

ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES FOR REGIONS AND CITIES

In this presentation I will discuss **local architectural policies** in the Nordic countries using the example of Finland.

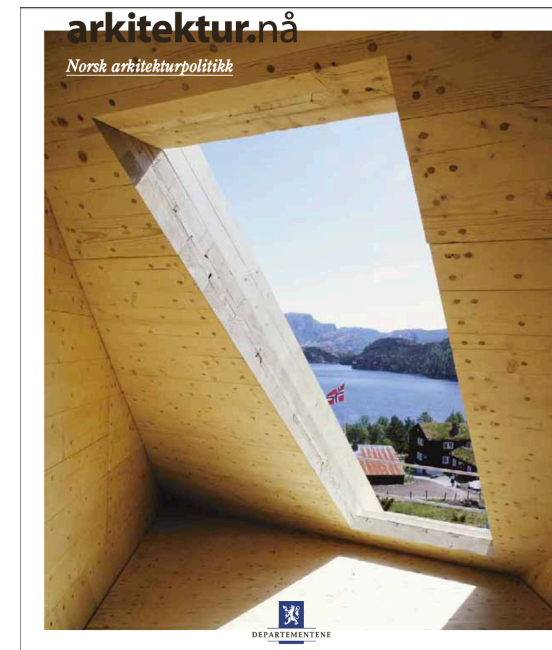
I believe that my observations largely apply to the other Nordic countries too, because they do not differ from each other very much in the structure of their societies.



BACKGROUND

The Nordic countries were well represented in the first wave of **national architectural policies**.

- the Finnish Architectural Policy was approved by the government in **1998**
- the Swedish bill on Architecture was approved by the parliament in **1998**
- The first policy document in Norway was published in **1992**
- Denmark's first policy was launched in **1996**
- Iceland got an architectural policy in **2007**

