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## Integrating the Öresund – What Kind of Region?

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### Résumé

Ce texte traite du processus d'intégration de la région d'Öresund, un exemple d'intégration régionale se produisant dans le cadre de l'Union Européenne. Après une discussion de la géographie et de l'histoire de la région, il analyse les institutions développées pour faciliter l'intégration. Il est incertain, selon l'auteur, que le rôle traditionnel de l'état-nation devra changer face à l'intégration régionale.

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### Introduction

The last fifty years in Europe has brought an increased co-operation between nation states and the birth of a considerable supranational institutional level. The most advanced cooperation has developed within the European Union. The set of mutual interactions between the European and national levels, known as a two-level game, had remained the core of cooperation and integration process until the 1990s. Since then a third level has evolved, namely the regional one. Regionalization as an answer to 'Europeization' or more broadly speaking – Globalization – has changed the traditional way of cooperation; however it must be said that it is a process of which the outcome is unknown. Regions, generally speaking, still do not enjoy enough power to be able to constitute as much influential body (the Committee of Regions) as the European Parliament. Nevertheless the tendency to give power down to regions is on its way.

In this paper we aim to take a closer look upon the integration process in the Öresund Region, which constitutes an interesting object of analysis since it is a cross border region of functional character but with a historical background. Moreover, by analyzing the most prominent institutions and actors, we aim to trace in what kind of way the region is being integrated and what it signifies to the main actors involved into the process.

### The Theoretical Background and the Key Concepts

This chapter aims to clarify some basic notions that this paper deals with, and to provide a discussion about contemporary processes challenging nation states within the European Union.

As Joachim Blatter (2001) states, during the last decade there has been a growing awareness that the European Union is not the only challenge to the Westphalian system of sovereign nation states. What then could constitute those challenges? For the purpose of this paper it is sufficient to choose and enumerate globalization and regionalization, with the emphasis on the latter one. The modern societies and states are facing the tension between global and local forces. While globalization leads to an increased dependence of the outside world, regionalization points in another direction. It implies that human beings and activities are, and will remain, tightly bound to a local and regional environment (Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist 2000, p.20).

Regionalization processes can also be seen as a reaction to the development of a centralized and bureaucratic Brussels (Persson 1999, p.212). This explains why the subsidiary principle has become so important. The Subsidiary principle, as expressed in the Maastricht agreement in December 1991, has been read as a confirmation of the growing importance of the region as the most appropriate level of European organization, which is closer to citizens and more competent to handle political issues than the traditional nation states (Tägil 2001, p.11). However, opposite opinions are also expressed that see regions as an obstacle to the process of integration.

Therefore, the intensified cooperation between border regions raise another phenomena such as “the idea of a Europe united at the local level” (Persson 1999, p.214–215). Undoubtedly, the connection between institution-building processes on the supranational level (macro integration) and the process of micro-integration can be observed in the borderlands (Blatter 2001, p.180). Hence, the nation-state is challenged but the outcome of these processes is very arguable, since it concerns a future state of order. Proponents of the rise of the regional state (Ohmae 1993 in Blatter 2001, p.180) take cross-border regions as examples for a future characterized by the declining importance of the nation-state and the increasing relevance of regions that are being shaped by intensive socioeconomic interdependencies (Blatter 2001, p.181). On the other hand Östhol claims that the tough negotiations between centre and periphery may “bring about a more firm recognition of the significance of cross-border problems and opportunities” (2001, p.29). However, cross-border region building cannot gain legal status as one single judicial entity in two countries and thus cannot achieve status under public law in one country. Therefore, cross-border cooperation

perforates borders, but does not replace states (Osthol 2001, p.29). In spite of mentioned challenges, the nation-states in a foreseeable future will remain in power to handle the most important decisions.

