see below.

development initiatives within the region. A comparison of Figures 1 and 2 would, however, also seem to suggest some differences worth noting:

C with regard to multi-level governance the involvement of supra-regional tiers could be less extensive than in North Jutland, and that the relations between the regional and local levels are organised in a somewhat different manner,

C although private sector representatives are included on the boards of all development bodies within the region, the process of inter-organisational policy coordination does to a large extent appear to take place on the administrative level.

There are, in other words, plenty of reasons for investigating the way the policy making process functions in practice in order to gauge whether these differences are mere organisational variations on themes similar to those played out in North Jutland, or whether they reflect different underlying interests and concerns about how best go about the promotion of economic development within the region.

Inclusiveness in the Policy Process

Most interviewees believed that philosophy of partnerships was here to stay, but at the same time it was also repeatedly stressed that “there is not one partnership, rather the partnership philosophy is a part of our working philosophy”.74 This not only refers to the co-existence of strategic, institutional and project partnerships in the Storstrøm region, but also alludes to the fact that even on the regional level there is more than one strategic forum organised along partnership lines, namely

C the Business Development Committee consisting of elected members of the County Council and representatives appointed by the regional employers and trade union associations, and

C the Objective 2 steering committee comprising a wide range of interests, i.e. members of the County Council, representatives of district councils, sub-regional business development councils, economic development bodies, knowledge institutions, labour market organisations and even some NGOs.75

It could even be argued that the administrative coordination taking place through the ‘external secretariat’ mechanism constitutes a third strategic partnership on the regional

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74 Interview with Storstrom County Industrial Policy Division.

75 It could be argued that because the Objective 2 programme does not cover the entire county, it actually operates on the sub-regional level (as is the case in North Jutland), but as the Structural Funds are the largest single programme with a near-regional coverage, its indirect spatial impact is likely to reach into the non-designated northern-most parts of Storstrom as well.
level with the aim of coordinating the activities of the various development agencies because such a forum, to some extent, will inevitably also provide input to future strategic development within the region. All in all it would appear that although the County plays a pivotal role in all three strategic partnerships, the co-existence of three coordination fora which only overlap partly in terms of membership would seem to suggest either a limited degree of success in imposing coordination or, more likely, a limited need in Storstrøm for coordination from one single vantage point akin to that provided by NUF in North Jutland. It must be assumed that also in Storstrøm the motives of public actors at the local district level is primarily to promote the interests of their own locality, but compared to the quite elaborate efforts of especially NUF in North Jutland, the need for the County to manage rivalry between different subregions would appear to be fairly limited. The strategic partnerships do not have a pronounced territorial dimension, and, at the same time, inter-locality conflicts did not emerge as a major theme in the interviews. In other words: the absence of a unified strategic partnership appears to reflect a relatively peaceful political environment rather than a failure to address conflicting interests within the region.

With regard to sub-regional strategic partnerships, and indeed institutional and project-based partnerships, the situation has a strong resemblance to that in the first case-study region; local districts and firms dominate the former, a broad range of interests are represented on the boards for the four major development bodies (TIC-SEC et al.), while the composition of project partnerships depend on the nature of the specific tasks and circumstances.

In strategic and institutional partnerships, private sector interests are generally looked after by representatives of the regional branches of e.g. employers associations and trade unions. Individual firms are generally perceived to be uninterested in the ‘big plan’ for regional development; their actions are governed by the success of their business and they will be involved in partnerships on a project basis if this is beneficial to their business, and if they enter into such an arrangement with e.g. a development body, this is mostly a short-term relationship that is dissolved after the project has been completed.

With regard to proactivity, public actors, the County Council especially, have clearly taken the lead in terms of establishing partnership fora for strategic coordination or setting

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77 Interviews with Storstrøm Business Development Centre and Falster Industrial Development Council.

78 Interview with Falster Industrial Development Council.
up individual development bodies with boards dominated by private sector representatives. In terms of new initiatives it is, however, rare that the County actually initiates new projects; these come from the bottom up, i.e through the development bodies and their partners in the business community, and thus while an institutional framework for economic development has been established proactively by regional-level public actors, the filling out of this framework relies largely on the entrepreneurial efforts of public and private project champions in firms and development bodies.

