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Special section: Life in
the Archipelago. 50 pages

BALTIC WORLDS

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The stories that need to be told

Testimonies
on the horrors
of the Holocaust

Death and life
in the Lithuanian
Jewish Shtetls

The last witnesses
of the massacres
in Pidhaitsi

also in this issue

PAN-BALTIC DREAMS / RUSSIAN SPY FILMS / SOROS ART CENTERS / ALBANIA AS UTOPIA / GULAG MEMORIES

editorial

Listen to the stories

To remember and tell may be the only way to deal with a traumatic past. We begin this issue with texts describing and recalling the massacres of Jews in the surroundings of Nazi German. Grigory Kanovich, now 90 years old, is the last Lithuanian author with first-hand experience of the horrors. In his books he has in his wording "tried to create a written monument of the Jews in the shtetls".

For *Baltic Worlds* he tells about the difficulties in writing about the persecution of the Jews during the Soviet regime, and further the reluctance today to recognize that the Lithuanians turned against the Jews without being commanded to do so by the Nazis. There were, however, also Lithuanians who helped and saved Jews. We here publish such an encounter in an extract from Kanovich's newly translated novel *Devilspel*.

Baltic Worlds publishes a chapter from a forthcoming book in Swedish by Peter Handberg. He has during travels collected testimonies from the last witnesses of the Holocaust. The stories shed lights on how humans do, or rather do not, cope with the horrors such as massacres of children. This chapter is from the village of Pidhajtsi in Ukraine.

IN AN ESSAY Viktoriya Sukovato focus on the cultural memory and trauma of WWII from another viewpoint. She discusses how spy films can play a role of a collective psychotherapy for the post-war Soviet society.

Baltic Worlds includes, as always, a broad spectrum of articles and subjects in each issue. The theme section "Life in the Archipelago" throws us into a completely different setting. In a series of articles, we learn about the special prerequisites for economic, social, and cultural life in areas such as the archipelago. In the archipelago life is intertwined with the char-

acteristic nature, the surrounding water, and the isolation of the sparsely inhabitant islands, despite their being situated close to land and often too dense urban centers. The theme has an emphasis on research on entrepreneurship, and discusses how to make a living in the archipelago and in best using the resources that the environment in the archipelago provides, while also protecting and securing the nature and ecosystems in the areas against exploitation.

IN THE REVIEW section, we return to dwell on the politics of memory and how the past is treated. Tomas Sniegón reviews *Gulag Memories* by Zuzanna Bogumil and Francesco Zavatti reviews *Tourist in Utopia*, the biography of the Norwegian professor Rune Ottosen who tried to come to terms with his own enthusiastic belief in the communist system and his travels to ensure friendship and relations with the Hoxha regime in Albania during the 70s.

Followers, witnesses, and survivors – they all have stories to be told. ✕

Ninna Mörner

in this issue



Continued use of ecosystems

“Fishing was earlier always one of several legs that underpinned the livelihoods and economies of coastal families.

Page 40



Post-Soviet spy cinema

“Historical trauma represented through visual art can create a distance between the subject of the trauma (the audience) and the traumatic experience.

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LITHUANIAN
AUTHOR
GRIGORY
KANOVICH,
SURVIVOR OF
THE SHTETLS:

“I HAVE TRIED TO CREATE A WRITTEN MONUMENT TO THE LITHUANIAN JEWS”

by **Pål Ruin**

He is the last Lithuanian Jewish author with first-hand experience of the shtetls, the small Jewish towns that vanished from the face of the earth in 1941.

“I have tried to create a written monument to the Lithuanian Jews”, says Grigory Kanovich in an interview with *Baltic Worlds*.

Kanovich turns 90 this summer. At 85 he stopped writing when he published his last book, *Shtetl Love Song*. The book *Devilspel*, from which an extract is published in this issue of *Baltic Worlds*, was written back in 2002 but not translated into English until now.

Kanovich has lived in Israel since 1993, and his son Sergey has helped in translating our questions into Russian and then translating the answers into English. First his father only answered three of the questions, and he was too tired to continue. But the following day came the rest of the answers.

“He is delighted that the English-speaking world is now able to read his books”, says Sergey, who is also a writer and currently walking in his father’s footsteps by trying to give life to the Jewish culture before the war through work with the Lost Shtetl Museum in the small town of Šeduva in northern Lithuania.

“I have said many times that Lithuania has enough traces of



**Extract from
Devilspel
by Grigory
Kanovich.**

Translated by Yisrael
Elliot Cohen for Noir Press.
Release of the English
version June 2019.

“Cheslavas deliberated constantly about how he could save Elisheva from those who wished to purify the nation.

He thought about her when he was in the meadow, too, with the intoxicating odour of harvest in his nostrils, as he carefully lifted the hay and lay it into the cart as if it was alive. The clouds descended lower and lower. On the horizon, far beyond the meadow, they had already merged with the majestic crowns of the trees. From time to time the horse raised its head and looked up in alarm; it wouldn't be long before they dropped their burden – the first rainstorm the bomb-wounded earth would receive.

Without waiting for Elisheva to bring his afternoon snack, Lomsargis got up on the seat of the cart. Speaking tenderly,



The old part of Grigory Kanovich' home town Janova was demolished in 1941.

as if to a member of his family, he urged his raven beauty on, Stasia, Stasite, Stanislava. Stasite understood from his tone where to go and how. She understood whether he wanted her to trot or gallop, whether in the direction of the farm or to Mishkine. She quickly caught his mood and easily determined when he was sober and when he was tipsy.

Sometimes, she would approach him when he was disconsolate or troubled and nuzzle up to him as a woman might, rubbing against his chest with her muzzle. He pitied her and harnessed her only on church holidays when he set out for prayers in town or when it was time to cut the hay and harvest it.

"Why are you so attached to her?" Prane inquired, never failing to disapprove of his love for anyone but herself. She

suffered not only from a diseased liver, but also from a flow of pointless questions in her blood.

"I'm learning from her."

"If it's no secret, what are you learning? I would imagine that she was the one who should be learning from you."

"She's teaching me how to be a human being. Where do you think all the evil in the world comes from? From horses or cows? From sheep or from birds? It comes from us intelligent two-legged creatures! A horse would never wage war against another if her rider didn't force her to do so. A rabbit wouldn't disparage a sheep out of envy, because the poor creature lacked a woolen coat and had to warm himself with his feet in contrast to herself. A sparrow wouldn't accuse a nightingale of all kinds of mortal sins just because the latter

Jewish death,” he says. “Meanwhile, it’s almost impossible to find traces of Jewish life in Lithuanian towns.”

This description of both the life and death of the Jewish culture in Eastern Europe is something that characterizes his father’s books. In *Devilspel*, the readers get acquainted with a couple of Jewish and half-Jewish families in the town of Mishkine in Southern Lithuania at the end of June 1941 when the Germans are about to arrive. The sounds of the war are heard from the distance, while Lithuanians suddenly are turning against their Jewish neighbors.

Grigory Kanovich himself was born in the town of Jonava, in central Lithuania. What did he experience of anti-Semitism before the family left?

“My life in the 1930s in Jonava was happy and untroubled. As far as my parents are concerned, I cannot tell you for sure if they experienced anti-Semitism at that time. They never dealt with politics. My father Solomon tailored suits for everyone regardless of ethnicity or religion – he tailored for rabbi and priest, policeman and doctor. My mother was a house-keeper.”

Researchers in the field have come to similar conclusions, namely that anti-Semitism was not a widespread phenomenon in Lithuania before the war, and the situation for the Jews was actually better than in many other European countries. The Jews had lived in the area for almost 600 years, and Lithuania’s autocratic leader at the time, Antanas Smetona, even spoke Yiddish.

The sudden change in mood among many ethnic Lithuanians, the outburst of hatred and violence, has been analyzed by several scholars. Many explanations have been put forward, but the one that is most often emphasized is that Jews were accused of supporting the Soviets when the country was occupied

in 1940. This was of course a horrific accusation, and the vast majority of the Jews were victims of the occupation, just like the ethnic Lithuanians. At this time, the Jews accounted for about 8 percent of the Lithuanian population, but they held about 15 percent of the leading positions in the communist regime. Without in any way having a dominating influence, they were still over-represented among the hated communists. This fact was exploited by the Nazis: “It was Jewish communists who carried away your countrymen to Siberia, now you have to help us make your country free from the Jews,” was a message that many people bought.

Almost 80 years have passed since Grigory Kanovich experienced this sudden hatred, which forced him and his family to flee the country. How could his neighbors become murderers over night? What is his answer after all these years? Surely, he must have thought about it over and over again?

His answer is brief, and maybe he lacks the energy and will to dwell on it today:

“There were many reasons and most probably we will never know all of them. But we can

raise the questions and try to understand. One of the main reasons was Lithuania’s loss of independence.”

Before the hatred took root, how intense were the contacts between kids from the Jewish community and the Lithuanians? In *Devilspel*, you describe how Elisheva had played as a child with the Lithuanian boy Povilas Genis. Was it common?

“The contacts and inter-relations between Jewish and Lithuanian kids were almost impossible due the language barrier. Jewish kids did not know Lithuanian and Lithuanian children were

“MY LIFE IN THE 1930S IN JONAVA WAS HAPPY AND UNTROUBLED. AS FAR AS MY PARENTS ARE CONCERNED, I CANNOT TELL YOU FOR SURE IF THEY EXPERIENCED ANTI-SEMITISM AT THAT TIME.”

sang, while he merely chirped. But human beings? Humans, Pranute, will claw each other to pieces over a plot of farmland. They will disparage their neighbour for no reason and will report them to the authorities just to keep themselves out of trouble.”

Prane did not object. As she listened, she tried to imagine where he got such clever ideas from; they always made her feel like yawning. They were just a stone’s throw from the farm when the first drops of rain fell heavily on Stasite’s mane. On the roof, beyond the trees lining the road, it was possible to make out a wooden horse that looked like it had been drawn with ink.

“Hurry, Stasite, hurry!” Lomsargis shouted.

The horse neighed and shifted from a slow trot to a gal-

lop. Soon Lomsargis caught sight of his five sided cottage through the rain and of Elisheva, who rushed barefoot from the porch to the haybarn to throw the door wide open for Stasite and Cheslavas. It was as if the storm had waited until the cart had entered the haybarn before it slammed down upon the farm.

“We made it, thank God, we made it!” Cheslavas rejoiced.

“Thank you, Stasite! Thank you, Elenute!”

The horse shook its head and Elisheva, who seemed uncharacteristically silent and gloomy, began to help unload the cart, which was piled high with hay.

“Why do you look so down, my dear?” Lomsargis asked, concerned that she looked so despondent when he entered the farmhouse and sat at the table. “You don’t look yourself.”

not in command of Yiddish. The fact that Elisheva was playing with a Lithuanian kid was rare, an exception to the rule.”

What did you yourself experience of Lithuanians turning against you Jews before you fled?

“Before the evacuation I had never experienced any hostile approach from Lithuanian children – they knew that their parents were wearing Jewish tailored clothes, had their hair cut at Jewish barbers. This somehow made us closer.”

Grigory and his parents fled Jonava the day before the town was taken over by the Germans. Via Latvia they managed to escape to Russia and the Ural Mountains and ended up in a kolchoz at the Kazakhstan steppe where they lived with very little food. His father had to serve in the Soviet army.

They almost didn’t make it all the way to Russia. At one point the line of refugees they were travelling with was attacked by a German airplane. Grigory’s mother dragged him into a haystack in the middle of a field, an act that came to save their lives. The scene is dramatically retold in the novel *Shtetl Love Song*.

Grigory tells me that his mother saved the family even at an earlier moment:

“I remember an argument between my parents – to leave or to stay. My father was convinced, as unfortunately were many Jews who decided to stay, that the war would be over in a few days or a few weeks at most. It was my late mother who persuaded him to leave.”

Around 95 percent of the Lithuanian Jews were killed in the Holocaust, over 200,000 people, most of them already in 1941. Grigory lost several family members, but still the family moved back to Lithuania after the war, settling in Vilnius. “We were drawn back to the cemeteries of our relatives,” he said in an earlier interview.

Grigory started studying at the philology department at the university. His command of Yiddish had somewhat deteriorated during his years in exile, which led him to start writing in Russian. After having written a successful poem to a friend’s



Grigory Kanovich in Janova 1934, age five.



Grigory Kanovich in 2011, age 90.

He didn’t touch his food. “What happened while I was away?”

“Nothing.”

“What do you mean by that?”

She didn’t reply, but sat opposite Lomsargis with her head bowed in shame at having lied.

“So, what then?” Cheslavas stared at her, waiting for a direct and honest answer.

“I’ve decided to leave.”

“To go where?”

“To my father and sister. God won’t forgive me if I stay here,” she said. “He will not forgive me if I’m not with them at this time,” she repeated, addressing both Lomsargis and the Almighty.

From outside the window came the sounds of the June storm raging. The lightning threatened to strike the roof of the cottage with whips of fire and the peals of thunder shook its walls. The rain battered the apple orchard and ravaged the branches of the old elms that surrounded the farmstead.

“But Elenute, are you sure that they are alright there?”

Lomsargis asked. “Perhaps I could ride over there first, have a look around and find out how everything is. You can’t see anything from our wilderness here apart from the *Pushcha* and the swamp with its sandpipers. You know perfectly well what kind of a time this is for your people; it’s not a good time to be wandering around. Anyway, right now I need to drop in on our priest – there’s an important matter I don’t want to put off . . . I don’t care if you get angry at me, but I won’t let

girlfriend, his career as a poet started. His first collection of verse came in 1948, when he was only 19 years old. Eventually he turned to prose and gradually found his topic: "My saga about Lithuanian Jewry", as he put it.