It is necessary to explain what could constitute a region, a cross-border region and what phenomena follow them. Generally, regions can vary greatly in size, and not necessarily encompass the state territory, fitting into its boundaries. A region can be a supranational entity, i.e. Central Europe, as well as a state. Finally, regions can be intrastate entities that have developed a distinct identity over time. However, intrastate regions based on a distinct identity (culturally and historically defined) must be distinguished from those, which are defined on the basis of economic and political criteria (Johansson, Rönnquist, and Tägil, p.16).

Further on, the historical region is defined on the basis of the historical, cultural roots and traditions of the population. Therefore a regional identity may endure long after the region has been stripped of its political and administrative relevance (Persson 1999, p. 213). The second type of regions we are interested in are functional regions, which are demarcated from the others in terms of travel, transportation, contacts and other dependency relations that connect people and structures (Jönsson, Tägil, and Törnqvist 2000, p. 139).

Cross-border regions form an interesting concept. Both the already mentioned types might blend into this one. Many of Europe's cross-border regions have been transformed into areas of cooperation and development. This form of regionalization neutralizes international borders and thus may create a more challenging factor for the nation state (Jönsson, Tägil, and Törnqvist 2000, p. 147). On the other hand, it must be noticed that such cross-border cooperation has contributed to the elimination of traditional interstate border conflicts (Persson 1999, p.214). Cross-border regionalization differs from traditional vertical regionalization by creating mostly horizontal links. That is why Jönsson, Tägil and Törnqvist (2000, p.149) here employ the term transnational instead of international to describe the true nature of cross-border networks. This includes actors such as firms, universities, chambers of commerce, trade unions, political parties and cultural organizations.

### Emerging Networks

Having the Öresund Region example in mind, our interest focuses in this paper on the networks and the centre-periphery perspective. Networks within or between particular territories/regions are points (actors) bound together by particular links (set of transactions). The risk, which

accompanies networks is that, they may “become autonomous in relation to the individual territories to which democratic control is confined” (Jönsson, Tägil, and Törnqvist 2000, p. 23). In other words, some types of networks may not be accessible for democratic control, transparency, etc. thus acting contrary to one of the most important ideas which is laid as a base for regionalization and subsidiary principle; that is to say that they increase transparency and democratic control. Naturally not all the networks need or can be transparent while remaining harmless to democratic rules.

This problem, mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, may concern mainly institutional networks and, to a lesser extent, social and cultural networks while excluding entirely physical ones since they are composed of constructions for transportation of goods, people and information. The major problem may be linked with institutional networks since they bind together the different sites and entities of economic and political life (Jönsson, Tägil, and Törnqvist 2000, p. 24). Social and cultural networks may work as binding ties, aiming in overcoming mutual stereotypes and forge mutual understanding. However, Jönsson, Tägil, and Törnqvist (2000, p.24) note that socio-cultural networks “involve complex structures that together forge a virtually impenetrable network morphology,” which can constitute another kind of challenge to the nation-state when we take a closer look upon major cities (Copenhagen/ Malmö area) where two new social groups emerge. First of them is a new cosmopolitan social group with new lifestyles and consumption patterns. It consists of high-income earners who represent a cosmopolitan work culture. Their visions and lifestyles often clash with traditional middle-class values (Jönsson, Tägil, and Törnqvist 2000, p. 158). On the other hand, the second rootless group consists of low paid immigrants. For both of them the traditional nation-state is perceived as an obstacle rather than an opportunity.

### The Centre-Periphery Dimension

Another relevant aspect of the state-region relations is the centre-periphery one. Generally speaking the centre-periphery theory has been used to express, besides the geographic distance, also the social one as well as discrepancies in status and closeness/distance from the decision makers in political, economic or cultural centres (Johansson, Rönnquist, and Tägil 2001, p.176).