According to many of the interviewees, access to economic development partnerships in Storstrøm depends on being able to bring relevant resources to the table; not just financial but also knowledge and information. In practice this has lead to the preponderance of regional and local government and organisations associated with labour market policy and trade issues, while NGOs are largely absent from the strategic and institutional partnerships. Interviewees generally put this down to a perception of the latter as “unstructured organisations that are difficult to co-operate with”, but at the same time some cases of ongoing and fruitful co-operation with NGOs were also reported (e.g. between Tourism South and anglers associations), and it is also interesting to note that in response to Commission guidelines it is intended to include NGOs in the regional Objective 2 steering committee. All in all it would appear that in the case of Storstrøm, new actors could in principle gain access to economic development partnerships, but that at the same time this air of openness is somehow in contrast to the narrow nature of the central Business Development Committee which has been constructed strictly around traditional tripartite lines.

Accountability in the Policy Process
The key actors interviewed generally agreed that although direct elected politicians do play a role in the partnership arrangements both at the regional and local levels, it is mainly in terms of a general capacity for oversight. In practice other actors are held responsible

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79 Interview with Storstrøm County Industrial Policy Division.
81 Interviews with Storstrøm County Industrial Policy Division, Storstrøm Business Development Centre and Falster Industrial Development Council.
82 Interview with Turisme Syd.
83 The same guidelines have not prompted inclusion of NGOs in the Objective 2 management structure in North Jutland, cf above.
through the dual means of contractual obligations - regional level RDAs are under contract to the County both as institutions and in connection with individual projects\textsuperscript{84} - and mutual trust without which whole concept of partnerships would fail to function.\textsuperscript{85}

One of the problems mentioned many times in interviews is the fact that the same ‘faces’ appear at many boards and committees, and while this may ensure that agendas are very established between actors and a high level of consensus facilitated, the down side could be that those same actors are missing out on new input.\textsuperscript{86} In other words: the overlapping of partnerships on the personal level could potentially be a feature that would make the institutional set-up for economic development policy within the region less dynamic.

\textit{Coherence in the Policy Process}

It has sometimes been claimed that compared to other regions undergoing industrial restructuring, Storstrøm has been comparatively slow to ‘get its own act together’ and mainly prioritising the attraction of support from outside, i.e. from the national or European levels.\textsuperscript{87} If the region has indeed been relatively slow in converting to the current emphasis on indigenous development, then a likely explanation for this could be a relatively specialised industrial structure dominated by large firms rather than SMEs, and the absence of major public knowledge institutions which would potentially spawn new developments.

The current strategic orientation, combining attraction of investment from outside the region with support for existing firms, dates back from the late 1980s where a so-called ‘White Book’ was produced by TIC when EU Structural Funds became available. This established priority areas such as product development, support for entrepreneurs and farming-related industries, and indeed it is this focus and its accompanying working practises that has influenced the way the that the Regional Policy Division of the County and the regional-level implementation agencies still operate and contributed to making the concept of partnership part of its common day to day working practises, both in terms of overall strategies and in relation to individual development bodies.\textsuperscript{88}

\textsuperscript{84} Interview with Storstrom County Industrial Policy Division.
\textsuperscript{85} Interviews with Storstrom Business Development Centre, Falster Industrial Development Council, Storstrom County Industrial Policy Division, and Storstrom County Mayor.
\textsuperscript{86} Interviews with Storstrom Business Development Centre and Falster Industrial Development Council.
\textsuperscript{87} Cf Erhvervsfremmestyrelsen 1998.
\textsuperscript{88} Interviews with Storstrom Business Development Centre and Storstrom County Industrial Policy Division.
The seemingly widespread consensus surrounding this approach would seem to have several possible explanations:

C the severity and longevity of the economic crisis has produced a widespread perception of common fate and the potential for collaborative action in addressing the problem of unemployment,

C the broadness of the strategic framework allows public and private actors to promote nearly any development project as long as it has the potential for strengthening economic growth and employment.

In others words a pragmatic rather than a philosophical adherence to the use of partnership arrangements as a way of organising regional policy activities in a region with more public that private actors capable of pursuing economic development objectives.

