The Rise of the Regions
Norwegian film policy and the new regional cinema

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ABSTRACT
This article aims to analyse the advancement of regional film agencies in Norway, with the creation of 11 agencies during the 2000s and 2010s. This regionalisation does not only involve a territorial change in the film production landscape. It is also part of a significant change in film policy and the legitimatization of subsidies, with a new emphasis on economic objectives. This article will discuss the role of both state and local/ regional authorities in this regionalisation, with the main perspective on how funding for the regional agencies have been legitimated.

Key words
regionalisation, regional film production, film policy, attachment-strategy, experience economy, film tourism.

INTRODUCTION
In 1956, the director Eric Heed made the children’s film, Toya, on location in the town of Stavanger, Norway. It would take 45 years before another feature film was made in Stavanger. It is no small achievement, then, that 23 feature films have been made in the Stavanger region between 2001 and 2014. The «Stavanger wave», as it was termed in Norway, began with a group of independent films, but the lasting success of the local film production community should be credited to Stavanger’s regional film fund, Filmkraft Rogaland, established in 2006. What is especially interesting about the case of Stavanger is the number of similar cases to be made. Over the last fourteen years, there has been a significant regionalisation of the Norwegian film sector.

Historically, the film sector has been strongly centralised. The state has not only been involved as the main financial source for private producers, it has also been directly involved in film production through the state-owned production company Norsk Film A/S (1948–2001). Norwegian film production remains dependent on state subsidies, and the continued centralisation of the sector is evident in the distribution of funds. In 2014, 85 % of the funding channelled through the national film agency, the Norwegian Film Institute, went to production companies based in Oslo/ Akershus (Norsk Filminstitutt 2014, p. 11).

Nonetheless, the regionalisation have had a significant impact on the film sector, especially in terms of strengthening democracy. During the 2000s and 2010s, 11 new regional film agencies were established throughout Norway.
These agencies provide funding for short films, documentaries, feature films and television. Filmmakers are no longer solely dependent on the support of the Norwegian Film Institute and the institute’s allocation frameworks.

Furthermore, the regionalisation is part of a significant change in discourse of film policy, moving from a strong emphasis on cultural rationales towards an instrumentalization and commodification. The duality of film, as both an artistic product and a commodity sold in a competitive market place, has of course always been present. However, arguments based on commercial interests and economy have never figured prominently in national film policy. The legitimization of film subsidy has been characterized by a cultural idealism. The guiding principles have been solidarity among filmmakers and the promotion of a unified, national culture (Sandberg 2005, p.56). Up until 1984, there are remarkably few arguments regarding the business aspects of the film sector. For instance, White Paper no. 17 (1981–1982) Film og Samfunnet (Film and Society), does not feature a single economic argument, but rather explicitly denies that the increased subsidies to the film sector can be called business subsidies (Sandberg 2005, p. 64).

Although economic issues were more frequently addressed during the latter half of the 1980s and 1990s, it was not until White Paper no.22 (2006–2007) that these issues became part of an explicit agenda. One of the objectives of White Paper no.22 was to obtain new funding sources for film production. This was, among other measures, to be achieved by an investment in regional film agencies. Furthermore, local and regional authorities have played a significant role in the establishment of regional film agencies, and their involvement was solely argued on an economic basis.

In this article, I examine the regionalisation of the Norwegian film sector with the main perspective on the political objectives, of both state and local authorities, that have initiated these developments. What role has the different levels of authority played? How is the funding of these agencies legitimated by the state and by local authorities? What does the state and local government want to achieve by channelling funds into regional film production? I will attempt to answer these questions, as well as discuss how the developments in Norwegian film policy correlate to larger tendencies within cultural policies. What I am particularly interested in is the purpose and meaning ascribed to film policy and the legitimatization of film subsidies.

I will base my arguments on a textual analysis of State Propositions, White Papers and state commissioned reports regarding the film sector. These documents illustrate the changing justifications and priorities within the national film policy. Additionally, I have examined the annual financial statements from both the regional agencies and the Norwegian Film Institute, as well as a recent report on the economic flow of the sector. I have also conducted a series of qualitative interviews with the CEOs of six regional agencies, as well as with one of the initiators of the first regional film fund. I have gathered the
empirical data as part of my doctoral thesis work. Thus, the qualitative interviews were conducted with a wider scope than the research questions of this article. However, the interviews have provided valuable insights into the current conditions in which these agencies operate, as well as of the political climate in which these agencies were created. The main perspective of this article is on explicit political objectives and active politics, such as measures taken and implemented subsidy schemes. Thus, the political documents will have a higher empirical status than the interviews for any conclusions drawn.

