

Innovation, culture and politics – An outline for investigating criss-crossing Nordic cleavages

Increasingly innovation systems have come to be understood as regional. This can be seen as a logical continuation of the perception of the economy and its constituting production systems as regional. The present day economic axis of analysis has to a large extent come to be the regional – global axis. This challenges the understanding of how regional innovative behaviour is interwoven with regional culture and politics. Whereas the economy in many respects rightly can be analysed on a regional basis, the framework for innovation policies is often dealt with on a national basis, at least for its institutional aspects. This especially holds true after the first decade of this century witnessed a strong limitation to devolution ambitions in the Nordic countries and a reinforced emphasis on the national political level in shaping innovation policies. When it comes to the regional mosaic of political culture, and hence the ability to respond to various national policies, the picture is, however, less national and more regional. By drawing on the cultural theories of the French scholar, Emmanuel Todd, the paper sets out to investigate how these conflicting parameters affect the conditions for regional innovation systems to be established and to operate.

Innovation systems – scope and geography

Innovation systems can be analysed as broad or narrow. They can also be analysed as national or regional. In its broadest sense an innovation system can be understood as all social and political factors influencing innovation activity. In its narrowest sense, the innovation system can be delimited as the institutional arrangements explicitly set up and the political measures deliberately taken in order to influence the innovation activity of a given society. These categories can then also be specified on a national or a regional level of analysis.

Whereas the economy in many respects rightly can be analysed on a regional basis, the framework for innovation policies should preferably be dealt with on a national basis, at least for its institutional aspects (Hedin et al. 2008) This especially holds true after the present decade has witnessed a strong limitation to devolution ambitions in the Nordic countries and a reinforced emphasis on the national political level in shaping innovation policies.

In Norway the efforts to launch a large-scale devolution regional reform eventually resulted in some minor amendments to the present institutional system, though with the important consequence that a smaller amount of the national research budget was allocated to separate regional bodies. The national ambition to coordinate even this timid attempt to devolution is

well articulated in national policy documents¹. A year-long rivalry between central government and the county councils over the ownership to the central innovation agency, Innovation Norway, should be seen as an illustration of the stalemate over who should have upper hand in innovation policy.

In Sweden it could be argued that the partnership arrangements never really presupposed any strong regional policy base whatsoever. The emerging quest for more political autonomy particularly articulated by the regions of Skåne and Västra Götaland was soon curtailed by national policy regulations leaving the imprint of Sweden as a strongly centralised country. Typical for Sweden is that the growth agreement configuration involved the central state apparatus on the one side and the regional state apparatus through the County Administrative Board on the other. Of course, one could argue that this Spinoza arrangement of God playing with himself could duly be classified as partnership, though a more frank way to state it would be to label the Swedish model as some advanced form of political masturbation. A more polite way to describe the model has been to label it as partnerships by state-led design (Östhol and Svensson 2002:85-134).

In Denmark the important local and regional reform of 2005-7 came as a state-led initiative primarily to reshape the municipal sector within an explicitly stated paradigm of modernisation of the public sector. The reform then also dealt with reshaping the old counties into new and fewer regions. There was no ambition, however, in the reform to (re-)establish these regions as active agents for fostering regionally grounded policies of innovation. Instead the Danish innovation system relies as before on rather low-profiled partnership arrangements where the imprint of political *laissez-faire* is more predominant than in the other Nordic countries (Asheim and Mariussen 2010; Lundvall 2002).

Finland was in many respects the most interesting of the Nordic countries as regards innovation policy. This stems from the early 1990ies and the strong government initiative to make use of innovation related institutions in a state-led public private partnership model to enhance national economic growth (Virkkala 2002). The way this model developed in an almost Byzantine way of layers and nexuses of actors and policy initiatives coined the empirical scene of the ultimate framework for what was subsequently labelled process-based regional development policy in a Nordic context (Sotarauta and Bruun 2002). The Finnish national innovation policy options seemed to go well together with a semi two tier policy system that relied on strongly institutionalised negotiations thus fitting the requirements of a model of governance almost *par excellence*. In the last few years the top-down aspects of the model has been somewhat attenuated without losing its systemic governance imprint (Asheim and Mariussen 2010).

NIS or RIS?

The question of whether we are dealing with a national or a regional system of innovation can as argued above be analysed as a question of institutional set-up and as a question of vertical power balances within the policy chain. Furthermore it should also be understood as a question of how policy works. Describing an institutional system is of course of some initial value, but does not tell us much about whether the system works or not. We therefore need to consider two theory traditions in addition to that of institutional analysis, the theories of implementation and the theories of political culture and participation.

¹ The tender documents for the evaluation of the regional research funds explicitly mention the need to strengthen the national coordination of regionally financed research (Norges forskningsråd 2010:5).

Theories of implementation take the top down-perspective on politics, asking if policies are implemented in accordance with face value. Not surprisingly most research within this tradition concludes that policies seldom are implemented as expected by the policy makers and lists numerous factors that explain the various discrepancies (Barrett and Fudge 1981). In this paper I will not follow up on this, but in stead give attention to the factor of political culture and participation.

Political culture and participation could be said to represent the bottom up-perspective on policy implementation and presupposes that we accept the idea that politics are mediated in a circular input-output-model (Easton 1957). Policies are, to succeed, dependent on acceptance and participation by their target-groups. If policies do not meet the political culture sheared by those for which they are intended, they will eventually tend to fail. We can think of three ways of reacting to policies. Policies can be rejected, they can be subject to distortions or modifications to fit the target groups' expectancies or they can be subject to reformulation by re-entering the input-loop. The latter solution is the classical throughput-idea identified with good political practice. This simple model suggests the importance of studying the culture of a given entity, be it a firm, a nation or a region, to understand its innovation potential and its liability to respond to innovation policies.

