



Inter-governmental relations

- The case of Norway

Gunn Marit Helgesen, President, KS – the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities

KS at a glance

National members association for local and regional governments

422 municipalities and 18 county councils (both local self-governments)

Interest and employer organisation

Spokesman vis-à-vis central government

Central collective bargaining organisation

Advisory and consultative body



Democracy Index 2015

Democracy in an age of anxiety

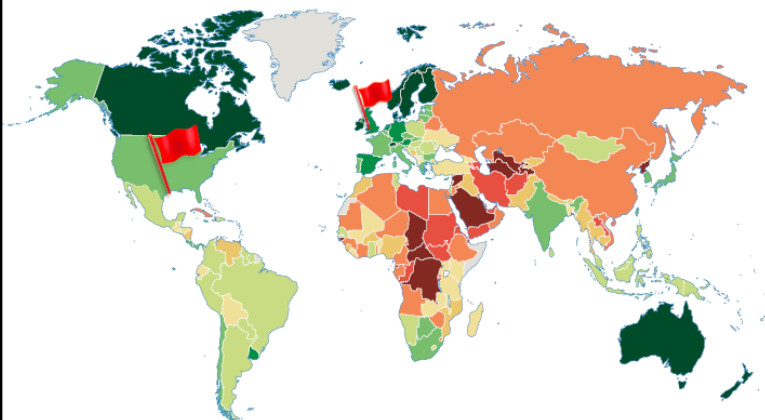
A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



Democracy Index 2016

Revenge of the “deplorables”

A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



www.eiu.com

Democracy Index 2017

Free speech under attack

A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



www.eiu.com

Democracy Index 2018: Me too?

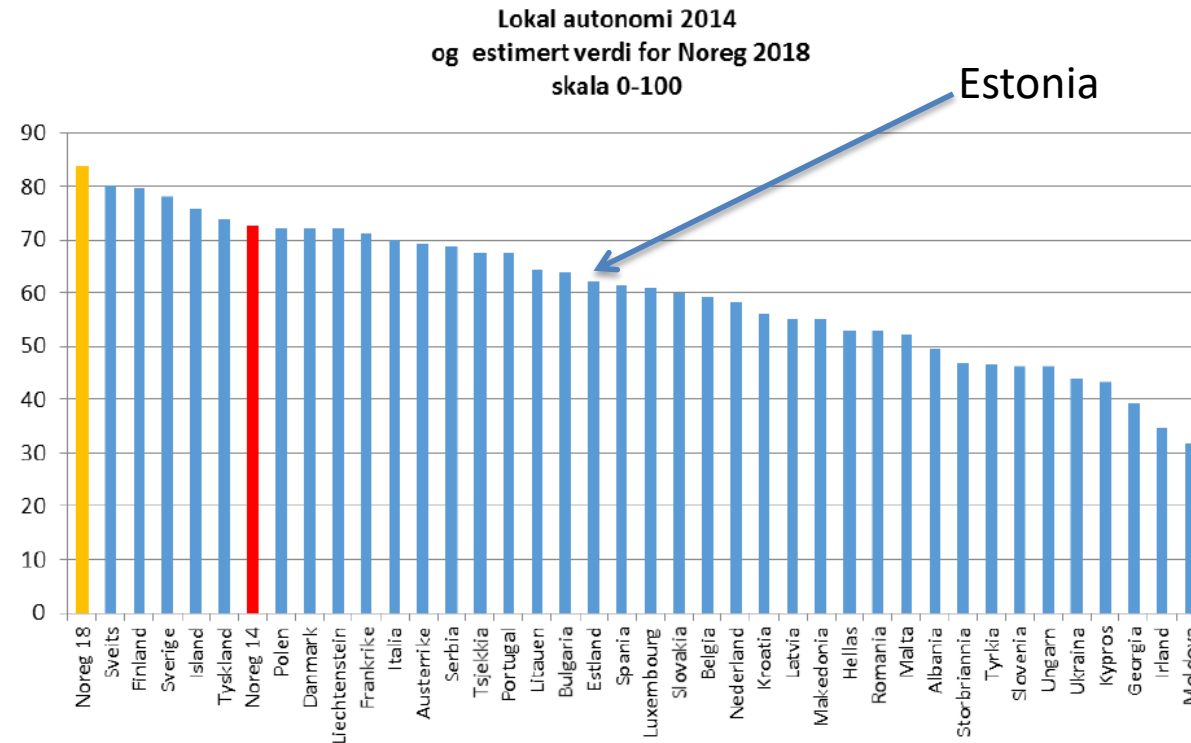
Political participation, protest and democracy

A report by The Economist Intelligence Unit



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The Local Autonomy Index



Figur 3:

Indeks for lokal autonomi: Verdier for 2014 og estimert verdi for Noreg 2018. Skala 0-100.