The case of the Öresund Region in that respect is a peculiar one. On the one hand we have Stockholm-Malmö relations, in which the latter lacks the status and prestige of the Swedish capital and may have a feeling

of being disregarded by the capital. Although Malmö is the third biggest city in Sweden, it is rather provincial in comparison with other European cities. Looking from the Malmö perspective the Swedish capital is too distant. On the other hand half an hour from Malmö we find the Danish capital, which not only serves as a centre for Denmark, but is also the biggest city in Scandinavia. Then, when it comes to economy, culture or transport, Copenhagen is growing as a centre for Malmö and the southern Sweden. The most important political decisions still must be made in Stockholm, however, in this particular case the distance between Malmö and Stockholm can only grow, while Copenhagen naturally becomes closer and closer. Johansson, Rönquist, and Tägil (2001) make an interesting remark that the city's most evident geographic advantages are that it offers two types of proximity, a territorial one and proximity in networks. Thanks to advanced means of transportation and communication, people, and institutions are within reach and easy access (Johansson, Rönquist, and Tägil, 2001, p.159). Moreover, thanks to its well-developed transportation and infrastructure, Copenhagen has become a sort of gate for southern Sweden, and especially Scania, to Europe and overseas.

### The Öresund Region Case

Reading declarations of both Swedish and Danish governments, one may feel confused whether the name “Öresund Region” is legitimate. Does the region really exist? The troublesome concept is visible when merely reading: “With the building of the bridge [...] water ceased to be a barrier. Zealand and Skåne are linked [...] Two countries are brought together in one region. Öresund is born” (The Birth of a Region 1999 in Berg, Löfgren 2000, p.7). However, the next statement says that: “The Öresund Region exists already, but does not really exist yet. But the vision of a dynamic development based on faith in the future [...] that exists!” (Öresund – en region bliver til 1999 in ibdm.). Hence, the opening of the Öresund Bridge on the 1st of July 2000 finished only a long process of attempts to link the Swedish and Danish Shores. This fact gave an extraordinary opportunity to foster integration between the Swedish region Scania and its Danish counterpart Zealand within the Öresund Region.

Nevertheless, we are observing the beginning of a long, uneasy process of co-operation and integration, of which the outcome is still uncertain. The enthusiasm that welcomed the Öresund Bridge has gradually been replaced by an ordinary daily life. Any number of actors from both sides of the Öresund strait express different visions and expectations as for the future of the Öresund Region and its patterns of co-operation.

While the question about what composes the discussed region is, as Berg and Löfgren (2000) say, the source of constant dispute, it can be stated that it encompasses the Swedish region Scania and the north-eastern part of the Danish island Zealand. The Greater Copenhagen region and the Malmö–Lund–Helsingborg area are perceived as the core of the Öresund Region (Berg Löfgren 2000, p.11).

For a better understanding of temporary processes and attempts, which the Öresund Region is undergoing, it is relevant to present some of its key historical events. The history of the region does not explain all the tendencies, however constructs a base for a further analysis of the phenomenon.

Before the Öresund Strait started to integrate, it had for more than three hundred years been a dividing borderline between the two Scandinavian kingdoms. What we agreed to call the Öresund Region here had been ruled by the Danish – Norwegian dual monarchy until the Pace of Roskilde was signed in 1658. Then victorious Sweden, beside other lands, took over Scania. Despite the second war over Scania, it has remained in Sweden. In order to unite newly conquered lands, Sweden imposed a policy of “Swedification” (Linde-Laursen 2000, p.143). The policy targeted mainly three social groups: the clergy, the king's officials and the nobility. It aimed to secure the loyalty of these particular groups as well as to create uniformity within the Kingdom. The realization of the nation-state since the 19th century had caused what the Swedish author Claes Krantz described as “the immense distance across the narrow water” (Linde-Laursen 2000, p.145–150). The Öresund border became effective in causing relatively little inter-exchange between the Danish and Swedish coasts.