In Brief: Partnership in Storstrøm

Partnership arrangements are an integral part of the institutional set-up in Storstrøm with regard to regional policy, especially in terms of bringing private sector interests into the policy process. In terms of inclusiveness they appear to based on pragmatic considerations about the potential usefulness of individual partners and the resources they can bring to the policy process, leading to a dominance of traditional tripartite actors; namely regional and local government and organisations associated with labour market policies. In terms of accountability, functional legitimacy would seem to dominate, as in North Jutland, and the broad quasi-‘catch-all’ development strategy which has been pursued since the 1980s would appear to have generated little opposition either along spatial or sectoral lines, and as long as enough external funding is available to support most projects with a clear development potential, this situation would seem to be unlikely to change.
4. Regional Case Study: Vejle

The case study of partnership and economic development in Vejle starts out by giving an outline of the institutional set-up and then proceeds to an analysis of the role of partnerships in the policy process.

The Regional Institutional Setting

The basic structure of economic development activities in Vejle is summarised in Figure 3, and it is immediately obvious that although partnership is still a pervasive feature, the situation differs markedly from that of the two other case study regions in several respects:

- the ‘institutional thickness’ of public development bodies is comparatively limited, with both the number of bodies being fewer and the size of their budgets smaller,
- the extent of inter-tier collaboration is more limited, and
- the balance regional and sub-regional actors has shifted towards the former.

With no parts of Vejle Amt designated for support under the European Objective 2 programme,\(^89\) the role of supra-regional tiers of government has been limited to co-funding of the TIC Vejle business advisory service as a subsidiary of the nationwide TIC network.\(^90\)

In the case of Vejle the most important sub-regional actors in economic development are the district councils, with local advisory services set up in collaboration with private interests such as Kolding Erhvervsudvikling (KEU). Moreover, subregional networks have been formed, i.e. the East Jutland Development Corridor in the north and the Triangle Region in the south-east, the latter bringing together local development

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\(^89\) Erhvervsfremmestyrelsen 2000.

\(^90\) Dissimilar to North Jutland, inward investment attraction is handled by part-time staff in the County’s Regional Policy Department and is considered a very minor activity (Halkier et al. 2000).
resources in a high-profile promotional network covering three adjoining large cities at the
cross-roads between Jutland and the islands of Funen and Zealand which have been
designated a national growth centre on par with e.g. Aalborg and comprises around 60% of
the total population in Vejle County.

On the regional level Vejle County Council is the most important economic
development actor, and its main roles are as follows:
C it is the largest single sponsor in financial terms and has established some specialised
business development bodies such as the Tourism Development Foundation and the
Green Network for promotion of innovative sustainable technologies amongst firms in
and outwith the region,\textsuperscript{91}
C it has assumed responsibility for the coordination of economic development activities
within the region by setting up Vejle Development Council (VDC), an advisory
committee which makes recommendations about the spending of the economic
development budget of the county and brings together a wide range of interests within
the region,\textsuperscript{92}
C through its Development Department it provides the secretariat for VDC and indeed the
County Council itself.\textsuperscript{93}

Still, the role of the County in economic development would appear to be rather more
limited than that of its counterparts in Storstrøm and North Jutland. Its own development
efforts are concentrated in selected areas, and it is interesting to note that if sponsorship of
other bodies is excluded from the budget of each organisation, the largest implementor of
regional policy in the region in financial terms would actually appear to be the sub-regional
Triangle cooperation.

The overall picture in Vejle is in other words in many ways different from what we
have seen hitherto, and thus it will be interesting to investigate the way in which the policy
making process functions in practice in order to illuminate the extent to which these
differences reflect specific patterns of interests and concerns about how best go about the
promotion of economic development within the region.

\textsuperscript{91} Interviews with South-east Jutland Tourism Development Office, Vejle Green Network, Vejle County
Industrial Policy Division.

\textsuperscript{92} Interviews with Vejle County Industrial Policy Division. On the composition of the two committees, see
below.

\textsuperscript{93} Interviews with Vejle County Industrial Policy Division.
Inclusiveness in the Policy Process

Most key actors interviewed saw partnership as an important feature of current economic development arrangements within the Vejle region, encompassing the whole process from policy to strategy, tactics and indeed the financing and running of projects, and involving both public/private and public/public relations. It was, however, also generally stressed that there were many partnerships operating in the region, ranging from very general strategic activities to partnerships surrounding concrete projects.94

Currently three strategic partnerships exist in the case study area:

C On the regional level VDC provides advice to the County with regard to development issues, and its large membership includes a very wide spread of interests, from elected members of the County Council via representatives of local districts, regionally-sponsored development bodies and local business support agency, to knowledge institutions,95

C at the sub-regional level the Triangle and Corridor bring together representatives of local districts under umbrellas which are formally dominated by elected politicians but are in practice based on collaboration between local development bodies with strong inputs from the private sector.96