DEMARCATIONS AND STRUCTURE

It is important to note that the concept of «regional cinema» is an elusive one, particular in a European context. Film production is a collaborative effort, both creatively and financially. Most European films are financed by a collection of sources, both private and public. This means that a film labelled «regional» might have received funding from different regional, national, and/or supra-regional agencies.

Additionally, many regional agencies are political constructions that precedes the existence of an active film community. As a result, an infusion of film workers from outside the region is required in order to produce a film. In many cases, the affiliation between the production team and the region is limited to a short period, arguably negating any real connection.

The series of issues regarding the concept of «regional cinema» are too complex to discuss in detail here. Nonetheless, I will contend that neither economic/practical conditions (for example the address of the production company) nor cultural conditions (a regional landscape or story) are sufficient means of demarcation on their own.

I will begin the article with a brief outline of the main characteristics of Norwegian and European film policy in order to illustrate the level of centralisation and state involvement prevalent in the film sector. In the following sections I will attempt to answer what role the different levels of authority have played in the regionalisation, how the funding is legitimated and what the authorities hope to achieve by channelling funds into regional film production. Firstly, I will focus on the state in relation to these questions, and secondly, the role of local and regional authorities. Lastly, I will briefly discuss the impact these developments have had on regional film production. I will not evaluate the implemented measures, nor the achievement of the regional agencies, but I will point to a few changes in the sector.

1. This is an issue addressed in my current PhD work.
FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION

One key aspect of the European national film sectors is their dependence on public support and subsidies. In fact, the term film «industry» has not adequately described the realities of the European film business since World War I (Jäckel 2003, p. 5). The emergence of talking films in the late 1920s strengthened Hollywood’s domination of the European markets, and by the end of World War II, this phenomenon was firmly established. Since then, the national film sectors of Europe have fought to establish, maintain and revive their place in the international film business (Jäckel 2003, p. 16). Today, all European countries have a film funding system operating at a national level, with the exception of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belgium, Liechtenstein and Malta. 2 (Newman-Baudais 2011, p.12).

Hollywood has constituted a threat in two key ways. Firstly, there is the enormous power of the American media conglomerates. Public subsidies have been necessary in order for a national film production to survive in its domestic market, or to have any chance of reaching an international market. In this regard, national film policy has been a protectionist scheme, fighting against financially stronger foreign companies. Secondly, there is the threat of cultural dominance. Film is an international medium with shared aesthetics, formal structures and themes, but the influence of Hollywood has been strong in the cementing of these traditions. National film policy is thus concerned with the protection and promotion of national culture, language and identity. In this respect, Norway is no exception. Since the first national film policy was implemented after World War II, its main concern has been the promotion of a distinctive, unified national culture. This is in line with the core values of Norwegian cultural policy going back to the 1800s (Solhjell 2004, p. 43).

At the same time, in keeping with the strong ideals of democracy and welfare that developed following World War II, authorities across Europe have tried to decentralise cultural events, artists, cultural funding and authority over cultural policy (Mangset 2002, p. 81). In Norway, the notion of decentralisation played a significant role in cultural policy from the 1970s onwards. Nonetheless, the film sector remained centralised. I will not analyse this issue here, but I will suggest a few reasons why this was the case.

This was partly a result of economic realities. Norwegian film production is dependent on state subsidies. Private investors have been involved in a few productions over the years, and different governments have tried different incentives in order to increase the influx of private capital. However, these efforts have not led to sufficient funding, and most films have received some sort of state subsidy. All funding agencies were located in Oslo. Production

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2. Bosnia and Herzegovina and Belgium have public funding agencies at sub-national level. Malta has prioritized film commissions, whose agenda is to attract foreign film productions to the country through financial incentive schemes. Liechtenstein does not have a funding agency for film as of today.
companies and film workers were thus attracted to the city, ensuring that it remained the axis of all activity.