Nevertheless, it must be said that neither the policy of “Swedification” nor creating distinct and strongly centralized, unitary nation-states have prevented Scania from developing an “understanding of separateness” and difference from the rest of the nation. This “understanding of separateness” and closeness to the rest of Europe has become a disassociating factor in the Scania-Stockholm relations. Thus, for some Scanian actors both the bridge and the region are means to promote an institutionalized independence from the national centre in Stockholm, as argued by Linde-Laursen (2000, p.153–157). The institutional issue is linked to language and culture, and the Foundation for the Future of Scania (Stiftelsen, Skånsk and Framtid) expressed this by asking the Swedish government to “postpone the question of the formal status of the regional languages until such time the regions have their own democratic political institutions” and then, to “give the regional languages legal protection as

well as additional and more generous resources” (<<http://www.scania.org>>). So far the Swedish government has not recognized such demands and is unwilling to impose any special legislation for the region. As a result, “Lex Öresund” (Linde-Laursen 2000, p.157) might be a consequence of linking Scania with Zeeland in a foreseeable future. It must be said that the “understanding of separateness” is not strong enough to be compared with other European regions, i.e. Catalonia.

The Danish counterpart of the Öresund Region creates radically different phenomena. Firstly, in Scania it is rather common that people express their affinity with Denmark and/or Copenhagen and the latter one is seen as an actual capital, rather than the distant Stockholm. This is not the case in Denmark. More than three hundred years of separation has created number of stereotypes, which can be a source of many different reactions but affinity. Thus, one could find Danes saying, “Asia begins in Malmö” (Löfgren 2000, p.38). That is not to say that every Dane shares this image, however it is more common that the Swedes from Scania associate themselves with the Greater Copenhagen region than the other way around.

The Danish reasons to engage in the Öresund project, thus, has been mostly economic, whereas the Swedish counterpart was also economic but followed by those other reasons previously mentioned in this paper. In past decades Denmark has gradually changed its economic and demographic structure. From the country founded on agriculture and family business, it has developed into an urbanized, capitalistic nation with a strong and competitive economy. This perception has opened the understanding for a bridge across the Öresund that could be an extraordinary instrument in expanding the market for Danish products and services eastwards (Linde-Laursen 2000, p.153). We must also note that the Öresund Region is the most densely populated metropolitan area in Scandinavia with approximately 3,5 million inhabitants, two thirds living on the Danish side and one-third living on the Swedish side. Another important factor is a network of 15 universities, 120 000 students and 10 000 researchers, a number of science parks and an innovation oriented public sector (<[www.oresundskomiteen.dk](http://www.oresundskomiteen.dk)>).

The international conditions after the end of the Cold War also favoured of the project. For nearly fifty years, due to possible Soviet veto, it was simply impossible to realize the idea of the bridge across a strategic strait such as Öresund. Hence, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the Swedish and Danish governments finally agreed to build a fixed link across the Öresund in 1991 (Tangkjär 2000, p.180).

### **Institutions in the Öresund Region**

When thinking about the Institutions in the Öresund Region that are contributing to integration we should keep in mind that perhaps not all aspects of integration are positive.

Some scholars have forecast that in the future, the influence of the discursive framework of nation-states on international political and economic processes will diminish. Instead of nation-states, they believe networks of metropolises will appear that will lead development. Transgressing borders, promoting advanced technology... The networks are thought to undermine the homogenizing effects the bureaucracies of the nation-states have had within each political-geographic unit and at the same time erode differences, the barriers as they are most often referred to between imagined communities (Berg, Linde-Laursen, and Löfgren 2000, 155).

The question to keep in mind is thus: Will the nation state be able to adapt to such intimidation? In the following sections we will try to critically examine the integrative bodies of the Öresund region.

### **The Integration bodies of the Öresund Region**

#### **The Öresund Committee**

The Öresund Committee (ÖC) initiates co-operation between Institutions and Interest-Organisations and administrates the EU programme, Intereg-Öresund. It also arranges conferences and seminars to spread knowledge about the region. The Öresund Committee is a co-operation organ for regional and local politicians on both of sides of Öresund. The purpose of the co-operation is to create a region where it is simple and easy for the inhabitants to choose where they want to live, study and work. There should be good environment for industrial co-operation and expansion. For this to happen the politicians on both sides of Öresund look into rules and regulations and try to create a working relationship between these. The Öresund Committee’s goal is to strengthen and promote the region nationally and internationally as well as to create the basis for increased growth in the region economically, culturally and socially in order to exploit the area’s joint resources for International competition. The ÖC initiates and supports co-operation projects. Among other things it supports cultural co-operation projects and analyzes the integration process. The aspiration is that the Öresund Region will become one of the most integrated metropolitan regions in Europe. In the ÖC you find 32 local and

regional politicians representing 13 member organisations – counties and municipalities on both sides of the Öresund.