Culture and Innovation

The concept of culture is often brought forward as crucial to the understanding of regional innovation systems. However, the concept of culture as such, and the way in which it relates to the formation of a distinctly regional system of economic behaviour, is seldom dealt with in depth. Following Marshall, culture often boils down to something that happens to be “in the air” (Arbo and Selstad 2004:309; Lundvall 2002). More optimistically, but in no way more trustworthy, is it when the cultural part is by some known or unknown procedure transformed from an unexplained residual to an identifiable component of knowledge, be it formalised or tacit, and presented as the final component for understanding regional variations in economic growth and development (Lommerud 1993 cit. in Arbo and Selstad 2004:46-47).

In the learning region-tradition a systematic approach is taken linking knowledge to innovation through various institutions and practices. This offers valuable insight in the forms and mechanisms of knowledge as they pertain to innovation, but it is rare to see any analysis of the culture rationales and practices *per se* in this type of literature. Gertler (2004) in a general overview of the field of study makes a point of culture both being taken for granted and highly under-analysed in much of what has been written on innovation in relation to geography. His own discussion of what he labels cultural attitudes and values, as distinguished from societal institutions, does however not open up for any substantial discussion of culture as a separate and institutionalised aspect of social practice either. Gertler's (2004) analysis is hardly a genuinely cultural social analysis, but rather a culturally informed piece of economic geography.

An exception to the non-treatment of culture as a field of analysis in its own right and with reference to innovation research is represented by the Danish *life mode-tradition*. Following the work of Højrup, Hjalager and Lindgaard (1984) elaborate on three different life-modes in Danish context explaining how these life-modes dispose for meeting with economic and political challenges in local settings. The life-mode is presented as a form of integrated cultural and economic type of adaptation that apply to persons and households in a given

historical and geographical context. The cultural and economic rationales appear as intertwined and mutually reinforcing, accentuating, almost creating, a Weberian ideal-type of agency without labelling it so².

The literature on regional innovation systems and on the broader concepts of cluster or industrial districts often seems to rely on a foundation of practice and embeddedness in order to cope with the cultural factor. When stated more explicitly, variables such as social and class structure, educational level and social and economic interaction in many forms are depicted. These are undoubtedly important factors for understanding economic behaviour, but they are in no way pointing at substantially cultural theories of explanations. Therefore, one is often left with the impression that culture even by some of the main authors of the regional innovation canon is treated as an add-on to a basic economic or economy-close way of analysis. It is much harder to get the cultural than the economical pivotal point in i.e. Piore and Sable (1984) and Porter (1990). Even for the godfather of the concept of the learning economy, Bengt-Åke Lundvall, culture seems mainly to be understood as given and independent variables and historically exogenous traits pertaining to the socio-economic systems in question. In his discussion on the Danish innovation system some root cultural values are identified, but they are not theorised other as influential on the general national attitude towards research, schooling, labour market behaviour and so on (Lundvall 2002). Even when commenting upon Grundtvig, which he lifts to the forefront as a leading figure important to understanding the establishment of the social climate conducive to the present Danish mode of innovation, he does so only with a sketchy, almost journalistic, remark. There is no analysis of the Grundtvigian contribution or the Grundtvigian phenomenon as such (Lundvall 2002:191-2), which makes us wonder why the author really thinks he should be mentioned at all.

There exists a rich literature on the relationship between culture and economy, much of which belongs to the various traditions of grand theory. It is rather curious that so little of this literature has been drawn upon in order to sharpen the analyses on such phenomena as industrial districts, variations in regional economic performances and regional innovation systems, curious because this is a bulk of literature that plays an important role in other social sciences dealing with culture such as anthropology, demography, history and sociology.

One cannot start a discussion on the relationship between culture and economy without mentioning Max Weber and the capitalism-debate. Weber's (1947) ambition was to classify all the main world religious systems in order to evaluate their impact on social and economic development, a project that he did not live to fulfil. His main point was that the basic cultural mind-sets are formative to economic behaviour and that the empirical differences in these mind-sets, which he in his historical context mainly identified as religious, are of paramount importance to explain social and regional variations in economic activity.

Weber has been contested on ontological and empirical grounds. But it should be rather obvious that in our age, where the concept of learning regions has come to the forefront, Weber's theoretical positions seem more appetising than they may have been earlier, especially because he also has given valuable contributions to the understanding of agency in social science.

² Indeed, to the authors of this tradition, the Weberian analogy could perhaps more be taken as an insult than as a sign of recognition.

The Norwegian political sociologist, Stein Rokkan, emphasises the differentiation of social spheres in his famous cleavage model (Rokkan 1967). Vested political, economic and cultural interests were increasingly institutionalised through European history and on different geographical levels and brought to struggle which each other over the establishment of hegemonic power relations. Rokkan does not specify any *ex ante* position on the primacy of any of his spheres analysed. Politics, economy and culture on the contrary influence each other reciprocally within various geographic centre-periphery arenas, thus giving rise to the well-known mosaic of European regions.

The French historian and demographer, Emmanuel Todd (1983, 1987, 1990) like Rokkan belongs to the cleavage-tradition, but unlike Rokkan he puts the sphere of reproduction to the forefront. In Emmanuel Todd's model the cultural values are fundamentally attached to the sphere of reproduction stemming from the idea that what is reproduced and learned in *micro* (i.e. the family) will be reflected in the way we behave in *macro* (i.e. in the economic and political sphere). He therefore starts out to make an empirical catalogue of all the main family-types of the European regions according to his own typology, a project that leaves him with 483 units of analysis. For the Nordic countries he uses the counties as base units. In addition to the family structure, he emphasises the structure of home and land ownership and the ownership to the means of production.

