UiT The Arctic University of Norway

Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education

What Happened in Northern Norway?

A comparative and quantitative analysis of political and demographic development in Northern Norway from 1950 to 2015

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Summary

The thesis *What Happened in Northern Norway?* is a quantitative analysis of various aspects of the political and demographic development in Northern Norway from 1950 to today. The theories of Ottar Brox and in his seminal work *Hva skjer i Nord-Norge?* (What Is Happening in Northern Norway?), have influenced regional and national actors in their understanding of the region and their policy development. This thesis aims to analyze what *actually* happened in Northern Norway in the years following Brox's work by using a different theoretical framework for the center–periphery relationship, one developed by another social scientist with roots in Northern Norway, Stein Rokkan, and by applying quantitative methodology.

The first paper, "The Striking Similarities between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden," published in *Arctic Review on Law and Politics* (2019), uses a comparative perspective to find a very similar pattern of demographic development in municipalities in Northern Norway and Northern Sweden, especially from 1975 to 2015, despite important differences in regional policies applied in the two countries. In the second paper, "The Centre–Periphery Dimension and Trust in Politicians: The Case of Norway," published in *Territory, Politics, Governance* (2019), Northern Norway serves as a case for exploring if there is a spatial dimension in trust in politicians that goes beyond the urban–rural dimension. The results produced when using the Rokkanian framework reveal lower trust in national and local politicians in Northern Norway than elsewhere in the country, despite controlling for performance, cultural, political, and socio-economic variables. The paper also shows how distance from the capital could replace the dummy variable *Northern Norway* and, hence, has relevance for trust studies in other countries. The third paper, "The Local Impact of Increased Numbers of State Employees on Start-ups in Norway," published in *Norwegian Journal of Geography* (2019), examines the effect of regional policies particularly important in Northern Norway, the relocation of state employees, and the creation of regional universities. The relative number of state employees in a municipality seems unrelated to local growth. Universities, on the other hand, seem to stimulate regional development. The findings indicate that the relocation of state

employees may be a rather limited tool for stimulating local and regional growth and, if applied, policymakers should consider how the relocation could stimulate place-sensitive development in individual municipalities.

Theoretically, the thesis adds new knowledge to the literature on political trust and to the literature regarding the effects of different forms of regional policies. *Empirically*, it adds new knowledge about the political and demographic development in Northern Norway. *Methodologically*, it exhibits the benefits of using quantitative tools to study a region that has mainly been studied qualitatively. Finally, in light of the empirical results, the overall perspective of Stein Rokkan generally seems to be more accurate for describing and understanding the demographic and political development in Northern Norway than the perspective of Ottar Brox. Northern Norway is a developed region also marked by the classical characteristics of a peripheral region, and the demographic development over the last 65 years is strikingly similar to the most similar peripheral region: Northern Sweden.

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1 Introduction—Aims of This Study

In 1966, Ottar Brox (Brox, 1966) asked *What Is Happening in Northern Norway?* Although his theories have influenced politics, academia, and public debate (Strøksnes, 2008), little interest has been shown in investigating what *actually* happened in Northern Norway in the following decades from a quantitative and comparative perspective. While important work on the development in Northern Norway has been carried out, this work has predominantly been of a qualitative nature (Arbo & Hersoug, 2010; Brox, 1984; Eriksen, 1996; Røvik, Nergård, & Jentoft, 2011, 2013). Emerging at around the same time as Brox, another social scientist born in Northern Norway, Stein Rokkan, also started writing about the center–periphery relationship (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967; Rokkan, 1987a; Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). Growing up in a relatively poor, peripheral region like Northern Norway in the 1930s influenced both Brox and Rokkan in their theory development (for more on Rokkan, see Stubhaug, 2019). Rather tellingly, Lipset and Rokkan (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967) dedicated their main work, *Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments: An Introduction,* "[t]o the memory of our fathers: defenders of the periphery." Although Rokkan and Brox both acknowledge the asymmetric power relationship between Northern Norway and the south, their theories do differ as to the solution and development within this framework. Hence, part of the project in hand is to analyze the respective theoretical frameworks of Rokkan and Brox and explore their relevance by using empirical data from Northern Norway on demographic development and trust in politicians. At the same time, the results from the empirical analyses are used to add knowledge to the general literature in political science concerning both political trust and policies for regional development. Consequently, Northern Norway becomes not only interesting as an empirical study for regional actors, but also as a comparative and explorative study for more generalized analyses (George & Bennett, 2005; Lijphart, 1975).

The aims of this study could be divided into three different but interconnected projects. The thesis title, *What Happened in Northern Norway?*, connects the theoretical, empirical, and methodological ambitions. The theoretical project aims to

explore the relevance of Rokkan's concept of the territorial dimension of politics between the center and the Northern Norwegian periphery, but also with respect to other parts of the general political science literature concerning political trust and regional policies. It also tries to compare and evaluate the respective theories developed by Rokkan and Brox. Empirically, the thesis focuses on developing new insights into the development in Northern Norway since the 1950s on the individual, municipal, and regional levels. The methodological aim of the study is to show the benefit of quantitative, comparative, longitudinal, spatial, and multilevel methods in social sciences by using quantitative tools to study a region that has mainly been studied qualitatively (e.g. Brox, 1966; Eriksen, 1996; Røvik et al., 2011). Historically, there have been few regional-level comparative analyses, a phenomenon perhaps resulting from that which Rokkan (2009) has described as the "whole-nation bias." The data has therefore primarily been collected about nation-states and limitations in tools of analysis explaining the scarcity of analyses on the regional level.

Studying every aspect of what has happened in Northern Norway over the last 65 years is not possible in a single thesis. Even broader scholarly collaborations, such as Røvik et al. (2011) and Elenius, Tjelmeland, Lähteenmäki, and Golubev (2015) do not cover all aspects. The main focus of this thesis is on political and demographic development, the main question, "What happened in Northern Norway?," answered by addressing three sub-questions, each corresponding to a paper in this thesis.

1. How has the demographic development in Northern Norway compared to Northern Sweden over the last 65 years?
2. Why is trust in politicians lower in Northern Norway than in the rest of the country?
3. What are the local effects, especially relevant in Northern Norway, of the policy of relocating and creating state jobs outside the capital?

By its very nature, demographic development is a rather slow process, and a 65-year period is not particularly long compared to many other demographic studies (e.g. Boserup, 1981; Braudel, 1958). It should be possible, however, to find room for time-

series studies shorter than the French *École des Annales* (e.g. Bloch, 1954; Bloch & Fossier, 1968; Braudel, 1958; Febvre & Martin, 1976) and at the same time benefit from the major advantages of longitudinal studies as compared to cross-sectional studies (see Becketti, 2013; Midtbø, 2000 and also chapter 4.4). Longitudinal and spatial aspects of variations in classical themes of political science, such as voter turnout and party preferences in Northern Norway, are thoroughly treated by Rokkan (1987c) for the period 1882–1961 and Buck (2013) for 1945–2009; however, there are no studies of the demographic development over time and in a comparative perspective.

Using a longitudinal and comparative approach, Paper I, "The Striking Similarities Between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden," published in *Arctic Review on Law and Politics* (Stein, 2019b) explores the effects of regional policies in Northern Norway in a comparative perspective with Northern Sweden, an example of that which Teune and Przeworski (1970) defined as a most similar systems design (MSSD). Contrary to the view held by many actors, the paper shows how the demographic development in Northern Norway and Northern Sweden is much more similar than as commonly perceived by most actors in both countries. It is difficult to see that the expensive and exogenous Norwegian regional policies have been more successful compared to the much less costly regional policy implemented in Northern Sweden.

The importance of political trust as an important indicator of political legitimacy is an emerging area of political science. To my knowledge, no studies on political trust have been conducted in Northern Norway, and only one concerning trust in general (Ellingsen, 2015). Paper II in this thesis, "The Centre–Periphery Dimension and Trust in Politicians: The Case of Norway," has been co-written with Marcus Buck and Hilde Bjørnå and published in *Territory, Politics, Governance* (Stein, Buck, & Bjorna, 2019). The paper explores the spatial dimension of trust in politicians. Political trust is often explained in relation to government performance and citizens' normative expectations (Hetherington, 1998; Rothstein, 2011), in relation to cultural norms and early-life socialization (Almond & Verba, 2015; Inglehart, 1997; Mishler & Rose,

2001; Putnam, 2001), or in relation to political and electoral variables (Listhaug, 1995; Miller & Listhaug, 1990; Newton & Norris, 2000). If used as control variables, spatial factors have mainly been linked to urban-vs.-rural residence (e.g Delhey & Newton, 2005). By taking into account the center–periphery framework developed by Stein Rokkan, the paper finds that citizens living in one of the peripheral regions produced by the Norwegian nation-building process display lower trust in both national *and* local politicians, despite controlling for socioeconomic factors and other relevant theories about political trust. By exploring the spatial dimension regarding trust in politicians, our findings suggest that space could be a political construct and, in this case, that the most important spatial component is the region's distance from the political center, not the urban–rural divide.

The last theme of this thesis is an analysis of the effect of the growth of state employees and its local effects (Paper III). The paper is entitled "The Local Impact of Increased Numbers of State Employees on Start-ups in Norway," and was published in *Norwegian Journal of Geography* (Stein, 2019a). The relocation or creation of state employment in peripheral or declining areas has been a popular policy for governments to moderate the center–periphery cleavage and to promote regional development; a policy particularly prominent in Northern Norway (see section 5.3). The assumption is that, based on a local multiplier effect, new public jobs create additional local jobs as a result of the increased demand for locally produced goods and services (Moretti, 2010). This policy has been particularly popular in Northern Norway (see section 5.3). Despite having been implemented in the UK (Lyons, 2004), Denmark (Kommunaldepartementet, 2017), and Norway (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2003), few studies have been conducted of its local and regional impact (Faggio, 2019; Faggio & Overman, 2014). In Norway, important work has been done on the relocation process (Kiland & Trondal, 2010) and the independence of the relocated agencies (Egeberg & Trondal, 2011), but no studies have been conducted on its regional effect. Following a multilevel panel data analysis of Norwegian municipalities from 2006 to 2014, the paper shows that the percentage of state employees did not have any effect on local development, measured in terms of the

relative number of start-up firms or population growth. While there was a modest positive effect of state employees in the bivariate model, state employees did not have a significant effect on local development when controlling for relevant factors such as municipality size or the presence of universities. The findings indicate that the relocation of state employees may be a rather limited tool for stimulating local and regional growth and, if applied, policymakers should consider how relocation might stimulate place-sensitive development in individual municipalities. Instead of understanding the relocation of public sector workers as a tool for generating regional economic development, it might be more useful to approach it as a political solution to a political problem aiming to bridge the center–periphery cleavage inherent in the political system.

The structure of the thesis is as follows. Chapter 2 starts with a broad review of the theories of both Rokkan and Brox concerning regional development. Rokkan's theoretical relevance to other sub-disciplines of political science is then discussed together with a broader literature review of those sub-disciplines. The next chapter deals with the empirical material in Northern Norway and gives an account for the relevance of studying Norway and Northern Norway. Chapter 4 discusses the methodological tools applied in this thesis and some of the broader methodological advantages of quantitative methods. Chapter 5 gives a brief account of the papers in the thesis. Chapter 6 discusses the empirical material in light of the theoretical, empirical, and methodological framework in Chapters 2, 3, and 4. Finally, I conclude in Chapter 7 and briefly discuss the limitations of this thesis and potential future studies.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Stein Rokkan and the Center–Periphery Dimension of Politics

2.1.1 What Is the Center–Periphery Dimension?

When reflecting on the methodological problems of incorporating time and space in social science analysis, Michael Keating (2018) recently wrote that social science used to treat space merely as where things happened rather than something with explanatory capacity. He argued that recent developments in ontology and epistemology had permitted new approaches, where space is seen as not merely a topological category but as a social and political construct, the meaning of which is determined by its content. This emphasis on time and space echoes the theoretical framework elaborated by Stein Rokkan and shows its relevance for contemporary social and political sciences.

The work of Stein Rokkan (1987c) on center–periphery relations is important to understand the policy development in the majority of western European democracies. Combining the organizational decision system of Hirschman (1970) and Talcott Parsons' paradigm for functional differentiation within states (Parsons, 1963), Rokkan identified four subsystems in analyzing the emergence of the modern state: the military, judicial, economic, and cultural systems. Rokkan's most important contribution to political analysis, however, was the addition of an independent territorial dimension to politics: the center–periphery axis linking the institutional architecture of a nation-state to its territorial structure; that is, its given political and geographical characteristics (Rokkan, 1987c, 1999; Taylor & Johnston, 1979).

The theoretical salience of the center–periphery axis is that the existence of a political center logically presupposes a periphery—and vice versa. The two are interdependent. In macro-historical terms, the center and periphery are both dependent variables. As noted by Bakka (1996), however, since a preliminary definition of a political center is that it is a node in a discrete network of human interaction wherein power resources are accumulated and projected into the network, a reasonable definition of a periphery

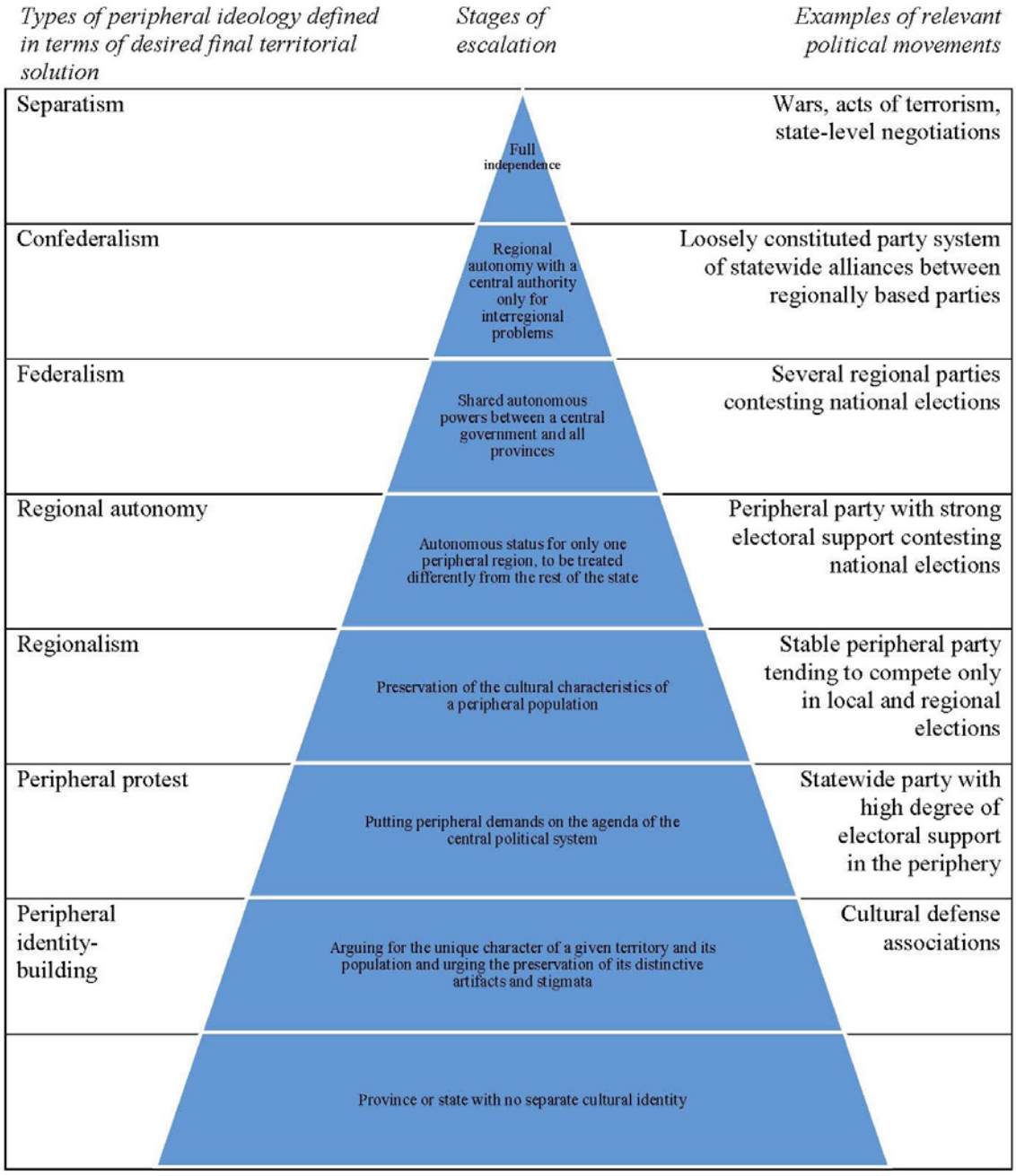
denotes it as a field in which exit and entry are controlled through the exercise of authoritative power by a node; in other words, center and periphery constitute a bounded hierarchical political network. Then, of course, the logical interdependence between the two presupposes a causal relationship in which the existence of the periphery depends on the existence of a center in temporal terms. Analytically, a center–periphery relationship exists only at $Time_1$. At $Time_0$, only competing nodes exist (Bakka, 1996). The center needs the periphery to be a center.