The composition of VDC clearly emphasises the public-private dimension of partnership building rather than territorial management in the sense of bringing local interests together across the region and between different tiers of government,97 and it is remarkable that the existing sub-regional development networks do not appear to have been given a formal role in view of their financial weight vis-à-vis other actors in economic development within the case study area. In this context it is particularly interesting to note that while many non-County actors saw the VDC as being of limited importance,98 even the chief officers of Vejle County’s Development Department did not stress the role of this strategic partnership in nearly the same way as their counterparts in Storstrøm and North Jutland for whom the Business Development Committee and NUF were clearly central to their regional economic development efforts.99 This could of course simply imply, as in the case of Storstrøm, that such efforts are not called for because intra-regional conflicts are largely absent, but in

94 Interviews with Vejle County Industrial Policy Division.
95 Vejle Amt 2001.
96 Interview with the Triangle Region.
97 Despite expressed statements to the contrary in the current regional development plan (Vejle Amt 2001).
98 Interviews with the Triangle Region, TIC Vejle and Kolding Industrial Development Council.
Vejle this is hardly the case. Unlike representatives of sub-regional development networks in the two other case study areas both interviewees from the dynamic Triangle and the northerly Corridor openly questioned the relevance of the administrative county borders in relation to economic development. One interviewee argued that “the County borders created in 1972 can be compared with the borders created in Africa” by the colonial powers, and the Triangle area would even see itself as a new-model region, created bottom-up by local public actors in close collaboration with business interests and possibly resulting in some form of new government arrangements for this part of Vejle County at some point in the future. In this situation the attempt to manage intra-regional difference through the advisory VDC would appear to be of a symbolic rather than substantive nature, or perhaps simply reflect a pragmatic recognition on part of the County that it would be difficult to pursue strategies which were openly in conflict with a subregional network which represents a majority of the regions voters and dynamic economic activities.

At the sub-regional level as well as with regard to institutional and project-based partnerships, the situation with regard to membership mirrors that in the first two case-study regions: local districts and firms dominate the former, a broad range of interests are represented on the boards of the development bodies (Green Network et al.), and the composition of project partnerships depend on the nature of the specific tasks and circumstances. In strategic and institutional partnerships, private sector interests are generally looked after by representatives of the regional branches of e.g. employers associations and trade unions, while individual firms are mainly interested in being involved on a project-by-project basis.

In terms of proactivity, public actors both at the regional and subregional levels have, unsurprisingly, taken the lead in terms of establishing partnership fora for strategic coordination or setting up individual development bodies, even if these have boards dominated by private sector representatives, and several interviewees pointed out that it has been difficult to get private sector involvement. Especially the Triangle region was keen to project itself as being responsive to the needs of business and would appear to see itself

99 Interviews with Vejle County Industrial Policy Division.
100 Interview with the Development Corridor.
101 Interview with the Triangle Region.
102 Interviews with The Development Corridor, South-east Jutland Tourism Development Office, TIC Vejle and Vejle Green Network.
103 Interview with TIC Vejle.
104 Interviews with Vejle County Industrial Policy Division and the Development Corridor.
in contrast to the County on this particular account,\textsuperscript{105} perhaps making a virtue of having a broad reactive approach under the banner of which many private sector project proposals can be subsumed (as was found in the Storstrøm case study. However, this has not stopped the Triangle Region to proactively instigate programmes of e.g. network building in the form of IT clubs, a food manufacturers club etc.,\textsuperscript{106} actually much in line with the County.

The core-periphery distinction is particularly difficult to apply to Vejle because in reality there would appear to be not just one but two cores: the County Council with its associated development bodies and partnership arrangements on the one hand, and the Triangle subregional network on the other hand. None of the interviews have alluded to a sectoral periphery, and the most obvious candidate must therefore be spatial, i.e. the rural hinterlands in the west of the county, mentioned only briefly during the interviews.

With regard to access to partnerships, the views expressed in Vejle did not differ much from that encountered in the two other Danish case studies. Although especially the representatives of subregional networks found it difficult to envisage new core partners (because they had been set up by geographically delimited groups of district councils),\textsuperscript{107} the general view amongst the interviewees was that there is room for new actors to take part in individual projects, and that the main resource that any partner, old or new, can offer a partnership is ‘knowledge’ and ‘time’. Compared to the other case study regions, trade union representatives would perhaps appear to play a less prominent role, and NGOs were generally considered to be marginal to the policy process, even in the case of the Green Network initiative.\textsuperscript{108} In this way the Vejle model of partnership comes closer to what some have called a ‘negotiated order’,\textsuperscript{109} i.e. loose ties between key public and private actors in a bi-partite relationship akin to an urban ‘growth coalition’.