Kjelde: Same som for fig. 1. Verdier for Noreg 2018 estimert av forfatteren.

How to manage interaction between local and national authorities?

Principles for national authorities' relationship with the local self-government – preferably in law

§ 2-1 Local self-government

[...] Restrictions on the local self-government must have a legal basis (principle of legality).

§ 2-2 Principles for national authorities' relationship with the local self-government:

- The local authorities should not be limited more than is necessary to safeguard national targets (principle of proportionality).
- Public tasks should preferably be added to the administrative level closest to the inhabitants (principle of subsidiarity).
- Within the framework of national economic policy, local self-governments should have free income that provides financial room for maneuver (principle of financing).

Source: The Local Government Act (free translation), in force from 2019

Additional considerations for the relationship between national and local self-government

- Generalists
- Financial responsibility
- Sector-department-responsibility
- Compensation
- Restrictions in local self-government only with regards to *certain* national considerations



National considerations that may justify state control

- Equality
- Legal protection
- National economy
- Life and Health
- Indigenous people and national minorities
- Environment and sustainable development, including climate change



The whole country is not the same, although it may look that way ...



Foto: Flickr/Henry Leirvoll

Good intentions and common goals...



Foto: Flickr/Kristian Mollenborg

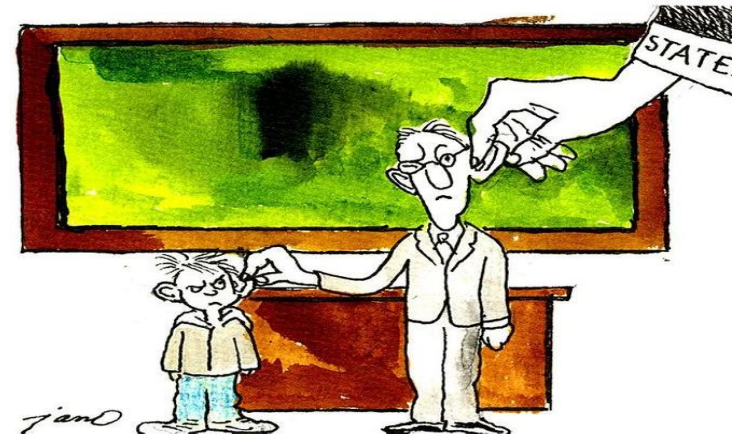
Equality is about

"The concept of equality is not about equal services with the same form, content and scope in all municipalities, but about opportunities to be able to provide health services, educational services and other things that can best be adapted to the individual's needs. In the concept of equality, it is also the case that everyone should be ensured a minimum level of services, regardless of where they live in the country. The majority of the parliament standing committee on local government and public admin. has in Innst. 270 S (2011-2012) stated that differences between municipalities are positive if they reflect different political priorities and different local conditions".

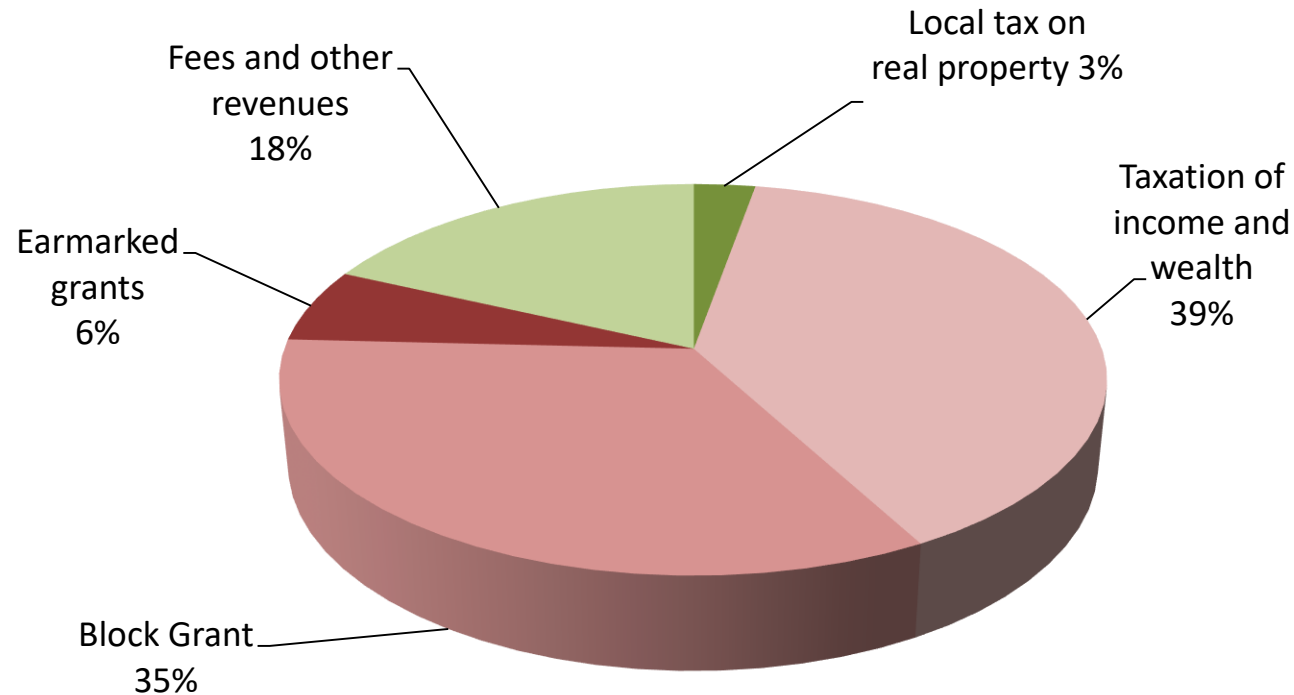
Source: Ministry of Local Government and Modernization's guide on state control of municipalities and county councils, 2016