Todd's emphasis on the family structure is due to a reinterpretation of the family in European and global history. It is a common misunderstanding, he says, to believe that some form of extended family used to dominate the European scene until it by the breakthrough of modernisation was replaced by the nuclear family. Based on the works of Peter Laslett and Frédéric Le Play and his own research he maintains that several and highly diverse family types have had a largely stable geographical distribution through history, perhaps for more than a millenium. What is typically European is not a succession from an extended family to the nuclear family, but the fact that a variety of family types maintain their regional hegemony over such a long time- span.

The fact that we perceive the nuclear family that we find in England (and in the US, Brittany, Holland, Denmark and Southeast Norway) as the modern family type, is because this family type was hegemonic in the regions where modern industrial capitalism emerged. The family type is therefore without further discussion taken as equally modern as the economic system to which it gave birth. It may well be that the nuclear family as an ideal diffuses alongside with industrialisation, but as he underlines when dealing with the question on the global scene, this is only seemingly. The German and Japanese forms of modernisation are both associated with the much more hierarchic family types typical for these two countries, and hence the modernisation process has taken a different and less liberalistic course in these countries (Todd 1983).

The basic family typology

According to Todd there are four variables, almost organisational principles, determining the family types

A. The degree of horizontal (un)equality within the family

If children are treated as equals, we have to do with a family type that socialises children to accept equality as a basic value. The culture will then support the idea of equality and reproduce it through generations. Alternatively, a family type that treats children unequally, as

it happens where allodial possession to land (*odel*) prevails, will be supported by a culture that justifies inequality. A practical way to determine the practice of equality or inequality is according to Todd to look for the institutionalisation of inheritance. In some societies inheritance is made up on an equal basis, in others it is subject to inequality either by prescribed procedures or by the random operation of a will.

B. The degree of authority within the family

If the family builds on authority, this will be reflected in the culture by its production and reproduction of belief in authority. If the family type pays little attention to authority, the culture will subsequently also reflect a disregard for authority. This dimension Todd attaches to the relation between generations, making it the vertical dimension in his typology. Where all three generations live together, Todd labels the family type authoritarian. Where the children leave the household to form a household of their own, and thus break away from their parents, this represents a truly anti-authoritarian trait in the family type.

Figure 1. European Family types according to Todd (1990:33)

Family type	Equality	Authority
Absolute nuclear family	No	No
Egalitarian nuclear family	Yes	No
Stem family	No	Yes
Communal family	Yes	Yes

These are the main variables he uses to construct his European family types. In addition he mentions two more variables:

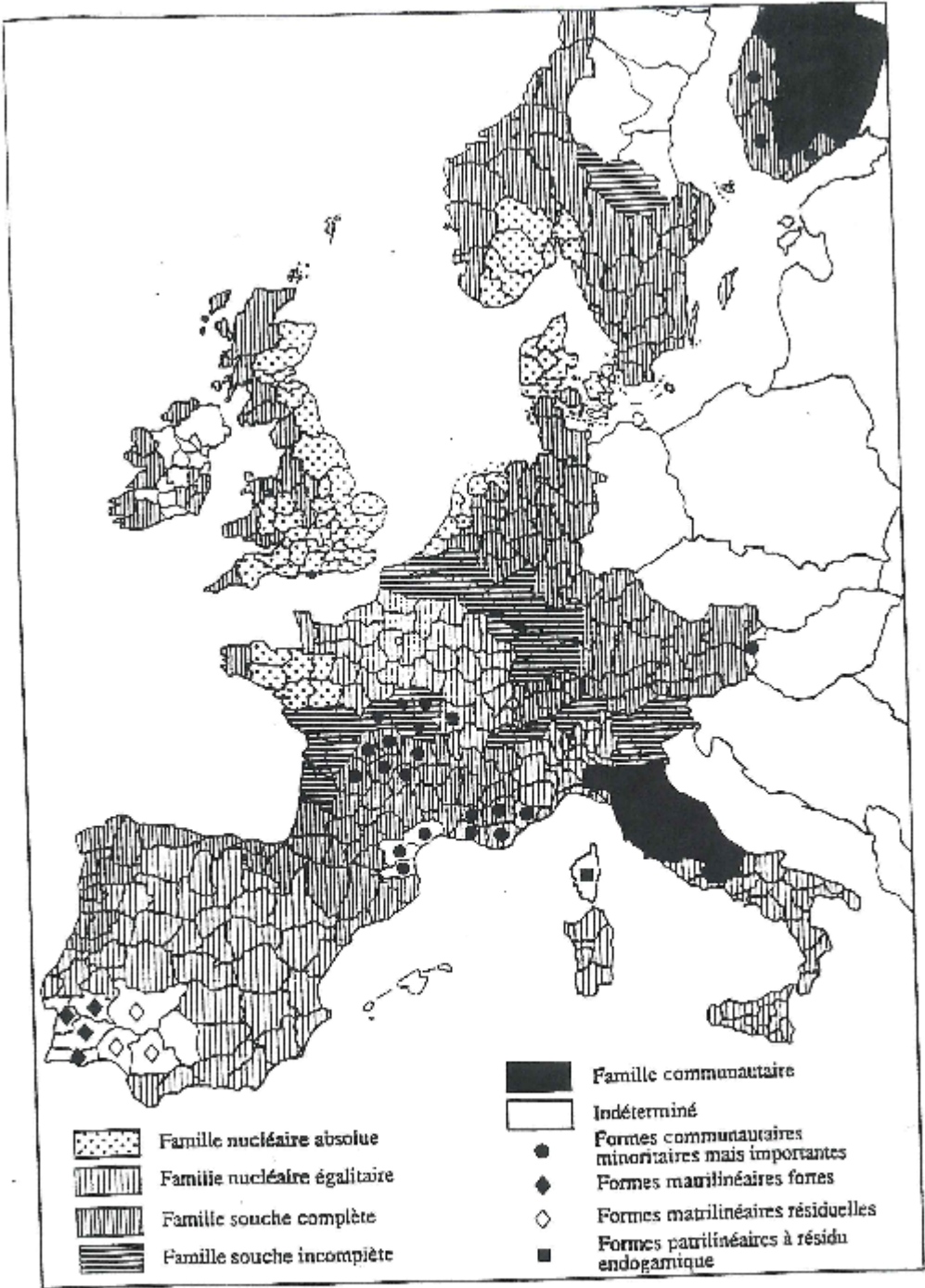
C. The degree of endogamy and exogamy within the family