But writing about the Jewish world of his childhood was a difficult task in the Soviet Union. The early 1950s were characterized by a wave of anti-Semitism in the empire. Newspapers called the small remains of the Jewish cultural elite "bourgeois cosmopolitans" and "supporters of American imperialism". Nazi crimes against the Jews were denied, and Jewish scholars were removed from their posts. How was it even possible to write under these circumstances?

"About half of my Litvak saga novels I wrote after 1993 in Israel. In the parts I wrote in the USSR, I dealt with the topic of the destiny of the Jews under the anti-Semitic Tsarist empire – probably that was the reason why the Soviet censorship thought that the ideas and values I was sharing were harmless. To the readers, however, the parallel between the Tsarist empire and Soviet one was obvious. But up until perestroika and glasnost, Moscow publishers would refuse to publish any of my novels. They would instead be published in smaller runs in Soviet Lithuania and then virtually smuggled and, in some cases, even hand-copied and distributed in the USSR."

He describes how Soviet authors dealing with sensitive issues had to be creative and to hide their true intentions behind metaphors. The censorship was very attentive, but also stupid at times. He recalls one incident, and I can almost see his smile there in the outskirts of Tel Aviv when he notes down his answers to my questions:

"In one of my novels where I did expose the anti-Semitic nature of the Russian empire, I had created the characters of two Russian brothers who were woodcutters. The characters I depicted were not totally negative, but it was a must that the censor's office, called Glavlit, would give their approval. They insisted that I change the name of the two brothers from Andropov to Andronov. Why? Because Andropov suddenly and exactly

at that time had become the head of the Politburo of the Soviet Communist Party!"

Who have you, over the years, seen as the main readers of your books? Litvaks in the Soviet empire? Litvaks all over the world? Jews in general? The general public in a wider sense?

"While living behind the Iron Curtain my primary readers were Russian-speaking Jews in general. But not only them, I had readers among other groups too. After Lithuania became independent and after I moved to Israel, more people have come across my books."

Grigory Kanovich's works have been translated into fourteen languages. Apart from his ten novels, he has written more than twenty plays and made a number of translations. He has indeed been praised also in Lithuania through a couple of prestigious prizes, but he has never reached a wide audience in the country. Why so? I asked my friend Rūta Puišytė, former Deputy Director of the Yiddish Institute at Vilnius University, who has studied Jewish history for many years. She herself read Kanovich already during Soviet times and was very touched by the books.

"The history of the Jews in Lithuania was not a big topic during the decades of Soviet occupation, and very few were interested in learning more. In fact, at the time of independence there were many, even highly educated people, who hardly knew that the country had had a large Jewish minority."

Puišytė concludes that the knowledge of the history of the Lithuanian Jews is more widespread these days and that the authorities are taking several praiseworthy steps to highlight this history. At the same time, she questions the level of interest in the issue, especially in the Lithuanian schools. At the moment she is active in a project where they have made recordings of the few remaining Jews who experienced life in Lithuania before the war – the voices of people like Grigory Kanovich. She has been in contact with several school principals, asking if they would

you go alone to Mishkine for any reason. Don't try to twist me around your little finger. If you don't listen to me, I'll tie you to the fence with a rope like a stubborn young calf."

He smiled, but his smile appeared forced and crooked while his cautious brown eyes flashed beneath his shaggy red eyebrows, which descended to the bridge of his nose.

"When I get back, I'll tell you everything. I won't hold anything back about your father and your sister, or even about your suitor, Yakov," Cheslavas said.

He began to noisily slurp his beetroot soup, which had grown cold.

"Shall I heat it up?"

"No need. It's fine like this."

He emptied the bowl and then polished off his favourite

dish of pigs' trotters with gusto. Getting up laboriously from the table, he asked a curious question.

"Elenute, do you know how to cross yourself?"

"No!" she said, breathing unnaturally, worried.

"I'll show you how it's done," Cheslavas boomed and crossed himself slowly several times. "Now you try. Come on, you can do it!"

Elisheva blinked and wrinkled her nose as tears suddenly filled her eyes.

"Don't be afraid! Try! No one ever died of it," Lomsargis said, trying to encourage her. "I'll show you again. It's quite simple. You hold your palm like this and with your fingers first touch your forehead, then you go down to your navel, then to the right shoulder, then to the left."

be interested in using the recordings in history lessons. The response has been lukewarm at best.

"One of them said, 'But how can we find the time to include this in the teaching when we have the French Revolution and everything else'," she recalls with a sigh. "Our own history seems to have low priority, but the history of the Jews is part of the history of Lithuania."

This seems like an obvious statement, but it hasn't been obvious. Many Lithuanians have for a long time treated the fate of the Jews as something that did not concern the development of Lithuanian nationhood in the 20th century. One reason for downplaying the importance of Jewish history is of course that thousands of Lithuanians contributed to ending this history. Yet another aspect that makes this issue even more complicated is that some of those responsible for the killings of the Jews were at the same time considered heroes in the armed struggle against the Soviet occupiers.

Over the years, several freedom fighters, called Forest Brothers, have been revealed as perpetrators – which has led to intense debates over the validity of the claims. At the very moment I am writing this text, the case of Jonas Noreika is the subject of a hot discussion in Lithuania. He was known as General Storm and is widely regarded as a national hero for his resistance to the Soviets both before 1941 and after 1944. But it is his actions between these years that have caused huge controversy. He was executed by the communists in 1947 at only 37 years of age.

Today he is accused of sanctioning the murders of more than 10,000 Jews in Šiauliai county, where he was governor in 1941. In this capacity, he was responsible for the establishment of the ghetto in the town of Žagarė and for the transfer of Jews to the

ghetto from which they were taken to the killing pits nearby. What makes this example even more remarkable is that the newest research behind these accusations was carried out by his granddaughter Silvia Foti, a journalist born and raised in Chicago. At her mother's deathbed, she was asked to finish the glorifying book on her grandfather's life, a book that her mother had started writing. Last year she instead published the book *General Storm – Unmasking a War Criminal*.

Her findings on Noreika, combined with earlier research, have been harshly criticized by several influential politicians with nationalistic agendas. But she has also received support among the highest echelons of Lithuanian society. Foreign Minister Linas Linkevičius wrote last fall that "in front of my eyes, I

have documents that bear witness to clear collaboration with Nazis". This led him to the conclusion that the Municipality of Vilnius, and the Academy of Sciences, should remove the plaque that honors Noreika at a library in the center of town. The granddaughter Silvia Foti has, together with a Californian Jew whose family members were killed in Šiauliai County, sued the state-funded

"THE HISTORY OF THE JEWS IN LITHUANIA WAS NOT A BIG TOPIC DURING THE DECADES OF SOVIET OCCUPATION, AND VERY FEW WERE INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE."

Center for the Study of the Genocide and Resistance for erecting the plaque. Recently the court dismissed the lawsuit, citing "ill-based intentions".

The Noreika case has a direct connection with the Kanovich family – Sergey was one of several Lithuanian intellectuals who already in 2015 demanded that the plaque be removed from the library. What are his reactions today?

"It is so evident that Noreika, and several other heroes, are guilty of atrocities. Why are some politicians today so scared of the historical truth? They bring shame on the country, and they damage our reputation."

"No, no! I don't want to. I can't..." Elisheva burst into tears.

"What's the matter? What is it? If you want to survive these crazy times, get rid of the idea of all these 'I can't's'. I understand that it's not your religion. Maybe you don't even believe in any God, but there's no other way out. After all, a person believes in order to live and not the other way around.

However you look at it, life is more important than religion, yours or ours. It's a good thing you don't look like a Jew. Your nose isn't hooked; it looks more like a little potato. Your hair's red rather than pitch-coloured and, what's more, you speak our language more fluently than we do ourselves. If it doesn't rain tomorrow, I'll set out for Mishkine and visit your folks on Rybatskaya Street."

Elisheva listened to Lomsargis fearfully, but without

argument, even though his good intentions and moralizing angered her. "What is life without religion?" she thought. "You don't change your religion any more than you do your skin."

To Lomsargis's delight, the following day the sky was clear. The sun regained its previous strength and its light gradually returned everything to its usual form – in the garden the apple trees that had been bent by the storm straightened up, the old elms recovered, and the dishevelled birds who had hidden in the comfort of their nests from the thunder and lightning emerged to preen their feathers.

Cheslavas cheered up as he got ready to leave. He donned his good, freshly ironed suit, which had been tailored for him by the skilful Gedalye Bankvecher, and put on his goatskin boots that had been polished until they shone. He

I also asked his father Grigory about these difficulties that many present-day lawmakers have in facing the truth:

"I truly don't understand why it takes so long to deal with this rather easy problem. There should be no place to glorify any perpetrator or collaborator with any evil regime – be it a Nazi one or a Soviet one."

Your son Sergey is building a museum in Šeduva, giving life both to the rich Jewish culture and to the Holocaust. What were your feelings when you heard about these plans?

"Myself, I have tried to create a written monument to the Lithuanian Jews, and my son has the privilege to create a material one. I am truly proud of him."

The museum, slated to open in 2020, will be part of the Lost Shtetl memorial complex in and around Šeduva. It will be located across the road from the town's restored Jewish cemetery, which is part of the complex. The curator of the main exhibition is the historian Milda Jakulytė-Vasil. I met her back in 2012, when she had published the *Lithuanian Holocaust Atlas*. In an impressive effort, she travelled to all 227 execution sites, documenting what happened there and also naming some of the perpetrators.

Several years later, she has now looked even closer into the case of Šeduva, in connection with the museum project.

"I found out that the number of killings were somewhat higher than I had learned before, around 700 people. By studying the archives, I also know today that several Lithuanian families tried to save Jews."

It has previously been documented that a large number of Lithuanians – a larger proportion than in many other European countries – risked their lives by hiding Jews. In the extract from *Devilspeel* published here, one of the characters, the farmer

Cheslavas, has the young Jewish lady Elisheva working for him. When the threats and the killings start, he gives her a cross to carry around her neck so that his fellow Lithuanians would take her for a Catholic. The fictional scene mirrors the reality in Šeduva where Milda Jakulytė-Vasil found out that eleven Jews there were baptized in three different families.

"Eventually the crosses didn't help them, and all but one were killed. The surviving Jew hid with a family in Šeduva for three years, and later left for Israel."

Almost all of the killings in Šeduva took place during two days at the end of August 1941. During the first day, no Germans were present. Both the supervising and the actual shooting were carried out by Lithuanians. During the second day, a few Germans had come, but only as supervisors.

"It is known beyond any doubt that not a single Jew was killed by a German in Šeduva," she says.

The Lost Shtetl project is the result of a wealthy family of South African Jews who wanted

"IT IS KNOWN BEYOND ANY DOUBT THAT NOT A SINGLE JEW WAS KILLED BY A GERMAN IN ŠEDUVA."

to search for their Litvak roots. The family's ancestors had fled already in the 1920s, and information about life in Lithuania was not passed on to future generations. It was not until recently that they learned that Šeduva was the town in question.

"It is their wishes that we present everyday life in the shtetl, showing what people worked with, their ideas, their contacts with the rest of the town. We focus on the interwar period."

Just like Grigory Kanovich's father who tailored suits for everyone, there were Jewish tailors. But also storekeepers, doctors, dentists, and other professionals serving all citizens in the community.

"Culturally, however, there was an abyss between the Jews and the Lithuanians. Friendships were rare, and one should rather talk of customer relationships. We have done research on

looked at himself in the mirror, combed his recalcitrant forelock and at last, quite satisfied with his appearance, called to Elisheva, who was pottering around in the passageway and had been observing his preparations with bewilderment, since she could not imagine why he was taking off with such haste to Mishkine rather than going back to Uznemune, to his sick wife, Prane, whom he had not once spoken about in the previous few days. It was as if she didn't exist.

"I'll be back in the evening," he assured Elisheva.

"As for you, pay attention, keep your eyes peeled. All kinds of unsavoury characters are doing the rounds."

"Alright," Elisheva nodded.

"So that nothing happens to you I thought I'd leave you with something to protect yourself."

"To protect myself?"

Cheslavas rummaged in an inner pocket of his rarely worn fancy jacket and, with a hand as heavy as an iron club, pulled out a silver cross on a chain.

"Wear it, please. Don't take it off, no matter what. Even sleep with it on. I bought it at Calvary (A Catholic shrine recalling the Via Dolorosa, this one probably in Vilnius, Author's remark.) about twenty years ago for my Pranute. It's pure silver. Unfortunately, it didn't bring her good fortune. Maybe it will do so for you."

Lomsargis approached the mortified Elisheva and carefully put the chain, which was as slippery as a snake, around her neck.

"Now stand in front of the mirror and look at yourself. I

the extent to which they visited each other's churches – and it almost never happened."

There were around 3,000 citizens in Šeduva back then, and the number is roughly the same now. In the 1930s one third of the citizens were Jews, today there are none.

"We have found three Jewish families living in Vilnius today with roots in Šeduva. That's all."

In total, there are between 3,000 and 5,000 Jews in Lithuania today, depending on how you count. Before the war a large number of Jews were found in practically every town. Typical for all Lithuanian communities back then was that the Jews lived in the center whereas most Lithuanians lived outside of the town, often working as farmers. One very sensitive issue for the creators of the museum in Šeduva is what to do with the names of the perpetrators.

"Several of their family members are still living in the Šeduva area. And most of them don't know what their relatives did during the war."

Some Lithuanian perpetrators were tried and convicted during Soviet times, but no one has been convicted since the country gained independence – neither in Šeduva nor in any other town. Milda Jakulytė-Vasil and the others have decided to display the names not only of those who were convicted before independence, but also the names of the individuals who were in charge of the groups who took the prisoners to the pits where they were shot.