Furthermore, it took several years of lobbying in order for the Norwegian government to assume responsibility for sustaining a national film production. In the aftermath of World War II, a national cinema became part of the symbolical rebuilding of the country. State Proposition no.2 (1946–1947) is the first public document where film is referred to as a («potentially») positive cultural factor. The Proposition also expressed concern with the massive import of foreign films. Active proponents, in particular Kristoffer Aamot, were at the time fighting for better terms for film production, and in a key article in Arbeiderbladet in 1946 he states that the government has a cultural obligation to facilitate Norwegian-language films (Iversen 2011, p.135). As in the rest of Europe, the threat of Hollywood felt real, and the government recognised that the film sector could not be revived without state subsidies.

In these early discourses on film policy, the focus was on building and sustaining national film production. The Norwegian film sector was small and funding was scarce. It was rational to centralise and consolidate such a fragile sector.

FROM THE TOP

The regional sectors across Europe have had a significant growth from the mid-2000s onwards. According to the latest statistics available (2009), there are 195 film agencies operating at local and regional levels in Europe. The regional agencies are responsible for over EUR 500 million designated for the creation of European regional films (Newman-Baudais 2011, p. 110). This constitutes a significant change in Europe’s film production landscape – with a shift from a historically strong national sector to an increasingly important regional sector. In Norway, the regionalisation was driven largely by local authorities and entrepreneurs. Nonetheless, changes in national film policy were significant for these developments.


³. This, and all translations from the original Norwegian, are done by the author for this article.

conomic agenda of film policy by introducing specific performance-based objectives that were to be achieved through new automatic and market oriented subsidy schemes.

Furthermore, White Paper no. 22 introduced the idea of national government involvement in regional film production. An entire chapter was dedicated to «Film initiatives throughout the country» («Filmsatsing i hele landet»), clearly stating that: «Regional film initiatives are part of this government's commitment to films» (White Paper no. 22 (2006–2007), p.89). This is not to say that the regionalisation of the Norwegian film sector was a result of White Paper no. 22. Local and regional authorities had already committed to the first regional agencies. What was significant was the White Paper’s formalisation of the state’s support and financial commitment to the regional agencies.

There were two main rationales behind the state’s newfound interest in regional film agencies. One was the economic objectives introduced in film policy at the time. The funding arrangements made between the state and the regional film agencies assured that the local/regional owners would cover all operational costs. That is to say, the state would not spend any more on bureaucracy. Furthermore, the arrangement with the commercial film funds, one of two types of film agencies, ensured that the owners would match the state’s allocations. This meant a doubling of the production funds, or in the words of State Preposition no.1 (2001–2002): «More culture for every krone we spend».

Additionally, there were high hopes regarding the regional film agencies’ ability to mobilize new capital for film production. In the Einarsson Committee report, one of three reports that preceded White Paper no.22, it is stated that: «Regional ownership and local identity is an important incentive to invest in film, as long as the opportunities for real profit are relatively limited» (Einarsson 2006, p. 65). They considered it likely that a company based in Bergen, for instance, would be more interested in investing in a film made in Bergen than in one made elsewhere. In this regard, the regional film sector is an opportunity for the state to relieve itself of some of its financial responsibilities.

In other words, the state were financing regional film agencies because they believed that the organization of these agencies would generate new capital for film production. However, the state’s involvement was also based on cultural objectives. In White Paper no. 25 (2003–2004), film was described as «probably the most important cultural expression of our time» (White Paper no. 25 (2003–2004) p. 7). White Paper no. 22 (2006–2007) also emphasizes the cultural rationales. It states that film is «a medium that reflects both the historical and contemporary society,» and that film is about «our identity, community and belonging» (White Paper no. 22 (2006–2007), p. 7). Moreover, the main objective was «a multitude of film and television productions based on Norwegian language, culture and society» (White Paper no. 22 (2006–2007), p. 7).
These statements demonstrate that the cultural objectives are prevalent in Norwegian film policy. They also acknowledge that Norway is not a homogeneous nation, and, accordingly, that national cinema should reflect a multitude of identities and cultures. There was a growing discontent with the degree of centralisation in the film sector, as well as with the lack of diversity represented on film. In fact, there was a common saying that all films in Norway were made by «white men in their 30s and 40s from the Western parts of Oslo» (implying the high-class areas). White Paper no. 22 sought to rectify this through measures intended to encourage gender diversity and geographic diversity. The paper suggested that the latter could be achieved by strengthening local film production.