State control in Norway: both more and less detailed

- Strong increase of rights based legislation in primary education and health (up to 2010). Legal instruments are still used extensively
- Framework financing. Limited use of earmarked grants
- Increased emphasis on guidance and consultations, agreements and dialogue between the state and municipal sector
- Increasing discussion about and use of binding staffing standards



The municipal sector's income is largely determined by the Norwegian Parliament. Only a small amount is earmarked



Known unfortunate consequences of detailed state control

«Throughout the last few decades, municipalities have increasingly been assigned tasks through various special laws, especially in education, health and social affairs. Within home nursing, practical assistance and training, home help and relief measures, it has become a increased use of individual rights. The goal is to strengthen the citizens' legal certainty and to provide stronger guidelines for a good services in each area. At the same time, such schemes entail considerable additional work and seize larger resources in the municipalities. Implicitly, they also imply a down-prioritization of other areas, without this being stated. Staffing standards also aim to ensure a good and equal offer on selected areas, across municipalities. At the same time, they lock municipalities or businesses to established solutions. The costs can be very high and limit the interest in investing in new and innovative solutions that can offer better services with lower staffing”.

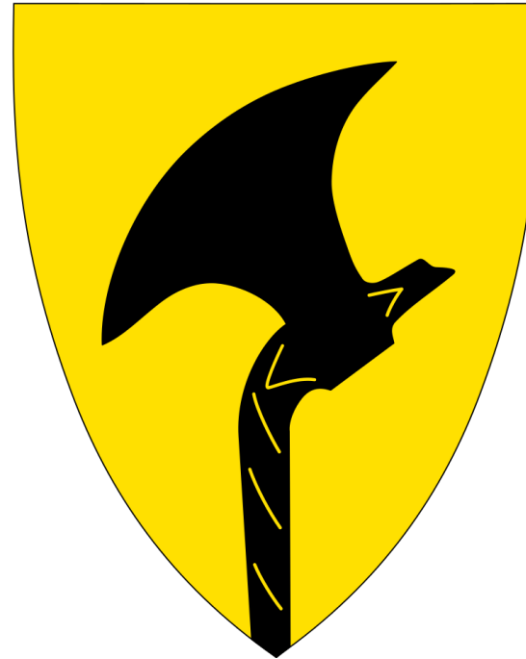
Source: White Paper on Long Term Perspectives for the Norwegian Economy, 2017

Control by:

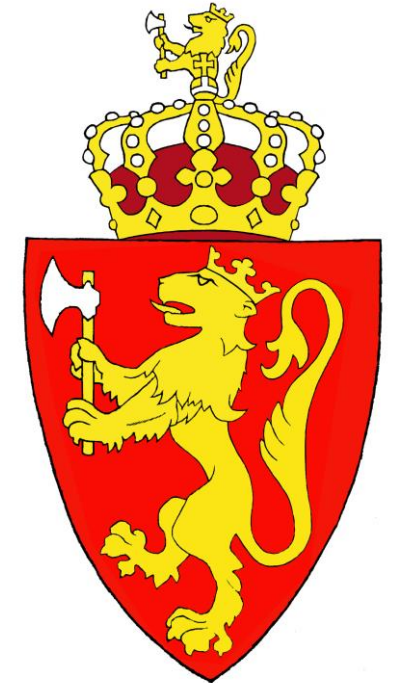
The People (local elections)



The Municipality (Political and administrative control)



The State (Supervision, complaint, Robek)



How to manage interaction between local and national authorities?

Consultation – KS has regular meetings with the Central Government



Some important guiding questions...

- Are the tasks performed as close to the citizens as possible? (The principle of subsidiarity)
- Are the tasks funded, with free funds? (The principle of financing)
- Is the state managing more than necessary? (The principle of proportionality) Can the task solution be affected locally?
- Government by law and regulations? (The principle of legality) Does the state instruct in anything other than law and regulation?



Photo: Sturlason