The Rokkanian center–periphery model also acknowledges the existence of different kinds of peripheries. Figure 1 shows Rokkan and Urwin's typology of peripheries. At the top of the pyramid are the peripheries that have gained or are trying to gain full independence. At the bottom are the regions or provinces without any separate cultural identity and with no ambition to claim a distinctiveness vis-à-vis the center. Over time, peripheries can evolve from one category to another, often dependent on two parameters: the resources for regional mobilization within the periphery and responses from the center to mend the cleavage between center and periphery. Through this theoretical framework, the peripheral ideology is not a constant factor, but rather a dynamic factor that possibly varies over time.

The salience of Rokkan's general model for the center–periphery relationship is that it allows for various kinds of peripheral status. That which all of the peripheries share in common, however, is an asymmetrical relationship with the dominant center and that actors within the peripheries can mobilize upon a distinctiveness vis-à-vis the center. Even without the presence of obvious cultural stigmata such as language, this distinctiveness would nevertheless imply some degree of consciousness of separateness, where the impact of history upon identity is that of ensuring the retention of collective memories (Strauss, 2017). At the lowest level of regional mobilization (see Figure 1), actors are primarily arguing for the unique character of a given territory and its population and urging the preservation of its distinctive artifacts and stigmata. When analyzing the development of nationalism, Hobsbawm and Ranger (2012) have

used the term “invented tradition,” where traditions appearing or claiming to be old are often actually quite recent in origin and sometimes invented.

Figure 1: Pyramid of Regional Aims (derived from Rokkan and Urwin 1983)



This method could also be used in the early stages of regionalism, where regional actors are arguing for the peripheral distinctiveness from the center. Even if the distinctiveness is derived from “invented traditions” or long-term cultural differences, once this distinctiveness is accepted by enough actors within the periphery, the center

and periphery enter into a conflict that mobilizes actors. Regardless of the dominant peripheral ideology and its strength, the center and periphery both share some common types of strategies for mending the center–periphery cleavage.

2.1.2 The Role of the Center

Harold Innis (2008) once described center-building as temporal imperialism: You privilege one site over others by investing so much effort in this single location that it becomes progressively more difficult to conceive of an alternative contender. The reasons for the original choice may have been utterly arbitrary, but once some arenas have been established and monuments built in one site, the costs of founding another prove excessive. Centers, then, can be minimally defined as privileged locations within a territory (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, 6). In this perspective, elites in the center try to centralize as much power as possible and to standardize politics, culture, and the economy throughout the state (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). Once peripheral regions are mobilized (as seen in section 2.1), however, the center must take action to mend the center–periphery cleavage.

To generate loyalty from the peripheral territories, the capital has several choices within three functions; cultural, legal, and economic. Including parts of the peripheral culture in the nation-building process, cultural concessions are one option, as seen in the case of Norway with the inclusion of *landsmål* (later called *Nynorsk*) from the South-West periphery in the development of the Norwegian nation (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, 82). Including the periphery in the decision making with political citizenship and democracy is an option within the legal function. The expansion of democracy is not only a process of including more citizens in the decision making, but also of giving decision-making power to peripheral actors; power that is normally exclusive to the actors in the center. The redistribution of goods and resources is the final option within the economic function. The welfare state, for example, is a *regional* stabilizer as well as a *social* stabilizer (Armstrong & Taylor, 2000). The main argument for these policies is often the social dimension, but this also has a significant spatial impact, as poverty and social problems are not evenly distributed across the territory.

Rokkan's perspective also gives us a theoretical framework for the comprehension of the motives and causes of regional economic policy, as he described as an example of a limited alternative that avoids the more thorny political questions (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, 179). In this perspective, economic redistribution is a tool for generating cohesion and loyalty from peripheral territories to the capital and to the state, and a necessary instrument for guaranteeing the continued supremacy of the political center; hence political stability (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, 173). The main interest of policymakers is therefore to generate a *perception* of the state redistributing resources, not the actual effects of the policies. National governments can implement regional policies to gain loyalty from peripheral regions, not necessarily to develop the region. Then, the emphasis is not on the efficiency of the policies, but on their actual existence and acceptance by regional and local governments. When analyzing the regional economic policies implemented in the years after World War II, Rokkan noted that the regional policy has been based on central premises and that its implications can extend far beyond economics (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, 179).

2.1.3 Choices for the Periphery—Exit, Voice, or Loyalty?

Because any collective distinction may serve as the underpinning for political mobilization (Sartori, 1990), differing historiographies may create territorially different political identities, as seen in the Rokkan model of peripheral aims (see Figure 1). Hence, political actors who perceive themselves as representatives of "peripheries" tend to nurture the idea that different identities linked to territories have developed over time. Some geographical identity is thus an asset in the regional political mobilization against the state's centralizing efforts. Whether regional actors choose and succeed in mobilizing on a territorial basis will largely depend on the status of the region vis-à-vis the state in the various phases of the modernization process. Throughout the nation-building process, the periphery is left with three choices that regional actors can mobilize upon; *exit, voice, or loyalty* (Hirschman, 1970).

Exit—the creation of a more or less independent regional state—is one of the aims for some peripheral regions (see Figure 1). However, through the use of protest (*voice*),

peripheral actors could mobilize their distinctiveness without having to demand an exit. Finally, the periphery could opt to nurture a close relationship with the center (*loyalty*). Especially between voice and loyalty, there are dilemmas confronting regional actors. Rokkan and Urwin have described this as follows:

> *We may also distinguish and identify two types of middlemen: government agents and mobilized community leaders or spokesmen. Typical government agents would be local schoolteachers, local mayors (under the Napoleonic regime), or local minister of state-established or controlled church. Where there appears cultural tension between the center and the periphery, or where the center increases pressure upon this local institutional network, these agents may be confronted with a dilemma. They can act primarily as the extended arm of the central authority, or they may choose to view themselves as spokesmen and defenders of the peripheral population, utilizing their institutional links with the central authority to gain access to the political core of the state. Mobilized community leaders by contrast, owe their position not to the institutional network of government, but to the indigenous network supported by the peripheral community. Here there is no division of loyalty; these people have no access to the center. It will therefore be easier for them to oppose pressure of standardization rather than to seek mediation.* (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, 132)

Peripheral political actors receiving regional economic policies are confronted with this same dilemma. They must raise their voice to get attention and acceptance for expansive regional policies. At the same time, if they use their voice too much, they risk being perceived as disloyal by central actors, which could have consequences for their respective individual careers and the prospects of the region. As we will see in the last sub-chapter, this may also have other consequences.

2.1.4 State Dependency

The mere existence of regional policies creates an asymmetric relationship between donor (center) and receiver (periphery). James Q. Wilson (1989) describes the political

relationship between donors and receivers of certain political programs as “client politics,” focusing particularly on agriculture and urban renewal programs. He shows how client-oriented departments in the bureaucracy develop a client-oriented relationship often based on a common objective of increasing subsidies and protection programs, even though the initial purpose of such programs was not subsidies and protection. Actors in the client position manage the free-riding problem by organizing collective action around a common strategy (Olson, 2009). While the taxes financing these programs are relatively small per capita, these programs matter greatly to the benefiting group and they are therefore highly motivated (Wilson, 1989, 93). This also explains why, at least from a public choice perspective, such programs could be based not on economic calculations but more on political estimations concerning, in this case, the center–periphery relationship (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983).

When analyzing the development in Northern Norway in the 1970s and 1980s, Erik Oddvar Eriksen (1996) used the Wilsonian concept of clientelism to develop the notion of *state dependency*. He saw the region in a client-like position in relation to the central government and therefore adopted a clientelist perspective. This perspective confines the regional actors’ scope for alternative political actions; instead, their only focus is on existing programs and subsidies as the only possible way forward (Eriksen, 1996, 154). The region develops a *state dependency* in which new, alternative solutions are unexplored and old, existing systems and programs remain unchallenged. Public policies, hence, become a double-edged sword; often created to compensate for social injustices or market failures, at their best they could be liberating and stimulate positive development. At their worst, they could also lead to clientelism, stigmatization, and dependency. This is *the faces of Janus in politics* (Eriksen, 1996, 172).

Combining Rokkan with Wilson and Eriksen, it becomes possible to argue for a *client paradox* in regional policies. Due to the asymmetric center–periphery relationship, regional policies could develop into clientelism, both parties relatively comfortable with the status quo. The donor gives some money to the client but expects loyalty. The

client develops a state dependency, and their only *modus operandi* is to receive benefits from the donor. As long as the development is relatively stable and merely moving slowly in a negative direction without too many dramatic changes, both actors seem content. Hence, this client paradox possibly explains why actors in some peripheral regions choose to protect the status quo instead of demanding political changes or mobilizing forces within the region.

2.2 Ottar Brox and the Alternative Way of Regional Policy

2.2.1 Small Jurisdictions and Anti-Industrialization

Writing his most important work, *What happens in Northern Norway?*, at the same time as Rokkan was emerging, Ottar Brox (1966) has had much more influence on both policymaking and public perception than Rokkan. Brox himself would argue that his analyses have had relatively little influence, especially in terms of fishery policies (Brox, 1984, 2007). There are important differences between policy development in Northern Norway and Northern Sweden, however, and as we will see, the policies implemented in Norway are *closer* to the policies envisaged by Brox than those implemented in Sweden (Stein, 2019b). Ottar Brox's position in Northern Norway is reflected in his appointment as honorary professor at UiT—The Arctic University of Norway in 2003[1] and his recent description as a "living legend" by the regional theatre Hålogaland Teater.[2] When the Norwegian newspaper *Dagbladet* selected the 25 most important Norwegian nonfiction books published since World War II, Rokkan was not on the list, but *What Happens in Northern Norway?* by Brox was selected as number 4 (Fløgstad, 2008).

In his book, Brox emphasizes the relative wealth of the agriculturist/fishermen-life in the rural parts of Northern Norway, the so-called *fisher-farmer* making the choice of a life in small peripheral communities a rational one. Due to the long Norwegian coastline, the fisher-farmer could settle in small, rural villages and "live off the land" by harvesting from nature. He could lead a relatively self-sufficient life outside the

[1] https://uit.no/50/portretter/aresdoktorer
[2] https://halogalandteater.no/nyheter/2019-05/ottar-brox-moter-skjalg-fjellheim

monetary economy, requiring only basic supplies from the monetary economy financed by the sale of his surplus fish. According to Brox, the fisher-farmer's relative wealth made it rational for him not to move to industrial cities and, given a choice, he would choose to live in the rural settlement. This combination was unique for the coastal areas of Northern Norway and was the basis for the idea of a special way for Northern Norway, where urbanization and industrialization were not seen as a necessity, but rather something that the people were free to reject. Implicit in the Broxian theories, we find that, given a choice, people in Northern Norway would choose the rural life and reject urbanization and industrialization.

Another important aspect of the Broxian theories is the notion of small, independent local jurisdictions free from interference from the greater society. The political economy literature also postulates that citizens are more satisfied with smaller jurisdictions because they are more efficient, homogeneous, and democratic (Mouritzen, 1989; Oates, 1999; Tiebout, 1956; Wolman, 1990). Local governments offer some benefits that citizens appreciate: They facilitate local adaptions and variations, facilitate citizen influence and participation, and facilitate coordination efficiency. Decentralized governments are said to be flexible and largely able to adapt to changing circumstances (Clark, 1984; Goldsmith & Page, 1987; Osborne & Gaebler, 1992; Sharpe, 1988).

These theoretical assumptions about the importance of small municipalities where the needs and desires of the rural population are emphasized are echoed in Brox's work on Northern Norway. He claims that it is vital to enable local communities to generate population growth. To achieve this goal, the problems must be solved within homogenous local communities, and not like in the development plan for Northern Norway that promoted regional structures that mixed expansion areas with sparsely populated areas (Brox, 1966). According to Brox, compared to Sweden and Scotland, the success of Northern Norway was due to the combination a large degree of self-determination within smaller local communities and a strong influence from actors in the primary industries on the policymaking.

Revising his ideas about Northern Norway in the 1980s, Brox concludes that Northern Norway had chosen neither the technocratic nor the populist pathway he had envisaged (Brox, 1984; Nielsen, 1987). Even though his alternative plan had not been implemented by the authorities, he would still argue that because of the populistic influence on policy development (see section 3.3 for further details), Northern Norway should, after a relative decline between 1950 and 1970, be able to achieve a consolidated population settlement (Brox, 1984, 12).

In contrast to a concentration process whereby more people are concentrated cumulatively in the urban areas, Brox believed that Northern Norway in the 1970s was approaching a consolidation process wherein the settlement structures would be frozen. According to Brox, there were five main reasons for why this consolidation thesis would succeed in Northern Norway in the 1980s and 1990s. These are also linked to the reasons developed in the framework from the 1960s (Brox, 1966). First, fewer people in the peripheral villages would mean easier access to land, natural resources, and falling housing prices (Brox, 1984, 133). Second, higher accommodation prices in the urban areas would slow down urbanization and make it rational to choose life in a peripheral village (Brox, 1984, 134). Third, public services and the expansion of the welfare state would create a steady income that could be combined with the small-scale fisher-farmer life, especially for women (Brox, 1984, 144). Fourth, the expansion of infrastructure (especially new roads) would create regional integration, rendering it possible to commute from villages to the urban center (Brox, 1984, 144). Fifth, the expansion of the new public regional policies in the 1970s through municipalities would stimulate peripheral development (Brox, 1984, 194).