"We cannot name the ones who actually fired the shots, since we don't know who they were."

The names of the group leaders in Šeduva have never been published before, which of course makes it extremely sensitive. Milda Jakulytė-Vasil claims that even naming the perpetrators who were exposed during Soviet times is delicate because the results of these trials are barely known among the general public.

"We anticipate intense discussions. And we welcome them!"

The museum team cooperates with a filmmaker who conducts interviews with Šeduva citizens who have memories of

what happened with the Jewish population in the town. Milda Jakulytė-Vasil describes one interesting incident:

"Recently we met an old man who was a boy at the time. The man said that he heard rumors of the killings, but that he hadn't seen anything with his own eyes. Then suddenly his granddaughter came in, she had overheard the conversation and cried out: 'But Grandpa, you have told me that you saw the killings'. Eventually he admitted that he had lied to the filmmaker."

A couple of days before I met Milda Jakulytė-Vasil in Vilnius, an archeologist had found yet other Jewish gravestones in Šeduva some distance away from the Jewish cemetery. They were probably stolen from the cemetery during Soviet times. The stones are of good quality and were used for several other purposes at the time. In his book, Kanovich describes how graves were decapitated already during the summer of 1941. In the book, two young Lithuanian men stand by the cemetery declaring that "the Jews are guilty, the dead as well as the living. There is no difference. Imagine how many tiled stoves you could make and how many new huts you could build from these stones".

Milda Jakulytė-Vasil says that they will make a monument of the gravestones that they have found in Šeduva and place it close to the newly restored cemetery.

In Jonava, the municipality has made Grigory Kanovich an honorary citizen. "The last time I visited the town of my childhood," Kanovich wrote some time ago, "was with my eldest grandson. Together we read the inscriptions on the Jewish gravestones. Those who forget the graves of their ancestors are not worthy to be called people." ✕

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think the cross suits you. By God, it does! Now you're a real Lithuanian woman!"

Elisheva didn't move. It seemed as if she was stuck to the floor. She felt that if she tried to take a single small step toward the old mirror with its massive oak frame and peeling surface, she would leave her feet on the floor boards and be crippled forever.

Gently, without insisting, Lomsargis tried to convince her that he had only one purpose – which was to protect her (and himself) from harm. However, rather than comforting her, his argument poisoned her soul.

"When everything changes, God willing, and we no longer have to live with the Germans and the Russians," he tried in vain to calm her, "you can go back to being who you once

were. Maybe, you can even fulfil your dream of bidding Lithuania goodbye. But meanwhile... Meanwhile, whether you want to or not, you have to forget not just about Palestine, but also your name and your family. Get it into your head: from today on you're no longer Elisheva Bankvecher, but a girl who lost all her documents on the train, Elenute Ramasauskaite from Darbenai, the daughter of my stepbrother Dominikas Ramasauskas, who was exiled to Siberia in June of last year. No matter who comes to the farm or who you meet in the fields or at the crossroads, get it into your head: you're not a Jew but a young Catholic woman, Elenute Ramasauskaite."

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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE HOLOCAUST

DEATH IN PIDHAITSI

by **Peter Handberg**

*After a pogrom in Berlin in 1923, Alfred Döblin, an assimilated Jew, decided to travel to more originally Jewish settings, spending time amongst the people and environments that barely two decades later were as good as completely wiped out. Döblin's book *Reise in Polen* [Journey to Poland] will be published in Swedish translation in autumn 2019. The Swedish translator of Döblin's book, Peter Handberg travelled to Poland and Ukraine himself in 2018, or to put it more accurately, followed in the footsteps of the Holocaust.*

Below is an extract from Peter Handberg's forthcoming book. In the company of Andrey, who comes from the Jewish community in Lviv, he visits Andrey's grandmother Dana in what is now western Ukraine.

A child looks on...

For breakfast Dana made coffee on the gas hob and served bread with eggs from the hens that were pecking in the garden, having spent the night up on their perches in the henhouse. The yolks were golden yellow and tasted and smelled exactly the way I remembered from my childhood. Just as we were about to get into the car, she brought me a healing elixir for my foot. When we arrived yesterday it was pitch dark. Now I could see the incredible views across the valley and the shining cupolas of the church in Berezhany, the ruined synagogue, the steep hills and slopes, and the town where more than 30 percent of the population were murdered in the space of a few years.

Like all the towns in this area, Pidhaitsi, 30 kilometres away, has frequently changed name over the course of its history and seems to be spelled differently every time. When I spoke on the phone to a woman from Skåne, in southern Sweden, whose father came from there, at first she didn't understand what I meant: "Ah! You mean Podhajce!"

The town had frequently been invaded and was destroyed by Cossacks and Tatars. The entire population was forced to flee on several occasions. But the greatest disaster took place in

1942-1943 when virtually the entire Jewish population, who had lived there since the Middle Ages, was exterminated. The railway station from which thousands of people were deported to the death camp in Belzec on two occasions in September and October 1942, no longer exists. It was bombed to destruction during the war. Today the town is reached by bus.

We drove up to the square, and naturally we got into conversation with an old woman with a headscarf who, with her hands on her back and a bunch of keys dangling from one hand, rushed off to show us where she thought we ought to go.

"We can't keep up," said Andrey, smiling, "even though I'm a dancer."

AFTER UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE in 1991, Stefan Kolodnytsky was appointed the first mayor of Pidhaitsi. He is now retired but he has had a keen interest in the history of Pidhaitsi, not least the Jewish part of it. He lives next to the Jewish graveyard in a big house surrounded by a brick wall. A chained dog guards the entrance. He comes out onto the steps. "Of course, just a moment." We wait outside while he fetches the key to the synagogue.

"For long periods, the Jews were the majority in the town", Stefan explains, as we walk along, "but since the death of Artyk Hirsh in 1992, there hasn't been a single Jew here." When Stefan took up his post, he managed to get two streets renamed as a reminder of the town's Jewish past; he also had the synagogue repaired so that it didn't collapse. Dating from the 1630s, the synagogue is the oldest building in the town, and, despite the repairs, is extremely dilapidated. Above the entrance a text in Hebrew is



Some of the gravestones in the Jewish graveyard in the town have been vandalized.

PHOTO: PETER HANDBERG

carved into the sandstone: “This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter.” Most of the interior was destroyed, but the walls bear a few faint traces of frescoes with patterns of flowers and animal motifs and the space carved out in stone for the *Aron Hakodesh*, the cabinet or holy ark in which the Torah scrolls were kept. During the Soviet era, grain was stored in the synagogue; vandals scribbled graffiti all over the walls, full of swearing and sexual insults. “But that has been cleaned off.”

Before that we had walked round the Jewish graveyard, which is one of the oldest and best preserved in the whole of Ukraine, with more than 1,350 gravestones, *mazevot*. The oldest gravestone goes back to 1599. Here, too, I saw graffiti and sexual insults on some of the gravestones. Stefan points out a grave from 1648 – a Jewish man murdered in the violent Cossack uprising under the Hetman Bogdan Khmelnytsky against Polish-Lithuanian rule, which also had an agenda of pogroms, with tens of thousands of Jewish victims as a consequence, many of them also from Pidhaitsi. The renowned Messiah figure Sabbatai Zevi became a legend in Poland and Ukraine after that, and here was no exception.

Mass executions took place at the graveyard during the German occupation. Stefan’s own mother, Julia Kravchuk, had witnessed a massacre by climbing a tree. He showed where

the tree had stood; now just a stump. At the time, she was living in the house that he has since inherited. One day she saw lots of Jewish women sitting against the wall of the graveyard, under guard. She recognised one of them as Rivka, a friend of her mother’s, and asked: “Why are you sitting there, Rivka?” – “I am waiting for death,” Rivka answered. Stefan pointed out the place where she had sat, but the wall was no longer there either. From the garden, his mother heard the shots and saw the bodies fall into the grave. But not all of them. When the Germans left (they had come from Tarnopol, now Ternopil) Rivka was still lying on the ground and was alive, although in severe pain. It was clear that she did not have long to live. Then Julia saw a man, a Ukrainian man who she did not know, come out of a garden, make his way to the site of the massacre and start to take the gold rings off the women’s fingers. He couldn’t get Rivka’s ring off so he

chopped off the finger. “He went mad in the 50s,” said Stefan laconically. “He had done that a lot.”

Stefan had agreed to give us a guided tour of the town in return for a small fee. “You understand, almost every house has a story, was home to a victim, a witness, or a child of one.” We had stopped at a *beth midrash* from 1874, a house where the *Torah* was studied and interpreted. Almost all of the plaster had flaked off. An old lady was raking the ground. Hens

“DURING THE SOVIET ERA, GRAIN WAS STORED IN THE SYNAGOGUE; VANDALS SCRIBBLED GRAFFITI ALL OVER THE WALLS, FULL OF SWEARING AND SEXUAL INSULTS.”

were pecking. “That was where Pidhaitsi’s *mitgnadim* went,” opponents of Hassidic Judaism. There was a library and a reading room.

A building slightly farther away was where the owner had uncovered the skeletons of two adults and a child when he was renovating the house a few years ago. They were the bones of the Jewish family who used to live there. They had undoubtedly been robbed and then murdered and their bodies hidden. So they lay there until 2007. “An unsolved crime.”

Stefan’s mother Julia had told him about a Ukrainian family in Holendra outside Pidhaitsi who promised to hide Jewish families, whereupon they killed them or handed them over to the Germans after stealing their valuables.

Stefan says that nothing is clear-cut: “Some Ukrainians hid Jews, many were killed for that if they were discovered. And then there were collaborators who also took part in the mass shootings. And informants of course. And others who lined their own pockets at the Jews’ expense. But my Jewish friend Bernhard in the US was helped by Ukrainian partisans.”

WE HAD NOW REACHED a simple building on Sikorska Street, which was renamed after the war. This was where mother of three Kateryna Sikorska hid photographer Moishe Klyar and her neighbor’s boys Adolf and Leon Kressel for over a year. Someone informed on her and all of them were shot. Her daughter Iryna managed to survive and was later given the designation *Righteous Among the Nations*.

This was a town where ghosts emerged on every street. A town where the past was only just beneath the surface, where the houses had been replastered but the past peered through again when the plaster flaked off, as with Anton Herbrych’s kosher restaurant *Jadla*, whose adverts reappeared on the walls just a few years ago.

A Jewish house of prayer, now a home. On the corner of every street there was a story of death and brutal violence, fear, and atrocities, but also unlikely heroism. This was where the baker Max Gross lived. He was murdered with all his family, six people. We were inside the ghetto. Over there was where the *Judenrat* and the Jewish police were; the latter were forced to perform duties imposed on them by the Germans, such as rounding up everyone who was to be deported and guarding the lines of people on the way to the trains or the mass graves. One of the leaders was a man called Dornfeld, a lawyer. Another was Doctor Ridke. He returned to Pidhaitsi after the war but then vanished without trace. Clearly he was troubled by his conscience. Artyk Hirsh, Pidhaitsi’s last Jew, had told Stefan the story. Some of the men in the Jewish police force gave advance warning of what was going to happen before the raids began. Many people took poison, including the son and daughter-in-law of the head of the *Judenrat*, Rabbi Liljenfeld.

This is where the boundary of the ghetto was, with its fence,

barbed wire, and watchtower. “Sometimes”, Stefan continued, pointing to a recently renovated house, “people find the Jewish hiding places when buildings are renovated – mostly double ceilings. In this house, the Pikh family found a hiding place containing Jewish books and other items.”

That grey house over there was where the Pistreich brothers, Leon and Yossel, lived, born in 1921 and 1924. A Jewish police officer told them that the ghetto was to be liquidated on June 6, 1943. Together with 23 others they managed to escape into the forest. With Eliezer Haber, they found a hiding place with a Ukrainian farmer, Michail Gunchak, and stayed for 14 months in a covered hole in the ground without seeing daylight. But they survived.

A WHITE HOUSE: LEON KLAR. He managed to get hold of false papers and survived. In another white, two-storey house with an old Lada in front of it, a Ukrainian woman had lived with a Ukrainian policeman who assisted the Germans, giving them everything they requested. For two years she hid two Jews, Henisch and Rozmarin, on the top floor. They survived. Over there was where one of the town’s dentists had his house and practice. He was shot while the rest of the family survived.

“This is the house of one of the town’s oldest citizens, Yury

Cherevko; he is quite sick now, but there is one thing he will never forget. With a friend, he sneaked through a field of corn and came quite close to the mass grave that had been dug a few days earlier and where the executions then took place. A German forced the victims out on a plank that lay over the hole. Then he shot them one by one. The German had a crate of beer next to him. He shot and drank, shot again

and took some deep gulps.”

We stopped outside a shop, “*Produkty*”, a grocer’s. “Here,” said Stefan shaking his head when Andrey asked if they had coffee, “was where the victims’ clothes and shoes were brought on barrows after the mass shootings. Young women and girls were forcibly recruited to sort clothes and wash, patch and mend all kinds of garments. Rags were burnt or given away. The rest was transported away by train.”

“Where to?”

“No idea. Some central camp? I was mayor for 25 years but I don’t know everything. But,” he said, pointing where we were going, “I had access to housing information and population registration data going a long way back. Although I never met them I know the names of many people, almost none of whom survived. In 1940 alone, many Jewish children were born here: *Shlioma Kupfer, Bronia Mates, Marek Borel, Bruno Nas, Enta Vegveiser, Blima Tsvok, Minka Shtetner, Kolias Shtorkman, Renia Buhvald, Henia Beizen, Zhydana Tsitron, Ryva Verfel, Frima Vaisbrod* ... born in 1940, yes I can go on and on. What happened to them? All of them killed or died of starvation or

**“THE OWNER HAD
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In this shop, "Prodykty", now a grocery store, young women and girls were forcibly recruited to sort clothes and shoes that were brought there after the mass shootings.