The Swedish and Danish governments have the role of observers. They all meet four times a year. The task is to further develop a common region based on two different countries. Thus the Öresund Committee consists of political representatives from Swedish and Danish governments as well as representatives from regional and local authorities in Scania and greater Copenhagen. In the view of the ÖC a common region must be built on the preferences of its inhabitants. The differences in regulations and legislations could attract and stimulate investments depending on industry or trade. The ÖC focuses on seeing these differences as possibilities and not as barriers. It works for the creation of an environment that will enable people to take part in the capacity on the other side and to share experiences. Also it has the vision that the region will become a common market, not only for investments by trade and industry, but also for daily life: work, living and pleasure. Since the mid 1990s the Öresund Committee has been a member of the Association of European Border Regions (AEBR), which is a forum for political representation at the European political level as well as a forum for the exchange of ideas and experiences.

### **The European Dimension**

In the view of the EU Committee of the Regions, the role of local authorities regions have played a major part in positive developments around Europe. Budget deficits have been reduced and unemployment has fallen. We can understand the roles of states in EU co-operation better through looking at the financial capacity of sub-national authorities. These authorities implement much of the EU policy in their respective countries. The political responsibility by sub-national authorities is generally related to financial capacity. Only then can these authorities take political and administrative responsibilities for public functions and carry out EU policy. Giving sub-national authorities a role in the decision-making can be good for several reasons. It would widen EU's scope and efficiency, be more cost efficient and increase democracy. The latter process would happen because the decisions would be made closer to the citizens and they would therefore be more inclined to participate. The role of the sub-national authorities is also important because the EU does not always have the competence to implement its policies. Sub-national authorities can deliver this, partly because they have information about the specific conditions in which EU legislation has to be carried out and how EU initiatives have to be adjusted to local conditions. The increased cost efficiency rises from the fact that

sub-national authorities pay for implementation of part of the EU policy; this saves money for the taxpayers. (Committee of the Regions: 2001)

### **The EU Support**

The EU supports the cross border cooperation in the Öresund Region. Together with the Danish regional authority HUR and the Swedish national authority NUTEK, the Öresund Committee is administrating the program Interreg-Öresund. This is an EU program aimed at furthering the integration in the Öresund Region. Between 2002 and 2006 there will be spent 60 million Euros in different cooperation projects. Interreg-Öresund creates opportunities for cooperation across nation borders. These projects can lie within many different areas, for example labour market integration, education, tourism, regional competence, business development, research development, environment, media and culture. The overall goal is to make the Öresund Region one of Europe's most integrated and functional border regions. This project is supposed to give the Inhabitants of the Öresund region an opportunity to use all of the regions resources in spite of the national borders. Through these cooperation projects people and organizations will be able to discover new possibilities and learn from each other's experiences. Obstacles and barriers will hopefully be minimized and the opportunity for new networks and institutions will be created (<[www.oresundskomiteen.dk](http://www.oresundskomiteen.dk)>).

### **Discussion about the Öresund Committee**

The Öresund Committee has a broad overall goal but is sponsoring many programs that are important in the integration process. It also seems to have helped bolstering the economy of the region in recent years, since one of the regions merits has become a strong and competitive business sector characterized by high efficiency, superior educational levels and an innovative business climate (The Öresund Identity Network ). It is thus contributing to making the region more functional. But one has to keep in mind that a great deal of the money that the ÖC uses for its projects comes from the EU. This is for example the case for the Interreg-Öresund project. EU thus has a direct effect on certain integration projects by accepting to contribute financially or not. The rest of the financing comes from regional and national authorities, which therefore play a major role in furthering the integration process.