\textit{Accountability in the Policy Process}

The key actors interviewed generally agreed that although direct elected politicians do play a role in the partnership arrangements both at the regional and subregional levels, it is mainly in terms of a general capacity for oversight. The emphasis is very much on functional legitimacy; getting the job done by being responsive to private sector needs and,

\textsuperscript{105} Interviews with the Triangle Region and TIC Vejle.
\textsuperscript{106} Interview with the Triangle Region, cf Vejle Amt 2001.
\textsuperscript{107} Interviews with Kolding Industrial Development Council and the Development Corridor.
\textsuperscript{108} Interviews with Kolding Industrial Development Council, Vejle Green Network, Vejle County Industrial Policy Division.
\textsuperscript{109} Moore & Booth 1989.
of course, the need for mutual trust in order to make complex institutional arrangements work.\textsuperscript{110} The importance of the subregional networks which do not correspond to one elected public authority would seem to put even more emphasis on the combination of functional legitimacy and inter-organisational trust as the main modes of accountability.

\textit{Coherence in the Policy Process}

The region-wide development plan which is turned into annual action plans by VDC and the County has focused primarily on the development of indigenous firms through informational and organisational measures such as advisory services and formation of thematic networks, something that is also reflected in the work of regional-level implementation agencies such as \textit{Green Network}.\textsuperscript{111} Nonetheless, many actors in development bodies and subregional networks still tend to take a dim view of these activities, especially with regard to their capacity for influencing actions and policy implementation on the ground.\textsuperscript{112} This could seem to suggest a rather low level of coherence, probably well short of consensus, but as the development strategies pursued by the two tiers of government would appear to be broadly similar, the differences between e.g. the County and the Triangle probably primarily reflect inter-tier \textit{positioning}.

\textit{In Brief: Partnership in Vejle}

Partnership arrangements are an integral part of the institutional set-up in Vejle with regard to regional policy, especially in terms of bringing private sector interests into the policy process. In terms of inclusiveness they appear to based on pragmatic considerations about the potential usefulness of individual partners and the resources they can bring to the policy process, in this case leading to a dominance of regional and especially local government and business organisations. In terms of accountability functional legitimacy again dominates, and the absence of a single core in terms of partnership is also rather obvious. On the basis of the existing research it is, however, difficult to tell whether the differences between the County on the one hand and the Triangle \textit{et al.} on the other are based on strategic differences, inter-tier rivalries or territorial politics.

\textsuperscript{110} Interviews with Vejle County Industrial Policy Division and the Triangle Region.

\textsuperscript{111} Vejle Amt 2001.

\textsuperscript{112} Interview with Kolding Industrial Development Council.
5. Comparative Analysis

The three case studies of partnership arrangements in regional development policy have unveiled both similarities and differences, and thus that while it would appear to be possible to speak about a ‘Danish partnership model’, significant variations between the regions also occur. As will be argued below, most of the commonalities have been found in the areas of inclusiveness and accountability, while differences are most pronounced in relation to strategic coherence.

In all the three case study regions public actors have clearly played a proactive role in setting up partnerships and devising policies, both with regard to overarching strategies and collaboration, and in relation to individual development bodies, and the coordinating body is invariably a public organisation cf the adjoining Table 4. Moreover, partnerships practically always includes actors from the private sector on boards and committees, mainly in the shape of representatives from regional/local business or employers organisations, while individual development projects organised along partnership lines often involve individual firms, sometimes even in a proactive role. Most of the overarching strategic partnerships on the regional level include a significant local government representatives in order to facilitate inter-tier coordination, while the voluntary sector is largely absent except in connection with individual development projects which fall within their ‘sectoral’ remit (e.g. anglers and promotion of green tourism). All in all this gives the core of Danish regional development partnerships a distinct profile, cf Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coordinating body</th>
<th>County (North Jutland, Storstrøm, Vejle Amt)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>District grouping</td>
<td>District grouping (Triangle, Corridor)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in all three case study regions</td>
<td>Business organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trade unions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Districts</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 4. The core of strategic partnerships in Denmark.