The idea that local/regional film production will lead to a more diverse cinema is based on the assumption that regional culture differs from national culture. Norway is a country with scattered settlement patterns and strong regional identities. Regional differences have played an important role in political mobilisation, in the creation of political parties, and in voting behaviour (Bakke 2003, p. 149). Since the 1970s, the government has had an explicit goal of maintaining the country’s scattered settlement patterns. White Paper no. 13 (2012–2013), «Ta heile Noreg i bruk («Appropriating all of Norway»), stated that a scattered settlement was part of the country’s historical and cultural heritage. It is the government’s ambition to give the people the freedom to settle wherever they want in the country (White Paper no. 13 (2012–2013), p. 9). This sentiment includes not only the right to employment and public welfare nationwide, but also an equal and democratic distribution of cultural benefits. Decentralisation has been a prevalent idea in cultural policy since the 1970s. The notion that Norwegian cinema should reflect regional differences stems from the same ideas of cultural democracy and decentralisation.

The objectives stated in White Paper no. 22 (2006–2007) and the subsequent funding schemes, demonstrate great ambitions on behalf of the regional film agencies. Not only are they to generate new funding to film production, both public and private, they are also expected to diversify Norwegian cinema.

**A MATTER OF LOCAL POLICY**

The majority of Norwegian regional agencies were created between 2005 and 2008, and the financial support of local and regional authorities was crucial for their development.

Before I go on to discuss the role of local authorities in these developments, however, it is important to note that the first two regional film agencies began their operations many years earlier. In the late 1970s, a group of film workers in Northern Norway took the initiative to form a regional film centre. Nordnorsk Filmsenter AS (Northern Norway Film Centre) was established in 1979, and, after a trial period, the centre was formally in place by 1981. The centre is owned and funded by the three northernmost counties in Norway— Nord-
land, Troms and Finnmark—but has received additional funding from the state since 1979. The second regional film centre, *Vestnorsk Filmsenter AS* (Western Norway Film Centre), was established in 1994 in Bergen. The initiative to create the centre came from the local film community, but the initiators struggled to get the necessary funding in place. They eventually got financial support from the municipality of Bergen and the county of Hordaland.

The Norwegian regional agencies compromises two groups: non-commercial film resource centres and commercial film funds. This model ensures continued support for non-commercial film making through the film centres while, at the same time, putting new emphasis on the commodification of film production through the film funds. *Nordnorsk filmsenter* and *Vestnorsk filmsenter* are both film resource centres with the main purpose of aiding the regional film community. The centres have no commercial agenda and funds are allocated exclusively to film workers based in the region. The centres offer funding for the development and production of short films and documentaries. In order to enhance the competence level in the region, they also run several courses in subjects like filmmaking and scriptwriting for both children/youths and professional film workers. Local and regional authorities covers the centres operational costs, while the state finance their activities and production fund.

The main objective of the commercial film funds is to build and sustain a regional film production. They allocate funding for commercial productions, such as feature films and television series, with most allocations given as repayable investments (Ryssevik & Vaage 2011, p. 18). These investments are primarily based on the market potential of the films/series. As Kjetil Jensberg, CEO of the film fund *FilmCamp*, states, «*FilmCamp was a business project from day one*» (Interview with Jensberg, 19 August 2014). In interviews, the CEOs of the film funds express a strong desire to build a film industry. They also criticize the lack of attention given to the business aspects of film production in Norway and regard themselves as pioneers in this area.

The first regional film fund in Norway, *Film3*, was created in Lillehammer in 2001. Bjørn Nørstegård, former CEO of the «creative industries facilitator», Lillehammer Kunnskapspark, says that the future perspectives of the region were bleak at the time. Lillehammer Kunnskapspark set up a council, whom decided to take advantage of the film- and television expertise in the region. Lillehammer was already home to a range of Film and Television Studies, as well as the national film school. In 2000, the council sent a group of local film producers, politicians and entrepreneurs to the regional film agency *Film i Väst* in Sweden. The trip proved fruitful, and, in 2001, *Film3* was established with the CEO of *Film i Väst*, Tomas Eskilsson, on the board of directors.

As with the film centres, local/ regional authorities cover the operational costs of the film funds. The arrangement between the state and the regional film funds, however, dictates that any state subsidies designated for the creation of works will be matched 1:1 by the local/ regional authorities.
For instance, in 2012 FilmCamp received 2,468,750 NOK in state subsidies earmarked for the creation of works. This was matched by 2,530,000 NOK in regional subsidies, and 4,998,750 was channelled into film production. The film fund FUZZ AS received 2.5 million NOK in state subsidies in 2013. A new arrangement with the municipal of Bergen, where a larger sum would be allocated if private investors would match the sum, resulted in an allocation of 7.5 million from the municipal. 11,925,000 NOK of these funds were channelled into film production, almost 9.5 million more than the state subsidy. In other words, local and regional authorities play an important role in the financing of regional film production.

