




The Nordic level and Nordic cooperation in the Nuclear Safety Sector

Lecture at the NKS seminar

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Overview

Main question:

What is the role of the Nordic level in the nuclear safety sector?

FOUR STEPS:

➤ **Providing context:**

- Nordic cooperation at the political level
- Defining the 'nuclear safety sector'
- Defining 'governance' and a brief introduction to the project "Governance processes in the nuclear safety sector".

➤ **The Nordic level and Nordic cooperation in the nuclear safety sector:**

- Article two on horizontal governance processes
- Vertical governance processes across levels

➤ **Zooming out from the Nordic level: the role of the expert**

➤ **Concluding thoughts**

Nordic cooperation at the political level

The Nordic Council of Ministers: the official body for inter-governmental co-operation in the Nordic Region.

Vision: “That the Nordic region will become the most sustainable and integrated region in the world by 2030.”
(Norden.org)

However

Nordic cooperation described as a “prateklubb” – much talk, little action.

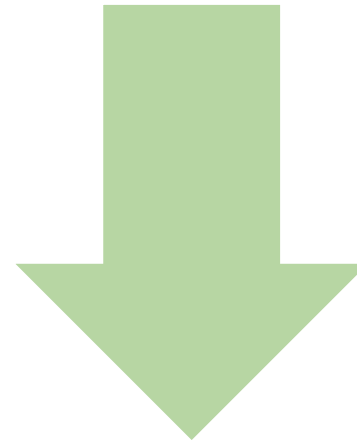
And: Is Nordic cooperation eroding due to the increased importance of EU-related cooperation and integration?

My project: main focus on cooperation below the political level (and globally)

Scholars propose that longstanding Nordic networks, grounded in professions and located in the state administration, may prove to be more robust toward external changes.



Cooperation
at the
political level



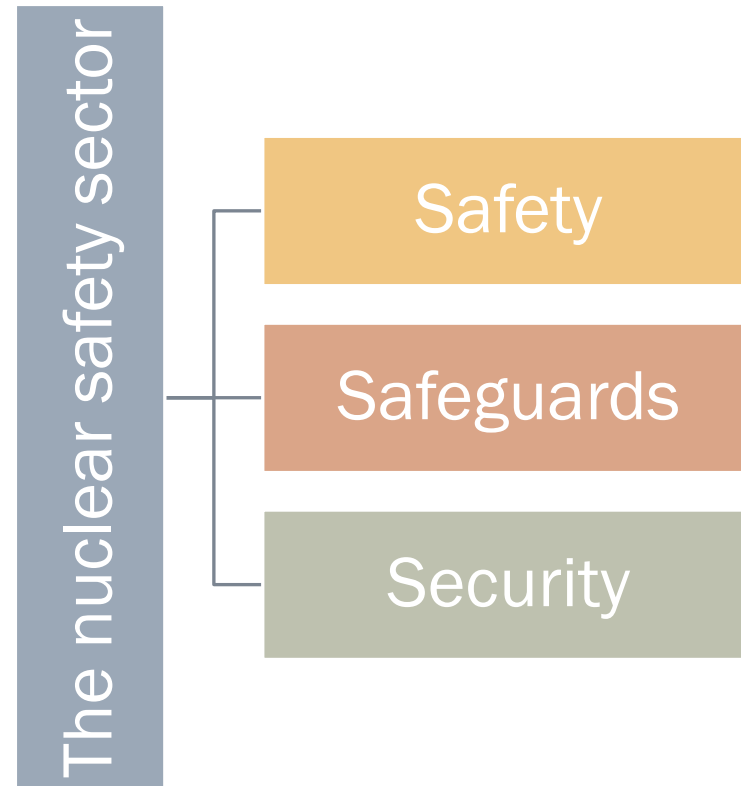
Cooperation
below the
political level

Defining the nuclear safety sector

Three pillars:

1. **Safety:** the protection of people, environment, and society from the consequences of radiation. It includes radiation protection, emergency preparedness, and nuclear safety.
2. **Safeguards:** ensuring that nuclear material, technology, and information is used for peaceful purposes, and not to develop nuclear weapons.
3. **Security:** protecting nuclear facilities from terrorism, and how to avoid theft of nuclear material, technology, and information.

In my project: studying actors operating below the political level and at the global level, addressing these issues.



«Governance processes in the nuclear safety sector»

**“Every time I see the word ‘governance’
I have to think again what it means and
how it is not the same as government.”**

Former political editor of the Times (Bevir 2011)

Defining governance

The word 'governance' is related to steering, piloting, or directing a boat.

Governance as processes: steering, coordination and decision-making.

Traditional idea of government: the society is governed through a chain of government, linking voters, parliaments, executive political leaders, public bureaucracy, and citizens.