Finally, revisiting Northern Norway in the 2000s, Brox (2007) acknowledged that the consolidation hypothesis had not succeeded. This was mainly explained by two factors. First, the closing of public services, such as the post and telegraph offices. Second, the changes in the fishery policy (Brox, 2007). However, he still maintained

that Norway had been more successful in keeping a dispersed population than Sweden due to the peripheral mobilization and different policy choices in the 1970s (Brox, 1984, 72).

2.2.2 Differences between Rokkan and Brox

Brox used a rational-actor perspective in his analyses. It was profitable for the individual to choose life in the peripheral villages over industrial jobs in the city (Brox, 1984, 99). Willy Gunneriussen and others have criticized this perspective for excessively emphasizing the rationality and strategic approach of the individual actor (Gunneriussen, 1984). Conversely, Rokkan used a structural-functionalist approach, where region-specific structures are used retrospectively to explain variations in Europe. For Berntzen and Selle (1992), this could lead to the danger of a circular argument: The unit of analysis is adapted to the characteristics of the phases of development. The emphasis on Rokkan's structural-functional models also risks undervaluing the social actors (Berntzen & Selle, 1990). Even though Rokkan attributes decisive weight to the goal-oriented actions of social groups, their intentions and meanings are introduced *post festum*, and Rokkan never undertakes a real analysis of their ideologies, resources, and strategic choices (Berntzen & Selle, 1990). This implies that any researcher employing the Rokkan model will have to identify these actors and their strategies in any given case (Buck, 2006, 36). For example, Rokkan postulates the existence of the "nation-builders" category without telling us who they are, where they come from, and—when the nation-building process is "completed"—what happens to them afterward (Berntzen & Selle, 1992). This has since been successfully carried out in Norway by Rune Slagstad (1998).

Rokkan and Brox also differed in their methodological approach. Inspired by the empirical sociology developed by Paul Lazarsfeld for analyzing US presidential elections (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, & Gaudet, 1944), Rokkan, together with Valen, started the first empirical voter analyses in Norway (Aardal, 2017; Rokkan, 1958). Later, based on large bodies of historical data, he elaborated his theoretical models. Stepping on the toes of historians provoked criticism, the historians critical of the tyranny of the models (Seip, 1975). However, this methodological approach—where

theories and models are elaborated, constructed, and adjusted based on quantitative data—was a new way of using big data to understand the past and present (Mjøset, 1987). This method was very different from Ottar Brox's approach, who developed theory, hypotheses, and analyses based more on personal observations, analyses, and theoretical knowledge. If empirical data has been used, it has more so supported his theories, like the comparison between Northern Norway and Scotland (Brox, 1966). His critics would say that this hypothesis of consolidation was only "based on frail observations from a couple of villages in Troms" (Hansen, 1983), but Brox would counter this argument by saying that he only uses the observations to create hypotheses and develop theories about the future population development.

Even though both Rokkan and Brox acknowledge the asymmetrical relationship between Northern Norway and the south, they do depart in their theories about solution and development within this framework. Brox emphasizes the importance of small jurisdictions and the importance of the primary industries. For him, Northern Norway was given a *Sonderweg* due to the municipal structure, the fisher-farmer culture, and the opportunity to remain outside the grinding mill of modern capitalism symbolized by the central authorities in Brussels. Opposition to Norwegian membership in the European Union became a hallmark for Broxian supporters (Brox, 1989, 2004).

Rokkan, on the other hand, held a much more cynical view. As seen in section 2.1, Rokkan developed a broad theoretical framework in which the center–periphery cleavage is built-in in every nation-state. Northern Norway is by no means a unique case and, despite having some distinct cultural traits (like all territories have), the experiences and development are similar to most other peripheral regions in the democracies of western Europe. Regional economic policies, small jurisdictions, and the old primary industries are not the solutions for the peripheries. Instead, Rokkan argued that the peripheries need to obtain the ability to control the appropriate means and instruments at a regional level, not a small local level as emphasized by Brox. Such a transfer of powers implies that the peripheries should receive the financial

autonomy that centers have consistently refused to grant (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983, 177). Without a political will of regionalism and functional regional authorities gaining sufficient political power, the development toward more centralization would continue.

As seen above, Rokkan and Brox departed with two different perspectives for understanding social development. Brox departed from the individual actor perspective, while Rokkan departed from a historical and institutional perspective and how these factors shape the individual actions. They were also based on two different methodological approaches. While Rokkan applied comparative and quantitative methods, Brox developed hypotheses and theory based on a deep knowledge of small empirical samples. Based on these differences, Brox and Rokkan developed theoretical frameworks and hypotheses that could be relevant for understanding development in a peripheral region like Northern Norway. In the next chapter, we will see how they could be relevant when applied to areas studied in this thesis.

2.3 Literature Review and the Relevance of the Center–Periphery Framework

2.3.1 Political Trust

The Rokkan model of center–periphery cleavage makes it possible to argue and explore if the center–periphery cleavage also could explain some differences in people's trust in politicians. Political trust is considered an essential component of a well-functioning society. Political trust on the local and national levels concerns public sentiment about the government and its political representatives. There is, however, a growing perception that political trust is deteriorating in contemporary democracies (Hardin, 2013; Klingemann, 1999; Lipset & Schneider, 1983; Norris, 1999; Nye, Zelikow, & King, 1997; Pharr & Putnam, 2000; Torcal, 2014) , albeit less so in the Nordic countries (Dalton, 2005).

Political trust is unevenly dispersed, also—at least to some degree—within countries. It is often explained in relation to government performance and citizens' normative expectations (Hetherington, 1998; Rothstein, 2011), in relation to cultural norms and

early-life socialization (Almond & Verba, 2015; Inglehart, 1997; Mishler & Rose, 2001; Putnam, 2001), or in relation to political and electoral variables (Listhaug, 1995; Miller & Listhaug, 1990; Newton & Norris, 2000). The center–periphery dimension, however, has been rather absent from the explanatory framework and has mostly occurred as a control variable for the urban–rural divide in empirical studies (e.g. Delhey & Newton, 2005; M. Hooghe, Marien, & de Vroome, 2012).

The asymmetrical power relationship between center and periphery could cause people in the periphery to feel powerless and that they have less influence on the political power located in the center. As seen above, actors in the periphery could also mobilize upon this sense of powerlessness and the distinctiveness in the periphery vis-à-vis the center. In this perspective, the center–periphery theory could *add* an explanatory variable to Rokkan for differences in political trust; a viewpoint that would be supported by the Broxian theory of the importance of local identities and skepticism toward the central authorities, although for him the urban–rural divide might be just as important as the center–periphery dimension.

Another aspect of political trust is the difference between trust in national and local politicians. Here, Rokkan and Brox would split. With Brox' emphasis on small jurisdictions and the salience of close ties between citizens in the periphery with their local authorities, his theories would predict higher trust in the local politicians, especially in a periphery like Northern Norway. The argument about differences in trust between local and national politicians is not thoroughly argued in Rokkan's theories about the nation-building process and the center–periphery conflict. Nevertheless, the Rokkanian assumption about an asymmetrical power structure between center and periphery could lead citizens to distrust local politicians perceived as powerless and as representatives of the central authorities.

In sum, the center–periphery theoretical framework would add some possible explanations for a better understanding of political trust. The empirical results will be further explored in Paper II in section 5.2.

2.3.2 Regional Development

Local and regional development is an increasingly global issue (Pike, Rodríguez-Pose, & Tomaney, 2007), although it has been on the political agenda since the 1950s, when a greater institutional effort emerged with deliberate attempts to coordinate and structure state intervention more organically, in accordance with the declared objective of efficiency (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). Governments very easily switched from the problem of backward rural areas to those of the older, outdated industrial concentrations, whose current or projected obsolescence due to emerging technologies and new locational requirements was deemed to have more significant consequences for the national economy (Fleming, 1967). The new key words in the dominant theory of poles and axes of development were priority zones and sectors (Perroux, 1950; Petrella, 1978). Until the 1980s, regional economic policies were heavily influenced by top-down exogenous growth theories (Begg, Moore, & Rhodes, 1986) focusing on creating poles in less successful regions to create multiplier effects mainly through investment in infrastructure.

Together with the challenges generated by globalization, the failure of traditional top-down policies has led to a serious rethinking of local and regional development by practitioners and academics (Pike et al., 2007). Since the 1990s, there has been a shift toward bottom-up development, so-called endogenous growth theories (Aghion, Howitt, Howitt, Brant-Collett, & García-Peñalosa, 1998; Martin & Sunley, 1998). Regional economic policies have changed from infrastructure, aid, subsidies, or tax breaks toward research and technology, leveraging private investment and high-tech clusters. The mixed results of the regional policies in the EU (see review in Mohl & Hagen, 2010) has led to changes in the perception of the regional policies and literature. In the 2010s, new ideas like smart specialization (Foray, David, & Hall, 2009; McCann & Ortega-Argilés, 2011), triple helix (Etzkowitz, 2008; Leydesdorff, 2012a), and quadruple helix (Leydesdorff, 2012b) became the new regional policy trends. These policies claim to be more place-sensitive and strongly based on theory and evidence. They aim at tapping local potential based on the implementation of place-sensitive policies (Iammarino, Rodriguez-Pose, & Storper, 2018; Rodríguez-

Pose & Ketterer, 2019). They also stress the importance of collaboration between local and regional business, local and regional public authorities, and important regional institutions, like universities. These trends are connected to the renewed emphasis on the salient role of institutions for development, and Rodríguez-Pose (2013) has shown that institutions play a vital role at the regional level as well as mattering for national development (Acemoglu, Johnson, & Robinson, 2005; Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013; Rothstein & Teorell, 2008).

As seen above, over the last 70 years, different policies based on different theoretical ideas have been implemented to promote regional development. This provides opportunity to explore which policies have been successful and which have been less so. But how do we measure the success of regional policies? The center–periphery framework might help us understand the motives and causes behind the regional economic policy. In this framework, economic redistribution is conceived as a tool for mending this tension between center and periphery. The goal for the center is not necessarily to use economic redistribution to develop the periphery but to mend the tension between the actors. Consequently, the goal is not necessarily efficient policies but to create the *perception* that something is being done.

For local and regional policymakers, there is a trade-off between voice and loyalty (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983). As seen in section 2.1.3, local and regional actors could end up like middlemen between authorities in the center and demands from the peripheral population. So if the voters seem relatively happy with the current policies (even if they are relatively inefficient), there are no incentives for local actors to voice their concerns too much with their national actors. On the contrary, the implementation of regional policies is proof of a peripheral actor's voice being heard and being awarded for their loyalty. The background peril is becoming too dependent on regional subsidies and, as seen in section 2.1.4, is developing a clientelistic relationship.

2.3.3 What Kind of Regional Policies Work?

As seen in the previous sub-chapter, the Rokkanian perspective could add some knowledge about the motivations and other potential goals of regional policies.

Nevertheless, analyzing what kind of regional policies works for their stated goal is of interest for scholars and policymakers. This thesis will try to add knowledge to the general literature about three specific policies.

First, tax incentives for businesses to promote growth in lagging regions have been politically popular for decades. Some academic studies (Billings, 2009; O'Keefe, 2004) find that such incentives do have a positive effect. A recent report for the Norwegian government (Rybalka et al., 2018) finds a positive effect in some of their econometric models on employment, using data from municipalities in Southern Norway. However, they do indicate that they are unable to test the effect of the scheme in the region where the scope is greatest (i.e. in Finnmark and Northern Troms) due to a lack of variation in the scheme in this area during the evaluation period (Rybalka et al., 2018, x). Other studies (Frick, Rodriguez-Pose, & Wong, 2019; Neumark & Kolko, 2010) show that tax-incentivized enterprise zones are not as effective and do not increase employment. Using panel data for all 50 U.S. states from 1977 to 2005, Prillaman and Meier (2014) show that state tax cuts for businesses have little to no positive impact on gross state production, job creation, personal income, poverty rates, and business establishments. A thorough literature review by Peters and Fisher (2004) finds that the standard justifications given for incentive policy by state and local officials, politicians, and many academics are, at best, poorly supported by the evidence. Paper I in the thesis aims to add knowledge to this literature.

Second, the thesis also reports on the effect of establishing regional universities, as analyzed in Papers I and III. The political motivation behind the creation of some of the newer universities is clearly within a center–periphery framework (Fulsås, 1993), and there are case studies about the regional effects of the universities in Tromsø (Arbo, 2011; Fulsås, 1993) and Umeå (Olsson & Wiberg, 2003). The general literature about the role of universities in regional development is not as clear-cut. Benneworth and Nieth (2018) argued that policymakers accepted relatively straightforward narratives of universities working with regional partners, often encoded within happy family stories; Pinheiro, Benneworth, and Jones (2012) in particular highlighted the

factors and mechanisms that could explain why universities may fail to stimulate regional development. First, regional development may not be particularly lucrative for them, and they might therefore pursue other activities and strategies that bring more guaranteed and regular funding. Second, they may believe that they lack the capacity to engage in entrepreneurial discovery processes. Finally, there may simply be a mismatch between the profile of universities and that of the region, making it difficult to identify areas in which university knowledge can be meaningfully applied to drive regional development benefits (Benneworth & Nieth, 2018).

On the other hand, university activities, particularly knowledge-based activities, such as teaching and basic research, have been found to have substantial positive effects on a variety of measures of regional economic progress (Drucker & Goldstein, 2007). Other studies indicated that the presence of universities *per se* does not influence employment growth but that university regions with high concentrations of human capital and, in particular, with employees characterized by the synthetic knowledge base, show higher growth rates (Eriksson & Forslund, 2014). Benneworth and Nieth (2018) summed up the main theoretical arguments on the role of universities in regional development from an institutional perspective. First, universities can be actively involved in defining the parameters of regional strategies because of their detailed knowledge of gaps and opportunities. Second, they can be important contributors to regional capacities regarding institutional and social attributes. A third element is that universities also contribute to smart specialization policies (Foray et al., 2009; McCann & Ortega-Argilés, 2011) through the creation of external connections outside of the immediate innovation system.

Third, the thesis also aims to add some knowledge about the policies of the relocation of state employees as a tool for regional development; another type of regional policy that could be understood in Rokkan's center–periphery framework. The assumption is that based on a local multiplier effect, new public jobs will create additional local jobs as a result of the increased demand for locally produced goods and services (Moretti, 2010). There have been few academic studies of these policies, however, and the only

major work on the local effects—especially on the labor market—is that of Faggio (2019), which examined the effects of the Lyons Review in the UK. She found a small, positive local effect of relocating state jobs. When using English data at the local authority level for 2003–2007, however, Faggio and Overman (2014) found that public sector employment had no identifiable effect on total private sector employment.

Scholarly work on the relocation of state agencies in Norway is relatively scarce. The majority is reviewed in an anthology edited by Trondal (2011). Some important work on the various political processes involved in moving out of state agencies has been conducted (Kiland & Trondal, 2010; Saba, 2011; Sætren, 2011). Egeberg and Trondal (2011) showed that agency autonomy, agency influence, and inter-institutional coordination seem to be relatively unaffected by agency site. To my knowledge, however, no previous study has investigated the local impact of public sector relocation policies in Norway, although a report done by consultants for the government has made a number of generalized estimates about some smaller positive local effects of the relocation in 2003 (Fornyingsdepartementet, 2009). The thesis in hand adds knowledge to the general literature about the relocation of state employees and, in particular, about the Norwegian case.