This variable covers whether marriage takes place between persons from the same family or between persons from different families. Endogamy, according to Todd, creates seclusion, introversion and protection, whereas exogamy creates openness, exposition and vulnerability. Endogamy traditionally plays an almost negligible role in Europe, but is important in much of the Islamic world. Todd argues that endogamy offers a poor cultural soil to innovation. He further argues that the escalating conflict between the Christian and Islamic civilisations has more to do with conflicting attitudes between cultures of endogamy and exogamy than with a conflict between the religious belief-systems as such.

D. Mother-line /Father-line

Todd (1983, 1987) maintains that a strong role for women in the family structure is a determinant for social and economic development. Besides the obvious argument of making use of all human resources within a society, he points to the historical role of women in the socialisation of children and hence their tendency to be stronger agents for cultural (re-)production in primary social relations than men. Women's inheritance rights, educational level and relative age at marriage are all important indicators when determining women's status. Todd argues that women historically were strong within the regions of the stem family pointing to Germany and the Nordic countries as typical cases. Therefore these countries experienced a cultural modernisation through widespread literacy, which preceded the economic and political modernisation of the same countries. Oppositely, early economic and

political modernizers such as England, Scotland and France lagged in cultural modernisation in regard to their early economic and political modernisation.



Figur 2. "Les types familiaux: synthèse".

Figure 2. The European family types (Source: Todd 1990:63)

The four family types in Todd's scheme have the following characteristics:

Absolute nuclear family: A couple makes up a household on their own. The children are treated with little prediction as to status. Inequality is tolerated. A will is often used to regulate inheritance. Nuclear family means that no grandparents are included in the household. This is the most individualistically disposed of the four types. Generations are split and children are also treated on an individual basis.

Egalitarian nuclear family: This type is distinguished from the former type by the children being treated equally, by inheritance and in other respects. This is the less authoritarian of the family types because of the suppression of the ability to administer inequality between heirs.

Stem family: When the children marry, one of them and normally the eldest son, brings his wife to his parents' household which typically comes to be made up of three generations. The eldest son normally inherits the premises undivided, whereas the other children are compensated otherwise and subsequently move away either to set up new or to join other households.

Communal family: When the sons marry, they all bring their wives to the family household. The married sons are all under the equal authority of their father in a common family structure. When the father dies, the structure breaks up and each of the sons forms new structures with their sons again. Thus authority is combined with equality among brothers.

The argument is that these family types are unequally distributed throughout Europe, and that each of them has a hegemonic status within a region where it also sets the framework for cultural socialisation. Todd cannot explain how these forms evolved in the first place, though he offers some speculations as to their origin. He points to evidence that the English nuclear family is well documented in the Middle ages, and that the communal family type so typical for the Third Italy may be a legacy from its Etruscan past.

The question then should be asked: how prevailing are these family patterns today? The nuclear family is hardly threatened as such even by the occurrence of more incomplete families, but the authoritarian family types are clearly challenged by urbanisation and the diminishing influence of agriculturally related household structures. The number of three generations households are also dwindling, but the family framework can be maintained for instance by grandparents being involved in child care, by children setting up new households in the vicinity of their parents, by intergenerational economic support and by grandparents being consulted for important family decisions. Thus the basic structures of authority or emancipation survive the mere break up of the old household patterns, making the cultural form viable through new generations.

From family to culture

Todd's basic cultural thesis derives from his *micro to macro* operation. What is learnt in the family is practised in society. In this he belongs to the projection-tradition in cultural analysis that we typically associate with a Freudian view in psychology³ and with a Durkheimian position within sociology.

³ It is interesting that Freud, who for obvious reasons did not know the geography of family types came to generalise from the family type he met in Vienna, namely the stem family type with its complicated intergenerational tensions.

When Todd generalises from his family typology to the cultural sphere, he postulates that the cultural forms found in a region will be those that correspond to the hegemonic family type in the same region. These forms are created when a given ideological impulse meets with a given family type. Classical examples are how the course of the Reformation, the French revolution, the literacy revolution, the Industrial revolution and the vague of secularisation all swept the European continent with so strikingly different results, according to Todd only understood when considering the anthropological terrains these revolutions confronted.

A good example is presented by the process of secularisation. We are used to think of this process as involved with urbanisation, modernisation and industrialisation (Martin 1976). The first wave of secularisation sweeps over Europe in the period 1730-1800 and is parallel to the Age of Enlightenment. This early period of secularisation is furthermore associated with the Paris region, which is understandable if we think of urbanisation and modernisation, but which is less understandable in relation to the lack of industrialisation of Paris and of France at this historical stage. Even more problematic is the fact that the other regions to secularise at this time are the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula, Sardinia, Provence and Southern Italy, regions that neither then nor today excel as modernising by any parameters.

But these regions are all dominated by the egalitarian nuclear family, which are characterised by its values liberty and equality. The lack of ability to conceive authority (God) and inequality (salvation or perdition) makes it easy for the inhabitants of these regions to overthrow the Christian faith.