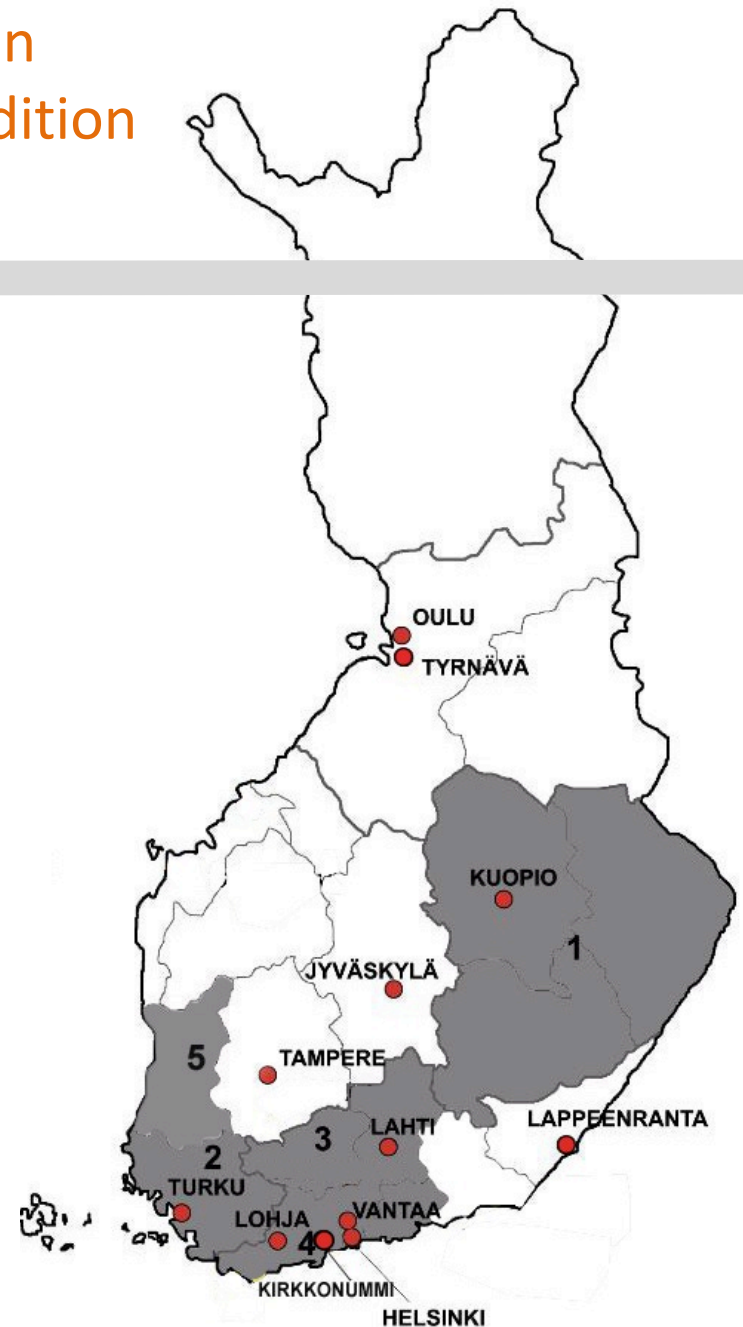
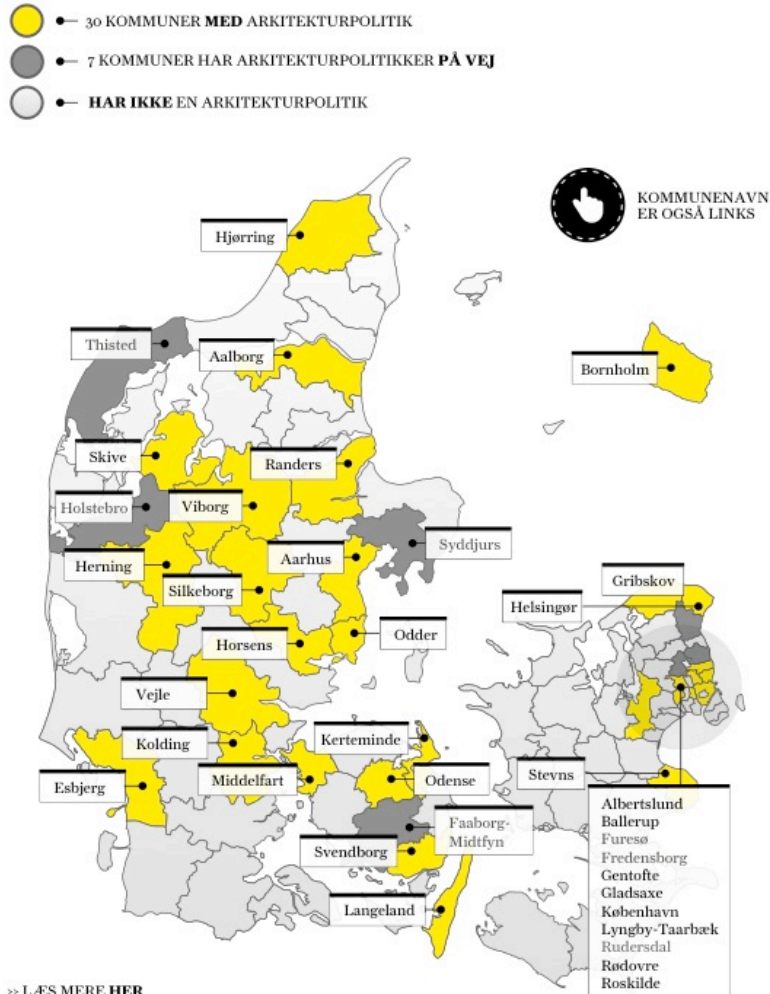


BACKGROUND

A second/ third round of national policies is currently in progress in the Nordic countries

- Denmark published a new policy in 2007 and 2014
- Norway published a new policy in 2009 and the most recent policy is in the final stages
- Sweden recently published an extensive study Living Environment – a new policy for architecture, form and design. On the basis of this, drafting of a new architectural policy will begin in 2016
- The programme of the Finnish Ministry of Education includes preparation of a new architectural policy in 2016

The Nordic countries have also been heavily involved in creating the tradition of LOCAL architectural policies



THE NORDIC BOOM IN LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES IN THE 2000s

- The trend to create local/ municipal policies has spread rapidly in the Nordic countries since the late 1990s.
- The **number of local policies** in the Nordic countries:

Denmark	30	(all municipalities)
Finland	17	(12 cities/towns + 5 regions)
Sweden	10	(at least)
Norway	14	(at least)
Iceland	0	?

VEJLE IN DENMARK: TOWARDS POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT SPIRAL THROUGH ARCHITECTURAL POLICY

Vejle, a town of over 100,000 inhabitants, has had an architectural policy programme for over 18 years.

The local policy has turned urban development into a force that is present in the actions and decisions of everybody involved in land use.

The results are visible in the high quality of the urban landscape, whether in the street paving, lighting, the reconciliation of old and new, services, social housing provision or iconic landmark buildings.