3 Empirical Approach—Why Northern Norway?

3.1 Why Study Norway and Northern Norway?

3.1.1 Partial Generalization Based on a "Normal" Case

When writing about *Division and Cohesion in Democracy* in 1966, Harry Eckstein, made an unusual choice for an American political scientist by choosing to use the Norwegian political system as a case study. He admitted that his decision was influenced by the work of Norwegian scholars like Rokkan and Valen (1964), Valen (1956), and Torgersen (1964), but his main reason to perform a theoretical case study on Norway was that he did not regard Norway's political system to be unique in any substantial sense.

> *No doubt, Norwegian politics and social life do have distinctive characteristics, as do all concrete phenomena, be they persons, relationships, objects or events: But the fact that this is a "theoretical case study" necessarily implies a strong assumption on my part that Norway is not unique, in one or both of the two senses: first, that what is the case in Norway may also be substantially the case elsewhere, however exotic some aspects of Norwegian life may seem; second, that there are general principles which we can account for any distinctive characteristics of Norway and for the undoubtedly distinctive general configuration of the whole society. (Eckstein, 2015, 3)*

Eckstein's observation is linked to one of the key issues in choosing a case for case studies. While there is obviously something to be learned from outlier and problematic cases, at the same time there are important problems associated with deviant or extreme cases (George & Bennett, 2005). If the cases are too extreme, it becomes difficult to extract something that could be generalized for broader theoretical and empirical use (e.g. see the debate about ethical and methodological problems of studying the Nazi regime in Kershaw, 2015). Eckstein (2015) argued that political science should be concerned about discovering broader generalizations about political systems, broad strategies for making sense of them, and that political scientists are overly concerned with "problem cases;" that is, cases posing conspicuous policy

problems—and rightly so. But why not a similar concern with what one might call "solution cases?"

An assumption that serves as the point of departure for this thesis is that Norway in general and Northern Norway in particular represent a normal, well-functioning political system with liberal democracy, a market economy, and a well-functioning welfare state. While Northern Norway does have some distinct characteristics, most are shared in common with the characteristics found elsewhere in Norway and most OECD countries. Based on Rokkan's theoretical assumptions, some of the distinctive characteristics are not specific regional characteristics of Northern Norway, but rather characteristics that can be explained more generally in a center–periphery framework. Based on these assumptions, I therefore do believe that findings using Norway or Northern Norway as a case could be generalized and used to add knowledge to the general literature in political science (see section 2.3 and the broader methodological approach in Chapter 4).

3.1.2 Empirical Interest

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis has two dimensions: It aims to add knowledge to the general political science literature as well as producing empirical knowledge about what happened in Northern Norway. For those living in the region or scholars studying other phenomena in the region, these empirical aspects of the development could be interesting and important for their work and lives. Producing new knowledge about the effects of regional policies and political trust in Northern Norway has value for individuals, policymakers, and scholars from other sciences studying or operating in the region.

Even though I do think that Northern Norway and Norway are "normal cases," both Norwegian society and the region of Northern Norway have some distinctive characteristics and cultural traits. As seen in the theoretical framework, both Rokkan and Brox acknowledge that Northern Norway has distinct characteristics. For Rokkan, this distinctiveness is in large part explained by a broader and more general theory about the center–periphery relationship. Brox (1966), on the other hand, explained the

distinctiveness of Northern Norway in terms of the unique geographical, economic, and demographic structure of Northern Norway. As mentioned, the latter theoretical explanation has had a much stronger influence on policy development, academic studies, and public perception.

3.2 Northern Norway—A Peripheral Region within a Peripheral Nation-state

In the paper "Geography, Religion and Social Class: Crosscutting Cleavages in Norwegian Politics" (Rokkan, 1967), Stein Rokkan presents a thorough analysis of the development of the Norwegian political system before 1960. He argued that the main theme of Norwegian politics had been the opposition to central authorities; initially to gain national independence from Denmark and subsequently Sweden in the 19th century. The opposition to central authorities in Oslo (Christiania/Kristiania) developed gradually in reaction to the nation-building process.

According to Rokkan, the Norwegian state- and nation-building processes yielded two distinct peripheries functionally different from each other: Northern Norway and South-West Norway. While Northern Norway was seen as an economically backward periphery marked by class polarization, South-West Norway was a cultural periphery marked by alternative standards, such as language (Nynorsk), lay Christianity, and temperance. The main point is that the different forms of peripherality may lay the foundations for political mobilization against the centralizing forces of the center or lead to alienation and distrust in what is perceived as institutions of the center. According to Rokkan, democratic mobilization should lead to integration into the system.

Regarding political mobilization, the two peripheries have indeed differed since the introduction of universal (female) suffrage in 1913. Where the South-West periphery successfully managed to establish a political party in 1933, The Christian People's Party (Krf), the periphery in the north has seen only sporadic and unsuccessful

attempts at party-building.[3] Hence, as shown elsewhere, it comes as no surprise that Northern Norway exhibits significantly lower voter turnout than the rest of Norway from 1945 onwards, although the gap has steadily waned over the years (Buck, 2013).

Throughout the early 20th century, the struggles of the economically backward periphery blended with class struggle. The fight for Northern Norway became synonymous with the struggles of the emerging Labor Party, and the socialist parties have been in the majority in Northern Norway since the elections in 1927 (Rokkan, 1987c). Having the peripheral claims absorbed by a large national party has some obvious advantages, especially since Labor became the all-powerful political party in the 1930s (Seip, 1963), although this also meant that peripheral cultural identity and political independence were less accentuated than economic issues and class struggle. Using Rokkan's Pyramid of Regional Aims (see Figure 1 in section 2.1), Northern Norway has to be typified at the lower end of the pyramid as *peripheral identity-building*. Consequently, *Exit* in the sense of creating a more or less independent regional state that has been used in many countries with more or less success has never been a real option in Northern Norway.

Instead, the regional culture distinctiveness became more accentuated in the years after World War II. Regional actors started arguing for the unique character of a given territory and its population (Brox, 1966, 1984) and urged the preservation of its distinctive artifacts, stigmata, and culture (e.g. Drivenes, Hauan, & Wold, 1994; Eilertsen, 2005). This consciousness of peripheral identity and culture has enabled actors to gain some regional concessions, either by use of protest (*voice*) or making deals with the central government (*loyalty*). The use of voice has not mainly been through the channels of a regional party in parliament but through the channel of action-based protest against elites (Inglehart, 1997) or as a regional fraction within the bigger national parties, mainly the Labor Party. In many ways, Northern Norway

[3] Aune-listen (1989) and Coastal Party (1997 and 2001) have had one MP representing regional parties.

became a classic example of what Rokkan and Urwin would describe as a peripheral region at the lower end of the pyramid (see Figure 1).

3.3 A Brief Overview of Regional Policies in Northern Norway

Throughout the post-war era, numerous regional policies were implemented to stimulate the regional development in Northern Norway (Elenius et al., 2015; Røvik et al., 2011); a peripheral region considered by central authorities as backward-lying and less developed (Grønaas, Halvorsen, & Torgersen, 1948). The industrial focus in the 1950s and 1960s was later challenged by the theories of Brox (1966), which had a major impact on the political development in Norway in terms of ecological awareness and as a counter-weight to industrialization and globalization (Brandal, Bratberg, & Thorsen, 2013), primarily associated with the powerful Labor Party, pictured as a one-party state (Seip, 1963; Slagstad, 1998). They also contributed as a theoretical framework for the radical left in the 1970s and the mobilization of the winning coalition against Norwegian EEC membership in 1972 and the Labor Party's policies for rural development (Hersoug & Leonardsen, 1979).

The pro-EEC central authorities responded by strengthening regional policies, especially toward Northern Norway. In 1977, the new Labor government established what was to become the official Norwegian policy for regional policy; "the objective is to maintain the fundamental features of the population distribution" (Teigen, 2011). This objective has very important implications for evaluating the actual effects of regional policies. For more than 40 years, the Norwegian authorities have worked to maintain the percentage of the population living in peripheral regions, especially in Northern Norway, and the goal has gained hegemonic status in Norwegian regional policy (Cruickshank, 2006).

A variety of more exogenous regional policies were implemented, the most important being the regionally differentiated payroll tax on employees (Hervik & Rye, 2003; Rybalka et al., 2018). Implemented in 1975 and later expanded, the total national cost

for the RDP was estimated at NOK 13.3 billion in 2016,[4] and approximately NOK 8 billion in Northern Norway. Regional governments and Innovation Norway have also received money to stimulate regional and business development in Norway. In 2016, one-third of all funds for regional development went to counties in Northern Norway despite only 9 percent of the national population living in the region (Norway, 2016).

An extra contribution was created in 1986 for the Northern Norwegian municipalities: the *Nord-Norge tilskot* (Eriksen, 1996, 148). The complicated revenue system for Norwegian municipalities involves many factors, but the special treatment of Northern Norway is obvious, and the contribution per capita is much higher than for peripheral municipalities in the south. In 2017, this extra contribution amounted to around NOK 1.3 billion (Norway, 2017). Table 1 displays the net contribution per capita in areas in Northern Norway, compared internally and externally to the peripheral areas in the south.

Table 1: Contribution from the Norwegian government to municipalities and for regional development

Regions	Extra contribution 2017-budget (NOK per capita)	Regional funds 2016-budget (NOK per capita)
Nordland and Namdalen	1710	730
Troms (outside special zone)	3279	682
Special zone Troms	3864	682
Finnmark	8008	1087
Peripheral areas south	218-1087[5]	433[6]

[4] http://www.statsbudsjettet.no/upload/Statsbudsjett_2017/dokumenter/pdf/skatt.pdf

[5] Contribution per capita varies depending on the peripheral index for each municipality. There is also a fixed contribution up to NOK 1.2 million per municipality, depending on peripheral status.

[6] Average for the counties Hedmark and Oppland.

A variety of other individual-level subsidies, such as lower energy taxes, have also been introduced. Through the creation of the special zone for municipalities in Finnmark and Northern Troms in 1990 (population of around 80,000), people living there pay lower income tax rates, receive extra childcare support (until 2014), and they receive a discount on their student loans. According to the national budget for 2017, the individual-level incentives for living in the special zone amount to approximately NOK 1 billion. In addition to these major policies, there are also other special arrangements for Northern Norway in smaller policy areas, such as culture, sports, and higher education.

In 2017, the total sum of regional policies mainly aimed at promoting living in Northern Norway amounted to at least NOK 12 billion (annually). These policies were all implemented in the period 1970–1990. This review has shown that the amount of resources spent on promoting regional development in Northern Norway is not insignificant and that there are valid grounds to expect these policies to have political and demographic effects.

4 Methodological Approach

4.1 Why Quantitative Methods?

How have scholars studied regions, regional culture, and regional development? According to Keating, Loughlin, and Deschouwer (2003), there have traditionally been two methodological approaches. First, studies of individual regions and the construction of a narrative about the region and its success. Most of the stories are about successful regions, and they are remarkably similar. Essentially, the story in this region is that we have a common history and identity marked by a commitment to social co-operation. Decision-making circles are small, everyone knows each other, and there is extensive face-to-face contact. The story is seductive but, having heard it repeatedly, one becomes a little suspicious (Keating et al., 2003, 27). Could this not be a myth that people are creating about themselves, complete with invented traditions (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012) and a selectively interpreted past? A thorough review of many of the success stories reveals that the positive impact in many of the cases is rather marginal (e.g. Geddes, 2000).

The other approach to analyzing culture and development is based on survey data (e.g. Cooke, Clifton, & Oleaga, 2005; Sternberg, 2000). Here, culture is conceptualized as a set of attitudes and norms that can be measured by standardized questionnaires and systematically compared. Surveys are an important tool for social sciences and could be useful for gaining more knowledge about society. When studying a phenomenon like political trust, surveys are often the best available tool, which is also why the paper about the spatial dimension of trust in politicians in this thesis is explored using a survey (Paper II). That said, even when there is a consensus about the use of surveys, as in the case of political trust, there are often methodological debates about how to use surveys to measure the object of interest (see discussion about political trust in Turper & Aarts, 2017).

However, even though there is valuable information, surveys have some basic problems such as whether or not people actually mean what they say. As in most

social sciences based on interviews and survey data, the observations rest on the respondents' *perceptions* (Egeberg & Trondal, 2011). Literature reviews (e.g. Bertrand & Mullainathan, 2001; Tanur, 1992) imply a great deal of skepticism in relation to subjective questions. In an econometric framework, these findings cast serious doubts on attempts to use subjective data as dependent variables, because the measurement error appears to correlate with a large set of characteristics and behaviors. Second, problems can also occur because of their level of generality and lack of control over the effect of variables and interactions (Morgan & Sonquist, 1963).

As seen, studying regions individually without comparison has some major disadvantages. One solution to these challenges is to use public data in a quantitative and comparative perspective. National and international bureaus of statistics collect enormous amounts of data about what has actually happened in societies. By using a stringent approach and standard statistical tools, it is possible to use the hypothetico-deductive model or method to generalize from observations, falsify theories, and to generate new "general laws" or theories. Caused by what Rokkan (2009) has described as the "whole-nation bias," relatively few comparative studies have been done regionally. Historically, national bureaus of statistics have collected data mostly about national states. Limitations in tools of analysis also explain the scarcity of regional-level analyses. This is no longer an issue, as there is a wealth of regional data and powerful tools for data analyses are readily available.

In the case of Northern Norway, there are relatively few quantitative studies (an exception is Buck, 2013), and the scarcity of quantitative social and political studies regarding Northern Norway is striking. Hence, from an empirical point of view, this thesis adds new knowledge about what has actually happened in Northern Norway in recent decades and what is happening today.

In the next sub-chapters, I will account for some of the aspects of the methodological approach of this thesis, describing how and why these approaches are beneficial for a better understanding and analysis of the research questions in this thesis.

4.2 Comparative Social Research

The main question raised in this thesis is about what happened in Northern Norway. But to understand what happened in Northern Norway, it is necessary to compare the region with something else. All too often, social and historical studies in Norway have been reduced to single-case studies (Kjeldstadli, 1988). Carried out thoroughly (see discussion in George & Bennett, 2005), single-case studies can be highly useful instruments (Lijphart, 1971). Social development does not happen in a void, however, and the main advantage of a comparative approach is that it allows for understanding a social phenomenon *relative* to something else and controlling for explanatory variables.

The comparative design allows for a better understanding of both dependent and independent variables of interest for a research project. On its very basic the two methods of John Stuart Mill (1893) the "method of agreement" and the "method of difference" are the basic forms of comparative research. In the method of the agreement, the logic is that if A B C D occur together with w x y z, and A E F G occur together with w t u v, then A is the cause, or the effect, of w. In "the method of difference," if A B C D occur together with w x y z and B C D occur together with x y z, then A is the cause, or the effect, or a part of the cause of w.

Drawing extensively on Mill, Teune and Przeworski (1970) developed their "most similar system design" (MSSD). The starting point of their method is the analysis of behavior "at a level lower than that of systems. Most often this will be the level of individual actors." Common systematic characteristics are conceived as "controlled for," whereas intersystemic differences are viewed as explanatory variables. Hence, will any set of variables that differentiates these systems in a manner corresponding to the observed differences in behavior (Teune and Przeworski, 1970, 34). The logical consequence of this approach is also that if the dependent variable does not vary despite there being a difference in the independent variable, the explanatory power of the independent variable will be zero. The hypothesis of the effect of the independent variable must be rejected, at least when the common systematic similarities of the

studied social systems are in play. Anckar (2008) argues that MMSD is particularly useful in cases where we are interested in systemic-level variables. Other labels that have been attached to the comparative method in the sense of the comparable-cases approach are the "method of controlled comparison" (Eggan, 1954) and "specification" (Holt & Turner, 1970).