Opposed to this, regions dominated by Catholicism, like Belgium, the Southern part of the Netherlands, Rhineland, Southern Germany, Switzerland and Northern Italy, remained Christian strongholds way into the post world war II-period despite these being the most industrialised and modernised region in Europe. The reason for this is that these regions all are dominated by the stem family, a type of family that accepts authority and inequality alike and therefore is not prone to question its own Catholicism.

Protestantism is usually understood as a belief system with a weaker social foundation than Catholicism. The more individually based Protestantism is thus more vulnerable to secularisation than its more socially embedded Catholic counterpart (Berger 1967, Houtart 1977, Weber 1947). Even so, the Lutheran regions experience their secularisation much later than the earliest secularised Catholic regions despite the aforementioned early literacy revolution taking place in these Lutheran parts of Europe. Todd explains this late secularisation, which only starts around 1880, by pointing to these regions being dominated by the stem family. The disposition for secularisation in Protestantism is therefore withheld by a family type that precisely does not dispose for secularisation.

Todd occupies himself so intensively with the process of secularisation because it becomes the cradle for later ideologies, be they religious or secular in nature. It is a rather common position to see the downfall of the ancient Catholic and Protestant holistic cultures as a prerequisite for the emergence of the new, individually oriented and mutually competing belief-systems. The process of secularisation thus immediately prepares the ground for successive waves of religious and political revivals (Hervieu-Léger 1987).

The Family typology and political ideologies

If we then leave the religious terrain and look at how politics interfere with the family-types, Todd starts out with three main categories, Socialism, Nationalism and a reactive religious category. In addition, there are of course minor categories as the agrarian ideologies in the Nordic countries and various smaller ethnic and other ideologies in different parts of Europe.

	Basic values	Socialism	Nationalism	Reactive religiosity
Egalitarian nuclear family	Liberty and equality	Anarcho-Socialism	Liberal-Militarism	Christian Republicanism
Stem family	Authority and inequality	Social Democracy	Ethnocentrism	Christian Democracy
Communal family	Authority and equality	Communism	Fascism	
Absolute nuclear family	Liberty and inequality	Labour, Travaillisme (zéro-socialism)	Liberal-isolationism	

Figure 3. The main European political ideologies.

Let me exemplify the model by explaining the case of socialism.

Anarcho-Socialism is predominantly found in regions dominated by the egalitarian nuclear family, which means the Paris basin, Provence, most of Spain, central parts of Portugal, Northwest and Southern Italy in addition to Latin America. By combining equality with a strong contempt for authority, Anarcho-Socialism mirrors the basic principles of the egalitarian nuclear family. Anarcho-Socialism is more a trait pertaining to socialist and communist parties than a party-maker itself, which follows from its dysfunctional attitude to organising and authority. Where it prevails, it tends to be one of the main causes to political instability. The ideology prescribes withdrawal from political and governance bodies and tends either to turn introvert towards social and political seclusion or to prescribe open violence against public and private sources of power.

The result is societies which are hard to govern because the basic accept for authority is not present in the value system. This fundamental tendency to non-accept for government in turn leads the Right in these same societies to alter between liberality – which is the logical anthropological position - and military reaction becoming the negation of this position. This negation then becomes manifest in series of military coups and attempts at coups, a development that historically has been driven to its extreme in Latin America.

The often incomprehensible alternation between popular irresponsibility and bureaucratic rigidity is the everyday imprint of the antiauthoritarian dilemma as it is met in many Latin countries (Peyrefitte 1977). For those European countries where the egalitarian nuclear family operates, this alternation between freedom and discipline is further accentuated by the fact that large parts (of the periphery) of these countries are dominated by other and more authoritarian family types. It is important to understand this in order to comprehend the regional conflicts exposed in connection to major turning points in history as the Spanish Civil War and the French Revolution, but also in order to get to the core of the conflicts between economically successful regions in (the periphery of countries like and Italy and Spain and (centrally located, but) more lagging regions in the same countries.

When it comes to Social Democracy, Todd substantiates that it dominates countries like Sweden, Germany, Austria, and to some extent Norway where the stem family is strong. In addition there are Social-Democratic traits in Socialist parties in other countries, especially in regions dominated by the same family type. Todd holds Sweden and Germany to be the best examples of Social-Democratic societies. Two features are typical for Social Democracy, Todd argues, the acceptance of inequality and the acceptance of authority. The acceptance for inequality shows itself in the tolerance for the market as a constituting element of the social order. This is not the case for Anarcho-Socialism and Communism, the variants of Socialism frequently found where equality values are part of the family types. What Social-Democracy does to attenuate the inequality aspect is to subsume the market under the institute of planning and thereby the control of the public sector, at least in rhetorical terms, thus making it more acceptable. The acceptance for authority shows in the way Social Democracy favours system building. The state model is hierarchical with its national father figures and its subordinated cadre, almost making a replica of the three-generational family model found on its terrains⁴.

Communism unites authority and equality. So does the family type with which it goes together. This is true on the global scene and for Europe. If we take Western Europe, we find Communism predominantly in Southern Portugal, along the northern parts of the French Massif Central, in Northern and Eastern Finland and in the Third Italy. These are the only regions in Western Europe together with Burgenland in Austria where the communal family prevails.

In some of these regions, the expansion of communism is often explained by referring to the class structure and to patterns of land ownership. This is pointing in the right direction, Todd comments, but can be better understood if we couple class structure and land ownership to the family type. Under egalitarian family regimes where everything has to be sheared equally, landed property is often fragmented through generations to the extent that each property becomes insufficient for feeding a family. This frequently results in land being sold to larger landowners giving rise to an extremely unequal agrarian structure. The equality ideals of the communal family thus paradoxically give rise to a very unequal social structure, the typical *latifundio* structure, which then as a consequence becomes intolerable for ideological reasons in these very same societies. Where the stem family prevails, where the farm passes intact from father to son, and where inequality is tolerated, the end result is paradoxically a fairly even distribution of land ownership in the population with numerous small and middle-sized family-owned farms.