PHOTO: PETER HANDBERG

disease. Jews lived in every house or every second house." He pointed along the street we were walking down: "Isaak Kreshner, hairdresser and family. | Driver Vaismilkh Volf and his wife Hudel. | What happened to the Gang and Akkerman families, 13 people all together? | Friling, owner of a shop selling fancy goods? | Leon and Salia Fuks who lived here on the town square? | Herman Keslier, casual worker? | Bar owner Davyd Friedmann? | Hatmaker Khaim Kupfer and his wife and four daughters? | Aizyk Pistrek, who traded in eggs? | Businessman Bernard Hakin who had a lovely flat here on the square and a family of five? | The Gliazar family? | Yoakhim Boitel, factory worker and his wife Amalia Laiter, the head librarian? | Fireman Israel Fisher and Erna? | Doctors Rotersman, Fridman, Falber and their families? | Lawyers Nutyk, Pomerants and Rotenberg and their families? | Miller Oskar Haber? | There are no signs that any of these or thousands of others survived. There are also people whose full names are not given, such as Beila the mad, Avre the hunchback and another mad person, Princess Sara, who wandered around singing in the streets at night. Some didn't even want to survive. Taras Hunchak, who was ten years old then, remembers his father offering a Jewish woman who he used to help with food a hiding place in the house. But she answered resignedly: 'What happens to other Jews will also happen to me'. Others had a stronger will to live. Artyk Hirsh, the town's last Jew who I spoke of earlier, told me how Goldenberg, half deaf, crept up out of the mass grave and found a place to hide. He was my schoolfriend Liusia's grandfather."

Slowly but surely the number of Jews living in the ghetto be-

gan to fall. Sometimes there were new arrivals from other places, but the number of inhabitants continued to shrink until the last death march on 6 June 1943. Ukrainian priest Josef Ancharsky came to Pidhaitsi the same day and wrote in his diary:

There has been an action against the Jews. In the night the poor people were fetched out of their hiding places. Everything is very sad and terrible. When I left Pidhaitsi I saw a large group of Jews being taken out of the town to their death. This might be the last action in the town. [...] A small group of Germans with machine guns is escorting them. The victims walk slowly [...] They have long known that the end would be like this ... I look at their faces, see no expressions. They are as grey as the dusty road that leads to their death. ... If there are any human emotions left in any of them, they are probably relieved that it will all soon be over. That there will be an end to their suffering and the anxiety that burned their souls to pieces.

Over and over again, the priest is struck by the impassive faces of the people condemned to death: "They are like dead robots. It deeply affects me!" At first he had thought that this meandering line only contained older people but then he realizes:

There were young faces too. Children, boys and girls. A long chain trails along in complete silence. No words, no crying, no screams. All the movement of life had



Ljubomyra Michailova Shelvakh tells how she in this graveyard witnessed children thrown alive into mass graves.

PHOTO: PETER HANDBERG

already ceased within them; death, that they soon will meet, is one long SILENCE.

After Stefan's shocking and detailed guided tour, we made our way across the square in silence. Andrey's interpreting skills had started to slip alarmingly: "I need some coffee!" My jottings in my notebook were virtually illegible. As the town didn't have an open café, Stefan invited us back to his house. He put the coffee pot on and brought out a plate of biscuits and a bottle of Wyborowa. Andrey was driving and I had no desire to drink during the day. In the evening I had promised to give a short talk to the Jewish community in Ternopil and I didn't want to turn up smelling of vodka. But it would have been impolite to decline. So I raised a glass with Stefan.

Where did his interest come from?

"From my mother's stories; they colored my childhood. And in this house," said Stefan, topping up his glass, "and in the butcher's that I pointed out earlier, my uncle, my mother's brother, hid his Jewish girlfriend Ryva Lief through the entire war. He had built double walls. They got married when the war was over. He was declared *Righteous Among the Nations* too."

HE BROUGHT OUT some papers and documents. The address of a Polish family from Pidhaitsi who lived in Skåne in southern Sweden. And the address and phone number of Bernhard Scheer. "Yes, the son of the dentist whose house we passed earlier." The father, Benjamin, was shot when he tried to escape a German raid. His wife Pepi and sons Zbyszek (later Bernhard) and Max were taken to a labor camp in Tarnopol. They managed to escape and were hidden by Ivan Kiefor, a faithful patient of their father, in the village of Szeredno outside Pidhaitsi until the Red Army invaded in March 1944. After the war, the family moved to the USA. In September 1989 Bernhard visited his hometown again, 50 years since his father had sent his daughter to America with the last boat from Gdansk, a day before the outbreak of the Second World War. "I am extremely grateful to Ivan, his wife and his daughter Olympia", Bernhard told the local newspaper, "it is thanks to them that I am still alive ... my children have gained a life."

"Bernhard and I talk on the phone from time to time even today," said Stefan smiling: "Is Minka still alive? Yes. And what about her? How sad. What's the weather like in Pidhaitsi?" – "It's sunny but cool." Bernhard, who is now 96 and lives in Arizona, usually burst out laughing: "Here in Scottsdale it's always warm! You must come over here one day, Stefan! It's good for your health."

STEFAN SHOWED US A PHOTOGRAPH of a local football team from the past. "There were three football teams in Pidhaitsi in the

1930s," he explained, "the Jewish team *Maccabi*, the Ukrainian team *Kristla*, and the Polish team *Streletz*."

"Which was best", I asked.

"*Kristla*," he answered. I didn't want to disappoint him by telling him what I had been told in Rohatyn the day before: "Considering the antisemitism, in the late 1930s it was a great delight to the Jews that *Ż.K.S. (Żydowski Klub Sportowy*, the Jewish sports club in Rohatyn) beat a Ukrainian team in the town of Pidhaitsi 8-1!"

"During the war, in the middle of the Holocaust," Stefan said, "a match was once played between Berezhany and Pidhaitsi,

at the same time as a massacre was being carried out on one of the hills outside the town. Taras Hunchak, the ten year-old, had seen a massacre before – 'I'll never forget how the Germans shot the old people and the little ones. I was an eye-witness to that crime'. Now, in the stands, watching a football match, he once more saw the scenes in front of him when he heard the shots:"

Everyone was appalled by this terrible fact – here, in the square, people were playing football and up

there, up on the hill, Jews were being shot. Everyone immediately turned in the direction from which the shots had come. I saw the tragedy in people's faces, people standing next to me [and out on the pitch]. I am sure that all hearts were bleeding in that terrible moment, but we could not help the poor victims ...

WE DROVE TO SEE Ljubomyra Michailova Shelvakh, born in 1936. She was standing in the kitchen cutting onions. There were tears in her eyes and she had just cut her thumb. "Say Ljuba, I know," she said, meaning that telling her story made her sad. Could I give her anything? I wanted to give her 300 hryvnia, but Stefan thought 200 was enough. In the car she said that a rabbi from Israel had been there a few years ago and she had gone with him just as she was going with us now.

In the Jewish graveyard she walked between the gravestones to some slightly raised ground towards one side of the fence. I wanted to take a photograph first. "Why photograph an ugly old woman?" she wondered, "you should have seen me when I was a young girl." This is where I started the recording:

Ljuba: "Who shall I tell? Him? Or you?"

Andrey: "Him, him, him."

L: "And what about you?"

A: "I listen. The important thing is to record it."

L: "There used to be a path there [points], do you understand, that was where they [the Jews, under guard] went, to a hole that was dug in the ground. Do you understand?"

A: "Yes, yes."

L: "Yes. My mother and I were going to travel away. It was like this ... the Jews took their clothes off, they were only wearing underclothes. The women did the same thing – they walked there

in their brassieres. And everything they had, gold and clothes, they had to put in piles. The clothes in one pile, gold and valuables in another. Yes. And then other people came and took it and sorted it and took it away on barrows. And they were forced to come nearer and stand right next to the hole [points], in a line, and there [points] stood a *falksdaitscher*. Do you understand?"

A: "Who stood there?"

Peter: "A *Volksdeutscher*".

L: "*Falksdaitscher*, *falks* ... a man, not a Ukrainian, everyone says they were Ukrainians ... those, well they said *falksdaitscher*. And he took them to the hole where they had to go. And it was him who shot them. Yes. He shot them one at a time, one after the other. And they all lay in a big pile. While my mother and I were there they filled the hole roughly halfway up. The ladders were very long so it was probably four metres deep, what I can remember – very deep. That was what my mother said to my step-father too. And they killed everyone. Here [points behind her] there was a wall. And my mother came here from Kramartjusjka, she climbed up onto the wall and watched while they killed [the Jews]. And I watched too. I wasn't very big so my mother lifted me up and supported my back so I could see. I remember it all very clearly. And I feel very bad when I think about all that, you understand. But it is how it is. So, there [points backwards] ... they killed, killed, killed. They came with four people – father, mother and two children. The children were small, a year old or something like that – a boy and a girl. This was what happened: first they killed her, the young woman, then her husband, then the older woman, then the older man, they killed all of them. But they left the children. And he picked up one of the children and threw her down into the hole alive. Then he took the other, threw the boy down alive. The girl and the boy were thrown down there living. I can still hear their screams in my head: 'Mamma!

Mamma!' Then they took another Jew, killed him and threw him on top of the children. It was terrible. And so it went on. I cried so much, I was afraid that a child ... I said to mother: 'Look, he threw a child into the hole!' And he [the murderer] just said: 'Hanka, go away from there. You can't be there with your child when she is crying!' I had become very frightened from seeing all this! ... That young woman, she had such long hair, it covered several of the others ... she wore it like young women have it now, loose, she was very young, her hair covered ... And he sent us away. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

A: "I don't understand. Sent away?"

L: "Yes, sent us away, told us to get away from there."

A: "Aha, to go away from there."

THE HORRIFIC STORIES of children thrown alive into mass graves are told by many witnesses across Eastern Europe. Other witness testimony told of babies kicked down into graves alive or kicked with boots or shovelled in with a spade. There are numerous accounts of children whose heads were crushed often at the start

of the raids to set a tone of relentless brutality and quash any resistance.

Was it only sick brutality, excesses of violence by perverted and desensitized mass murderers who were already wading in blood? Or had there also been an order issued to save on ammunition?

WHEN WE WERE in Ljuba's house, she had told us some things before we decided to go to one of the mass graves. I wrote down some points in my notebook. She had seen several mass executions from a distance. She had seen lines of Jews trailing out of the town to their deaths. At one point she said the shots were "*Kubantjik*", which was never translated or perhaps misunderstood by Andrey. These were thus men from Kuban in Russia, possibly meaning "*Volksdeutsche*". In any case, at that point she found herself near enough to see who the men firing were, how the execution was carried out, and how the bodies fell into the mass graves. According to Stefan and other sources, SS-Scharführer Willi Herrmann, who also led the massacres in Berezhany, was one of the most active. Before the war he had been a locksmith. After the war he returned to his occupation before being sentenced to ten years' imprisonment in 1966.

Stefan: "Yes, that was some of what she saw."

L: "Yes, that's what I saw. First ... listen. Then, another time, they killed every tenth person. So my mother said: 'We'll go now so you aren't scared. Because they're going to shoot them now'. You will understand who 'they' were. And they killed every tenth person. First they killed everyone in one house and then everyone in another – took them, brought them here in carts. There are several graves. Here, two in Vukach and in the old town."

A: "Here, here?"

L: "Yes, I told you."

A: "And the people fell straight down into the hole?"

L: "They fell down into the hole. They walked and walked and walked and then down into the hole. That's why they said to them: 'Walk!' There was a plank over the hole, a plank, do you understand?"

A: "Yes, yes."

L: "A plank. And they walked out on the plank."

Stefan: "And where did they shoot?"

L: "Where? At the people!"

S: "Did they shoot them in the back or in the neck?"

L: "No, no, they ..."

S: "Did they shoot them in the chest?"

L: "They shot them from behind. Shot from behind, yes, here [shows where on her body with her hand] in the heart."

S: "You also talked about the woman who was pregnant."

L: "No, no, I'll tell you about her later. So ... they killed them, they did it like this. They killed some, fetched more, killed them, fetched more. When I was out with my mother we came past one of the graves. I hadn't seen the shootings there. But when I came

**"SO MY MOTHER SAID:
'WE'LL GO NOW SO
YOU AREN'T SCARED.
BECAUSE THEY'RE
GOING TO SHOOT
THEM NOW'."**

with my mother, a woman said the grave was moving. Blood, that liquid, it ran all the way down to the walls of the houses. The dogs ... they hadn't even covered the graves properly, some dogs came with a head, others with a leg. I lived in all this but it was terrible. Living in that fear. Yes. And about the pregnant woman, I was coming along with my mother ... when a hay cart came past. Mother and daughter. She was pregnant, about to give birth, the same day or the next maybe ... And he [the Ukrainian policeman] hit the pregnant woman with ... that, weapon, the wooden bit ... how do I explain it?"

A: "Do you mean the butt?"

L: "Yes, hit her with the butt. And he ... the German killed him and left him there.

A: "Who killed who?"

S: "The boy who was brutal to the woman."

L: "Yes, he killed the boy."

A: "The German? And the policeman hit her?"

S: "The German killed the policeman."

L: "The Germans. Yes the Germans. He said: 'Why did you do that? Can't you see her condition?' And then he killed him."

A: "Did he shoot him?"

L: "He beat him to death. I don't remember. I watched – and his feet were already on his head. And he was thrown in with the others. So. Is there anything else you want to ask me? There were two graves I saw."

A: "Have you told this to anyone else?"