The comparative method is not a simple method, as it is by no means easy to identify comparable cases. With that in mind, the emphasis of Eckstein (2000, 2015) on choosing "normal" cases for comparison and study is worth bearing in mind. Furthermore, there is the problem that comparable cases are likely to be similar not only regarding potentially confounding background variables which should be controlled for but also with regard to the operative variables (Lijphart, 1975).

In Paper I, Northern Norway is compared with Northern Sweden over time in an MSSD design (Teune & Przeworski, 1970). The two regions share many similarities but have experienced different regional policies over time (see paper I and Andersson, 2005 for a more thorough review of Swedish regional policies). There is a vast literature of comparative analysis in social sciences examining the Scandinavian countries (e.g. Hendin, 1964; Miller & Listhaug, 1990; Svalastoga, 1959), although not so many on the regional level, so the comparative study between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden is not something that, at least to my knowledge, has not been done before.

In the two other papers in this thesis, the main advantage of the comparative approach is that it keeps unobserved institutional and structural variables constant. In Paper II, the levels of political trust in Northern Norway are compared to the levels of political trust in other regions in the country. In Paper III, the development in municipalities with a larger number of state employees (many of them in Northern Norway) is compared with the development in municipalities with fewer state employees. Empirical data from other countries, regions, and municipalities is used as a tool for comparison to enhance our understanding of what has happened in Northern Norway.

4.3 The Spatial Dimension of Political Science

Comparative methods have been popular in political science for many years (e.g. Denters, Gabriel, & Torcal, 2007; Rokkan, 1987a, 2009; Skocpol, 1979). As noted by Keating (2018), however, time and space have been rather absent from the explanatory framework in social and political science:

> *Time was at one time left to the historians, who focused on the past. We could draw lessons for the present, but this did not form part of social scientific explanations. As for space, most social sciences treated it as just where things happened rather than something with explanatory capacity. Recent developments in ontology and epistemology, however, have permitted new approaches to both time and space. History is not just the past but is also with us. The past casts a shadow over the present, but the reverse is also true, as new social and political concerns provoke revisions of our understandings of the past. Space is seen as not merely a topological category but as a social and political construct, whose meaning is given by its content. State space defined by jurisdictional boundaries is merely one meaning, an important one given its connection to power, but challenged by other spatial imaginaries, above, below and across it.* (Keating, 2018)

The combination of time and space makes it possible to provide context to events. Rather than being mere residuals, explaining things that cannot be understood using standard variables, they can move to the center of analysis. This is not to say that social science is thereby reduced to a set of space- and time-bound case studies, but the spatial and longitudinal dimension could *add* explanatory power to understand the social phenomenon.

The main object for social and political studies is to explore general and universal causes and effects in society. But in the desire to develop more general theories and to avoid reducing political science to specific empirical case studies, the spatial dimension has often been ignored. As seen in section 2.1, however, there are

theoretical aspects about territorial structures that potentially could have explanatory power for objects of interest for political scholars. Studies of politics often highlight how an asymmetric power relationship is important for understanding outcomes, whether it regards factors like capital (Piketty, 2015) or the size of states in conflicts (Mack, 1975), it should not be surprising that the asymmetrical territorial relationship could hold explanatory power in other areas.

In this thesis, the spatial dimension is accounted for using two different methods. In Paper I, Northern Norway is used as a dummy variable to explore the spatial dimension of political trust and the effects of regional policies, and the data is presented in maps (e.g. Figure 3 in section 5.2). Further, in Paper II, the distance in kilometers from the capital (Oslo) is used to replace the more case-specific dummy variable, *Northern Norway*; in other words, trying to replace proper names with a more general spatial variable.

An even more advanced approached would have been the use of spatial regression models (Bivand, Pebesma, Gomez-Rubio, & Pebesma, 2008; Ward & Gleditsch, 2018). Beyond creating and viewing maps, spatial data analysis is concerned with questions not directly answered by examining the data itself. These questions refer to hypothetical processes that generate the observed data. Statistical inference for such spatial processes is often challenging and the reason why the papers in the thesis are not analyzed with spatial regression models, but instead with multilevel regressions models (see section 4.5).

4.4 The Times They Are a-Changin'—Longitudinal Approach to Social Science

Reflecting on the relationship between political scientists, political sociologists, and historians, Rokkan (1987b, 217) acknowledged that the social sciences would not progress without accounting for the time dimension and the prior historical processes in the analytical framework. He also noted that historians could learn from political scientists about mastering technical tools, organizing data, and data analysis. It is

reasonable to question whether a sufficient number of social scientist have used the longitudinal dimension enough as a tool in their analyses (Keating, 2018). Time-series analysis is a powerful tool for two of the main objects of social science: establishing causality and comparing development (Berry & Lewis-Beck, 1986; Janoski & Isaac, 1994; Midtbø, 2000). In contrast to cross-section analyses, it allows for analyzing longer trends instead of just a snapshot at one point in time, which can sometimes be misleading. Some social changes are rapid (e.g. social revolutions), whereas others are slower, drawn-out processes, and there can sometimes be a lag between cause and effect.

Plotting the data over time is a recommended starting point (Becketti, 2013; Chatfield, 2016), and visual analysis provides information about each time-series as well as giving a hint about correlations and the potential causality between various variables over time. This was the starting point for the comparative analysis between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden, which will be further elaborated in section 5.1.

The univariate model of just one time series is often a useful second step. ARIMA-analyses (Box, Jenkins, Reinsel, & Ljung, 2015) allow for a meaningful analysis of the underlying stochastic process and identify changes, or ruptures, within the time series. The ARIMA models use three different techniques to deal with autocorrelation; autoregressive term (AR), integrator (I), and moving-average term (MA). The major challenge with time-series analysis is that it violates the Gauss–Markov theorem assumptions for regression that the errors should be uncorrelated and homoscedastic. The errors of Y_t are correlated with the errors of Y_{t-1} or even further observations. To deal with this problem, the models in all papers have had their error term corrected with an AR1 structure, which more or less removes the autocorrelation.

The third step would be to compare time series with other time series in a panel data set, where we have multiple variables observed over time. Panel data can be specified as “standard” multilevel model (Singer & Willett, 2003). For individual *i* (or in this

case municipality *i*) on occasion *j*, we assume that opposites-naming score *Yij* is a linear function of TIME:

$Yij = \pi 0i + \pi 1iTIMEj + eij$
$\pi_{0i} = \beta_{00} + u_{0i}$
$\pi_{1i} = \beta_{10} + u_{ji}$

4.5 Multilevel Regression Modeling

Since panel data analysis is a form of multilevel modeling (applied in Papers I and III), the themes about multilevel regression modeling (applied in Paper II) will be relevant for the panel data analyses as well. The integration of micro and macro data is now seen as the state of the art in many subfields of political science (Stegmueller, 2013) and has become increasingly popular in recent decades (Gelman & Hill, 2006). There are good theoretical and statistical arguments for using multilevel models (Luke, 2004). Theoretically, it is logical that an individual *i* is affected by the group *j* that they belong to or live in. If different policies are applied for different groups (country, region, school, class, etc.) that are characteristics of the group *j*, not the individual *i*. Statistically, scholars have tried to disaggregate group-level information for the group *j* onto the individual *i*. There are at least two problems with doing so. First, all of the un-modeled contextual information ends up pooled into the single individual error term (Duncan, Jones, & Moon, 1998). This is problematic, because individuals belonging to the same context will presumably have correlated errors, which violated one of the basic assumptions of regression analysis. Second, by ignoring the context, the model assumes that the regression coefficients apply equally to all contexts, "thus propagating the notion that the process works out in the same way in different contexts" (Duncan et al., 1998, 98).

Using this multilevel setup, a diverse range of topics has been studied: policy diffusion (Gilardi, 2010), attitudes toward immigration (O'Rourke & Sinnott, 2006), ethnic and social tolerance (Andersen & Fetner, 2008), rightwing voting (Arzheimer, 2009), social and political trust (Dalton, 2005; M. Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, & Trappers, 2009), satisfaction with democracy (Anderson & Singer, 2008), political participation (Van der Meer, Van Deth, & Scheepers, 2009), the political economy of gender vote

gap (Iversen & Rosenbluth, 2006), and support for European integration (L. Hooghe & Marks, 2004).

Most studies employ pooled individual-level survey data with matched country-level information to estimate micro and macro effects. This is the same technique applied in Paper II in this thesis, but instead of having countries as level 2 units, we have used 417 municipalities as level 2 units on a survey with 22,000 respondents (Difi, 2015). One of the criticisms against multilevel modeling is that researchers are often analyzing countries with insufficient numbers of level-2 observations (Stegmueller, 2013). The research strategies in this thesis have created a design in which there are sufficient level-2 observations by using municipalities at level 2 in all papers and time or individuals at level 1. The general analytical strategy has been conducted through five steps in all papers.

1. Empty model—finding the ICC (Interclass Correlation Coefficient)
2. Model with all level 1 variables + random intercepts
3. Add level 2 variables
4. Check the variation of random slopes
5. Full model where level 2 variables can explain varying slopes and intercepts

All of the models are estimated by estimation algorithms. The two most commonly used in multilevel modeling are REML (restricted maximum likelihood) and ML (maximum likelihood). The difference between them relates to how it estimates the interplay between all of the relationships. REML gives the most parsimonious results, minimizes variance the best, and produces the most unbiased estimates. The one major problem is that you can only compare models if the change in the models only occurs in the random effects.

Consequently, all of the models in this thesis are estimated with both ML and REML to assure consistency in the findings, but the reported models are estimated with ML.

To examine which model has the best fit, it is recommended to use either the Akaike Information Criterion (Akaike, 1974) or Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC is often called the Schwartz Information Criteria). AIC and BIC cannot be interpreted in absolute terms, but the smaller the number, the better the model fits the data.

4.6 Open Science and the Building of Gator

Transparency, openness, and reproducibility are readily recognized as vital features of science (McNutt, 2014; Nosek et al., 2015). When asked, most scientists embrace these features as disciplinary norms and values (Martinson, Anderson, & De Vries, 2005); one might therefore expect these valued features to be routine in daily practice. A growing body of evidence suggests that this is not the case (Banks et al., 2016; Ioannidis, Munafo, Fusar-Poli, Nosek, & David, 2014; John, Loewenstein, & Prelec, 2012). This has led to discussions about how to open science, and the most recent example is the debate about Plan S[7], which currently comprises 13 national research funding organizations from 12 countries which have agreed to implement the 10 principles of Plan S in a coordinated manner together with the European Commission and the ERC to open science. Regardless of their stand regarding open access publishing, the majority of scientists would agree that striving for more transparency is desirable. The question then becomes: What kind of transparency?

A literature review by Fecher and Friesike (2014) shows that there are different schools regarding open science. *The infrastructure school* (which is concerned with the technological architecture), *the public school* (which is concerned with the accessibility of knowledge creation), *the measurement school* (which is concerned with alternative impact measurement), *the democratic school* (which is concerned with access to knowledge) and *the pragmatic school* (which is concerned with collaborative research). Inspired by these schools, this thesis attempts to be available to the community to evaluate, critique, reuse, and extend. The analyses in this thesis are

[7] https://www.scienceeurope.org/coalition-s/

made with open software (R), and all of the codes and data used in thesis have been made publicly available at https://github.com/TromsoJonas

A final part of this thesis project, which answers to the infrastructure school of open science, has been the creation of the dataverse Gator (Svalestuen, Buck, Stein, & Haugen, 2017) inspired by the ideas of Gary King (2007) about various researchers working together with open data sets, making replication data sets available. The data has been made available through a dataverse.[8] This is the same tool now used by journals like the *American Journal of Political Science* to ensure openness about the data used in their publications.[9]

The data material about Norwegian municipalities is excellent, and the majority of the variables included in the data set stem from Kommunedatabasen (NSD) and Statistikkbanken (SSB). The accessibility to the data has not always been so easy, however, particularly with regard to longitudinal analyses. Fiva, Halse, and Natvik (2012) have created a very good and easily available panel data set with Norwegian municipalities from 1972 to 2016, but Gator adds both more longitudinal observations (1945–2016) and more variables (around 1100 variables). This empirical data gives scholars and students the opportunity to compare the development in Norwegian municipalities *between* and *within* each other. The Gator data has already been used for work on elections to the Sami Parliament (Buck, Haugen, Stein, & Svalestuen, 2018), and there are ongoing projects involving fishery policies, educational research, and health sciences in which the data from this data set will be used.

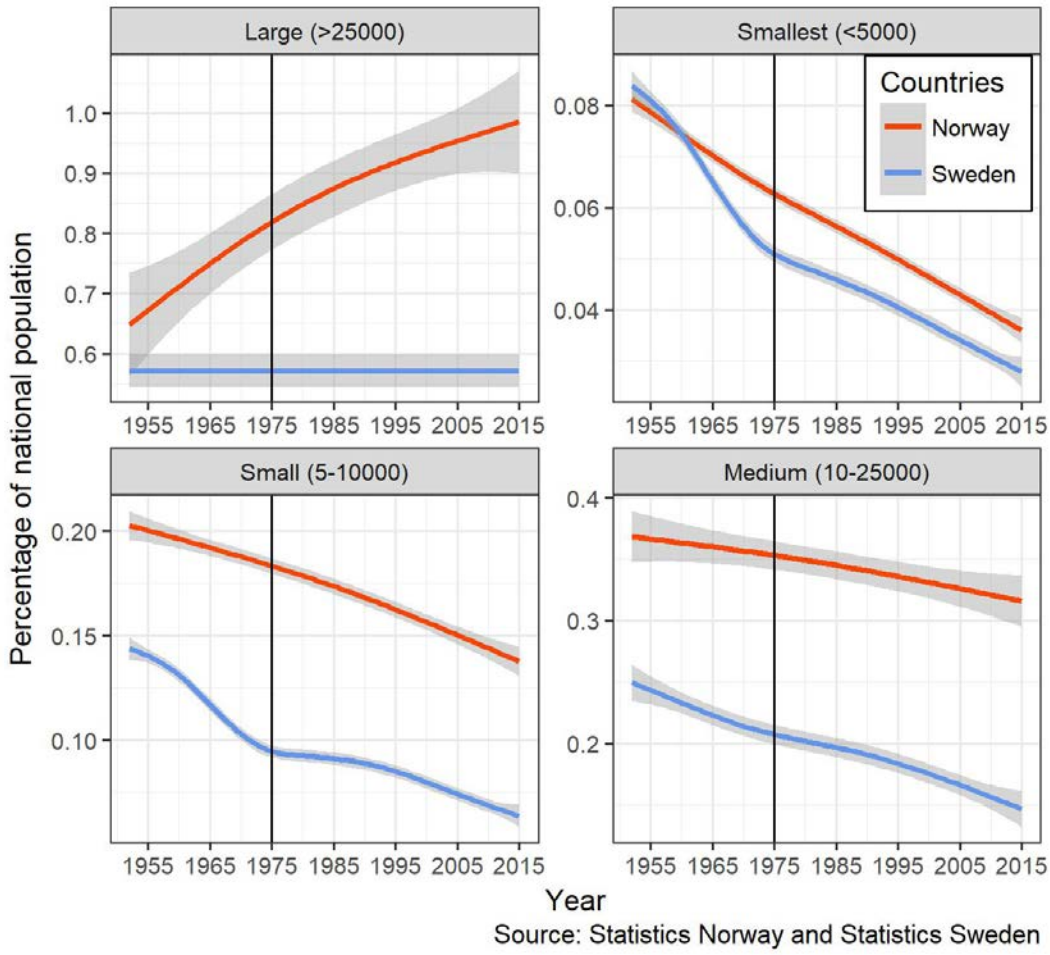
[8] https://dataverse.no/dataverse/uit
[9] https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/ajps

5 Results

5.1 Paper I—The Striking Similarities between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden

Contrary to the view held by many actors, by using a quantitative and longitudinal analysis in a comparative perspective, this paper shows that the demographic development in Northern Norway and Northern Sweden is much more similar than many think. Figure 2 shows that the demographic trends in the two countries are almost identical. The difference between the largest municipalities are mainly explained by the relatively few municipalities with more than 25,000 inhabitants in Norway and that two (Tromsø and Bodø) of the three are classified as "knowledge cities," a significant variable in the models (see regression models in Paper I).