Labour (travaillisme, zéro-socialism) like Social-Democracy accepts inequality by accepting the market institution. Labour does however not build systems as a consequence of its low appreciation for authority. Todd picks the best examples from English-speaking countries like England and Australia, but also mentions Denmark and with some hesitation again, Norway. The Labour-type of socialism is in many respects the response from the left to the liberal-pragmatic challenge⁵.

Culture and the Nordic innovation debate

⁴ It is almost amusing that Todd wrote this before having known the era of Göran Persson, without downplaying the role model value of persons like Tage Erlander and Olof Palme.

⁵ This was written before the Blair-epoque and its third way which in many ways coined the centre-left response to liberal-conservatism as an explicit ideology.

A more thorough discussion on Todd and his relevance for analysing political and religious variations of behaviour can be found in Knudsen (1994). But let us now see what happens when we make a first attempt to apply Todd's scheme on some questions concerning innovation and innovation policy in the Nordic countries.

There is a large debate taking place these days on the nature of the Nordic economies and the scope of the presumed Nordic model. This debate has changed somewhat in content over the years. Whereas it in the first post-war decades was centred on the Nordic welfare states and their potential as role models, the debate has now come to concentrate on the viability of a Nordic model for coping with the present economic strains related to the international economic crisis. This turn has put the occupation with the Nordic capitalist system and the Nordic ability to innovate to the forefront (Fellmann et al 2008.) The occupation with the Nordic scene, especially in the wider international context, tend however to overemphasise what is common Nordic and to downplay the disparities between the various countries and even more so between the various regions of these countries.

It is always important to have an understanding of the business system as a foundation for the innovation system. The diamond model is fairly often used to portray the main constituents of a business system (Fellmann et al. 2008:7). This model is occupied with the public and private institutional regulation of the business activity and its related factor in-put, but skips the cultural part. What the diamond model does not do, is to specify if the model will work under all cultural conditions, or to ask whether there are certain cultural environments that a more favourable to the model's operation than others are. One is therefore left with a feeling that the analyses made within this tradition offer a rather meagre understanding of the cultural aspects of the study objects. So it is with Fellmann et al (2008) too. We learn that there may be a main divide between a liberalistic or *ad hoc* Danish and Norwegian business culture on the one side and a more systemic oriented Swedish and Finnish culture on the other side. But we do not get to the core of why this is so.

If we go to Olav Wicken (2004) we find a more culturally rooted, and therefore a more in-depth analysis of how regionally shaped production systems correspond with regional variations in political inclination and mobilisation. Starting out with the variations in Norwegian political behaviour and voter alignments between the Oslofjord region and the western coastal band of the country, Wicken places his analysis in a solid tradition of literature on this classic cleavage pattern (Rokkan 1967). His additional insight consists in showing that the cleavage has important bearings on the positions taken towards the ideas of industrial policies. Whereas the coastal West mainly supported a "French" system of decentralised bottom up industrialisation, the Oslofjord region was the national cradle of the "English" system of Fordist large scale industrialisation. These different positions were rooted in the political culture of the two regions and this also entailed two opposed views on social class and industrial relations.

Wicken then links these two political positions on industrialisation to long-lasting disputes over industrial policies on the national level. The conflicting centre-periphery understanding of the nature of industrial relations necessarily entailed a struggle at the national level of which strategy to undertake in order to enhance and spur national industrialisation in the inter- and post-war period. His point is to show that the national policy was heavily swayed by the influence of the various regional political cultures with the result that the national policy over the years tended to become more multifaceted than it would, had it not been for these cleavages.

Though he is not explicit on the subject, it could be inferred that some of the same patterns would be relevant for innovation policy.

What Wicken discusses is that the input side of politics has important consequences for the throughput aspects of politics and finally for its output. The political measures taken and implemented should be understood in relation to the formative backdrop of their conception and acceptance. To put it even clearer, one could argue that political arrangements and institutions will have selective relevance and success with regard to the political soil they face when put to practice.

This in turn influences the way political institutions should be set up to cater for innovation and industry policies. Faced with a mosaic of regional preconditions regarding political culture and economic structure, national innovation policies should be equally diverse in ways of coping with the challenges they are set to meet.

This has been recognised when it comes to explicit socio-economic parameters of development, and is manifest in the way regional development policies are institutionalised in the Nordic countries. However, very little political attention has been given to the need for coping with regional variations in cultural outlook, behaviour and attitude towards innovation.

It could be argued that there is a distinction to be made here between the ways in which politics are perceived when it comes to influencing economic activity. Whereas most conventional models of thought presuppose that economic and political behaviour can influence each other reciprocally in a rather instrumental fashion, Todd (1987:131ff) argues that economic behaviour is the end result of a chain of events that starts with some basic variations in family models. These models are exposed to and respond differently to a general push for rise in the age of marriage and the historic phenomenon of wide-spread literacy. The outcome is among other things a regionally differentiated acceptance of economic modernisation. Todd's notion of modernisation can then easily be transformed into a notion of innovation following much of the same logic.