Governance as a problematization of this traditional idea: critical acts of governing often occur outside the formal chain of government and in the interactions of a variety of public and private actors.

Consequently, a core question emerged in several social science disciplines from the early 1970s: How may we govern effectively and democratically in a world where political power is fragmented?

Such questions lead to discussions of the role of the state, and these discussions are reflected in literatures on governance.

Basic assumption

States are important, but they operate in a complex web of different actors which also include private actors, and in addition states themselves does not act as one coherent entity.

“Although traditional notions of regulation are largely associated with the state, much regulation in our contemporary world is formed and pursued by actors other than states or in constellations of public and private actors, including states, international organizations, professional associations, expert groups and business corporations.”

(Jacobsson & Sahlin-Andersson 2006)

Structure of the project

Three individual papers, studying governance processes at different levels, and between different actors.
NB: my limited point of view



Article two on horizontal governance processes: **Nordic cooperation in the nuclear safety sector**

Focus: Examines cooperation between the national authorities on radiation protection and nuclear safety in Iceland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

Shared characteristic: expert bodies operating below the political level, where specialized knowledge is essential and where the workforce is characterized by highly educated and skilled experts.

The article asks: “Why does the degree of integration vary between issues of safety, security, and safeguards, involving the same actors, in the same sector, at the same level?”

Findings and analysis:

- Based on interviews
- How to measure ‘degree of integration’?
- Theoretical underpinnings are related to historical institutionalism and organizational theory = history and organization matter in order to understand governance processes.

Table 1. Operationalization of integration.

Proxy	Low degree of integration	High degree of integration
Contact pattern	Infrequent communications flows	Regular communications flows
Trust	Low reciprocal trust	High reciprocal trust
Formalization	None or ad hoc	Permanent structures
Resources	Resources remain in each authority	Pooled resources
Perceived importance *	Low	High

Note: * Of the cooperation. Source: Based on Jacobsen (2017) and Keast and Mandell (2014).

Main findings and conclusions



High degree
of integration

Low degree of
integration

Not *one* singular Nordic cooperation: There are important differences in how the national authorities interact within the different pillars.

A continuum ranging from the safety issues of radiation protection and emergency preparedness, where the cooperation is characterized by high degrees of integration, whereas in security and safeguards issues, cooperation is marked by low degrees integration.

In sum: Different parts of the national authorities are integrated into Nordic cooperation to different degrees = differentiated integration.

Why?

History matter: The longstanding history and success of the Nordic cooperation within radiation protection and emergency preparedness contributes to explaining why this cooperation upholds its importance.

An attempt to establish Nordic cooperation on other areas failed, and the main survivor of this attempt, is the NKS.

Less relevant to have *Nordic* cooperation within nuclear safety and security: only Sweden and Finland rely on nuclear power.

Organization and portfolio matter: More difficult to establish and maintain cooperation related to security and safeguards compared to radiation protection and emergency preparedness, because of the more political and sensitive nature of these issues.

Main findings: a core quote

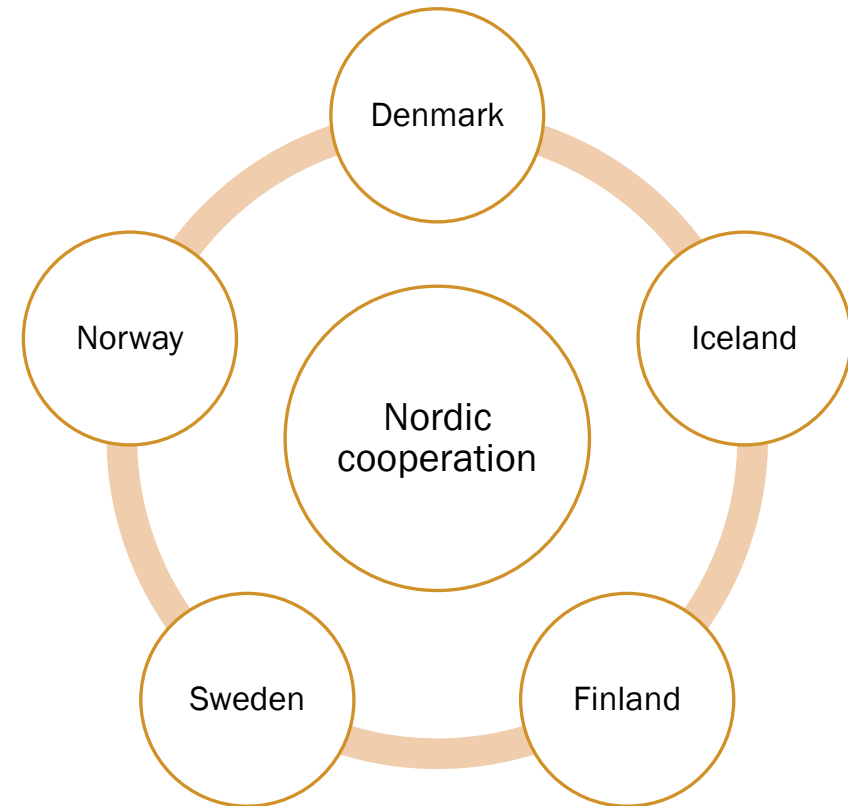
*“We have great Nordic cooperation with sister agencies in the other countries. We meet twice a year, all of us working on emergency preparedness in these countries. And we can have joint publications, joint working groups, joint exercises, seminars, and workshops, so it is very important for us to have this Nordic network. And of course, we cooperate with many others as well, **but I would probably say that the most important sphere is the Nordic cooperation**, because that is where the nearest nuclear facilities are located. That is one part of it, but it is also important to have joint Nordic recommendations, for example. So, we know each other well!”*