Figure 2: Demographic development in Northern Norway and Northern Sweden 1952–2015



Despite adopting an expansive regional policy around 1975 inspired by Broxian theories of growth in smaller municipalities, these policies do not appear to have had any significant impact on the demographic development. This is striking due to the numerous similarities between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden, but Sweden has had a much less expansive regional policy (Andersson, 2005), reduced the number of municipalities from 2000 to around 290 in the 1970s (Kjellberg, 1988), and joined the European Union; all factors that, according to Broxian theories, should have contributed to a less positive development than in Norway.

The larger trend in both countries is that the population in the north is declining at approximately the same relative speed as the rest of the nation. This said, some regionally based policies, such as the establishment of universities in the north, seem to have had a positive effect on the development. “Knowledge cities,” especially the two university cities, Tromsø and Umeå, have been the drivers for demographic development in Arctic Scandinavia.

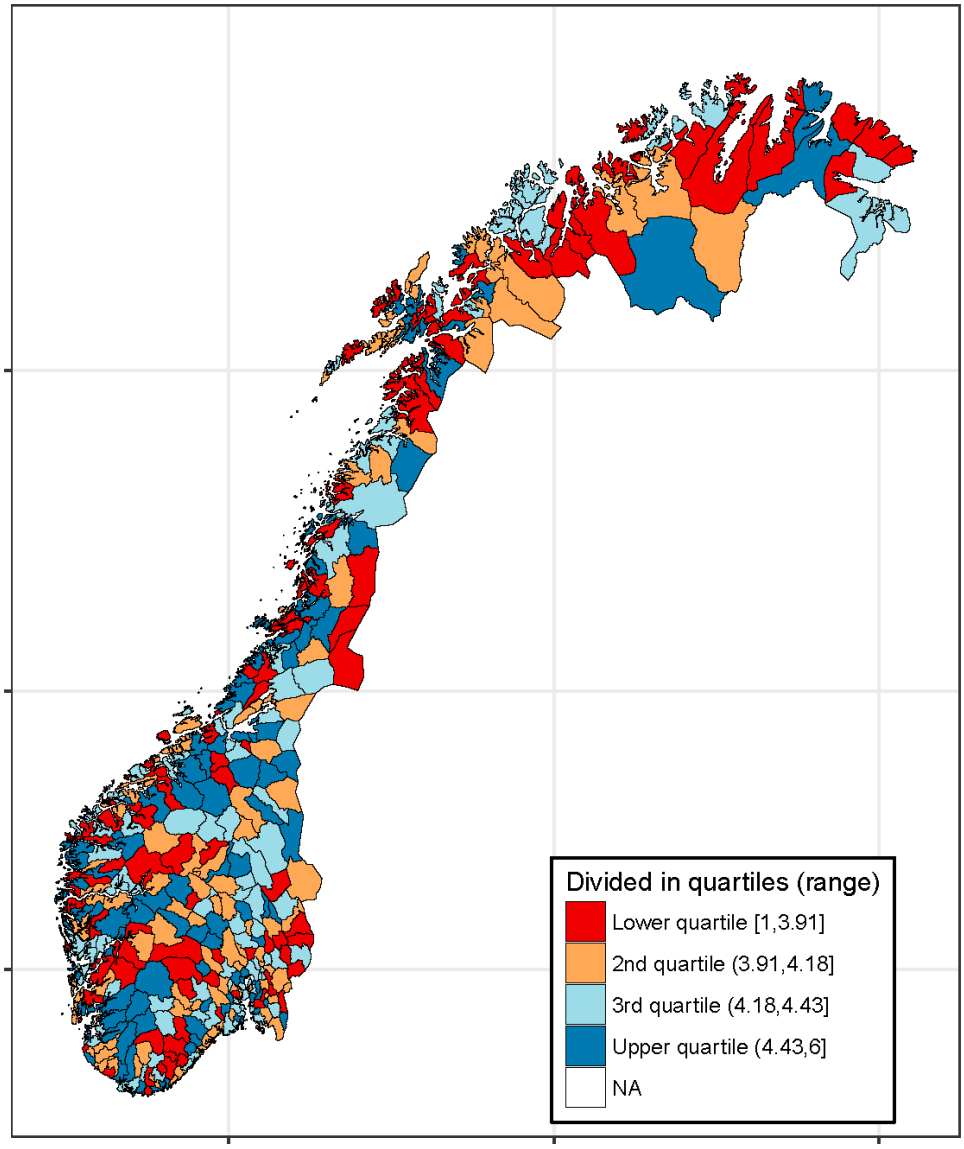
5.2 Paper II—The Center–Periphery Dimension and Trust in Politicians: The Case of Norway

This paper explores the spatial dimension of political trust. Figure 3 shows how the municipalities in Northern Norway are among the Norwegian municipalities with the lowest trust in national politicians on an aggregated level. The paper examines if this difference is due to other explanations or if the center–periphery framework could hold explanatory power even when considering other explanations. Scholars have often studied social, political, and economic reasons for why trust waxes and wanes. As seen in section 2.3.1, there are theoretical arguments for why regional spatial location could be considered an independent variable and that the centre–periphery framework, as elaborated by Stein Rokkan, would hold more explanatory power than the other forms of spatial location, such as the degree of rurality.

By using multilevel regression analysis on a large-N survey on a crucial case (Norway), the models have 14 different control variables for the urban–rural divide and cultural, institutional, political, and economic factors at both the individual and

municipal levels (see regression model in Paper II). The findings indicate that regional spatial location manifests itself as a unique explanatory variable and that the Rokkan center–periphery framework has explanatory value for explaining differences in trust in politicians. It also shows how the spatial dimension could be relevant when studying political and social phenomena.

Figure 3: Trust in national politicians aggregated to municipalities



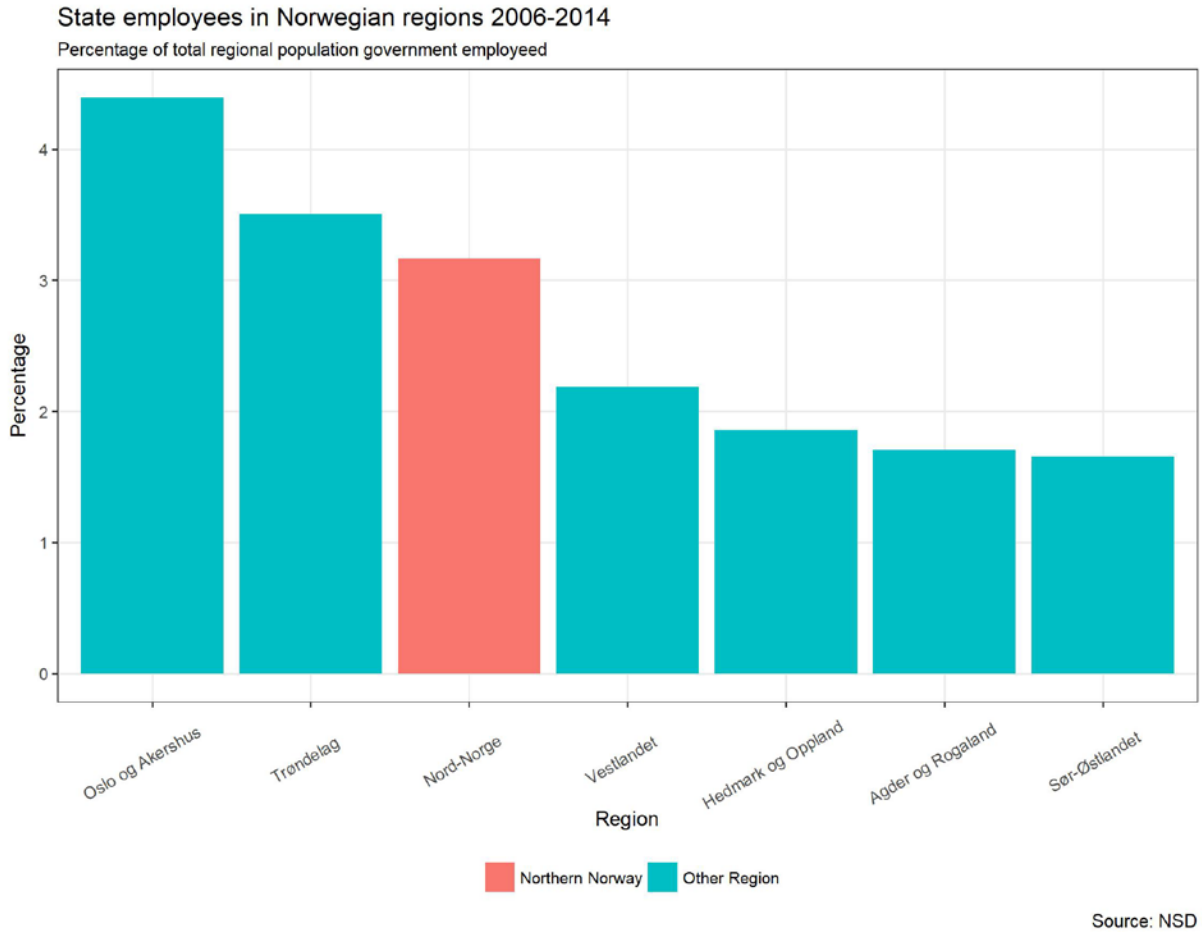
The paper also shows that the general variable *distance from the capital* could replace the more case-specific variable, *Northern Norway*. This possibly indicates that

distance from the political center matters more for explaining territorial differences in trust in politicians than economic and cultural factors.

5.3 Paper III—The Local Impact of Increased Numbers of State Employees on Start-ups in Norway

This paper explores the effect of a specific policy for regional development: the relocation of state employees. As seen in Figures 4 and 5, state employees are particularly important in Northern Norway. In 2014, five of the 10 municipalities with the largest percentage of state employees were located in Northern Norway (Kautokeino, Vadsø, Tromsø, Karasjok, and Brønnøy).

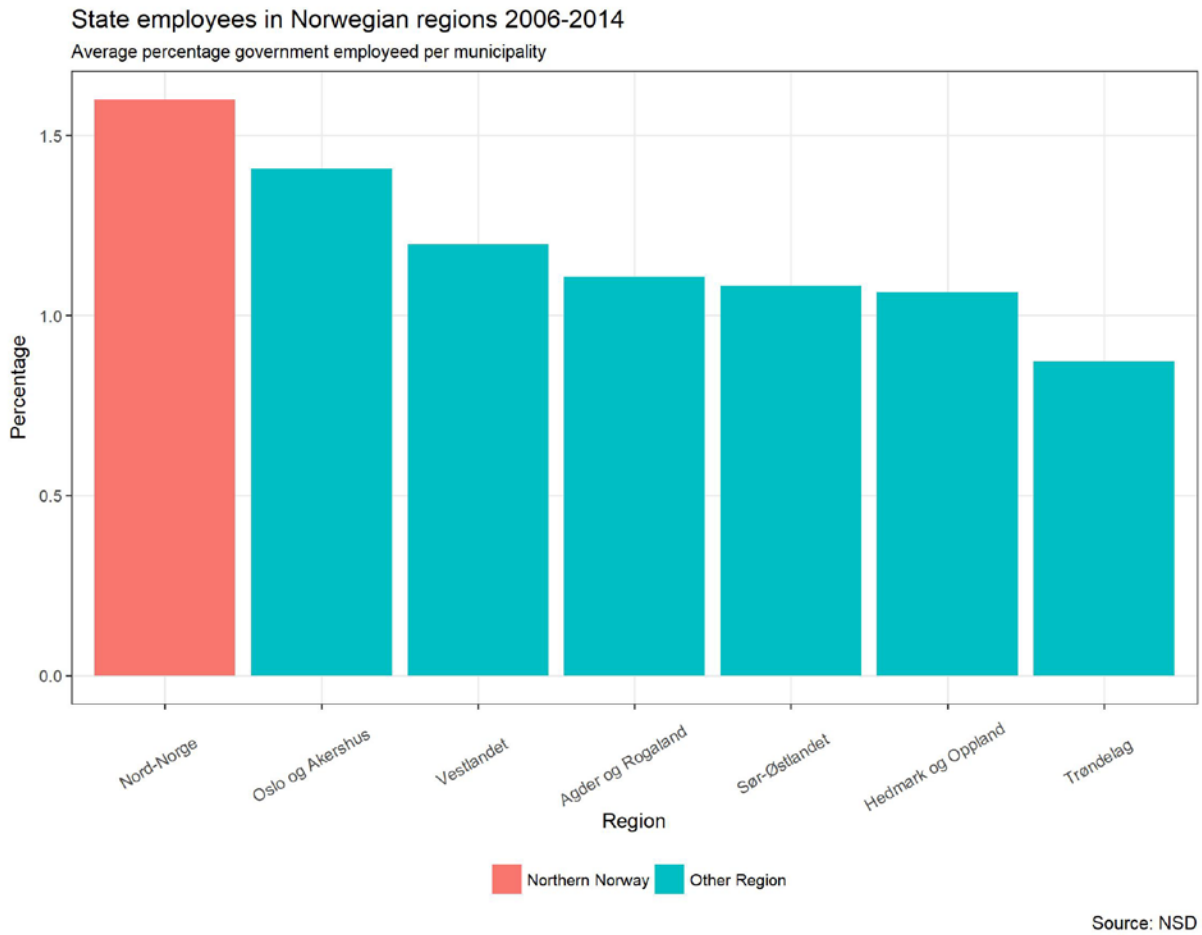
Figure 4: State employees in Norwegian regions 2006-2014—Percentage of total regional population government employeed



Local multiplier effect theory (Moretti, 2010) suggests that increased local demand of state employees, especially high-skilled employees, will stimulate the local supply of

goods and services and, hence, local development. This study assesses the local effects of having a high percentage of state employees in a municipality (see regression models in Paper III). While it finds a small positive effect of state employees in a bivariate model, when controlling for relevant factors such as municipality size, regional universities, or unemployment rate, there is no significant effect of state employees on local development. This finding suggests that the relocation of state employees is a rather limited tool for stimulating local and regional development. The finding is similar when using population growth as an alternative measurement for local development. However, the local existence of universities seems to have a positive effect on the number of start-up firms. Even when controlled for city size, unemployment rate, demographic characteristics, and larger national and global trends (financial crisis), university cities have a significant positive effect.