Bridging Todd and Wicken

Combining Todd with Wicken it should be argued that the distinction between a Western and a Southeast Norwegian mode of innovation corresponds with deep-rooted cultural value systems. The Southeast pattern of *laissez-faire*-minded liberalism and pragmatic value attitudes is according to Todd (1990:63, 420-432) shared with most of the North Sea rim regions, including the eastern part of Great Britain. This attitude is formed by the absolute nuclear family type as the main socializing institution. Interestingly, Wicken (2004) labels the Southeast Norwegian form of industrialisation as *English*. But where Wicken stresses that *English* means the welcoming of large scale industrialisation and Fordism, the implication of Todd would be to stress the Oslofjord region as a one of fostering pragmatic and extremely adaptive and flexible DUI economic relations with very little vertical loyalty in line with the region's anthropological inclination. In this context it is interesting to note that Lundvall (2002: 83ff, 197) makes a point of the Danish tendency to very high inter-firm labour market mobility and low vertical firm-directed solidarity comparative to other OECD economies. It would be logical according to Todd if the same pattern could be found in Southeast Norway.

Wicken labels the Western industrialising model as the *French* model, emphasising its bottom up and family dependent pattern of organisation. In doing this, he will be in perfect line with Todd (1990:63,420-432) who argues that the western part of Norway, like parts of France and most of Germany and Sweden is dominated by the stem family type, an authoritarian category that should predispose for the set up of family businesses with multi-generational involvement and vertical solidarity. This is a family type, Todd argues, that has been crucial to specific phases of European modernisation by its insistence on socialising literacy and cultural learning within small-scale, highly disciplined, family controlled arenas.

There is thus an obvious and often commented conflict of scale and class between the Southeast Norwegian and the Western Norwegian mode of coping with the economy, but there is also a more important and underlying conflict between a Southeast Norwegian flexibility of the Danish/British type and a Western Norwegian attitude of control and discipline. This cleavage is also well-known in Norway, and is perhaps even more manifest in the cultural and political confrontations between the two regions (Knudsen 1986, Rokkan 1967, Øidne 1957).

For Western Norway we should as for Sweden, following Todd, expect less labour market mobility and stronger vertical solidarity. This should be due to the primacy of the authoritarian family type present in these areas. However, there is an important distinction to be made between the two countries. Whereas Western Norway is characterised by an extremely small-scaled and egalitarian economic structure, most of Sweden has a large scale economic tradition and a related polarised class profile inherited from its agricultural past. Thus the vertical structure of the Swedish labour market is typically made up of dependency on the large company which is mediated politically in a classical left-right conflict dimension, whereas the Western Norwegian vertical labour market structure is that of loyalty to the small and medium-sized family firm, which in turn finds its political imprint in the rejection of class polarisation and the welcoming of a Christian liberal tradition, which Todd (1999:427-430) rightly identifies as not very liberal, ideologically speaking.

Interestingly, where the Swedish class structure is weakened and resembles that of Western Norway, as in parts of Småland, it can be argued that the similarities in family structure is matched by an equal similarity in company structure, that is the predominance of the family-based small and medium sized firm with a strong tendency to innovate.

Class also plays an important role in Eastern Norway, especially in the two inland counties of Oppland and Hedmark, where the agrarian structure historically resembles that of Sweden with a substantial class of crofters in economic and political conflict with a thin stratum of large land-owners. Unlike the Southeast parts of Norway, these inland counties according to Todd (1990) adhere to the authoritarian family type. Having some resemblances in economic structure with the Swedish resource-based large company typology, it is not surprising that this Northeast corner of South Norway has subsequently been associated as a region performing more poorly in terms of innovation (Spilling 1984:20). The combination of a closed resource base linked to sun-set industries and a pairing of the authoritarian family type with an acute class polarization, should be expected to predispose for an unfavourable innovation climate.

Furthermore, it should be questioned whether the class aspect is perhaps overestimated by Wicken for the Oslofjord region, especially for its ideological depth. Todd makes a point about the Danish and Southeast Norwegian variety of Socialism being in line with the English

Labour-type. According to Todd's scheme, the Northeast part of Norway along with Sweden should produce a much more ideologically consistent type of Social-Democratic thinking in line with the expectations of the authoritarian family type present in these parts of Scandinavia. It could theoretically easily be argued that the Labour variety will take a more welcoming stance towards an innovative turn on economic behaviour than the classical Social-Democratic variety. Such a differentiation would also make sense in the Norwegian case adding explanative power to the discrepancies between a Southeast and a Northeast type of cultural attitude. However, I will be more reluctant to make a too strong case for advocating a Swedish ideological lock-in on Social-Democratic dogmatism.

For Western Norway, as for some other Nordic regions where the stem family prevails like Småland and Southern Ostrobothnia, this family type goes along with very identical models of small scale business innovation and fervent religious lay movements. The specific combination of this type of religious practice and innovation is well known in beforehand, the point made by Todd about these regions all having the same family type, could however open up for new angles of researching these themes.

Another interesting case for further research is the parallel occurrence of the communal family on the European scene in the Third Italy and in the North and East of Finland. Which are the possible lines of explanation in these two cases, as both Finland and the Third Italy have been frontrunners in exemplifying innovative practice? Reading Emmanuel Todd through the lenses of innovation thus offers some stunning insights, but also raises a number of new questions.

Possible lessons for policy research

In a book to appear in short time Asheim and Mariussen (2010) argue that the innovation policies pursued in the Nordic countries are very different concerning strategies and measures, but that they all have proved to be successful related to broadly accepted indicators for economic renewal, competitiveness and level of living. This conclusion immediately appears as *bona fide*. On the other hand, if various policy paths have been followed with an equal outcome, the first critical question should be whether the innovation policies have had any impact at all. Perhaps the relative similarity in economic performance between these countries could be explained by other and more general features than the innovation policies, or at least the notion of innovation policy should be stretched to its limits.