Today there are thirteen regional film agencies, and all of them are owned and partially financed by municipalities and counties. In addition to the two earliest centres, Nordnorsk filmsenter and Vestnorsk filmsenter, the only two agencies initiated by an already existing film community, are FUZZ and Filmkraft. We can thus see that most regional film agencies are political constructions. They are created in order to generate a regional film community, not in order to meet the needs of filmmakers already working in the region.

The newfound interest in film production among local and regional authorities had very little to do with the cultural value of film or an interest in stimulating a more diverse national cinema. Rather, film production was seen as an instrument of regional development, offering the potential of social and economic ripple effects.

THE ATTACHMENT STRATEGY

The developments in Norwegian film policy during the 2000s demonstrate an increased focus on instrumental objectives. This is part of a larger tendency within cultural policy. As Gray (2007) states:

The increasing emphasis that has been placed upon the «need» for arts and cultural policies to demonstrate that they generate a benefit over and above the aesthetic has become a major development within political systems. The search for at least alternative, if not actually superior, justifications for the creation of cultural and artistic policies has led to an increasing «attachment» of arts and cultural policies to other sets of policy concerns in an instrumental fashion (Gray 2007, p. 203).

Vestheim defines an instrumental art and cultural policy as a policy that uses cultural areas and cultural investment as an instrument for achieving non-cultural objectives (Vestheim 1994, p. 65). Thus, an instrumentalization means a shift in focus away from the role of arts and cultural policy within their own sectorial terms, and towards their location within an instrumental framework (Gray 2007, p. 204). In this way, the authorities can justify cultural policies through a wider set of secondary effects (Gray 2007, p. 205). Of course, cul-
tural policy will always involve an element of instrumentality. Cultural policies, as both Gray (2007) and Vestheim (1994) point out, are designed to achieve certain ends. What is significant about this instrumentalization is that the new objectives lie beyond traditional areas of concern for cultural policy.

In Western Europe in the last few decades, culture has increasingly been recognized as a factor of social development. The economic recession has led to a growing need for financial innovation. Many local and regional authorities have come to believe that the cultural sector may revitalize their economic base (cf. Vestheim 1994, Bayliss 2004, Gray 2007).

Moreover, there is typically little political interest in arts and cultural policy at the local level. Gray (2007) argues that this is one of the reasons why the so-called attachment strategy, in which funding for the cultural sector is determined by its contributions to other sectors, has gained such support. Strategies like this make cultural policy, which was once on the margins of government, economically relevant. These strategies create an expectation that one through cultural measures may find solutions to problems that are fundamentally economic, social, political and ideological (Gray 2007, p. 207).

The developments in the Norwegian regional film sector show clear traces of an attachment-strategy. Local/regional authorities invested in film agencies and, in return, they expected the region to benefit in various non-cultural ways. According to Nørstegård, whom was part of the team that initiated Film3, the key arguments to attract local authorities were employment in the region and increased tourism. In the report For en neve dollar mer (2011), Ryssevik and Vaage present similar findings. They interviewed representatives from every local/ regional authority involved in film agencies and conclude:

The municipals and counties … wanted to use film production as a means of achieving their own local policy objectives. […] The objectives were to create economic activity and jobs, and to make these places and regions attractive to live in and as tourist attractions (Ryssevik & Vaage 2011, p.16).

Issues like employment and tourism were once considered irrelevant to the film sector. Gray argues that this constitutes an ideological shift – from use value to exchange value (Gray 2007, p. 207). The political focus has shifted away from the specifics of the cultural policy and onto the question of how this policy contributes to the creation of economic value.

THE EXPERIENCE ECONOMY

The attachment strategy means that local and regional authorities have formed expectations that the local film production will benefit the region in various ways. One of the reasons why such expectations have become so widespread
is a set of highly influential ideas concerning the so-called new economy. Facing the economic recession and a decline in traditional industries, local authorities have looked for inspiration of how to turn the negative trends. The answer many believe to have found, are the experience economy. According to cultural economist Trine Bille (2012), there has been an overall increase in consumer demand for experiences. She argues that society has changed, and the creative industries, culture and experiences, play a key role in this change.