L: "I told you, I told that rabbi. He said he was a rabbi. As young as you are."

A: "And the Germans? Have Germans come here asking questions?"

L: "No Germans ... that was what I saw. My mother might have seen more."

A: "Do you have children yourself?"

L: "Why wouldn't I? I have six grandchildren ... and six great-grandchildren. And four children."

A: "Are they all healthy?"

L: "All of them. One died. One died."

A: "Who? A grandchild?"

L: "No, my son. He was 37. The other three are living. One is at the power station in Zaporizhia. Yes, I was asked about the Ukrainians ... with the Jews or ... how they lived together. The rabbi asked me that. And I answered very well. Ukrainians and Jews. Definitely."

A: "Why do you think the Germans did this? How could they do that? Why?"

L: "How should I know? I don't know. Don't know so I say nothing. It happened very suddenly. We were forced to break stones [Jewish gravestones used for building roads], my mother told me about it."

A: "The Ukrainians?"

L: "Yes. We crushed rocks and pushed them on barrows, and

the Germans took them. We were forced to work. Is there anything else?"

A: "We haven't upset you?"

L: "No, no."

A: "Peter says to give you his heartfelt thanks. He is very grateful."

L: "Thank you to you too. God bless you."

Although I only understood parts of the conversation, I could clearly see the mental energy she possessed. The old fear surged up once more and was expressed in her gestures, in the shadows of her face. Her eyes filled with fear again. She carried with her the terror, fear, the horror, the screams, the shots, the blood, the

smell of decaying flesh, everything that happened 75 years ago; she had carried it with her for most of her life. And although I had only understood fragments, still I understood. Terror is faster than words. It is there, in concentrated form, and it takes a while for it to find a spoken form – first come incomplete words, concepts. It was like it is with a drug where it tends to work before you have even taken it (in my own case in the past

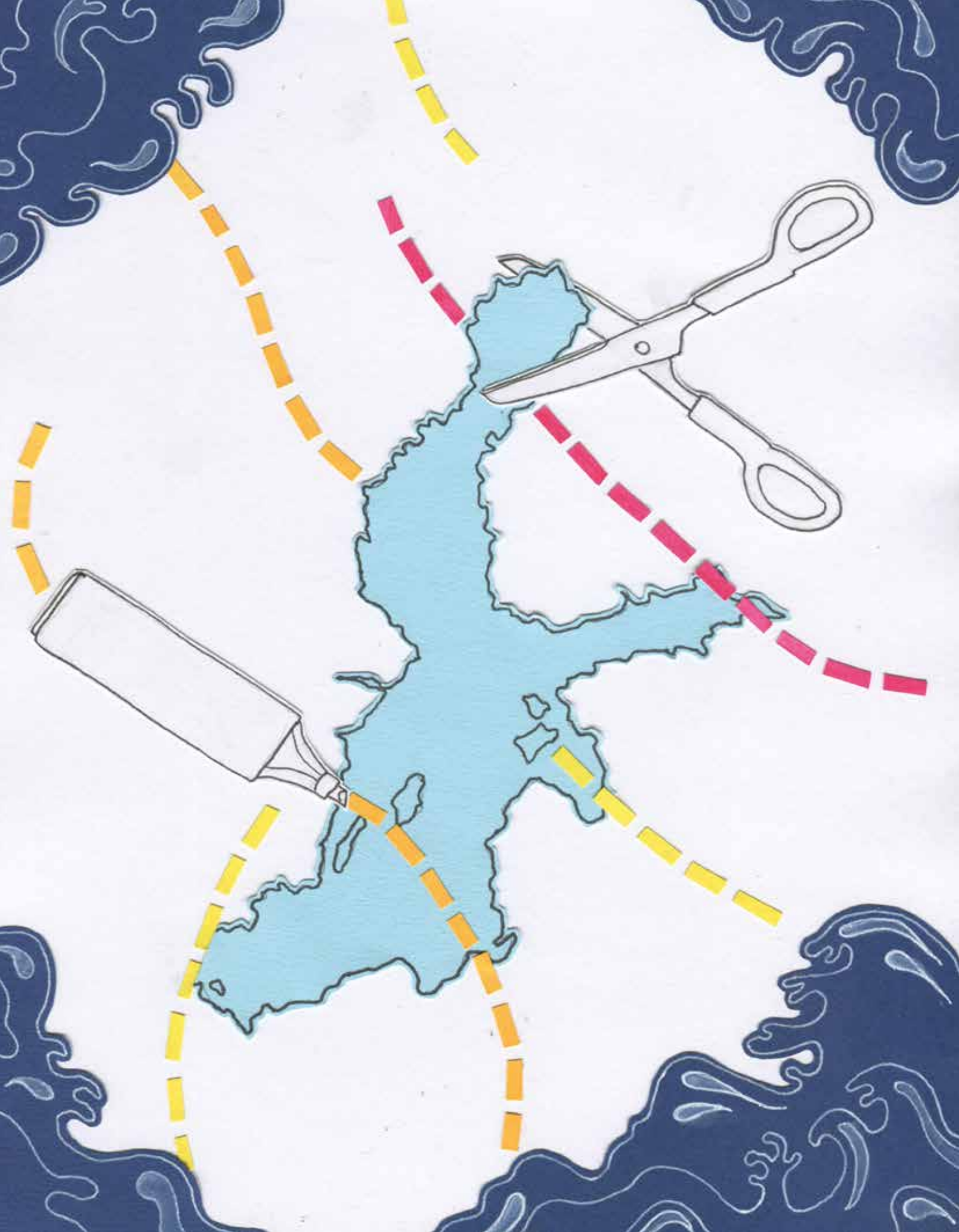
Ljunglöfs Ettan tobacco snus). Back in Sweden, I would read the transcription and the translation and her face would once more appear, full of the fear and tears of the 7 year old she once had been.

DID GERMANS COME to Pidhaisi these days? I asked her finally. No, Stefan answered for her, never, though actually yes there was a coachload once. They were visiting the graves of some German soldiers and demanded all manner of answers from the local council.

Ljubomyra said she could walk back. We said our farewells one more time. The last I saw of her was her briskly cutting across the Jewish graveyard to her little house on Spasivska Street where she would carry on making soup for dinner that evening with some of her grandchildren. ✖

Peter Handberg is a Swedish author and translator. Among a long lists of books and novels he is the author of two works of literary nonfiction about the Baltic States, and two collection of essays of which the latest, *The Disconnected Heaven* was published in 2011 to critical acclaim. Handberg has also been widely praised for his translations to Swedish, particularly his interpretation of Thoreau's *Walden*, published in 2010. The coming book of Handberg *Världens yttersta platser – Judiska spår* [The World's Outermost Places – Jewish Traces] will be published simultaneously with his *Döblin* translation in the fall of 2019 on the publishing house Faethon förlag.

"THE OLD FEAR SURGED UP ONCE MORE AND WAS EXPRESSED IN HER GESTURES, IN THE SHADOWS OF HER FACE. HER EYES FILLED WITH FEAR AGAIN."



THE DREAM OF A BALTO- SCANDIAN FEDERATION

SWEDEN AND THE INDEPENDENT BALTIC STATES 1918–1940 IN GEOGRAPHY AND POLITICS

by **Thomas Lundén**

For a long time in the 20th century, the Baltic region, or *Baltikum*¹, here defined as the area south of the Gulf of Finland and east of the Baltic Sea, was more or less a blank spot on the mental map of Swedish politicians and social scientists alike. The “inventor” of geopolitics, political scientist and conservative politician Rudolf Kjellén, urged for Swedish cultural and economic activism towards the Baltic part of Tsarist Russia², but the program was never implemented, and the break-up of the Russian Empire and the new geopolitical situation, as well as Kjellén’s death in 1922, with few exceptions put a new end to Swedish academic interests in the contemporary geopolitical situation of the area.

From the perspective of the three states of the *Baltikum*, any super-state regionalism with Norden³ was primarily connected with Estonia in combination with Sweden.⁴ Sweden and Estonia thus played a special role in the Baltic discussion about regionalism. However, there was a more one-sided interest from Lithuania in contacts with Scandinavia and particularly with Sweden.⁵ The independence of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 1919–1920 gave Sweden a geopolitical buffer against the neighboring great powers of Russia/the Soviet Union and Germany, which were initially weakened and politically unstable. But as pointed out by Wilhelm Carlgren⁶, Swedish foreign policy towards the three Baltic states was passive, even reluctant. Kangeris makes a temporal distinction. In the period 1918–1925, Sweden was the leading

actor in relations with the three newly independent Baltic States, which had no political co-ordination. From 1925 to 1934, the three states searched for contacts with a (reluctant) Sweden and Finland, and from 1933/34 Sweden’s policy towards the three states was directed towards keeping them neutral.⁷ It should be added that, as described below, Sweden’s early activity was mainly indirect, through the League of Nations, especially during the activities of Hjalmar Branting and much later those of Rickard Sandler.

Kangeris⁸ summarizes the Swedish deliberations in 1919 as follows:

- A rejection of any participation in a Baltic confederation
- Caution with political standpoints and commitments
- Consideration of German standpoints
- Emphasis on Russian standpoints
- Finland’s exceptional position in relation to Sweden
- Sweden’s economic interests in the new states
- Consideration of the interests of national minorities [i.e. in all Baltic States. Author’s comment]

SWEDEN’S INVOLVEMENT in Baltic geopolitics was mainly channeled through the League of Nations and concentrated on the right to self-determination, the rights of minorities, and the geopolitical issues of Wilno/Vilnius and Memel/Klaipėda, with Hjalmar Branting as the main actor until his death in 1925.⁹

The Swedish lack of direct interest in the Baltic States was particularly regretted in Estonia. Per Wieselgren, professor of Swedish at Tartu 1930–1941, referred to this in his book when recounting an anecdote in which Prime Minister (1917–1920) Nils Edén responded to the demands of an Estonian delegation begging for Swedish help with building a legal system and appointing Swedish jurists at the Tartu University Law Faculty by saying, “Das interessiert uns nicht” [It is of no interest to us].¹⁰ The monography on Edén does not mention the Baltic area, but with one exception. In a speech by Edén on March 2, 1919, he mentions that “an important right-wing journal had, apparently influenced by great power traditions, demanded an active involvement in the Baltic countries”.¹¹ The wording seems to indicate a repudiation of this demand. That early Baltic demands for help with building a modern legal system were rejected by Sweden is further mentioned in an article in *Svensk Tidskrift* from October 1939.¹²

WHILE FINLAND recognized Estonia on June 7, 1920, shortly after the Tartu Peace Treaty of February 2, Sweden and Norway waited until February 4 of the next year to recognize Estonia and Latvia. Sweden recognized Lithuania *de jure* on September 28, 1921.¹³ A Swedish Legation was established in Tallinn, but already in 1922 it was moved to Riga in order to include Lithuania in its responsibility. A *chargé d'affaires* was installed in Tallinn in 1930 but subordinated to the legation in Riga. The Swedish envoy to the Baltic States from 1921 (including Kaunas from 1922) to 1928, Torsten Undén¹⁴, first reported on the Memel issue with a positive interest in a referendum to the benefit of the ethnic Lithuanian population, but the Lithuanian geopolitics in the area eventually caused Swedish resentment.¹⁵

Even after the annexation of Memel/Klaipėda into Lithuania, the “old-timer” honorary consul for Sweden in Klaipėda represented a “pro-German” standpoint, causing tensions between the countries¹⁶. But Grigaravičiūtė writes: “It should be noted that in 1923–1924 Sweden was especially concerned with the settlement of the Klaipėda case in the interest of Lithuania and actively supported Lithuania in the League of Nations. Later, at the end of 1924, when the Dawes Plan was adopted, the situation started to change.” In the Wilno/Vilnius conflict: “With the support of Hjalmar Branting, in 1924 Lithuanian diplomacy tried to initiate the consideration of the Vilnius issue in the League of Nations; however, the attempts were doomed to fail”.¹⁷

On August 9, 1940, the Estonian Foreign Ministry, under Soviet pressure, informed that the Estonian missions abroad had ceased operations and consequently the Swedish representations had to be closed in all Baltic States, which were soon to be annexed by the Soviet Union.¹⁸ A similar message was received by the Swedish mission in Kaunas on August 10.¹⁹

The “Baltic Entente” in Swedish politics: One man’s work

The only politician to urge for closer ties to the Baltic states was the mayor of Stockholm (1903–1930) Carl Lindhagen²⁰, who in both 1920 and 1934 advocated in Parliament for a closer cooperation with the area, and who also in 1934 advocated such cooperation as a counter-force to an increasingly aggressive Germany.²¹ Lindhagen’s efforts on behalf of Lithuania are described by Pivoras.²²

Lindhagen devotes six pages in his extensive memoirs to “*Den baltiska ententen. Finland, Estland, Lettland, Litauen, Vilna*” [The Baltic entente. Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Vilna].²³ Representing Stockholm as its mayor, Lindhagen secretly met with representatives of these “rim states” in St. Petersburg in 1903 at the celebration of its 300th anniversary. Evidently these contacts led to a meeting in Stockholm on October 12, 1915, with Juozas Gabrys, Martynas Yčas, and Stasys Šilingas.²⁴ In October 1915, together with Estonian Aleksander Kesküla,²⁵ Gabrys traveled to Stockholm to meet with Yčas, a member of the Russian State Duma, and Šilingas, an employee

of the Russian Ministry of Internal Affairs. Kesküla wanted to persuade Yčas to resign from the Duma in support for Germany, while Yčas wanted to organize a much broader Lithuanian conference with representatives from Lithuanian activists living in Lithuania, Russia, Western Europe, and the United States and was disappointed that only Gabrys could attend. The meeting, self-declared as the First Lithuanian Conference,

did not adopt a political statement. At the end of 1915, Jonas Aukštuolis came to Sweden, and at the end of 1915 or at the beginning of 1916 Ignas Šeinius came also.²⁶