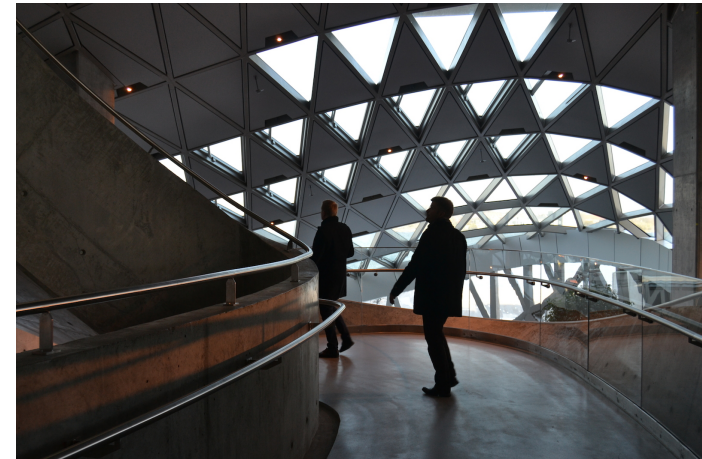


VEJLE

Vejle's architectural policy also assisted the construction of **CityLab**, a highly popular **multipurpose centre** for local residents and developers.

Exhibitions and events are held there to show off the municipality's visions and plans, and architectural workshops are organized for schoolchildren.

→ Vejle is growing, while many other similar municipalities are losing momentum.



LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES IN FINLAND

There are **no holistic studies** on local architectural policies

- one doctoral thesis is being written
- I personally have been able to follow the process from close up for almost 20 years

The **national Architectural Policy** approved by the Finnish government in 1998 **don't contain any recommendations** or calls to draw up **local architectural policies**.

- the proposed actions in the national policy are directed at officials within the central government administration itself

→ The 17 **local policies** in Finland have come about on a completely **voluntary basis**

- Despite this they have largely been approved by the highest municipal decision-making bodies



The Architectural Policy of Kuopio

- supports city planning by analyzing the elements of good urban development and creating customized guidelines and measures for each of them

The main identified zones in Kuopio:

- The city centre with its historic grid layout
→ will be developed as a pedestrian city
- Dense residential areas with multistorey buildings, surrounded by nature
→ will be developed as a city based on public transportation
- New employment and service areas and single-family house residential areas
→ will be developed as a city based on individual transportation



WHY LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES IN FINLAND?

The following background factors can be identified at least

- 1) A decisive **increase in municipal self-determination** in decision-making affecting land use from the 1990s
 - In the 1990s there was an important overall reform of land use and building legislation in Finland (previously municipal master plans and most town plans were confirmed at the ministerial level)
 - The general political development and the influence of EU have further reinforced the **decentralization trend**

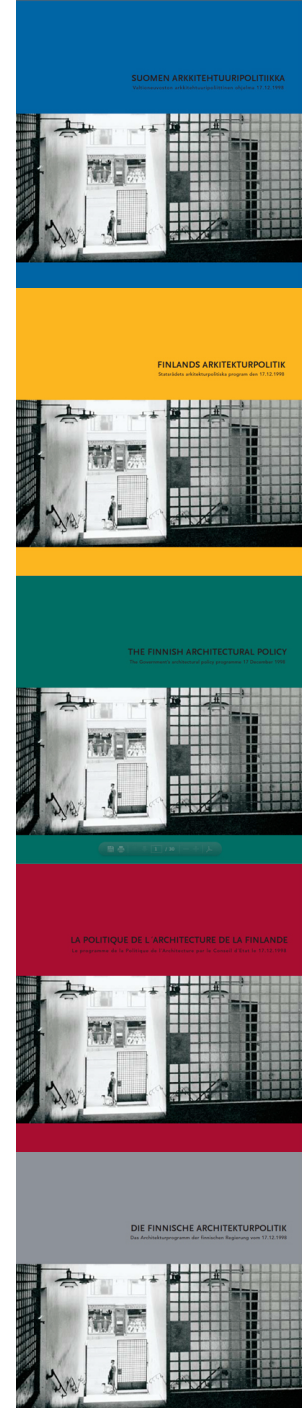
2) Impact of the national architectural policy

- The gestation period of the national policy took three years and proposals at various stages **were circulated widely for comment**, also **in the municipalities**
- the policy process **brought together** the interests of **authorities and the architecture profession**: both the Ministry of Education and Culture, The Ministry of the Environment and the Finnish Association of Architects SAFA were key actors in it
- when the national policy was completed, **an illustrated and easy-to-read edition** of it was produced straight away in Finnish and Swedish,
(later also in English, German and French)

WHY LOCAL POLICIES?