Figure 5: State employees in Norwegian regions 2006–2014—Average percentage government employed per municipality



6 What Happened in Northern Norway?

6.1 The Effect of Regional Policies?

6.1.1 Peripheral Mobilization for Regional Gains

So what happened in Northern Norway? Overall, in light of the empirical results, the general theories of Stein Rokkan seem to hold more explanatory power than the those of Ottar Brox, even though Brox's theories have had a much stronger political impact than those of Rokkan. It is understandable how the ideas of a specific regional culture could be captivating for regional actors and observers (Hobsbawm & Ranger, 2012; Keating et al., 2003). Perhaps this captivating narrative needs to be understood as a part of the Rokkanian *Pyramid of Regional Aims* (see Figure 1)? Northern Norway has experienced what Rokkan would describe as a period of peripheral identity-building, where regional actors are arguing for the unique character of a given territory, economy, and its population, and urging the preservation of its distinctive artifacts and stigmata. This peripheral identity-building has succeeded in mobilizing regional actors and creating a general acceptance of the peripheral identity in Northern Norway in contrast to the central national identity. As seen in Paper II, even today there is less trust in national politicians among those living in Northern Norway, which cannot be explained by other social, economic, or political factors.

The mobilization of the center–periphery tension has proven to be an effective political tool, especially when mobilizing against Norwegian EU membership (Jenssen & Valen, 1995; Valen, 1973). Applying the tools of *voice* and *loyalty* (Rokkan & Urwin, 1983), regional actors have managed to use the peripheral identity to get attention and acceptance for gaining concessions in terms of regional policies (see section 3.3). Since the 1970s, Norway has voted against EU membership twice (1972 and 1994), implemented an expansive regional policy, and did not radically reform the municipality structure as was the case in Sweden. These are all policy choices closer to Broxian theories (see section 2.2) and, according to his hypotheses, should have stimulated a more positive development in Northern Norway than in Northern Sweden. It should be noted that Brox (Brox, 1984, 2007) himself would emphasize that not all of his policy plans have been implemented. He has been very critical of the

industrial and market-based fishery policies in Norway in this period (Brox, 2006), even though other scholars (Holm, Raakjær, Jacobsen, & Henriksen, 2015) contest that the social contract is changed. However, in Northern Norway only around 4,000 people are registered as fishermen, so their effect on the longer development trend should not be overestimated; especially since aquafarming, an industry often located in smaller municipalities along the coast, has boomed in the same period.

Paper I shows that the idea of a specific *sonderweg* for Northern Norway, at least in terms of demographic development, is not supported by a longitudinal comparative analysis with Northern Sweden in an MSSD. In fact, the similarities are striking. The comparison also reveals the subtlety and craftiness of longitudinal analyses. A cross-section comparison between the two regions would conclude that the Norwegian regional policy in Northern Norway has succeeded inasmuch as a relatively larger part of the population lives in the northernmost region. As shown in the longitudinal analysis in Paper I, a relatively larger percentage lived in Northern Norway in the 1950s, and the trends have been identical since 1975. There do not seem to be any positive effects of these types of regional policy choices.

As seen in Paper III, it is also difficult to find any local effects of another popular tool often used in the center–periphery framework: the relocation of state employees. In 2003, the Norwegian government carried out its third relocation program, around 1,000 jobs in seven different agencies being moved from Oslo to five other regions (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2003) and two subsequent white papers on relocations plans in Norway, regional development is seen as a key argument for relocation (Fornyingsdepartementet, 2009; Kommunaldepartementet, 2017). This has been particularly popular in Northern Norway, with the large state agencies like the National Registry established in Brønnøysund in 1980[10] and the National Collection Agency established in Rana in 1990.[11]

[10] https://www.brreg.no/om-oss/historien-var/
[11] https://www.sismo.no/en/pub/information/about-us

But should the success of regional policies not be measured in terms of local development but instead as a tool for curbing the tensions between the center and the periphery? Policies like the relocation of public sector employees (Paper III) or regionally based subsidies and tax incentives (Paper I) allow center-based politicians to provide a specific and visible solution to the tension between the center and the periphery at a relatively small net cost and sometimes aid the readjustment after de-industrialization, as in the case of Rana. Stephanie Rickard (2018) has also shown that regional subsidies could be used as an election-winning policy tool for politicians.

As seen in the study by Buck (2013), the voting gap between Northern Norway and the rest of the country has decreased since the 1950s. Although Paper II shows that there is a significant difference in trust between people living in Northern Norway and the rest of the country, the difference in point estimate is relatively small and not more than .15 (standard error .04) on a 1–7 scale. We have no earlier trust data, but it would have been very interesting to see from a longitudinal perspective if the spatial difference was diverging or converging. A comparative study with other countries experiencing territorial tensions between center and periphery could also provide an interesting perspective.

6.1.2 Potential Negative Externalities of Regional Policies

Even though regional policies may not have any positive effects, some would argue that they do no harm. This might not be so obvious. This thesis also shows that there are some potentially negative externalities that might be associated with being on the receiving end of regional policies.

First, there is the risk of developing a position of state dependency (see section 2.1.4). At their best, public policies created to compensate for social injustice or market failures could be liberating and stimulate positive development; at worst, they could contribute to clientelism, stigmatization, and dependency (Eriksen, 1996, 172). The lack of debate on the effects of regional policies in Northern Norway might be an indicator of state dependency. The rural (and to a certain extent regional) depopulation

should have mobilized regional actors in Northern Norway to protest against or at least question some of the regional policies applied for regional development. Regional actors in the north have not been highly mobilized around the broader fundamental debates about regional policies; instead, there has recently been a massive political mobilization against structural changes at the municipal and regional levels (Finnmark, 2018). These structural changes might not have too many advantages, but they do not have many disadvantages, either (see Paper I). However, in a state of state dependency, it is easy for political actors to mobilize the peripheral distrust of structural changes enforced by central authorities who often lack sensitivity to actors in the periphery voicing their concerns.

Second, connected to the notion of state dependency, local and regional actors tend to underestimate the interconnection between different forms of trust. Studies have shown that different forms of political trust are connected (Denters, 2002; Torcal, 2014; Turper & Aarts, 2017), and, as seen in Paper II, there is less trust in national politicians in Northern Norway, but there is no significant difference in trust in local and national politicians in Northern Norway. The spillover effect of lower trust in national politicians appears to influence the trust in the local politicians. Even though skilled politicians and other actors distinguish between local and national politicians, ordinary people appear to associate the question of trust in politicians more with their trust in the institutions of the political system, which again relates to their quality and performance (Hetherington, 1998; Mishler & Rose, 2001; North, 1990; Rothstein, 2011; Van Ryzin, 2007).

For local actors, the potential pitfall is that when they protest too much or aim to delegitimize the national actors, the result is lower trust in the political system nationally *and* locally. The debate about the structural reform of the regional level is not yet finished. For scholars, it will be interesting to use future data from the Citizens Survey (Difi, 2015) to explore if trust in national politicians and trust in local politicians in Finnmark has declined since 2013. My assumption is that both types of

trust in politicians have decreased, although the trust in national politicians has most likely decreased more.

6.2 Urbanization and Growth of Knowledge-based Cities

6.2.1 Urbanization

The other major finding in Northern Norway over the last 50 years is the urbanization of the region (see Paper I). This is not unique to the region, and global urbanization is one of the major trends in the 20th century (Friedman, 2005; Pike et al., 2007). Despite the more general Norwegian regional policies being especially beneficial to sparsely populated areas and Finnmark and the Broxian theories of why rural development in Northern Norway should thrive, the major demographic development has been in the two largest cities in Northern Norway: Tromsø and Bodø; although Brox assumed that, if given the opportunity, people would reject the urban centers and choose life in the periphery, especially in a region like Northern Norway, where people could live the life as *fisher-farmers*. This has not turned out to be the case in Northern Norway.

This echoes earlier empirical studies of Northern Norway (Elenius et al., 2015) and could be explained by the role of the cities and the creative class as engines for regional and urban development (Florida, 2005). It is worth noting, however, that the growth in urban municipalities is also a trend in the rest of Norway (Paper III) and Northern Sweden (Paper I). Some might argue that this is only a part of a larger trend toward urbanization. At the same, time there are findings suggesting that the empirical trend in Northern Norway consists of more than mere urbanization *per se*, and that the growing municipalities have more to offer than just urbanity.

6.2.2 Knowledge-based Cities

The urbanization trend does not mean that people merely move to larger cities; it is important to understand what kinds of cities are growing. In both Papers I and III, having a university or university city college appears to stimulate growth; growth that cannot be explained by city size alone. It might not be surprising that the two largest cities, Tromsø and Bodø, have experienced the largest population growth in recent decades. The same pattern is found in Northern Sweden, with the growth of Umeå and

Luleå (Paper I). However, the growth of Alta, a municipality without a hospital and regional administrative functions, underlines the importance of knowledge-based cities (see also Paper I). It is not the third-largest city in Northern Norway, but it is the one that has been growing most in recent decades—not larger municipalities like Rana. The similar decline between the old industrial towns in Arctic Scandinavia, Rana and Skelleftå, illustrate that knowledge-based cities, not just cities, have been the population winners over the last 50 years (Paper I). Skellefteå used to be the biggest city in northern Sweden but has been surpassed by Umeå and Luleå.

The establishment and increased financing of higher education in the northern region has undoubtedly been a key policy for regional development in Northern Norway. The decision to use the expansion of higher education, a policy for social equality and knowledge development, to also promote regional development was clearly a political decision inspired by the establishment of the University of Umeå (Fulsås, 1993). When national authorities realized that the existing capacity of the existing universities in Oslo and Bergen was insufficient, they decided to meet the growing need for higher education through the establishment of a new university in Tromsø, despite strong concerns from the existing research communities. This decision has to be understood on the background of the center–periphery conflict in Norwegian politics.

The success of higher education as a tool for regional development is apparent in Northern Norway and illustrates another point regarding regional development: The success of the relocation of state employees or the establishment of new functions within the state depends on the functional demands of the state and society. The general demand for higher education has rapidly increased in recent decades for social and economic reasons, which has contributed to the growth in the cities having such state functions. More stable functions (e.g. regional administration or the National Registry) do not seem to stimulate growth in the same way. The risk is that they become conservatory power, a pretext for doing nothing or merely maintaining the status quo. There may be good reasons for discussing the rationale behind some of the restructuring processes in the Norwegian state apparatus. But even when there are

clear benefits for society in general, such as the efficiency improvement for collecting the television license, local politicians tend to demand that no local jobs be affected.[12]

Finally, without wanting to dismiss the value of attracting more state employees to a municipality, the benefits of which could be more than purely economic, local actors should at least be conscious about the limited effects of this strategy for local development; at least if the strategy is not supported by thought-through, place-sensitive policies (Iammarino et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Pose & Ketterer, 2019). A better strategy for local and regional actors wanting to use the state apparatus to promote local and regional development may be to think "Don't ask what Norway can do for you, but ask what you can do for Norway!" and to use cluster theories (Porter, 1998, 2000) to find local and regional comparative advantages to combine with necessary tasks within or in the future for the state apparatus (see also Paper III).

6.3 What Does Knowledge of Northern Norway Add to the General Literature?

6.3.1 Political Trust

The most important finding in this thesis for the general literature in political science is regarding the explanatory power of the spatial dimension in relation to trust in politicians. As seen in section 2.1, the Rokkanian framework provides a theoretical background for explaining why the center–periphery conflict is important for understanding various political processes and outcomes. This paper finds that although institutional, cultural, and political factors are the strongest explanatory variables, the spatial dimension in a center–periphery framework is significant for explaining the differences in trust in politicians. The paper also shows that the general variable, *distance from the capital*, could replace the more case-specific variable, *Northern Norway*. This leads to a more general finding that could be relevant for political trust in other countries and contexts. As Scott (2010) has shown, those who are more skeptical of the powerful central state and government are more likely to move farther from the political center. And this might also work the other way around; that the

[12] https://ranano.no/ranas-ordforer-ber-om-mote-med-kulturministeren/17.10-01:15

distance causes those living far away from the political center to become more skeptical of institutions controlled from far away and they feel that their influence on those institutions is limited. Scott's perspective could be seen as complementary or overlapping the Rokkanian center–periphery perspective.

Despite decades of regional policy and the development of a universal welfare system created to even-out social and spatial inequalities, we still find a significant spatial independent variable that cannot be explained by controls on the individual or municipal level in our multilevel regression model (see Paper II and section 4.5). Those living in Northern Norway, one of the two peripheral regions defined by (Rokkan, 1987c), have lower trust in national-level politicians despite relevant controls. This suggests that what Caramani (2004) described as the "nationalization of politics," making internal spatial location unimportant, cannot be taken for granted.

The finding in Paper II suggests that the spatial dimension is more than just the level of urbanization, something which is also controlled for in the paper. Keating (2018) noted that in most social science, space has been treated as just "where things happened," rather than something with explanatory capacity. This is particularly relevant in the literature regarding political trust. The spatial perspective has not been thoroughly studied in the trust literature other than sometimes as an urban–rural control variable in empirical studies (e.g.Delhey & Newton, 2005; M. Hooghe et al., 2012). That differences in trust in politicians is correlated with distance from the capital illustrates that the spatial dimension has the explanatory capacity for social analyses.

This finding with regard to political trust should be regarded as a first step, an explorative case study for partial generalization (see section 3.1). Further studies should explore the center–periphery framework in other countries and other forms of political trust, especially by using *distance from the capital* as an explanatory variable.

6.3.2 The Effects of Regional Policies

This thesis has also explored the motivation and effects of regional policies. The center–periphery framework could help to understand some of the motivations behind regional policies. Some actors narrowly perceive regional policy just as some kind of "development aid" that the center donates out of generosity to the periphery. The Rokkanian Pyramid of Regional Aims (see Figure 1 in section 2.1.1) shows that resolving the center–periphery relationship is essential for not escalating the tension between center and periphery, consequently developing the tension into a cleavage (see Aardal, 1994 for cleavage debate). The EU has used the expression "cohesion policy" about the European regional policy. This expression is rather precise as to the main objective of regional policy: keeping center and periphery together. It also underlines why reviews around regional development programs (e.g. Mohl & Hagen, 2010) find relatively small success for the various regional policy programs (see Paper I), especially regarding tax incentives (Neumark & Kolko, 2010). It could also depend on the kind of dependent variable used for measurement. The goal might not always be variables related to growth, but possibly goals measured by other variables, such as political trust. As seen in section 6.1.1., even though there is a significant difference, the gap between the center and periphery in Norway regarding political trust is not insurmountable.

This also highlights another finding for the more general literature. Peripheral mobilization against the center could also have negative spillover effects for peripheral actors. As seen in Paper II, there is a potential spillover effect of lower trust in national politicians to the trust in local politicians. This might be an unintended effect of peripheral mobilization against the central authorities.

Finally, using the tools of *Voice* and *Loyalty*, regional actors could gain concessions in terms of regional policies. Some kinds of regional policies obviously seem to work, but being on the receiving end of policies could ultimately prove to be a double-edged sword. Similar to some of the debates on the limited effect of development aid (e.g. Collier, 2008), the effects of regional policies are a rather limited tool for regional

development. Receiving excessive regional funding could lead to a state of *state dependency* (Eriksen, 1996), where there is little or no debate around the effect of the policy, and the only solution is maintaining the status quo and receiving more funds.