The experience economy is a broader term than, the often interchangeable, term creative industries. They differ in that the former emphasize the experience of the user and not the creative act of the producer (Bille 2012, p. 93).

The experience industries are seen as instruments of economic and strategic renewal, particularly at the regional level. Bille argues, however, that one central dilemma in Scandinavia stems from the fact that these so-called experiences are often public goods that receive substantial public funding. Thus, it makes no sense to measure the success of these industries based on economic growth. For instance, if a publicly funded experience industry increases its staff, this does not indicate social and economic revenue. It simply indicates expenditure. In other words, growth in these industries may lead to improved economic welfare, but it is not necessarily tied to financial benefit for any parties involved (Bille 2012, p. 107).

Bille (2012) traces back the Scandinavian understanding of the term experience economy to three different sources. The first is Pine and Gilmore’s book The Experience Economy (1999). Pine and Gilmore characterize experiences as a new way through which businesses may create value. They believe that the success of a business will depend on its ability to connect experiences to the products and services offered (Bille 2012, p. 98).

The second source comprises two reports on the creative industries conducted by the British Department for Culture, Media and Sport in 1998 and 2001. The reports stated that the creative industries represent a significant economic influence in society and are a source of economic growth. The researchers measured a large range of creative industries to find their economic size. However, their reluctance to provide a clear definition of the creative industries meant that any inclusions or exclusions on their list were arbitrary. Thus, Bille argues that one should be quite critical of the overwhelming positive results presented in these reports (Bille 2012, p. 98–99).

The third source is Richard Florida’s The Rise of the Creative Class (2002), and, more specifically, his theories on the importance of creativity for economic development. Florida highlights what he calls the three T’s, tolerance, talent and technology, all of which he considers crucial for economic growth. He argues that the economic future of a city or region depends on the extent to which it manages to attract the creative class. His theories have been very influential, but they have also received strong criticism. This critique centred
on three particular issues. Firstly, one can ask if it is economic growth that attracts the creative class, or if it is the presence of the creative class that creates economic growth. Secondly, one can question his use of the term *creative* as something related to a separate class, as opposed to something universal and fundamental to man. Thirdly, in assuming that what is good for the creative class is good for all classes, he undermines the distinct needs of other classes (Bille 2012, p. 99–100).

In short, Bille points to substantial flaws in all of these ideas on the experience economy. The large number of studies on the economic potential of the experience economy have led many local and regional authorities in Europe to make plans for an experience economy of their own. Bille argues that these initiatives are based on assumptions that have no grounding in real research. She points out that «It has more to do with policy-based evidence than evidence-based policy» (Bille 2012, p. 106).

Stevenson, Rowe and McKay (2010) argue similarly. They find that the dissemination of these ideas has led to regional authorities believing that «culture equals pound notes» (Stevenson et al. 2010, p. 255). They write: «Places which are seen as having a strong cultural identity... are also seen as successful and attractive to the skilled and enterprising as places to live in, work in, visit and invest in» (Stevenson et al. 2010, p. 255). However, the idea of using culture as an economic stimulus is solely based on anecdotal evidence (Stevenson et al. 2010, p. 255).

Despite heavy criticism related to their lack of empirically tested evidence, these ideas have still had a tremendous influence. Local and regional authorities formed expectations that regional film production would promote and stimulate the region. The assumption was that, by spending money on regional film agencies, in return the region would become more attractive for businesses, tourists and the creative class.

For the film sector, the experience industry that has gained most attention is film tourism. The stories of success in New Zealand have become a beacon of inspiration throughout the world. If they can do it, why not us? Up until 2000, New Zealand had a small film industry with limited international export. This changed when Peter Jackson decided to produce *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy (2001–2003) in the country. Even before their release, the three films had an enormous impact on the national industry. During production, Jackson’s company was the largest employer in the country, with 23,000 employees. The production had significant government support from the beginning. The government even appointed a special «Minister of the Rings» responsible for optimizing the benefits of having the production in New Zealand, both in terms of employment during production and in terms of tourism after release (Beeton 2005, p. 81).
Both the film trilogy itself and the promotion of New Zealand as a destination were successful. According to an article in Forbes Magazine, tourism in New Zealand has increased by 50%. This makes tourism the second largest industry in New Zealand, closely followed by the film industry (Pinchefsky 2012). New Zealand has introduced tax incentive schemes, and can offer a solid infrastructure with studios, post production etc. These efforts have attracted many international film productions to the country. Nevertheless, a number of academic studies argue that vast overstatements are made regarding the actual role of film in inducing tourism. The case of New Zealand is no exception. Croy (2004) and Jones and Smith (2005) have all argued that the trilogy has had limited impact on tourist numbers, and that the media foster misconstructions of the role of film in tourism. In other words, while the effects on the national film industry are evident in terms of number of productions and number of jobs in the sector, there is limited data supporting the idea that film production can directly influence tourist numbers (Croy & Heitmann, 2011, p. 188).