(Interviewee 36)

What have we learned about Nordic cooperation in the nuclear safety sector as horizontal processes?

That there is an integrated cooperation between the authorities within the areas of radiation protection and emergency preparedness, and less integrated cooperation on other issue-areas.

= Nordic cooperation between the authorities is important first and foremost within radiation protection and emergency preparedness.



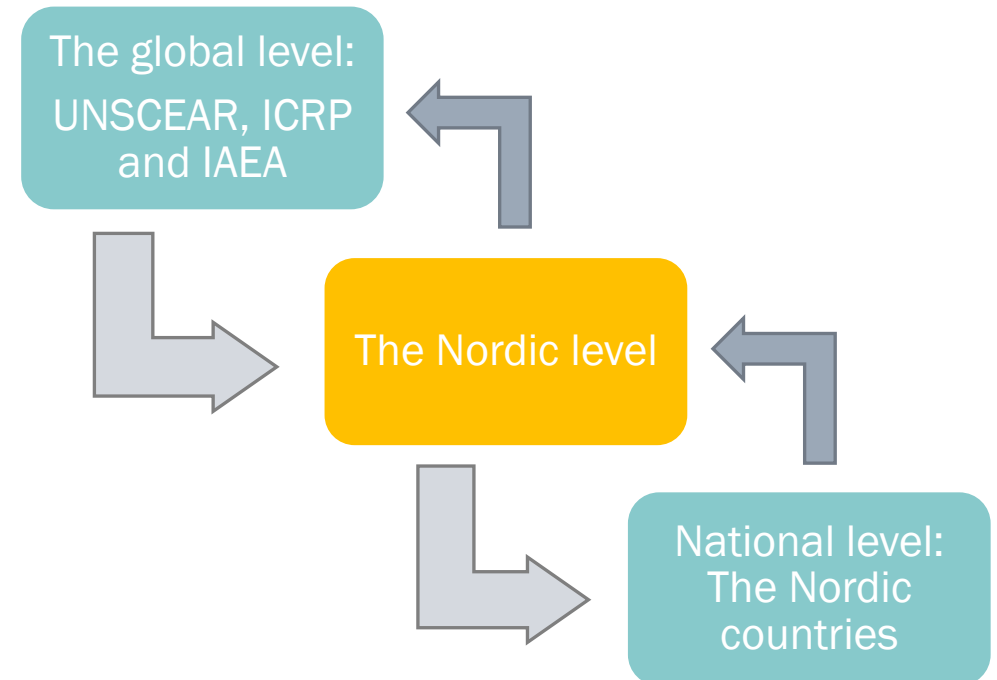
What about the Nordic level viewed as vertical processes in the nuclear safety sector?

Vertical processes = governance processes across levels

Main focus: processes related to radiation protection

Two directions:

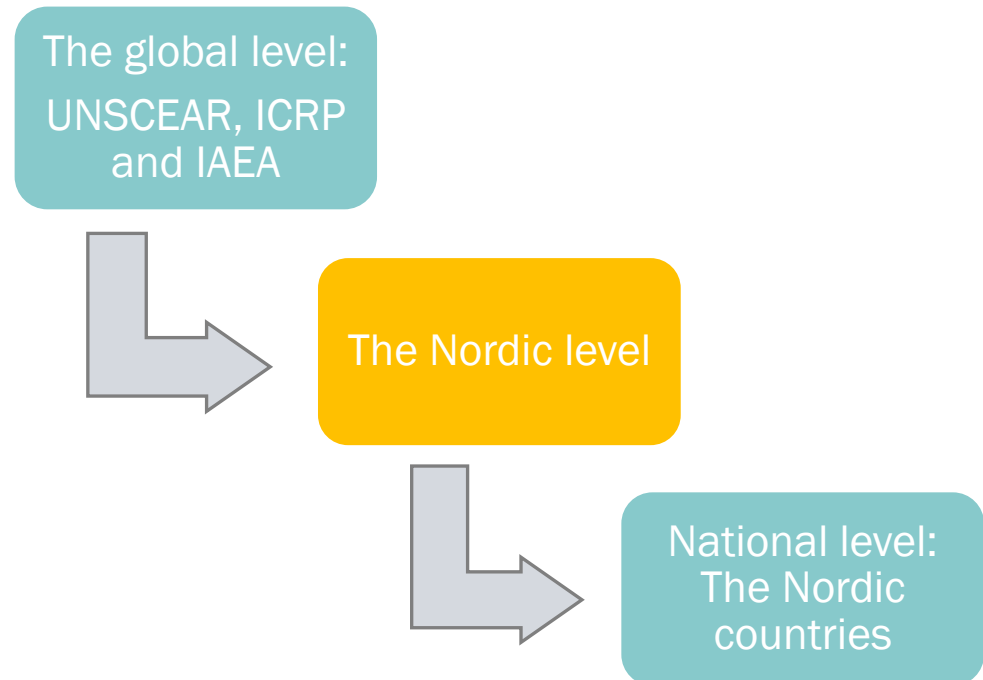
- Top-down processes
- Bottom-up processes