6.3.3 Regional Role of Universities

As seen in the previous sub-chapter, there are other measurements of success for regional policies; nevertheless, development in terms of economic or demographic growth is considered the main criteria of success. Papers I and III add to the general discussion around the role of universities. As seen in section 2.3.3, there is a broad literature around the role of regional universities as an engine for innovation and regional development (Benneworth & Nieth, 2018; Berger & Duguet, 1982; Drucker & Goldstein, 2007; Goddard & Chatterton, 1999).

This finding is by no means sensational but does add to the general literature on institutional theory and the role of universities (see section 2.3.3). Institutional quality seems to be of vital importance for development in industrial countries (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013; Rothstein, 2011), developing countries (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2013; Collier, 2008), and regions (Rodríguez-Pose, 2013). Universities could contribute to the reinforcement of institutional quality at the local and regional levels.

6.3.4 The Relocation of State Employees

This thesis also adds to the literature on the effect of the relocation of state employees. As seen in section 2.3.3, the scholarly work done on these types of reforms is limited, even though they are increasingly popular among policymakers (Kommunaldepartementet, 2017). Earlier studies from the UK have produced somewhat mixed results of the effect of the relocation of state employees (Faggio, 2019; Faggio & Overman, 2014). The models in Paper III suggest that there seems to be no positive effect of the increased number of state employees in a municipality on the relative number of new firms, a proxy variable for local growth. The findings are similar when using population growth as the dependent variable.

The findings in this paper also add to the literature on the relocation of state employees in Norway, which is a recurring policy debate in Norwegian politics (Sætren, 1983,

2011). The three main arguments in favor of relocation were increased agency independence, reduced expenditure, and the development of regional centers (Arbeidsdepartementet, 2003). First, as shown by Egeberg and Trondal (2011), location does not seem to matter much for Norwegian government agencies. Second, the evaluation after the relocation program concludes that expenditure has not been reduced (Fornyingsdepartementet, 2009). Third, Paper III in this thesis concludes that also the third argument, local economic development, is not something that can be learned from the Norwegian experience of creating or relocating state jobs to peripheral regions.

Since the local and regional extended economic effects are relatively limited, national policymakers should at least reconsider their arguments for relocation programs. There might be other arguments in favor of the relocation of state employees, and the models suggest that there might be some positive effects if jobs are relocated to larger municipalities capable of building sustainable clusters around the state employees.

6.3.5 The Limited Effect of Regional Policies

Finally, a recurring theme in this thesis when evaluating the different forms of regional policies is that exogenous policy interventions seem to be relatively futile and ineffective, at least when using classic indicators of growth such as population or innovation. The only exception is regional universities.

The major explanation may be that even though regional policies are of great interest to policymakers and scholars, their relative impact is rather limited. It is difficult or maybe even impossible to halt the larger global trend toward urbanization. The comparative study between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden may also add another explanation: the stabilizing effect of the welfare state. Municipalities do play an important role for dispersed settlement, but not in a Broxian manner, where it is the local decision-makers controlling their own life, but rather because the municipalities are the main provider of services from the national welfare-state, which is also accompanied with the local jobs necessary to deliver local services.

In countries like the Nordic countries, with high taxation, universal welfare systems, and centralized collective bargaining systems, public goods like childcare, education, social services, and unemployment benefits are equally distributed through a welfare system in which social rights are secured by national laws on an individual level regardless of the place of residence. Universal welfare goods are guaranteed regardless of municipality size. As an example of this so-called "Spatial Keynesianism," a government increase in spending on unemployment benefits, when unemployment is distributed unevenly between regions, would cause the channeling of resources from richer regions to lagging regions. More than just a social stabilizer, the welfare state is also a regional stabilizer (Armstrong & Taylor, 2000) that provides spatial redistribution as well as social redistribution.

Compared with the massive weight of urbanization and the welfare state, the overall regional policy is relatively feeble. Small, more general measures seem to be of little effect. There are, however, some more specific policies that build around some clusters (Porter, 1998, 2000), knowledge hubs, or smart specialization policies (Foray et al., 2009; McCann & Ortega-Argilés, 2011) that could have some claim to being a success.

Perhaps regional policies should be seen as a *political* tool more than an *economic* tool for development. They offer a means to provide a visible and specific solution to the periphery being subject to the center. Even though, at least in the case of Norway, there is a spatial dimension regarding political trust, the difference is relatively small. Until this is further studied, this is at least in theory something that regional policies could claim credit for.

6.4 Further Development in Northern Norway

6.4.1 Northern Norway—Still a Periphery?

The center–periphery tension is an underlying current in Norwegian politics and society. While it may have been written-off on numerous occasions, it continues to pop up at regular intervals. In Northern Norway, it has been activated in the referendums about EU membership, but also more recently when central authorities

rejected the bid for the Winter Olympics in Northern Norway (2004 and 2008) and in the restructuring of the municipalities and especially the county of Finnmark (2017). The success of the Center Party (despite its name, it is a political party actually mobilizing *for* the periphery *against* the center) in Norway in general, but specifically in Northern Norway in the two recent elections (2015 and 2017), could be an indicator of discontentment among a growing number of people living in peripheral regions with policies perceived as disadvantageous for the periphery. Opinion polls carried out in connection with the 2019 local elections in indicate the continued growth of the Center Party, some polls suggesting that they will become the largest party for the first time in Northern Norway.[13]

It is difficult to say whether Northern Norway still *is* a peripheral area. It is not evident that young people living in larger urban areas consider themselves as representatives of the periphery. As seen in Paper II, although there are differences in trust in politicians, the differences are not insurmountable. What is clear is that the center–periphery *tension* is something that can be mobilized by political actors. How it resonates with those in the periphery may be subject to other factors. The responsiveness of central national actors may also be important for explaining if the tensions escalate or not.

6.4.2 Why Not Change Policies?

If regional policies have not worked especially well, why is there so little debate about them in Northern Norway? A major explanation could be state dependency theory, where regional actors are locked in one perspective and have little flexibility to re-think their options (Eriksen, 1996).

For national actors, the policy of the regionally differentiated payroll tax on employees seems to offer the perfect example of a political compromise that characterizes European multiparty systems (Laver & Schofield, 1998). When political issues or the

[13] https://www.nordlys.no/politikk/arbeiderpartiet/senterpartiet/fersk-nordlys-maling-viser-et-politisk-jordskjelv-som-gar-gjennom-hele-nord-norge/s/5-34-1166294

political system become too polarized, it is difficult to reach political compromises (Gutmann & Thompson, 2010). For both major parties (Conservative and Labor), the cleavage between center and periphery cuts through their party and is a political issue that they would benefit from getting less politically polarized. Regional tax cut for enterprises are something that the Conservative Party, generally skeptical of increasing public expenses, could accept, since they generally argue for cutting taxes for business. For its part, Labor has offered a specific policy response to voices from mobilized peripheries. In the aftermath of the 1972 referendum on EU membership, Labor suffered major losses in the subsequent election in 1973; something that was explained by the cross-fire in which Labor Party voters in Northern Norway in particular found themselves (Hellevik, 1973). The losses were much smaller in the subsequent elections after and before the 1994 referendum. This possibly indicates that the strategy to contain the center–periphery framework has succeeded. The combination of a slightly more lenient approach to Labor Party members voting "no" compared to 1972 and the much more expansive regional policies seem to have protected the support of Labor.

A recurring theme in this thesis has been the motivations behind regional policies. If regional policies are primarily aimed at curbing the tension between center and periphery, at least they could claim partial success in Northern Norway. It is not so easy to find good policies that actually manage to change the larger global trend of urbanization. The national political compromise about a regionally differentiated payroll tax on employees combined with some direct transfers (*Nord-Norge tilskot*) to municipalities and individuals might be a well-functioning solution, at least for national actors.

7 Conclusion

7.1 Main Concluding Remarks

The aims of this study could be divided into three different but interconnected projects. The thesis title *What Happened in Northern Norway?* connected the theoretical, empirical, and methodological dimensions of the project. The theoretical dimension aimed at exploring the relevance of Rokkan's concept of the territorial dimension of politics between the center and periphery in Northern Norway, but also in other parts of the general political science literature concerning political trust and regional policies. As seen in Paper II, Rokkan's theories regarding the center–periphery relationship could add knowledge about explanatory factors for variations in political trust, generally measured as the *distance from the capital*. As regards regional policies, the Rokkanian framework could help to explain the motivations behind them. Combined with Rokkan, state dependency (Eriksen) could lead to a pitfall for regional policies. The Broxian assumptions about a special path for Northern Norway seem to hold much less explanatory power about what actually happened in the region. Ideas about certain geographical characteristics, smaller municipalities, and liberty from supranational control did not appear to lessen the depopulation of peripheral areas in Northern Norway compared to Northern Sweden.

The thesis has also focused on finding new knowledge about the development in Northern Norway since the 1950s on the individual, municipal, and regional levels. This thesis adds several new findings about Northern Norway. First, no earlier studies have explored political trust in Northern Norway compared to the rest of the country. This thesis finds it to be lower in national and local politicians alike. Second, the longitudinal demographic comparison with Northern Sweden also added new knowledge, and the development is much more similar than many people think. Third, the role of the universities has been explored as a single-case study but not as a systemic factor for explaining positive municipal development (Papers I and III). Fourth, the local effects of the relocation of state employees had not been explored in the Norwegian case. Since there are relatively few studies internationally, the findings

of a very limited local effect add to the general literature on the relocation of state employees as a tool for local growth.

The methodological aim of the study was to demonstrate the benefits of quantitative, longitudinal, spatial, and multilevel methods in social sciences by using the quantitative tools to study a region that has mainly been studied qualitatively. Especially the comparative study between Northern Norway and Northern Sweden (Paper I) casts light on the pertinence of longitudinal tools for exploring social issues. A cross-sectional analysis of the two countries would wrongly have concluded that the demographic development had been more positive in Northern Norway than in Northern Sweden due to the implementation of a set of specific regional policies for Northern Norway.

Multilevel modeling allows for a much more nuanced exploration of competing explanatory theories. All of the papers in this thesis show how quantitative tools can be extremely useful for finding new knowledge about societal and political issues. Hopefully, more studies concerning Northern Norway and other regions will reveal the benefits of quantitative methods for new findings. A final contribution from this thesis is also the open science approach featuring tools and approaches that other researchers could use in their endeavors.

7.2 Implications

The thesis has implications for both the general literature and for regional policies. It has shown that the central–periphery framework still holds substantial explanatory power for explaining policies and other political outcomes. It is a tension that should not be underestimated by national or regional actors. Elaborating policies that could mend this tension should be of interest for many actors. Factors like demographic and economic growth, which tend to be correlated, are often the goal for these types of policies. Based on the findings in this thesis, one might ask if the current policies for regional development in Northern Norway are meeting their declared objectives.

Regional actors should invest time in re-thinking regional policies. They should ask themselves if general tax breaks for companies or people (as in the case of Finnmark) are the best way forward. Some of the resources spent on these tax breaks could instead be invested in attractive welfare arrangements (e.g. free childcare and after-school programs), region-specific investment funds, and/or major infrastructure investment. Regardless of which side of the political spectrum actors are speaking from, there are sufficient grounds for re-thinking the regional development in Northern Norway.

Discussion of the relocation of state employees should also consider the relatively limited impact that the number of state employees has on local growth and development. Policymakers should have thorough relocation plans that demonstrate how the specific relocation or creation of state jobs could interact with other parts of the local community to stimulate local growth and development based on a strategy supported by thought-through, place-sensitive policies (Iammarino et al., 2018; Rodríguez-Pose & Ketterer, 2019)

Another important implication from this paper is the importance of higher education for regional development. The theoretical and empirical findings supporting the relevance of institutions hosting research and higher education for regional growth are significant. In the modern political era, policymakers somehow seem to omit the spatial dimension of higher education. Research funding is increasingly being channeled through national and European bodies. While this has many obvious advantages in terms of research quality, it is also important for national policymakers to remember that higher education serves goals other than research alone. Universities and university city colleges were established in Northern Norway and Northern Sweden, highly motivated by regional factors. As seen in this thesis, this has probably been the most successful regional policy measured in terms of impact on regional development, even though it is a policy that is not located in the Ministry for Regional Development.

Globalization has marginalized many regions within the developed world and has concentrated economic and political power. Many of the votes cast for Brexit and Donald Trump have been understood as an expression of anger at systems that seem rigged (e.g. Evans & Tilley, 2017; Lee, Morris, & Kemeny, 2018; Rodríguez-Pose, 2018). Unless policymakers grapple seriously with the problem of regional development, the fury of such voters will only increase. This center–periphery tension is by no means a new phenomenon, but it is something that regional and national actors must continually work on.

7.3 Limitations and Future Studies

As mentioned in the Introduction, I have made some choices as to which aspects of regional development have been in focus in this thesis. Thus, there is a myriad of other aspects of regional development that have *not* been treated in this thesis. I could have chosen other economic factors as the dependent variable (in Paper III), but at least all of the models have been run with demographic changes as the dependent variable and produced similar results.

Working with this thesis, I've become increasingly fascinated by time as a factor in social and political studies. I sincerely regret that there is so little data on political trust before 2013. This obviously limits my study, and I would have loved to have those rich sources of data going back 20–30 years or even longer to have a broader foundation upon which to analyze the effects of regional policies.

That said, these types of data will be available for social researchers in the future. An obvious extension of this thesis would be to examine political trust in Northern Norway in the years to come. As mentioned in Chapter 6, the consequences of the peripheral revolt in Finnmark (2017–2018) against the merger between the Troms and Finnmark counties will be extremely interesting to analyze quantitatively. What are the electoral changes in 2017, 2019, and 2021? And will the relative political trust decline further in both national and local politicians?

Finally, this is a quantitative study, with all its advantages and limitations. Done properly, qualitative and quantitative research share the same "logic of inference" (King, Keohane, & Verba, 1994) and could often be complementary (George & Bennett, 2005). Aiming for that which Tarrow (1995) refers to as putting "qualitative flesh on quantitative bone," Abadie, Diamond, and Hainmueller (2015) argue that their synthetic control method provides the qualitative researcher with a quantitative tool to select or validate comparison units. Based on a donor pool of comparable regions and cases, Abadie et al. (2015) use statistical inferential techniques to construct a synthetic version of the unit of study based on a weighted average of most similar cases, chosen by statistical data. In this thesis, this could have been done by a pool of regions, which could then be compared to Northern Norway. In such a study, Northern Sweden would probably be attributed important weight but would not be the only similar region to construct a "synthetic Northern Norway" to evaluate the effects of regional policies. It would have been a useful and complementary study.

Applying a mixed-methodological approach could yield an interesting analysis for qualitatively oriented social scholars. Data from this thesis could be used to select cases for in-depth studies. For example, Hammerfest Municipality is characterized by a high average level of trust in politicians, especially local politicians. Why is the trust so much higher in Hammerfest than in a similar-sized municipality, like Lenvik? An interesting single-case study in terms of population growth is the relative success of Sortland, a growing municipality in the north without higher education institutions. Are there any lessons to be drawn from Sortland?

By its very nature, research is ultimately an incremental process. In that respect, this thesis is merely another step; an attempt at adding a little more knowledge about what happened from 1950 to 2015 in Northern Norway.

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Appendix

All data analyses used in this paper is available for replication at https://github.com/TromsoJonas