A war refugee relief organization, the Swedish-Lithuanian Aid Committee (Lithuanian: *Švedų-lietuvių šelpimo komitetas*), was established, of which Carl Lindhagen, mayor of Stockholm, was chairman; Verner Söderberg, editor of *Stockholms Dagblad*, was secretary; and Lithuanian Jonas Aukštuolis was manager.²⁷ Two further meetings were held in Stockholm on October 18–22, 1917, and January 3–6, 1918.²⁸

IN JANUARY OF 1918, Lindhagen met Estonian representatives in the custody of the German army in Finland in Eckerö in the Åland Islands. When the Baltic States declared their independence and sought international recognition, Lindhagen interpellated the foreign minister in Parliament, but according to the minister the Government “did not dare” until “Paris and London” made the decision. When this happened, Lithuania was excluded because of Polish complaints about the Vilna case, and Sweden followed this example. At a public celebration in Stockholm, Lindhagen suggested a “popular declaration of recognition of Lithuania”, but finally the Paris and London governments

**“STEN DE GEER’S
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gave their recognition and Sweden followed.²⁹ This *de facto* recognition was made in December 1918.³⁰

At a conference in Helsinki in 1919, the Baltic foreign ministers approached the Scandinavian foreign ministers for cooperation but were met with rejection. Lindhagen made a new interpellation urging for cooperation, but to no avail. In the following 10 years he introduced seven parliamentary bills concerning relations with the “East Baltic States”. Lindhagen continued with two more bills in 1933–1934, one about the Vilna question and the other about “cooperation between small states, especially between Scandinavians and the Balts”.³¹ The document is a 20-page survey of the history and present situation at the time of Nordic–East Baltic relations since the independence of the East Baltic States, ending with the formal request that “the Parliament would request the Government to initiate agreements between the Baltic small states east and west of the Baltic Sea about an understanding (entente) between these powers to the promotion of a common autarchy and cultural furtherance”.³² The Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Constitution wrote that there were possibilities, but concluded that it was up to the King in Council (Kungl. Majt.) to implement Lindhagen’s proposal, and he writes that Minister of Foreign Affairs Rickard Sandler “who had communicated with the Committee was of the opinion that I ought to be satisfied”. Thus no real results were obtained, but the bill was given much attention in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. While rich in details and names of organizations and individuals, it does not mention De Geer’s article (see below).

In the summer of 1934, Lindhagen traveled privately through the Baltic States and was received by officials, and he also visited Memel (Klaipėda) and Dünaburg (Daugavpils). By special permission, he was allowed to cross the Lithuanian–Polish border, visiting Wilno and meeting with representatives of the Jewish and Belarusian populations.³³

De Geer’s regionalization of Baltoscandia

A scientific attempt to define a Balto-Scandinavian region based on natural and cultural indicators was made by the Swedish geographer Sten De Geer (1886–1933) in 1928.³⁴ His rather haphazard selection of indicators resulted in a core area including Scandinavia, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia.³⁵ Starting from the Finnish geologist W. Ramsay’s concept of Fennoscandia (comprising Norway, Sweden, Finland, Soviet Karelia, and the Kola peninsula) based on ancient bedrock morphology, he emphasizes that other physical as well as socio-cultural aspects show a different spatial distribution. He adds that there is a well-known difficulty in defining the outer limits of a distribution because some features show a slowly declining intensity, e.g. many biogeographical features that reflect an Atlantic or inner Eurasian influence.

De Geer chose nine indicators of a possible Balto-Scandian regional homogeneity, four of which were of a physical nature and five of which were of a socio-cultural character.³⁶ While most of the physical indicators were of little direct cultural influence, they defined conditions for livelihood and subsistence in a historical context. His socio-cultural indicators were from a geo-

political point of view more interesting and partly also questionable, especially indicator 5, “The core area of the Nordic race” (p. 127–129), which was partly based on a study by the infamous race biologist Herman Lundborg and his deputy F. J. (Frans Josua) Linders. The indications were based on body height, eye color, and head shape. De Geer indicates on a map a line denoting the outer edge the distribution of the “Nordic race or the Nordic race mixture” (p. 129). The delineation is vague; for example, the “Finns and Estonians are no more Mongolian, but the Lapps [Sámi] are”. Even if this indicator is, by modern standards, totally senseless, there is no indication of any derogatory racism. The sixth indicator is “The two Fennoscandian language areas” (p. 129–130), where the difference between the North Germanic and Fenno-Ugric languages is not taken as a regional boundary, because “the cultural border is rather to the east”, but the region is still divided into two sub-regions. De Geer also discusses the role of the Baltic languages – Latvian and Lithuanian – but with some hesitation he does not include them within the regional delimitation. As to the distribution of the Protestant religion, he maintains that religion was earlier a more important cultural indication than language. The delineation is quite clear, with Latvia divided in the middle towards Catholicism and the easternmost part of Finland marked as Orthodox (map 4). The political division into states at the time of publication (1928) is also marked on map 4, where Estonia and Latvia belong to an eastern sub-division with Finland. The final indicator is “The maximal extension of the two Nordic states (Denmark and Sweden) during 1000 years” (p. 133–135) where the time under the supremacy of one of these states is indicated on map 5. The only area really questioned is Kurland (southwestern Latvia), which from 1660 to 1720 was at times under Swedish dominance. At the end of the article, De Geer tries a synthesis, cartographically depicted on map 6 (p. 136). The result is, not surprisingly, the area covered by the states of Norden plus Estonia and Latvia, while Lithuania and the southeastern coast of the Baltic Sea are only covered by physical indicators. In the remaining part of the paper, De Geer mentions other types of Nordic influences farther south and east.

WHILE DE GEER is cautious about geopolitical or other conclusions, his study is more important as a sign of genuine interest in the Baltic relations than as a scientific study. In his vast correspondence (e.g. 122 letters with Germany), Estonia accounted for only 4 correspondences, all with Tartu, including one with Edgar Kant and 3 with Riga University, plus 11 correspondences with the Swedish geographer Jonatan Grufman (1893–1964) who was undertaking regional studies in Latvia.³⁷ Grufman wrote one article on the regional geography of Estonia in 1923, referring to Sten De Geer as his teacher and the SSAG (the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography) as the grantee of a scholarship³⁸, and one article on Latvia’s natural environment as part of an anthology.³⁹ Sten De Geer’s main contribution concerning Sweden’s southeastern neighbors is perhaps the naming of the concept of Baltoscandia⁴⁰ and, through personal contacts, the intellectual transfer of Kant’s social geography back to Sweden after World War II.

The spread and extension of the Baltoscandian concept

De Geer's spatial concept was evidently used by Lindhagen (without mentioning the source of his inspiration) and others in advocating for closer relations with Sweden's eastern neighbors. The Lithuanian professor Kazys Pakštas soon took up De Geer's work, but sought to include his own country in the region as a Baltoscandian Confederation,⁴¹ which was actually an idea already put forward by the Estonian president of the Land Council (Maanõukogu), Jaan Tõnisson, in 1917.⁴² Pakštas visited the Scandinavian countries in 1934 and gave two lectures in Stockholm. In the minutes of the SSAG of February 16, 1934, he was awarded the Andrée Medal.⁴³ In a letter in Swedish to the SSAG dated March 28, 1934, the Dean of the Mathematical-Natural Science Faculty of Vytauto Didžiojo Universitetas (Vytautas Magnus University) in Kaunas, Prof. Z. Žemaitis, mentions the occasion and the awarding of the medal along with the increased interest from Swedish scientific institutions and the mutual visits of professors.⁴⁴ Pakštas's ideas were supported by Estonian geographer Edgar Kant,⁴⁵ but met with little understanding in Sweden.⁴⁶ Kant referred to De Geer's (cited de Geer) study of the Baltic cities and other articles in his 1926 thesis on the urban geography of Tartu.⁴⁷ That Kant had contact with De Geer is evident from Kant's booklet *Estland och Baltoskandia*, published in Swedish in 1935, which is dedicated to the memory of the deceased De Geer and seems to be a revised Swedish-language version of his *Estlands Zugehörigkeit zu Baltoskandia* published in Tartu in 1934.⁴⁸

Kant even visited De Geer's widow and young son Eric in Stockholm.⁴⁹ Kant's close relation to Sten De Geer is also confirmed by Professor Olavi Granö, son of Johannes Gabriel Granö, the first professor of geography in independent Estonia, who called Kant "Sten De Geer's confederate".⁵⁰ As for direct contacts between Lindhagen and De Geer, there are no references, but taking into consideration Lindhagen's position as mayor of Stockholm and the important position of the De Geer family (and particularly Sten De Geer's scientific work on the urban geography of Stockholm) it is most likely that they were in personal contact.

Late geopolitical interest from Sweden

Rickard Sandler (1884-1964), who was Minister of Foreign Affairs 1932-1939 and an academic geographer, "showed a clearly greater interest in political contacts with Baltikum than his predecessors. He evidently wanted in the long term to establish some sort of connection between the Nordic group of states and the Baltic one. This was also a Baltic interest. But great-power politics crushed such ideas."⁵¹ Sandler made an official visit to the three states in 1937 and was met with warmth and good publicity.⁵² Before the journey, Professor Adolf Schück⁵³ of Stockholm University College and the Baltic Committee informed Sigurd Cur-

man, the King's Custodian of Antiquities (Riksantikvarie), about important persons to meet (and others not to meet), after which Curman in turn, in a formal but hand-written letter, passed the information on to Sandler.⁵⁴ In Kaunas, Sandler met Lithuania's authoritarian president Antanas Smetona and, among others, Kazys Pakštas.⁵⁵ Sandler's visit and Sweden's declaration of neutrality evidently had an impact on Lithuania's standpoint towards neutrality.⁵⁶

There were rumors in Nazi Germany that Sandler, with the help of Great Britain, would try to form a Baltic-Scandinavian group of neutral countries in competition with Poland, but these were only German speculations.⁵⁷ Sandler's social democratic colleague Sven Backlund, the initiator of and a teacher at the Nordic School for Adult Education in Geneva, envisaged a group of regions of small states in Europe, but he separated two northern blocs of states divided by the Baltic Sea.⁵⁸

Social, economic, and academic contacts

In spite of these fruitless political and theoretical attempts to create a Scandinavian-Baltic region, there were still of course economic, cultural, and educational contacts and exchanges. Swedish-Baltic economic exchange peaked around 1929 and

then dwindled due to recession and to increasing economic protectionism, and from 1934 due to rising authoritarianism. Towards the end of 1930 the amount of Swedish tourism to Estonia (and to a lesser extent to Latvia) based on the beaches and the bathing resorts also peaked, but this decline was motivated also by political and cultural arguments.⁵⁹ Regarding

Lithuania, negotiations for a state loan by the Swedish Match Company in 1929 increased contacts but also tied the country to the match monopoly.⁶⁰

Attempts to formalize a regional cultural cooperation met with limited interest from Sweden. A committee for cultural contacts with the Baltic states was founded in 1931 by a group of professors at the University College of Stockholm, organizing exchanges, courses, and a Baltic conference for historians in Riga in 1937. The conference included important Stockholm academics and was arranged from Riga by the lecturer in Swedish language and history (1928-1936) Harry Wallin.⁶¹ Two rather distinguished Swedish officials attended the Second Interbaltic Conference on Intellectual Cooperation, held on November 29-30, 1936, in Tartu, and even though a planned meeting of the cultural conference in Stockholm was cancelled, there were some Swedish delegates at the Baltic Conference on Intellectual Cooperation held in Riga the same year.⁶²

Adolf Schück, historian and secretary at the Baltic Institute of the Stockholm University College, in an interview in 1937 with an Estonian academic journal underlined that the status quo in the Baltic area would be in Sweden's best interest and should determine the future cooperation between the Baltic States and Sweden.⁶³

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At Tartu University, a number of Swedish professors were appointed. Philologist Johan Bergman was professor until 1923, but worked as a politician in the Swedish Parliament to create a chair in Swedish language and literature at Tartu (see below). Archaeologist Birger Nerman was professor at Tartu University 1923–1925 and made field excavations in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the early 1930s studying early contacts with Gotland and Sweden. Other Tartu-based professors included Andreas Bjerre in penal law until 1925, Helge Kjellin in art history (1921–1924, and at Riga 1929–1931), and Sten Karling in art history (1933–1941) who undertook an important study on the building history of the baroque fortress town of Narva in Estonia. In 1928 the Swedish Parliament decided to finance a professors' chair in the Swedish language at Tartu University. Per Wieselgren held the chair from 1929 until the German occupation in 1941.⁶⁴

The Latvian University recruited some Swedish academics, usually men with rather weak merits,⁶⁵ but also including the physical anthropologist and anatomy professor Gaston Backman (1920–1926). There were strong contacts in archeology and ethnology with Professors Birger Nerman and Sigurd Erixon (both of whom contributed to the anthology in 1935 at the 10th anniversary of the Swedish-Latvian Association), and one of the history scholars from 1937, Edgars Dunsdorfs, even studied at Stockholms Högskola.⁶⁶

Vytautas Magnus University introduced courses in Swedish in 1932 and a lectureship in 1935. In November 1936, the lecturer Knut Olof Falk wrote a memorandum concerning Swedish cultural propaganda in Baltikum where he indicated that the lectureships in Riga and Kaunas were implemented at the Swedish initiative, mainly from the Baltic Committee, and with increasing interest from the Swedish state, but the question of remuneration had not been effectively resolved.⁶⁷

Courses in the Baltic languages and in Estonian were introduced at Stockholm University in 1939 and maintained during the Second World War with its influx of Baltic refugees, but they were discontinued in 1950, probably because the Cold War and the containment of the Soviet Union made contacts with the Soviet Baltic republics virtually impossible. Some teaching of Estonian was maintained at the Departments of Finno-Ugric languages of the main universities. The publication *Svio-Estonica* issued in Tartu continued from Lund in 1943 and in 1948–1971 with contributions from exiled Estonians.⁶⁸

Conclusions

In the period between the two world wars, Swedish interest in the three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was in general extremely limited, whereas from the other side Sweden was seen as a geopolitically inactive power and consequently as a possible source of support and an ally against the Baltic states' two greater neighbors, the Soviet Union and Germany. Culturally and academically, a few interested persons mainly related to Stockholm and its University College tried to maintain contacts with the Baltic states, and Tartu University in particular received a limited number of Swedish scholars. Lithuania, squeezed between the Soviet Union, Germany, and Poland, tried to cultivate

academic contacts with Sweden, while Latvia seems to have had little contact with Sweden except for a limited number of academics working at the university college. Swedish academic interest in Latvia was almost entirely confined to Stockholm University College, with particular emphasis on archaeology, ethnology, and history related to earlier Swedish influences.⁶⁹ While often based on glorifying Swedish history, these contributions seem to have had no geopolitical aspirations.