Hedling (2010a) is another scholar who has studied the many problematic aspects of pursuing film tourism as an instrument of regional development. He argues that the regions cannot influence how they are portrayed in films or television series. Furthermore, there are complex factors that may affect and possibly reduce film tourism. This makes it very difficult to predict the effects of a film or television series. Lastly, there is a clear limit to how long any positive effect will last (Hedling 2010a). To sustain the flow of tourists, there has to be a steady line of successful film or television series from the same location. One of the local/regional objectives in Norway is enabling such a steady line of productions. However, regional authorities in Norway are far from the only ones with these sorts of expectations. The many regional agencies in Europe are competing against each other in order to attract the biggest productions (Hedling 2010b, p. 340).

Revitalizing the regions, job creation and film tourism – the objectives of local film production goes far beyond the traditional realm of cultural policy. The regionalisation of the film sector does not only imply a structural change, it also implies a new context to discuss film production and film policy.

THE RISE OF THE REGIONS

The regional sector consists of 13 agencies that are dispersed throughout the whole country, which is illustrated in the table below.
TABLE 1. THE DISPERSION OF FILM RESOURCE CENTRES IN NORWAY, LISTED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film centre</th>
<th>Founded in</th>
<th>Catchment area</th>
<th>Owners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nordnorsk filmsenter</td>
<td>1979</td>
<td>3 counties, comprising 88 municipalities. Population 465 000.</td>
<td>The counties of Finnmark, Nordland and Troms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filmkraft Rogaland (both film centre and film fund)</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>1 county, comprising 26 municipalities. Population 426 000.</td>
<td>The county of Rogaland and the municipalities of Stavanger, Haugesund and Randaberg.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sørnorsk filmsenter</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2 counties, comprising 30 municipalities. Population 278 000.</td>
<td>The municipalities of Kristiansand and Arendal, and the counties of Vest-Agder and Aust-Agder. a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viken filmsenter</td>
<td>2011</td>
<td>4 counties, comprising 75 municipalities. Population 1 373 807.</td>
<td>The counties of Buskerud, Akershus, Østfold and Vestfold.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a. The shareholders are responsible for administrational costs, while funds from the foundation Cultiva, together with the allocations from the Ministry of Culture, goes towards film production. Cultiva is an organization with the purpose to stimulate creative and cultural industries in the town of Kristiansand, where the film center is located.

TABLE 2. THE DISPERSION OF FILM PRODUCTION FUNDS IN NORWAY, LISTED IN CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.

<table>
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<th>Owners</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Film 3</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2 counties, comprising 48 municipalities. Population 375 500</td>
<td>The counties of Oppland and Hedmark, and the municipalities of Lillehammer, Øyer and Gausdal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FUZZ Film</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>3 counties, comprising 78 municipalities. Population 832 500.</td>
<td>The municipal of Bergen.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FilmCamp</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>FilmCamp invests in projects that place all or most of its production to Film-Camp and/or the region. Including foreign productions.</td>
<td>The county of Troms and the municipalities of Målselv, Lenvik, Sørreisa, Berg, Torsken and Tranøy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filminvest Midtnorge</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>2 counties, comprising 48 municipalities. Population 421 000.</td>
<td>The municipal of Trondheim and the counties of Nord-Trøndelag and Sør-Trøndelag.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In addition to the centres that cover geographically defined regions, there is the *Internášunála Sámi Filmbmaguovddáš*, the International Sami Film Centre. The centre was created in 2007 in Kautokeino/ Guovdageaidnu, and functions as a resource centre for all Sámi film-workers regardless of where they live. In 2014, the centre was restructured as the International Sami Film Institute and is thus no longer a regional centre.

What this overview makes clear, is the agencies impact on the territorial apportionment of the sector. The national agencies located in Oslo are no longer the only funding agencies. There are now funding opportunities across the country.