This pattern of inclusion and exclusion could suggest that partnerships in economic development are in fact closed ‘iron triangles’ on the subnational level. In all three regions interviewees do, however, generally claim that relevant resources, financial or otherwise, give access to partnership participation, something which would imply that partnerships do nonetheless have a relatively open character. Such an interpretation does of course hinge on what existing partners in practice will consider to be ‘relevant’ resource in an economic
development context, and thus the policy implications of a pattern of inclusiveness which could perhaps best be termed *pragmatic traditionalism* are still unclear. Pragmatic inclusion of actors with ‘relevant’ resources would seem to permit innovation, but at the same time the dominance of traditional interest organisations in strategic partnerships suggests that, perhaps, the source of dynamism should primarily be located at the level of individual projects. In order to establish whether partnership arrangements have indeed been dynamic or conservative in terms of policies and strategies in the Danish context, more research will in other words need to be undertaken, both in terms of broadening the range of interviews to include more individual entrepreneurs and voluntary organisations, and indeed by extending the historical dimension of the study in order to be able to ascertain the possible contribution of individual partnerships to the development of policies and strategies within the region.

Also with regard to accountability the three case study regions presented a broadly similar picture. Political accountability is largely indirect in the sense that the committees and boards responsible for individual partnerships have invariably been appointed or approved by elected politicians, and especially partnerships with a predominantly strategic role often have politicians serving as members of e.g. its steering committee. No instances of direct election of partnership boards have been recorded, but although the chain of influence from voters to public policy is often long, this is not seen as a major problem by the interviewees or, according to them, in the regional political context at large. This may well be because indirect political accountability in practice is supported by on the one hand legal accountability - partnerships involving monetary relations are governed by normal contractual standards - and indeed by ‘trust’, which many interviewees also claimed plays an important part in ensuring effective and transparent cooperation, something which would seem to be supported by the patterns of inclusiveness noted above. Establishing the balance between the three different forms of accountability would require much more extensive research, but perhaps the most important lesson to be drawn from this study would be that accountability has not emerged as a major issue in its own right, and thus a ‘functional’ type of legitimacy would seem to dominate. In short, if partnerships are seen to produce results in terms of regional policy, then the organisational patterns are not seriously questioned.

All in all the situation with regard to inclusiveness and accountability would in other words seem to be characterised by similarities and consensus: the ‘rules of the game’ are the same in each of the three regions, something that suggests that they reflect national
preferences, e.g. political regulation and/or particular ways of ‘doing politics’ embodied in the ‘political culture’ in Denmark, and thus a ‘Danish model’ of partnerships within regional economic development policy would seem to be in evidence.

In the light of these findings it is therefore particularly interesting to note that with regard to the last of the three key partnership dimensions, strategic coherence, a completely different picture emerges from the three case studies. Instead of similarities and consensus, divergence and to some extent conflicts are conspicuous features, as summarised in the adjoining Table 5 which depicts the situation in the three regions, including the two types of strategic partnerships coexisting in Vejle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Strategic partnerships in regional development</th>
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<tr>
<td>Summary of key characteristics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategic orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Jutland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Induced</td>
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<td>Policy impact</td>
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On the one hand it is evident that the overall strategic orientation differs greatly. In two regions the strategic partnerships can be classified primarily as induced, i.e. being prompted by external demands and to a large extent relying on mobilisation of resources from outside the region. In contrast to this the supposedly overarching partnership in Vejle appears to be of a mainly enforced nature, prompted if not outright demanded by coordination initiatives from the national level, while the bottom-up partnership in the Triangle region displays a generative strategic orientation, being a local initiative that relies primarily on mobilisation of resources within the locality. While significant variations have been identified with regard to the origins and basic resource mobilisation strategies of regional policy partnerships in Denmark, it should, however, also be stressed that in terms of specific economic development strategies all four partnerships are overwhelmingly concerned with promoting the growth of indigenous firms and thus even the two regions in which external resources plays a crucial role are ultimately using European funds to mobilise resources from private actors within the region.

On the other hand it is also evident that the policy impact of the four strategic partnerships vary greatly, with two of them appearing to be synergetic in the sense of combining considerable resources within a reasonably clear development strategy, one
partnerships being composite by involving relatively large resources within a looser strategic framework which allows individual partners to continue existing activities, and one partnership appearing to be of a mainly ritualistic nature with limited impact in terms of policy priorities within the region. In short, having a strategic partnership formally in place does not ensure that it makes much difference in terms of the allocation of policy resources on the ground.