The most active Swedes working for direct contacts and a sense of regional communality across the Baltic Sea were Stockholm's mayor Carl Lindhagen, geography professor Sten De Geer, and foreign minister Rickard Sandler, himself an academic geographer.⁷⁰ Lindhagen and Sandler were obviously in contact as members of Parliament and of the Social Democratic Party, and they both signed a public appeal in July 1918 in support for a collection of money for the worker victims of the Finnish civil war, with Lindhagen then representing the breakaway Left Party of the Social Democrats.⁷¹ De Geer and Lindhagen were both involved in the development of Stockholm, while De Geer and Sandler were both members of the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography. Sten De Geer's early death put an end to a relationship with Estonian geographer Edgar Kant, later to become vice-chancellor of Tartu University and who later became a refugee in Sweden, where he provided the impetus for the modernization of social geography. The Swedish academic contacts with Latvia were weaker and were mainly confined to Swedish interest in the history and pre-history in the area. In the case of Lithuania, Lindhagen's interest, Sandler's visit, and the efforts by Kazys Pakštas and Ignas Šeinius/Scheynius created some important contacts despite a lack of "natural proximity", but perhaps explicable by the vulnerable geopolitical situation of the country. ✕

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archivalia

SSAG meetings and board meetings, KVA (Royal Academy of Sciences) Archives, Stockholm.

references

- 1 The Swedish word Baltikum (also used in German) refers to the spatial area of the Baltic states without clear delimitation, sometimes (but not here) including the Russian exclave (oblast') of Kaliningrad and, earlier, German East Prussia. The word is used untranslated in this paper. See the discussion in Kristoffer Holt, (2007), *Hur nordiskt är Baltikum?* och *Svensk kultur sedd utifrån*. [How Nordic is the Baltic area and Swedish culture seen from abroad] Stockholms skandinavistsymposium: två rapporter, (Norrköping: Linköpings universitet). The concept of 'Baltic' is vague. In, for example, Lithuania, the states referred to included Finland until the mid-1930s, while in Sweden The Baltic Sea, Östersjön, 'Eastern Sea' (in

- Finnish the direct translation Itämeri, in Estonian Läänemeri (Western Sea), and in Lithuanian Baltijus jūra), formerly did not include the areas north of the Åland islands. While Sweden's eastern coast is Baltic, the Baltic States here are defined as the states east of the Baltic Sea, south of the Gulf of Finland, and north of Poland and East Prussia if not otherwise defined.
- 2 Carl Marklund (2014), "Stor är stark, men liten är listig: Kjelléns baltiska program och geopolitikens lärdomar för en perifer 'mellanstat'". [Great is strong, but small is cunning. Kjellén's Baltic program and the lessons from geopolitics for a peripheral "medium state"], in Edström, Björck & Lundén (eds), *Rudolf Kjellén Geopolitiken och konservatismen* (Stockholm: Hjalmarson & Högberg, 2014), 180–202, 195–199; see also Mart Kuldkepp (2014) "Sweden's historical mission and World War I: A regionalist theory of Swedish activism", *Scandinavian Journal of History* 39 (1), 126–146, 126.
 - 3 Norden is defined as the five independent states of Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland and including their autonomous territories. See the discussion by Fridtjov Isachsen (1960) Norden. In: *A Geography of Norden* ed. Axel Sømme. (Oslo: J.W. Cappelen), 13, and in Holt (2007).
 - 4 Mart Kuldkepp, (2010), *Den estnisk-svenska regionalistiska diskursen under mellankrigstiden. Ett kulturellt perspektiv* [The Estonian-Swedish regionalistic discourse in the inter-war time. A cultural perspective] (Tartu University: Magisteruppsats), 49; Mart Kuldkepp (2015), "Hegemony and liberation in World War I", *Ajalooline Ajakiri*, 2015, 3 (153), 249–286.
 - 5 Sandra Grigaravičiūtė, (2002), *Skandinavija Lietuvos diplomatijoje 1918–1940 metais* (Vilnius: Saulabrolis), 2002. [Summary: Scandinavia in Lithuania's diplomacy in 1918–1940], 256–264, 256; Sandra Grigaravičiūtė (2015), *Lietuvių ir Lietuvos Atstovavimas Skandinavijoje 1915–1990 Metais. Mokslo Darbų Apžvalga*, (Vilnius, Lietuvos Edukologijos Universitetas). With an English translation: Representation of Lithuanians and Lithuania in Scandinavia in 1915–1990, 39–87, 55.
 - 6 Wilhelm M. Carlgren, (1993), *Sverige och Baltikum: från mellankrigstid till efterkrigsår: en översikt*, [Sweden and the Baltic area: from inter-war time to post-war years: a survey], (Stockholm: Publica); see also Kaido Jaanson (2001) "The Baltic Sea region in international relations of the twentieth century: The seminal nature of the interwar period", *Journal of Baltic Studies*, 32:3, 267–288, 273 and Kuldkepp (2010), 53.
 - 7 Karlis Kangeris, (1988), "Die Schwedische Baltikumpolitik 1918–1925". In: *The Baltic in international relations between the two world wars*. Studia Baltica Stockholmiensia, 1988, 187–207, 187.
 - 8 Ibid., 190–91.
 - 9 Ulf Larsson, (2009), "Hjalmar Branting och Nationernas förbund". [Hjalmar Branting and the League of Nations], in red. Ulf Bjereld, *Socialdemokratin i krig och fred: Ingvar Carlsson 75 år*. [Social Democracy in war and peace: Ingvar Carlsson 75 years] (Hedemora; Gidlund), 19–31; Grigaravičiūtė (2002), 261; Sandra Grigaravičiūtė, (2002), "Lietuvos diplomatija Skandinavijos preldžiant Vilniaus problemą XX amžiaus 4-ame dešimtmetyje", *Istorija*. 2002, Nr. 1, 38–43.
 - 10 Per Wieselgren, (1942), *Från hammaren till hakkorset. Estland 1939–1941*. [From the hammer to the swastika. Estonia 1939–1941]. (Stockholm: Idé och Form), 9.
 - 11 Sverker Oredsson, (2017), *Nils Edén. Demokratins statsminister*. [Nils Edén. The Prime Minister of Democracy] (Stockholm: Ekerlid), 261.
 - 12 Elis Håstad, (E.H.), (1939), "Sverige och Baltikum, Dagens Frågor den 14 oktober" [Sweden and the Baltic area. Questions of the day October 15, *Svensk Tidskrift* 1939, 535–538, 538. The article is signed E.H. Elis Håstad was editor in chief of *Svensk Tidskrift* 1936–1949.
 - 13 (Grigaravičiūtė 2002: 257; Remigius Motuzas, (2011), *Lietuvos diplomatinisats toavimas Švedijoje*. (Vilnius: Versus Aureus), 133, 647. The Swedish government was first contacted for recognition on October 22, 1918. This was done by a member of the Council of Lithuania, M. Yčas, but the application was not formalized. Sometime later, at the end of November 1918, the Lithuanian representative in Berlin J. Šaulys asked for recognition through the Swedish envoy in Berlin. Historiography does not provide information on when exactly he applied to Norway, but the dates of de facto recognition by Sweden and Norway have been recorded. Sweden was the first country that recognized Lithuania de facto. The note of the envoy in Berlin is dated December 12, 1918, when Lithuania had not yet become a state. (Motuzas, 647, Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas: The state of Lithuania placing itself on the international stage in 1918–1924. <http://valstybingumas.lt/EN/saltiniu-apzvalga/diplomatija/Pages/default.aspx> [2018-05-23]. Information from Sandra Grigaravičiūtė on April 4, 2019, is that the newest research of S. Pivoras shows that in the historiography of Lithuania there are two dates of de facto recognition, December 3, 1918, and December 12, 1918.
 - 14 Torsten Undén (1877–1962) was the brother of Östen Undén, (jurist, important academic at Uppsala University, and government minister 1917–1920, 1924–1926, 1932–1936, and 1945–1962).
 - 15 Saulius Pivoras, (2000), "Die Haltung Schwedens zur Angliederung des Memelgebietes an Litauen, 1923–1924", *Annaburger Annalen Jahrbuch über Litauen und deutsch-litauische Beziehungen 2000*. (Heidelberg: Baltisch Christlicher Studentenbund).
 - 16 Grigaravičiūtė (2015) 75; 80.
 - 17 Ibid. [20], 60.
 - 18 Carlgren 1993, 50; Eric von Sydow, (1988), "Diplomatiska relationer mellan Estland och Sverige under mellankrigstiden" [Diplomatic relations between Estonia and Sweden during the inter-wartime], in Red. Raimo Raag och Harald Runblom, *Estländare i Sverige: Historia, språk, kultur*. [Estonians in Sweden: History, language, culture.] (Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, Uppsala University), 49–53.
 - 19 Motuzas 2011, 400 f, 652.
 - 20 Carl Lindhagen (1860–1946) was a jurist and politician and was a member of the Stockholm City Council (1903–1941), a member of Parliament's second chamber (1897–1917) and first chamber (1919–40) as a Liberal until 1907, turning Social Democrat in 1909, and joining the leftist breakout in 1917 but returning in 1923. Johannes Lehmann, 1960, *Carl Lindhagen*, (København: Arne Frost-Hansens Forlag); Torbjörn Lundqvist, (1995), *Industrialismens kritiker: utopism, ämbetsmannaideal och samvetspolitik i Carl Lindhagens ideologi*. [The critic of industrialism: utopism, the ideal of the public officers and the politics of conscience in Carl Lindhagen's ideology] Uppsala University: Dept. of Economic History. Uppsala papers in economic history. Research report, 0281–4560; 36. Lehmann (1896–1980), a Danish cultural and industrial historian, in his almost hagiographical booklet on Lindhagen, in passing mentions Lindhagen as being the first in Sweden to urge the country to pay attention to the small Baltic lands (p.58) and his wish that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania be included among the Nordic countries (p. 76). Lundqvist describes Lindhagen's ideological orientation and its development but does not cover his internationalist ideas. The booklet has, however, a valuable list of his enormous number of parliamentary bills, including almost 10 covering Swedish relations to the Baltic States and Poland (see Appendix).
 - 21 Algo Rämmer, (2016), *Haritlased ja Baltikultuurikoostöö. 1920–1930. Aastatel*. (Tartu ülikoolkirjastus. 2016). Summary: Intellectuals and Baltic cultural collaboration in the 1920s–1930, 50–51; Kuldkepp, 2010, 50–60; Jaanson 2001, 275, mistakenly referring to him as Lindgren.
 - 22 Saulius Pivoras, (2009), "Juozas Gabrys, Karlas Lindhagen asirlietuvių – švedų ryšiai XX a. pradžioje", Summary: "Juozas Gabrys" and Carl Lindhagen's Contribution to the Lithuanian – Swedish Connections at the Beginning of the 20th Century", *Istorija: Lietuvos aukstuju mokyklu mokslo darbai*, Issue 74, 23–32. [tomashttp://archyvas.istorijoszurnalas.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=193&Itemid=61](http://archyvas.istorijoszurnalas.lt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=193&Itemid=61). [2019-02-04].