- SAFA organized a comprehensive **information campaign** together with the National Council for Architecture*. The policy and its objectives were presented at around **50 training events** throughout Finland.
- the process raised architects' societal awareness and encouraged them to apply the knowledge and overall perspective gained in the production of the national programme also at the municipal level

* an expert body operating under the Ministry of Education until 2013



IMPORTANT PROMOTION PERIOD?

- 3) Active **promotion work** of the National Council for Architecture* and its special advisor on architectural policy **in 2004-2012**
- architectural policy got a telephone number when the post of **special advisor** was created
 - annual architectural policy **seminars** for municipal actors and key figures in the built environment throughout Finland (8 in total in 2004-11)
 - **grants** for architectural policy work and architectural education
 - **production and/or financing** of architectural policy and **educational material** (several publications and websites on architectural policy and education)

WHAT DID THE LOCAL POLICIES AIM TO ACHIEVE?

After the new Land Use and Building Act **land use decisions** were moved into the **hands of municipal actors**; also **the majority of public construction** - schools, hospitals, libraries – remains with municipalities

The national policy was directed above all at public officials themselves and set them objectives related to the quality of the built environment – correspondingly, local policies **aimed to set quality objectives** for actors in local administration.

→ Local policies can also be interpreted as an attempt by culturally oriented local actors to find **answers to** the challenges posed by the **increased commercial competition**, and influence of the construction sector.

THE CONTENTS OF LOCAL POLICIES IN FINLAND

The strong influence of the national policy is clearly seen in the content and approaches of the first-wave local architectural policies.

They all discuss **the importance of the quality of the built environment** for local identity, vitality and attractiveness.

Like the national policy, they include recommendations for

- raising public awareness of architecture
- sustainable protection and management of the built heritage
- increasing the use of architectural design competitions
- promoting architectural education of children and young people

THE IMPACTS OF LOCAL ARCHITECTURAL POLICIES

Local policies have raised **local and regional self-esteem** and residents' awareness of their own environment as well as general awareness of architecture among civil servants.

In some municipalities they were integrated into other development strategies or they were **used as collaborative and learning platforms**. In some cases, however, they remained cultural proclamations rather than practical catalysts.

→ Often the process was more important than the document: the creation process of 1-2 years meant that architecture was debated within the municipalities more than ever.

SECOND-GENERATION POLICY ROUND IN MUNICIPALITIES

In Finland, second-generation architectural policy programmes have been produced or are in progress in the following municipalities:

Municipality	No.residents	1st programme	2nd programme
Vantaa	213,000	2006	2015
Jyväskylä	137,000	2002	in progress
Tampere	225,000	2006	in progress
Kuopio	111,000	2007	in progress
Oulu	198,000	2002	in progress

In Denmark, at least Vejle and Aalborg are working on a second-generation policy. (Wien 2005, 2014)

IS ARCHITECTURAL POLICY WORK STILL RELEVANT?

The current **round of second-generation policies** is concrete evidence that municipalities find them useful. Otherwise officials in cash-strapped municipalities wouldn't be motivated to produce them.

Already now a clear trend can be seen in **second-round policies** to find **own customized approaches** and solutions for meeting local challenges.

They are also more concrete and much more interactive than earlier policies.

WHY ARE MUNICIPALITIES PRODUCING SECOND-GENERATION POLICIES?

At least the following factors can be discerned:

- Implementing a new type of **interaction and participation** requires stakeholders to have some sort of shared knowledge basis
- **Competition** with other municipalities: competition for inhabitants and businesses has become tougher.
- Today's municipal development is a complicated puzzle: There seems to be a real **need for common** strategic target **frameworks**.
- The building sector is increasingly interested in political cooperation: they have noticed that **clients** are more quality-conscious than before.

LOCAL POLICIES IN EUROPE OUTNUMBER NATIONAL POLICIES TWOFOLD

In the Nordic countries alone, there are at least 70 local/municipal architectural policy programmes.

The EFAP has carried out a Survey on Architectural Policies in Europe. Now a comprehensive survey of local architectural policy is needed

Therefore I propose that:

- the new EFAP carries out/ commissions such a survey
- when the new EFAP is set up, we look into how the resources behind local policies can be integrated and exploited in EFAP's activities.

WELCOME TO FINLAND IN AUTUMN 2016!

Next autumn, Finland will organize a Nordic architectural policy conference as part of the programme for the Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Several similar conferences have been organized within the last years in the Nordic countries. Generally also an unofficial ministerial expert meeting has been held in conjunction with these.

This time the aim is to extend the context to the Baltic states. Representatives from other countries are also warmly welcome!

There will be simultaneous interpretation into English for any presentations held in other languages.