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title: Devolving institutions: The disintegration of Norwegian public policy towards the IT-industry1970-2000.

Unlike in many other advanced economies, e.g. in Finland and Ireland as well as California (Silicon Valley), the IT-industry in Norway has played a minor and declining part over the last thirty years. Also the salience of Norwegian technology policy, IT-policy, and industrial policy in general, has decreased in the same period. The importance of government policy and investment for economic growth is appreciated when considering that defence spending funded the rise of the US hi-tech industries, that Ireland is actively prioritizing the ICT-industry in attracting FDI, and that Ireland and Finland are actively supporting the development of indigenous ICT-industry through funding and support structures.

An understanding of the major factors in the dismantling of Norwegian IT-policy requires a broad time frame. More dramatic changes in policy during the 1980s, are only partly explained by the contemporaneous events. Policy development and institutional development since WW2 in different policy areas (including institutional complementarities) affect IT-policy development as well as external events and policy effects of prior IT-policy. The industry neutral industrial policy of the 1980s resulted from the tipping of the balance between institutional actors caused by external events in the form of economic crisis and new ideology, structural aspects of decision-making, and the process of political contestation between actors.

The research problem is to elucidate the process of institutional development/policy development, in this context understood as institutional change/policy change and its institutional effects/policy effects within the ICT-policy regime. This is interesting in relation to the history of the Norwegian economy and IT-policy, and to future economic challenges, and as a case study in relation to developing historical-institutional research propositions for institutional/policy development.

Key-words: ICT-industry; ICT-policy; institutional development; policy effects; Norway
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