### Öresund Identity Network

An organization was created early in 2000 to continue the work with branding the region (naming its qualities and providing it with a logo). This has been carried out within a project called “The birth of a region”, which started in 1997. The organization’s board of directors includes representatives for national, regional and local governments as well as tourist organizations. Öresund Identity Network controls the region’s logo and seeks members among businesses, organizations, authorities and institutions that associate themselves with the message that the Öresund region is a new centre for growth and quality of life in northern Europe. Öresund Science region is part of this network.

### Öresund Science Region

This is an alliance between IT Öresund, Medicon Valley Academy, Öresund Environment and Öresund Food network and Öresund University. Öresund Science Region (ÖSR) gathers four strong clusters, IT, biotechnology, food and environment, all with focus on human needs. A greater emphasis on value instead of technique gives the Öresund Science Region a unique potential with its competitive brand “Technology with a Human Touch”. The Foundation for Technology Transfer in Lund and the Danish Ministry for IT and Research made it financially possible to launch Öresund Science Region in August 2001. They, together with The Öresund Committee for Research and Development (Öforsk), will be close partners of ÖSR.

The overall aims and activities of Öresund Science Region are: To establish a region of networks with special emphasis on promoting cross-disciplinary research and development; stimulate new knowledge within areas where Öresund is competitive on a global scale. Also developing and securing an innovative environment and efficient commercialization structure global branding of Öresund Region as a high tech region that can secure sustainable economic growth within a high ethical and humane standard. Furthermore, promoting integration across borders in the region: between disciplines, between academia, industry and the public sector, between Denmark and Sweden and between Öresund and other regions in the world. It also wants to be a catalyst for creating a worldwide inflow of students, researchers, entrepreneurs, capital and companies into the Öresund Region. One of the functions is to promote and initiate advanced courses, PhD and summer universities and life long learning programs within strategically important areas. Last, but not least, one of the functions is to

organize conferences and symposia with a mix of small-specialized meetings, symposia and big international conferences.

Öresund Science Region will work closely together with its partners in the region: local and regional authorities, industry organizations, agencies for marketing and branding and institutions for research and innovation. The foremost financing agencies for the ÖSR structure are the Foundation for Technology Transfer in Lund, the Danish Ministry for Information Technology and research, Öresund University and other sponsors and companies and business organizations and EU funds (<[www.oresundnetwork.com](http://www.oresundnetwork.com)>).

### Discussion about Öresund Identity Network

Here, as within the ÖC, the main actors are national, regional and local authorities. The goal is to promote regional integration. In many respects though, the parties within ÖIN seem already to treat the ÖR as a functional integrated metropole region at least with respect to business and industry and the goal is to become more internationally competitive. The funding for ÖIN comes from foundations, Danish Ministry for IT and a host of private contributors. Thus there are both public and private founders.

### The Culture Bridge Foundation 2000

The vision of creating stronger cultural links and co-operation within the new Öresund Region led on August 1st 1997 to the formation of the Swedish-Danish “Kulturbro 2000” founded by the Ministry of Culture in Denmark. The Kulturbro Foundation’s main task is to put the Öresund region on the map as an area that holds its own, strong cultural attractions. Likewise, the Foundation aims to promote and develop the funding of cultural co-operation between cultural institutions in the Öresund region, thereby strengthening the regions position internationally. By creating the framework for this biannually recurring event, Kulturbro, The Foundation intends to successfully pursue its goals of cultural amplification and integration. The official part of the Foundation’s financing of Kulturbro 2000 – 50 million Danish Kroner – was granted on March 9th 1998. The chairman and the Foundation Secretariat made the allocation of grants to the projects, and to the cultural institutions on the recommendation to the committee. The committee made the final decision and the final funding to “Kulturbro 2000” was allocated during fall 1999. The committee of the Cultural Bridge Foundation has the highest authority and has nine members. The Ministry of Culture in Denmark appoints a member, as well as the chairman. The Department of Culture in Sweden, Copenhagen Council and

Wonderful Copenhagen each appoint a member, and Malmö Council/Region Scania and the Foundation representatives each appoint two member Sponsors. The day to day running of the Foundation is financed partly by public funding and partly by support from businesses and private funding. The board of representatives consists of representatives from the companies and funding contributing to the running of the Foundation and who have wished to join the board (<[www.kulturbron.com](http://www.kulturbron.com)>).

