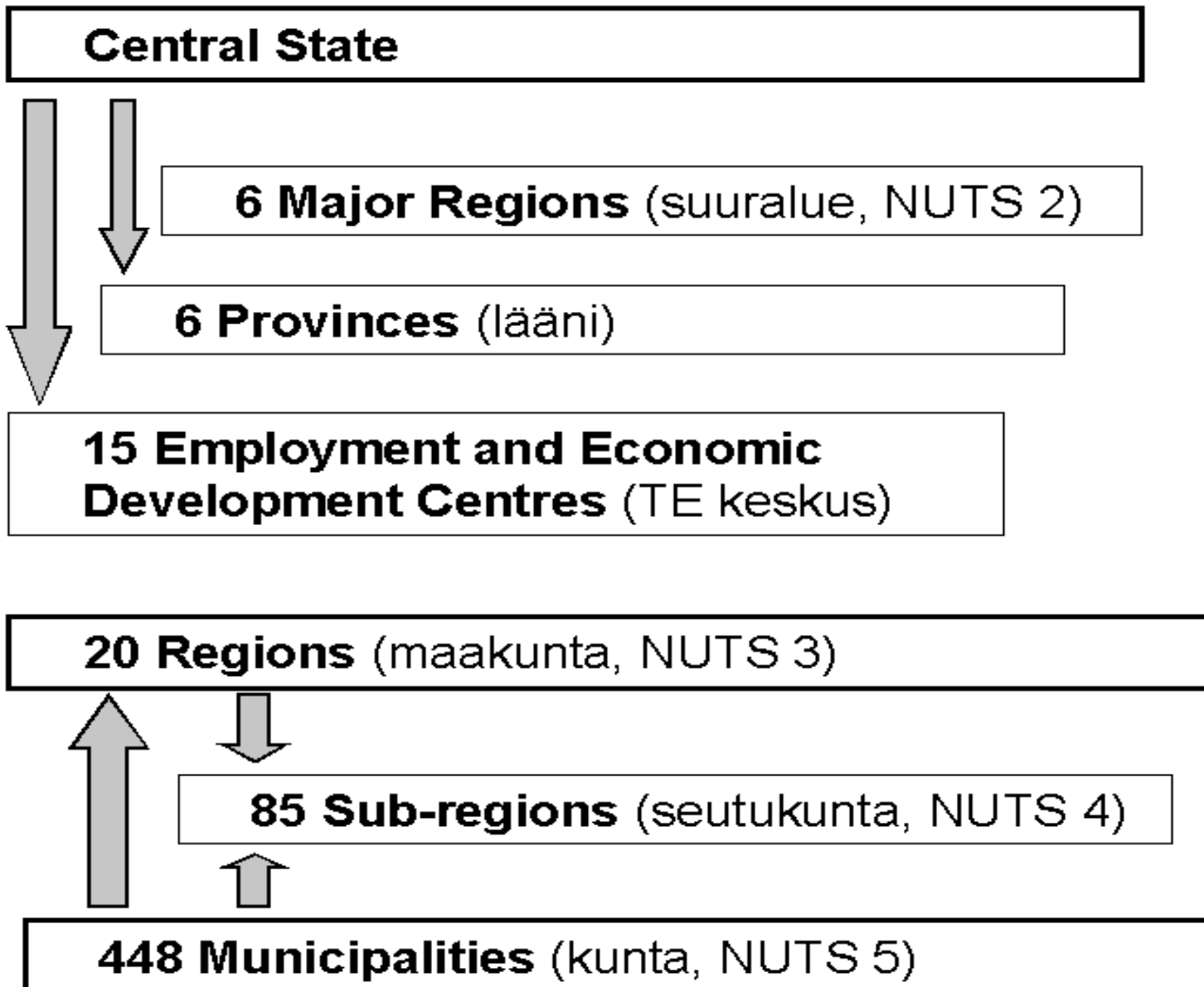


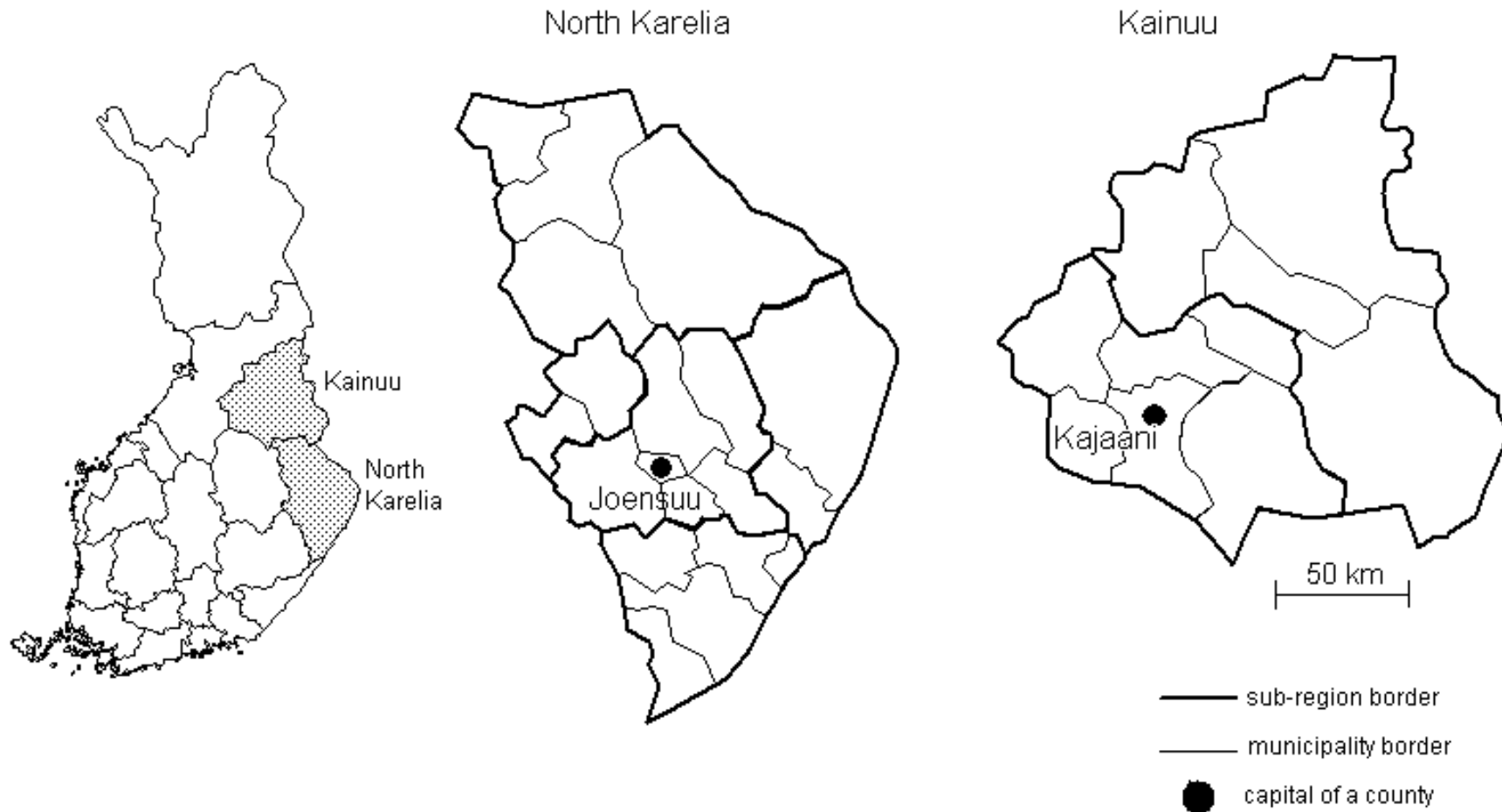
**Access to Services
in Rural Finland:
Examples from Kainuu
and North Karelia**

Presentation at NPP DESERVE International meeting in Sotkamo in Finland (21.1.2005)

Administrative levels in Finland



Location of Finnish Case Regions



Finnish Case Regions

Kainuu Region

- 10 municipalities
- EU Objective 1 region in 2000-2006
- 260 km common borderline with Russia, Vartiuss border crossing point

Population:

- 86 500 inhabitants (2003)
- 4.0 persons/ km²

North Karelia Region

- 16 municipalities (in 2005).
- EU Objective 1 region in 2000-2006
- 296 km common borderline with Russia, Niirala border crossing point

Population:

- 169 100 inhabitants
- 9.5 persons/ km²

Economic structure of Case Regions

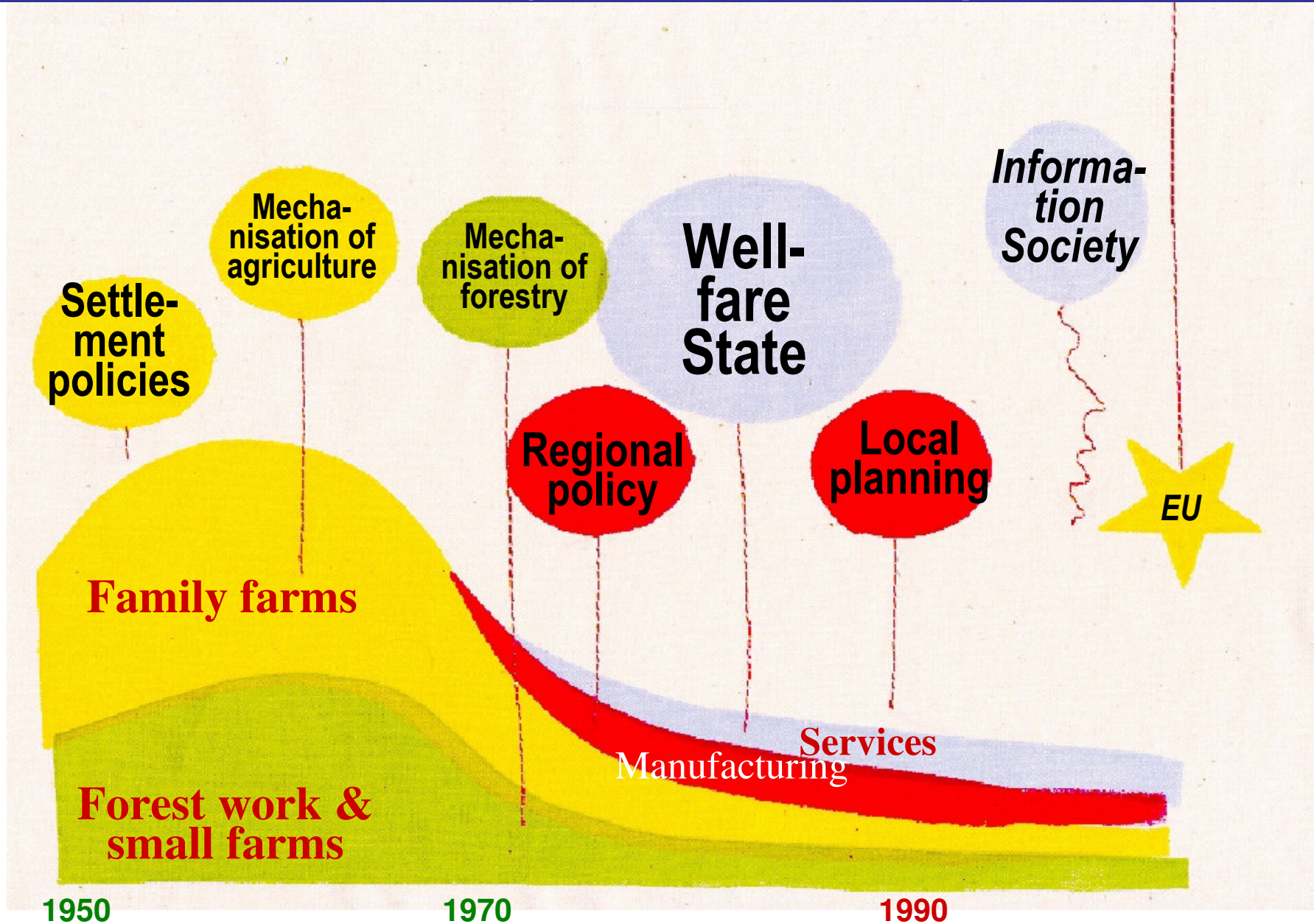
Long history of utilising forest resources

- the period of tar exports (1600s, 1700s, 1800s)
- the paper and pulp mill, sawmills and timber house factories (1900s)
- combination of family farms and forestry work (1900s)
- wilderness and tourism (1900s, 2000s)

The present strong role of public sector

- Municipality is the main organiser of services on local level
- The welfare state has undergone economic streamlining since 1990's economic depression

Historical layers of rural development



Finland's Descriptions

The Role of Municipality in Local Development

- The municipality itself is usually the biggest employer: a third of the local jobs.
- The municipality implements the local functions of welfare state and provides the social and health services, education and training.
- The municipality has also supported and activated the diversification of local businesses and industries. In some localities it has played a key role in new and risky development efforts.

Finland's Descriptions

Changing Role of Rural Municipality

	Role of the municipality	Main objective of development	Dividing line of social contradiction	Local struggles
Up to the late 1960s	Self-sufficient local government	Progress of agriculture and forestry	Landowners vs. small holders and workers	Social issues: Poverty
1970s & 1980s	Promoter of industries and provider of public services	Diversification of economy and development of welfare services; getting resources from the central state	Developers of the main centre vs. defenders of villages experiencing depopulation	Where to locate services; how much to invest to industrial development
1990s	Development municipality mobilising private and public resources	Focusing on tourism and image construction	Tourism & sports coalition vs. culture and village activists	land-use; Conflicts over budget priorities; Closing village schools

Self-government experiment in Kainuu

Self-government experiment in Kainuu

- The administrative context of service provision changed profoundly since Jan 2005

The new regional council of Kainuu will be responsible for:

- health care and social services (with the exception of children's day care),
- vocational and upper secondary education and professional adult education
- responsibility for the financing of these services will remain with the municipalities

Self-government experiment in Kainuu

The decision power of the new Regional Council

- is in the hands of a body elected by general vote (in October 2004).