All in all this pattern would seem to point towards conclusions both regarding the role played by partnerships in managing spatial economic inequalities in Denmark, and indeed on a more general level concerning the relationship between the strategic orientation of partnerships and their policy impact.

First and foremost it has been demonstrated that the role of partnerships in Danish regional policy varies between the regions. In North Jutland the main strategic partnership may have been largely induced by the European Structural Funds, but nonetheless still appears to have been able to maintain a potentially controversial strategic emphasis on industrial modernisation while at the same time keeping at bay inherent tensions between the revitalised core of the region and its less well-off peripheries. In Storstrøm the main function of the partnership would appear to be to facilitate the spending of the European funds available; something which was complicated by the absence of a dynamic Aalborg-style regional core, although this at the same time also made the task of partnership-building easier because the question of intra-regional differences remained of limited importance. Finally, Vejle is the only case in which contending strategic partnerships have been identified, with a weakly resourced region-wide partnership coexisting with several sub-regional partnerships of considerable dynamism. The three cases would seem to suggest that several potentially conflicting factors may influence the extent to which strategic coherence can be achieved, and, not least, have a tangible impact on regional policy and the management of spatial economic equality. On the one hand external funding gives the fund holder - the County in the case of the Structural Funds in Denmark - considerable leverage over other actors, but as the diverging experience of North Jutland and Storstrøm this may or may not result in a high degree of strategic coherence. On the other hand intra-regional polarisation may make it more difficult to establish strategic coherence because of diverging interests, but at the same time the presence of a regional core with dynamic firms and knowledge institutions may facilitate the emergence of new economic growth potentials which could eventually benefit the entire region. From this perspective the outcome of some of the case studies are perhaps less surprising. In
Storstrøm the absence of territorial tensions and a perception of limited indigenous potential resulted in a peaceful process because spending external funding was the main preoccupation, whereas in Vejle the combination of intra-regional polarisation and absence of large-scale external funding produced a situation where sub-regional territorial particularism could flourish. North Jutland may be the interesting case in that a longstanding perception of ‘common fate’ of industrial decline has generated partnership structures with a reasonably clear strategic focus that - on the back of significant amounts of European money - appear to be able to manage tensions between the increasing successful core and the less well-off parts of the region. Taken together, the three case studies would in other words seem to suggest that while the environment in which a partnership operates is of course important - e.g. presence/absence of external funding or intra-regional polarisation - the partnership process itself can also make a difference to the ultimate outcome by establishing a framework for longer-term interest mediation.

This conclusion also lends support to a more general observation, namely that it would appear that there is no simple correspondence between different aspects of the partnership process, unlike it is sometimes assumed in the literature. In the three Danish case-study regions a resource-reallocating synergetic impact has resulted both from collaborative arrangements of a generative nature and on the basis of a partnership created in response to the availability of the European Structural Funds. Conversely, an induced strategic orientation does not necessarily result in a synergetic impact, as the example of Storstrøm with its composite policy impact shows. From an analytical perspective the implication of this is that it is indeed necessary to investigate the partnership process in its entirety because it is difficult to make assumptions about impact on the basis of strategic orientations, however tempting this might otherwise be in terms of economising with scarce research resources. From a policy perspective the implication would seem to be that the partnership process would seem to matter in terms of influencing the eventual outcome and, indeed, that experiencing success with externally induced collaboration could potentially establish patterns of collaboration that may outlast the availability of e.g. the European Structural Funds.
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7. Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BIC Nord</td>
<td>Business Information Centre Nord</td>
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<tr>
<td>DATI</td>
<td>Danish Agency for Trade and Industry (Erhvervsfremmestyrelsen)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERDF</td>
<td>European Regional Development Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>ESF</td>
<td>European Social Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>HUR</td>
<td>Himmerlands Udviklingsråd</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEU</td>
<td>Kolding Erhvervsudvikling</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDI</td>
<td>NorthDenmark Invest</td>
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<td>NUF</td>
<td>Nordjyllands Udviklingsfond</td>
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<td>Teknologisk Informationscenter</td>
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<td>VDC</td>
<td>Vejle Development Council (Vejle Udviklingsråd)</td>
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<td>Vendsyssels Udviklingsråd</td>
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