As with the two former institutions, national and regional authorities play a major role behind the culture bridge both financially and otherwise.

### General discussions about Integration bodies in Öresund

Some authors are not sure that we will end up with a fully integrated region or if the role of the nation state will remain the same or change.

It is still too early to predict whether these creative institutional bridge building efforts will have the effect that the Öresund will end up also being the centre of a new natural region. Many forces in Danish and Swedish society are pushing for such a development, and it is certain that perceptions of the border have already changed. However it is uncertain whether this means that the roles played by the natural nation states will diminish. During the last century it was repeatedly predicted that the nation states would lose their importance due to American cultural imperialism and globalization (Berg, Linde-Laursen, and Löfgren 2000, 162).

When looking at the integrative institutions of the Öresund region one gets the impression that the creation of a functionally effectively integrated region is already well under way. One may also look at the question from the perspective of the business and industries. The chambers of commerce in Sweden may be taken to speak for their view. They have stated that the lack of harmonization between Danish and Swedish rules constitutes the biggest barrier to the integration and future growth of the Öresund region. The Öresund chamber of commerce has called for stronger action to boost integration of the Öresund region. They feel that the integration process is coming to a halt and state the main obstacles that the process is now facing. These are for example tax regulations, no common currency, toll fees on the Öresund Bridge and differences in labour market regulations <[www.oresundnetwork.com](http://www.oresundnetwork.com)>

When looking at the three integrative institutions that we have described, it is important to note that national, local and regional authorities play a major role in financing all of these and may be regarded as major driving forces behind the integration process along with the private

industries. This seems to be a paradox because at the same time the same authorities are the biggest obstacles to integration at least in the view of the Swedish commerce of chambers, as mentioned earlier.

If the power of the nation state's central authorities will diminish and diffusion of power to different kind of networking takes place, then the nation state will probably change in its role in/for the future. Its powers and its role will be different. So then we face the task of finding out what the nation-state should best focus its resources on in the future and to redefine its role completely.

### Conclusions

The uneasy integration process of the Öresund Region has begun and actually it is in just an early phase. Tensions arise between a number of actors and their different goals and this fact prevents integration from going smoothly. However, this process is mature enough not to be stopped or rewind. Since the major actor, which could be interested in doing so, is the nation-state, it will remain very cautious about pursuing the integration process in the Öresund Region.

Further and deeper integration is closely linked with demands for the "Lex Öresund". However, this would cause a number of demands from other Swedish or Danish regions. In our opinion, Sweden may become the side where the challenges and tensions would grow, due to the reasons discussed in the paper. That is to say a growing "network gap" between the Southern Sweden and Stockholm.

As mentioned earlier some of the tensions associated with the new networking processes such as the Öresund Integration project described in this paper seem to be sources of tension between existing authorities within the nation state (Ministries, regional authorities etc.) on how to do things, at what pace and what policies to apply. These tensions have to be solved within the framework of the nation state. With regard to the integration projects discussed in this paper, national authorities, sub national authorities, the EU and the private sector are all working together for integration in networking kind of way. This networking is putting a strain on the nation state by creating the aforementioned conflicts within the system. Part of the challenge for the future of the nation state may be to solve these internal conflicts.

Since the EU is a big contributor to many of the integration projects its policies are undoubtedly having a great effect on how things are done within the nation state. Whether this is a negative or positive thing has to be looked at closer. ■

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