Historical moment in Finland

- For the first time on the Finnish mainland, a democratically elected regional council will be granted administrative power that has traditionally been the domain of the state administration and its regional representatives.

On-going experiments

Regional Networks of Information Society Technology

- Municipalities and regional councils built together a common technical infrastructure of information technology (**Regional network**)
- **Building motives:** the use of the same software applications, to reshape division of labour, and to transfer data between the municipalities.
- The joint technological infrastructure can **serve as a platform for new forms and ways of providing services**
- The Hospital District's (North Karelia) experiment **mobile digital x-ray unit** that used in small health centres. The x-ray pictures are sent via the network to the specialists at the Regional Hospital for consultation. In this manner this specialised service is available in small localities, too.

On-going experiments

Broadband issue

- **c. 20% of households are outside** the commercial broadband connections (not taking into account satellite links) in Kainuu and in North Karelia.
- The broadband availability has become an important **rural development issue** in rural areas.
- Regional Councils together with the municipalities are constructing action plans to tackle the issue of broadband in remote and sparsely populated areas. These preparations are part of the national broad band strategy of the Finnish Government.

On-going experiments

Local community networks

- Local community networks are also called citizens networks (“kansalaisverkko”), which aim for improved bottom-up communication.
- These experiments often provide local advice and support for households and local communities, these models have attracted interest of the service providers in rural areas, such as some banks offering e-banking services.
- These community networks, if they are well grounded in the rural society, may offer new kinds of models for delivering various services to rural people.

On-going experiments

Upper Karelia Experiment

- Upper Karelia rose into national and even international fame by developing a successful computer network service, which mobilised over 25 percent of the local population to enrol as its registered users.
- The project was implemented by innovative activists. Groups of local unemployed were prepared to become peer trainers of rural population in the computers use and communication.
- The project changed the local atmosphere and the public image of the place, attracting visitors to see this most networked periphery of the Finnish information society.

On-going experiments

Learning Regions (OSKU)

- After the success of the Learning Upper Karelia network, the SITRA Fund (Finnish Parliament Fund of Research and Development) started in 2001 a large project of Learning Regions (OSKU).
- OSKU initiated eight pilot projects, using the experiences of North Karelia as their guidelines.
- One of the local OSKU pilot projects took place in Kainuu.

On-going experiments

Decline of the village shops

- The decline of the village shops has been rapid: In 1992 there were 1500 shops in rural areas and in 2002 of those were left only 700 shops.
- In the year 2003 in Kainuu there were 20 village shops (decline of 1 from the previous year) and in North Karelia there were 43 shops (decline of 4 from the previous year).

Mobile shops

- The total number of mobile shops (busses and boats) was 62 in Finland in 2003. The value of the total sales in these units has rapidly declined.
- Since January 2004 a new state support of the Ministry of Trade and Industry is available for investments in village shops and mobile shops.

On-going experiments

Mobile libraries

- The mobile library service covers most of the rural areas. - The most important reason for cutting down the mobile library service is the declining demand for books, because the clients move away or important institutions like village schools or old-age homes are being closed down.
- The activity of the mobile library gets public support as part of the state subsidy to the public libraries of the municipalities. For investments in new library busses the municipalities apply for state support.

On-going experiments

- Mobile voting place (**voting bus**) in North Karelia
- **Power Vehicle** (Woimavaunu), a mobile gym taking modern gym equipment to different places and offering opportunities for physical exercise for the elderly in Pyhäselkä municipality.
- **Client information database** of Lieksa town, where the nurses visiting patients at their `home write their reports directly to the database using mobile devices.
- **Multifunctional local taxi-entrepreneurs**: social care, security and emergency services, distribution of food purchases (from shops), pupils transportation (“school taxi”), and even delivery of alcoholic beverages.
- **“Joint ride“ (shared) taxi**: several persons using the same route (e.g. to regional hospital) are organised to travel together in the same taxi. One has to phone a call-centre and to reserve a seat one day in advance.

On-going experiments

Joint service points

- **The idea:** various public and other services can be obtained from one service point.
- **Typical location of points:** state or municipal offices, public libraries, postal service point (in a local shop).
- **Services available:** Services of the Social Insurance Institution (pensions, unemployment benefits, financial aid for students, sickness benefits), police, employment service, tax office, registry office (official forms), and bank.
- Joint service point model is promoted and coordinated nationally by Ministry of the Interior.