Top-down processes

The Nordic level is important in transforming and adapting international standards and recommendations to Nordic conditions.

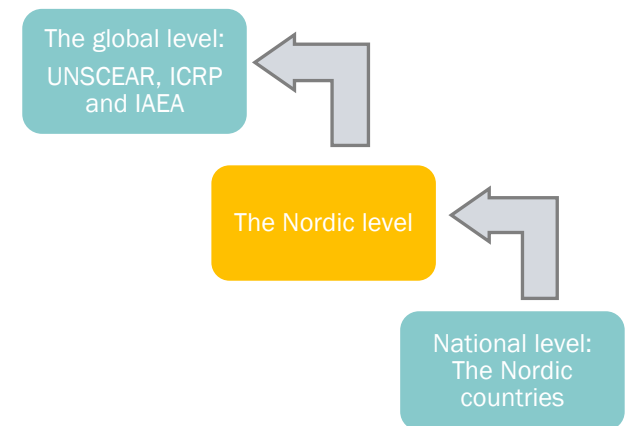
= essential for the development of a common understanding of radiation protection in the Nordic countries and it also serves as a boost into radiation protection at the national level.



Bottom-up processes

The Nordic level as an important coordination arena for work done at the European and international levels: *“When you’re at a meeting in the EU, you are of course a representative of Sweden and not the Nordics, but you can still say that this is something I have anchored with my Nordic colleagues. And it is the same in international contexts. Then I think of the IAEA, where it is also important to be able to say that I’m Swedish, but I’m not only Swedish. I have also asked what everyone thinks about this in the Nordic countries. And I am sure that when Norwegian experts are at meetings in the IAEA, they will say exactly the same: I’ve talked to my Swedish friends about this. I know what we think.”* (Interviewee S)

Work done at the Nordic level, influences international practices: *“The Nordic cooperation has been around for a long time, and it has been very influential. So, many international practices came from the Nordic groups originally.”* (Interviewee 2)



Vertical processes in sum

“So I think at least two points are very important regarding the Nordic cooperation: We have more leverage at the international level, and we can work more efficiently at the national level.”

(Interviewee 2)

The detour: Zooming out from the Nordic level

Another important underlying aspect looking at the nuclear safety sector as a whole: the role of the expert

My research show that governance processes in the nuclear safety sector are made visible through the interplay between different actors, operating at different levels and across levels:

“In this interplay those who produce and spread knowledge in the form of scientific theories, concepts, models, datasets, statistics, analysis and evidence-based recommendations, become some of the most central players in different decision-making processes”. (Stone 2013)

Epistemic communities: networks of professionals with recognized expertise and policy-relevant knowledge in a domain.

Some quotes to illustrate

At the national level: *“People have their own tasks and it’s quite individual what you are working on. I have projects and activities I manage myself, and professionally speaking, I am the expert within my field, so, there is nobody else who has much to object or to say.”* (Interviewee 30)

International level: **But would you say that because the members of UNSCEAR are states, national interests are more present in UNSCEAR meetings compared to the ICRP?** *“It's possible, but I'm not aware of that being the case. From my point of view, I wasn't aware that I was doing anything other than giving my opinion because there wasn't a background of, you know, a political stance on anything.”* (Interviewee 1)

Concluding thoughts

Returning to the main question:

What is the role of the Nordic level in the nuclear safety sector?

Step 1: The Nordic level is important primarily within radiation protection and emergency preparedness, and it is reflected in the integrated cooperation between the national authorities in the Nordic countries within these two fields in particular.

Step 2: Within radiation protection the Nordic level is important in both top-down and bottom-up processes.

The detour: the important role of the expert within this sector

References

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