Furthermore, the regional agencies have become very important for the production of film, in particular short films and documentaries. For instance, the film centre *Nordnorsk filmsenter* have funded 80 documentaries and 56 short films, and the film fund *FUZZ* have funded 36 feature films, 1 documentary, 11 short films and 4 TV-series from 2006 to 2013. Among the regional films are several box-office successes, critically acclaimed films and even a 2006 Palme d’Or winner for Best Short film, *Sniffer* (Bobbie Peers 2006).

Not everything is optimal though, and a common grievance among the CEOs is the agencies’ limited finances. One of the policy measures implemented following White Paper no.22 (2006–2007), was a substantial increase in state subsidies to film production. In 2006, the state subsidies were at 283 million NOK. In 2013, they were at 476 million NOK. As I have pointed out, the state had very ambitious and manifold objectives on behalf of the regional agencies. Not only were they to diversify Norwegian cinema, they were also assigned the difficult task of obtaining private capital for film production. Nonetheless, the regional sector only receive ca. 12 % of the total state subsidy. The rest is still channelled through the national agencies. As the CEO of *Vestnorsk Filmsenter*, Stine Tveten, says:

> Although the awarded amount has gone up, we do not really get that much more considering we have been doing this for 20 years. In 1995, we got 1 million from the state; in 2014, we got 8,5 million. That is not a big increase considering everything. What’s more, the new centres, only by virtue of size, gets the same amount after only 2 years of operation. Without having to prove themselves worthy (Interview with Tveten 19 August 2014).

While the state has increased the overall amount granted to regional film agencies, the high number of new agencies means that the old agencies still only receive a relatively small amount.

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5. Films that have received funding from the centre or fund. This does not exclude other sources of funding, and it is common for films to receive funding from more than one agency.
Another common grievance, particular in regards to the film centres, is the fact that the state dictates a framework for spending. For instance, Vestnorsk Filmsenter does not feel that measures for children and youths should be one of their prioritized areas, but would rather focus their efforts on the development of talent in the professional film community. Nevertheless, the state funding is earmarked programmes for children and youths and cannot be spent otherwise. This line of policy is closer to the concept of déconcentration – meaning deployment of state authority in the regions – than that of decentralisation – meaning decentralisation of authority. The regional film agencies do have some manoeuvrability when it comes to what projects and which filmmakers to support, but all within a framework. To quote Tveten again, «We are as much governed by the policies of others, as we are by our own agenda.» (Interview with Tveten 19 August 2014). However, the guidelines for funding in 2015 have given the centre more autonomy, which might signal changes in this area.

CONCLUSION

This article have discussed the role of both state and local/regional authorities in the advancement of the Norwegian regional film agencies. While state subsidies remain vital to the film sector, what prompted these developments was a newfound interest in film production among local and regional authorities. The majority of the regional film agencies are political constructions intended to attract filmmakers to the region and to build a sustainable local film community. The involvement of local authorities were based on an attachment-strategy, where they invested in film agencies and, in return, expected the region to benefit in various non-cultural ways. This constitutes a shift in discourse – from use value to exchange value, and from the specifics of film policy and onto questions of how this policy contributes to the creation of economic value.

This article has not assessed the potential ripple effects in the regions, but other studies imply that such effects will be difficult to achieve. With 13 regional film agencies in Norway, and approximately 200 across Europe, it is reasonable to assume that not every agencies will achieve all they intend to. That being said, it is not unfathomable that a successful TV-series like Lilyhammer (2012 –) might increase tourism to the Lillehammer region, or that a large German regional agency like Filmstiftung NRW in North Rhine-Westphalia might impact the economic base of that region.

The full consequences of the regionalisation remains to be seen. What is clear is that the creation of 11 new regional agencies represent a significant territorial change for the film sector. In 2014, the Norwegian Film Institute awarded 85 % of their funds to companies in the Oslo region. A strong regional sector

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6. Information based on e-mail correspondence with Tveten, 8. May 2015.
will to some extent, compensate for this. The regional agencies also strengthen the democracy of the sector. Although the regional agencies do not operate with full autonomy, they have the authority, and the finances, to support local projects in which they believe.

White Paper no.30 (2014–2015) En framtidsrettet filmpolitikk («a forward-looking film policy»), presented on May 29th 2015 signals an increased focus on the regional film sector in the coming years. Although the budget and details of implementation remain undisclosed, the emphasis on regional film production in the paper, demonstrate that the sector is undergoing significant changes.

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