It is a general insight that the impact of innovation policies on a given regional or national economy is hard to evaluate. Warnings have also been made that the political ambitions to stage and to succeed with innovation policies may surpass realism for several reasons (Jacobsen and Fløysand 2010). These reasons can broadly be divided into two categories. Firstly, one should have a realistic evaluation of the cultural conditions underlying innovative behaviour and of the ability to sway such behaviour through political measures in the first place. Secondly, it is all too easy to underestimate the complexity of social systems which a given policy measure has to cross in order to perform (Isaksen 2010). In its optimistic quest for achievement social science in general and innovation research in special both have a tendency to promise the stars, especially in a policy field so hyped as innovation policy happens to be.

The analysis undertaken by Asheim and Mariussen (2010) seems to presuppose that policies are implemented without problems and that the institutional design of the policy system *per se*

gives a fair picture of the political importance and content related to the system in question. Implementation theory tells us quite the opposite.

A far-going elaboration on Todd from a political point of view could be that one cannot really manipulate the readiness to innovate through political measures. It is rather the other way round. The liability to innovate or not is dependent on anthropological and social structures that themselves seem both very hard to influence by politics or even illegitimate to put on the political agenda. Even more, one can argue that these structures give rise to, mould and deflect political ideas in the first place. To believe in the success of innovation policies is then comparable to believe in cutting diamonds with a knife. Todd (1987:178) in his most extreme position observing the dismantling of Eastern Europe communism, himself being a former communist, holds the view that “...*action on part of the State does not at all emerge as essential to progress. This is a complete paradox, in view of the vast importance with which State action is invested by contemporary economic and political literature.*” Though this comment is given in another context than the Nordic innovation scene, we should from time to time devote ourselves to critical examination of our political pretensions and insights, especially so, when our devotion to analysing cultural checks and drivers to innovation is so incomplete as it is.

More optimistically, following Hjalager and Lindgaard (1984:11-13) innovative behaviour can be politically influenced positively and negatively, positively if policy measures meet the potential of a given life-mode and set out to open up its potential for development. In this sense, they argue, policies should be socially and geographically contextualised. Returning to Todd again, we could rephrase this to asking for policies that are sensitive to and responsive to the distinct varieties of culture of which the various regions are made up.

If we take Todd's perspective and stretches it to the analysis of the partnership experiences within Nordic regional development policy, some observations fit in rather easily. The inability of the Swedish partnership model to escape its state-led framing seems perfectly in line with Todd's analyses of the anthropological preconditions underlying the Swedish society (Östhol and Svensson 2002). Equally clear is the congruence between his laissez-faire analysis of Denmark and the pragmatic system built up for regional innovation support in this country (Asheim and Mariussen 2010, Halkier and Flockhart 2002, Lundvall 2002). In the Norwegian case Todd seems to hesitate, the country being split by two opposing family types. He follows up that the political response is equally split, and that this split is a systemic aspect of Norwegian politics and for Norwegian culture as a whole (Todd 1990:420-432). In terms of innovation support, Gjertsen (2002) and Östhol and Svensson (2002:235 ff) conclude that the Norwegian partnership response has been both weak and confusing and thus not being able to perform a distinct policy as such. This is line with Todd's general analysis of the Norwegian case.

We do not know, however, too much about whether partnership success or not is a good parameter for evaluating innovative behaviour. Todd devotes much space to the discussion of vertical and horizontal loyalties and ties. In terms of innovation, we could translate this into a concept of disciplined versus undisciplined innovative behaviour. In these days of fascination for all kinds of pull-oriented innovation theories, of which Richard Florida (2002) may have presented the ultimate city-lights version, it should be (re-)emphasised that much of the history of innovation and social renewal is a history of discipline, loyalty and, in the extreme cases, even of existential fear operating through cultural systems (Weber 1947). It is therefore highly probable that for many, even in the Nordic setting, the arenas for loyalty and

participation is not any state-proposed partnership-arrangement, but rather the cultural frameworks, be they religious, secular or kinship-based, within which the innovators and innovators to come operate. An exception could here be made for Sweden where, following Todd, the legitimate loyalty basis has become the state through the dominant position the Social-Democratic party, at least until recently. Concerning the undisciplined innovators, the Danish and Norwegian children of the absolute nuclear family, they are by culture born street-smart, so why bother from the political point of view?

The national innovation policies implemented in the Nordic countries have not gone very far in devolution. Furthermore the outline of these policies has been to practice a form of devolution that does not consider different cultural practices and cultural preconditions to innovate by analysing and responding to their cultural rationale in any substantial way. This is understandable and in line with the historic differentiation of institutions in the modern nation state. The existence of various regional cultures in some ways triggers the secularism-like instincts of the state apparatus much in the same way as does the historic presence of a decreasingly state-controlled Lutheranism in our corner of the world.

The state insists on being culturally blindfold⁶. But this is a position that simultaneously could harm its ability to respond adequately to the regional mosaic of cultures that so typically characterises the Nordic countries. If we believe that the ability to innovate is strongly interwoven with regionally differentiated cultural institutions and traditions, and if we believe in the importance of making this fact subject to policy-making – which is, as argued above perhaps not the right conclusion - then we ought to make a reappraisal of the need for coining policy measures that take the various regional configurations of cultural preconditions as their starting point in stead of presupposing that we all can respond more or less equally to the same policy initiatives. There seems to be two ways ahead to meet with this concern. Either the nation state has to deal with regional culture in a more substantial way, which is not very probable, or it should solve the dilemma by restarting its agenda for stronger and more loosely controlled devolution initiatives within the field of innovation policy.

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⁶ This observation has some important exceptions. Social groups like young people, women, immigrants etc. can legitimately be targetted and given special attention in innovation policy designs. The same is true for the Sami communities in Finland, Norway and Sweden. But the Sami example is the only one where a regional culture as such is taken as a starting point for coining the policy to be implemented.

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