- 23 Carl Lindhagen, (1939), *Carl Lindhagens memoarer, III*, [The memoirs of Carl Lindhagen III]. (Stockholm: Bonniers), 377–383. Juozas Gabrys or Juozas Gabrys-Paršaitis (1880, Russian Empire–1951, Switzerland) was a Lithuanian politician and diplomat best remembered for his efforts to popularize the idea of Lithuania's independence in the West during World War I. Secretary of the Union of Nationalities in 1918 and author of books and maps on nationalities. Martynas Yčas (1885, Russian Empire–1941, Rio de Janeiro), member of the Russian Duma 1912–1917, minister and active in the Lithuanian delegation at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, and border negotiator with Latvia in 1921. Stasys Šilingas (1885–1962) was a prominent lawyer and statesman in interwar Lithuania who was detained in Siberia from 1941 to 1953.
- 24 Lindhagen (1939), 377–383.
- 25 Aleksander Kesküla, (1882 Estonia, Russian Empire–1963, Spain) was an Estonian nationalist, enthusiast for Baltic-Swedish cooperation and possible agent, and founder of the Estonian Office in Stockholm 1918, but discarded by the official Estonian delegation. See Kuldkepp (2015), 257–58.
- 26 Grigaravičiūtė 2015: 44, Motuzas 2011:53. Ignas Jurkunas Šeinius (in Sweden Scheynius) (1889, Russian Empire–1959, Sweden) came to Sweden in 1915, and after J. Aukštuolis (January 12, 1919–March 3, 1921) and the temporary move of the legation to Copenhagen, became the Envoy of Lithuania in Stockholm (January 1, 1924–June 27, 1927) (also in Helsinki and Copenhagen). He returned to Lithuania in 1927, but upon the annexation in 1940 he returned to Sweden.
- 27 Remigijus Misiūnas, (2004), *Informacinių kovų kryžkelės: JAV lietuvių informacinės kovos XIX a. pabaigoje – 1922 m.* (Vilnius: Versus Aurius), 76; Motuzas 2011, 646.
- 28 Pivoras (2009); Motuzas (2011), 62–74.
- 29 Lindhagen (1939), 378
- 30 Grigaravičiūtė (2002), 259
- 31 Bill 1:200, signed January 21. (Lindhagen, [Carl]. 1933 Första kammaren Motion nr 200).
- 32 Lindhagen, 1933, p.19.
- 33 Lindhagen (1939), 381–83
- 34 Sten De Geer, (1928), “Das geologische Fennoskandia und das geographische Baltoskandia”, *Geografiska Annaler* Vol. 10, 119–139. Sten De Geer received his PhD in physical geography in 1911 and was appointed docent in geography at Uppsala University the same year. He became a teacher at Stockholm University College in 1912, the same year his article *Storstäderna vid Östersjön* [The cities of the Baltic Sea], *Ymer* 1912, 41–48 was published based on research and visits to the Baltic cities (see Thomas Lundén, et al. (2012) “A hundred years later: Street cars are still rattling in Baltic cities”, *Baltic Worlds* 2012 vol. V: 3–4, 37–44). In 1929 he was appointed professor of “geography with mercantile geography and ethnography” at the Göteborg University College. He had a vast field of contacts with influences from US social ecology and European geography, including Estonia, Latvia, and Finland (Eric De Geer, 1997–1999). Sten De Geer died on June 2, 1933.
- 35 See e.g. Kuldkepp, 2010, 46
- 36 De Geer discusses the problems of the method chosen, while Kant (1934) points at the disadvantages of seeking boundaries, comparing to (J.G.) Granö's method of indicating core areas. Kant still sees De Geer's delineation as the most acceptable (Kant 1934: 6–7).
- 37 Eric De Geer (1997–1999), *Förteckning över Professorn, frih. Sten De Geers samling av manuskript, kartor, foton, korrespondens, adresskartotek, m.m. sammanställd 1997–1999 av Eric De Geer* [Catalogue of Professor, baron Sten De Geer's collection of manuscripts, maps, photos, correspondences, addresslists, etc. compiled in 1997–1999 by Eric De Geer] (Unpublished manuscript, Uppsala and Göteborg University libraries), 9.
- 38 Jonatan Grufman, (1923), “Estniska republikens geografi”, [The Geography of the Estonian republic] *Ymer* 1923:4, 452–491, 452.
- 39 Jonathan Grufman, (1935), “Lettlands natur” [Latvia's nature]. In: Birger Nerman, /Henke, Jerker/Kempff, C./Schück, Adolf (Red.), *Svensk-Lettiska Föreningen i Stockholm: till dess tio-års jubileum 18.11.1935*, [The Swedish-Latvian Association in Stockholm: at its tenth anniversary Nov. 11 1935] Stockholm.
- 40 Sten De Geer's idea of Baltoskandia was mentioned by Swedish–Estonian writer and geographer Andres Küng (2002), *Ett liv för Baltikum, Journalistiska memoarer*. [A life for the Baltic area: Journalistic memoirs]. (Stockholm: Timbro).
- 41 Kazys Pakštas, (1942), *The Baltoscandian Confederation*. (Chicago: The Lithuanian Cultural Institute), reprint Academia Baltoscandia, Kaunas 1994.
- 42 Jaanson, (2001), 268; Torkel Jansson (2011), *Estland – Schwedens erstes Mallorca in den 1930er Jahren*, *Nordost-Archiv Zeitschrift für Regionalgeschichte* Tourismus im Ostseeraum [Tourism in the Baltic Region] (Wissenschaftlich verantwortlich: Karsten Brüggemann, Tallinn 20. Jahrgang), 111–145, 114–115.
- 43 In the machine-typed minutes of the board \$10, this is stated with a handwritten continuation, evidently written by the secretary, Hans W:son Ahlmann, stating *med anledning av hans föredrag i Stockholm den 20 febr* [on the occasion of his lecture in Stockholm on February 20th]. The medal, initiated in 1905, was given to prominent lecturers at SSAG meetings, but there is no mention of an SSAG meeting on that day. In *Ymer*, the Society's journal, on p. 154 is written that the Board of SSAG at its meeting on February 16 has awarded Prof. Pakštas the medal. According to Prof. Saulis Pivoras, he gave two lectures, on February 16 and February 20, organized by the Swedish-Lithuanian Society. Pakštas was president of the Swedish-Lithuanian Society from 1933 to 1938 and promoted the establishment of a lectureship in Swedish at Vytautas Magnus University (Pivoras e-mail July 21, 2018, *Svenska Dagbladet* December 4, 1934). Pakštas was mentioned in Lithuanian history when he was summoned in 1938 by the police for being mentioned as a rival candidate to the authoritarian president Smetonas during the latter's “re-election”. Alfred Erich Senn, (2007), *Lithuania 1940. Revolution From Above*. (Amsterdam & New York: Rodopi), 208.
- 44 In Pakštas (1942), he is mentioned on the title page as the receiver of the SSAG medal and also as Knight of the Order of Vasa by HM the King of Sweden, 1939. This is evidently the *Vasatecknet* bestowed to foreign nationals for their merits to Sweden.
- 45 Marko Lehti, (1998): “Non-Reciprocal Region-Building: Baltoscandia as a National Coordinate for the Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians”, *NORDEUROPA Forum*, 19–47, 19–23; Algo Rämmer, (2016), “Intellectual Partnerships and the Creation of a Baltic Cultural Body”, *Trames*, 2015, 19 (69/64), 2, 109–137, 120; Kuldkepp 2010, 65; Anne Buttmer, (1994), “Edgar Kant and Balto-Skandia: *Heimatkunde* and regional identity”, In: Ed. David Hooson, *Geography and National Identity*, (Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwells), 161–183. Lehti (1998) gives a correct description (albeit with a partly misleading reference to De Geer's paper) and a plausible explanation for an interpretation of a(n East) Baltic nationalistic discourse (p.23), but in a later reference from 2006 (Marko Lehti,; *Paradigm en ostseeregionaler Geschichte: Von Nationalgeschichten zur multinationalen Historiographie*, 494–510, in *Nordeuropaals Geschichtsregion*. Hrg. Jörg Hackmann und Robert Schweitzer, (Helsinki & Lübeck: Aue-Stiftung u. Schmidt-Römhild), 495, he omits De Geer altogether. Sami Moisio (2003), “Back to Baltoscandia? European Union and Geo-Conceptual Remaking of the European North”, *Geopolitics*, 8:1, 72–100, refers to De Geer as a geomorphologist but seems to base this reference on Lehti 1998.
- 46 The Danish geographer and geopolitical commentator professor

- Gudmund Hatt had a low evaluation of Nordic or Baltic co-operation and saw the inter-war period in the Baltic Sea region as a triangular imbalance of “English”, “Russian”, and “German” influences at the expense of the smaller states (Gudmund Hatt (1941), *Østersøproblemer*. [Baltic Sea problems] (København: Fergo).
- 47 Edgar Kant (1926), *Tartu Linn kuiümbris ja organism*. Tartu. The reference is to De Geer, Storstäderna vid Östersjön, *Ymer* 1912, 41–87. The reference to organism seems to refer to Rudolf Kjellén, but there is no indication of this in this book. However, in his booklet *Estland och Baltoskandia. Bidrag till Östersjöländernas geografi och sociografi*. Särtryck ur *Svio-Estonica*, Tartu 1935, mentioned above, he refers to Kjellén’s *Der Staatsals Lebensform* 1917 citing (p.99) his ideas about a Sweden with or without a Baltic influence (cf. Marklund 2014). In 1940 Kant wrote an introduction to the Estonian version of Kjellén’s *Staten som livsform* (1916).
- 48 Edgar Kant, (1934), *Estlands Zugehörigkeit zu Baltoskandia*. (Tartu: Tartu ülikooli majandusgeograafia seminari toimetised nr. 9).
- 49 Personal communication with Eric De Geer (born 1927) on May 28, 2018.
- 50 Olavi Granö, (2009), *Opening of the 3rd Nordic Meeting of Geographers, Turku 8. 11.6.2009*, (Unpublished manuscript, Turun Yliopisto), 2.
- 51 Carlgren 1993, 38.
- 52 Yngve Möller, (1990), *Rickard Sandler Folkbildare – Utrikesminister*. [Rickars Sandler Adult educator–Minister of Foreign Affairs] (Stockholm: Norstedts), 324.
- 53 Adolf Schück (1897–1958), historian, in an article in 1936 discussed the internal relations between the East Baltic States and the problems and prospects for “a Baltoscandian cooperation”, pointing at the need for a deeper understanding of cultural and economic factors as well as the geopolitical situation. Adolf Schück, (1936), “Narvamonumentet” [The Narva monument], *Ord och Bild* 1936, 561–570, 568–70.
- 54 From Curman’s archive, copied and transmitted by Prof. SaulisPivoras.
- 55 Motuzas, 2011, 344–345.
- 56 Grigaravičiūtė 2002, 262; 2015: 55–56.
- 57 Möller, 1990: 324.
- 58 Katarina Leppänen (2011), “Education for internationalism at the Nordic school for adult education in Geneva 1931–1939”, *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society*, 40:5, 635–649, 642.
- 59 Jansson (2011), 111–145.
- 60 Grigaravičiūtė 2002, 261
- 61 Per Bolin, (2012), *Between National and Academic Agendas: Ethnic Policies and ‘National Disciplines’ at the University of Latvia, 1919–1940*. (Huddinge: Södertörns högskola), 283; Aleksander Loit, (1988), “Kulturförbindelser mellan Sverige och Estland efter andra världskriget” [Cultural connections between Sweden and Estonia after World War II], In eds., Raimo Raag och Harald Runblom. *Estländare i Sverige: Historia, språk, kultur*, (Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, Uppsala University), 65–86, 80.
- 62 Rämmer, 2015, 122, 133.
- 63 Kuldkepp, 2010, 61.
- 64 Sten Karling, (1988), “Kulturförbindelser mellan Estland och Sverige”. *Estländare i Sverige: Historia, språk, kultur*, eds., Raimo Raag och Harald Runblom. Uppsala: Centre for Multiethnic Research, Uppsala University, 55–64, 55–59; Sveriges Riksdag Motion 1990/91: U519. *En professur i svenska språket och litteraturen vid universitetet i Tartu*; Wieselgren 1942.
- 65 Bolin 2012, 253.
- 66 Bolin 2012, 279.
- 67 Knut Olof Falk, (1936), *Kort promemoria rörande den svenska kulturpropagandan i Baltikum*. Type-written paper, [Curman’s archive], 3.
- 68 Karling, 1988, 60; Jansson 2014, 119.
- 69 Bolin 2012, 283.
- 70 Thomas Lundén, (2016), “Rickard Sandler – en praktiserande geograf”, [Rickard Sandler – a practising geographer] *Geografiska Notiser* LXXIV:4, 194–196.
- 71 Lars Ekdahl, (2018), “Humanitär hjälp och internationell solidaritet. Arbetarrörelsens stödinsatser i inbördeskrigets skugga”. [Humanitarian help and international solidarity. Labor movement support contributions in the shadow of the Civil War.] *Den röda våren 1918. Finska inbördeskriget i nordisk samhällsutveckling*, [The red spring of 1918. The Finnish Civil War in Nordic social development] red. Kjersti Bosdotter et al., Huddinge: ARAB och AKS, 301–329, 313.

appendix

Carl Lindhagen Motioner (from Lundqvist, 1995)

AK: Second, FK First Chamber. In cases when a motion was directly caused by a proposition, the motion is in italics.

- AK 1914B:214. Ang. befordrande av vänskapliga förbindelser mellan Sverige och Ryssland.
- FK: 1920: 142 Främjande av skandinaviskt och baltiskt samarbete i lagstiftningsfrågor m.m.
- 1922:90 En fristående svensk, eventuellt nordisk, baltisk, eller samfällt småstatlig avrustning.
- 1923:146 Initiativ för att nationernas självbestämningsrätt antas som internationell lag.
- 1925:170 Nationernas självbestämningsrätt som en internationell rättsfråga.
- 1932:280 Reglering av undertryckta folks självbestämningsrätt genom internationell lag.
- 1933:200 Överenskommelse mellan staterna runt Östersjön om gemensam självförsörjning.
- 1933:201 Lösning av tvisten mellan Litauen och Polen om Vilnaområdet.
- 1933:202 Legationssekreterarens i Riga förflyttning i Kovno i Litauen.
- 1933:203 Internationella politikens sysslande med ofredens djupliggande orsaker.
- 1933:204 Hävdande av nationaliteternas i alla världsdelar självbestämningsrätt.
- 1933:209 Det paneuropeiska problemet.
- 1934:274 Samverkan mellan mindre stater, särskilt mellan baltar och skandinaver.
- 1935:228 Inrättande av en permanent representation för Sverige uti Kovno i Litauen.
- 1936:3 Nordens framträdande med ny utrikespolitik.
- 1936:4 Betyggande av Freden i Östersjön genom överenskommelser med Tyskland.
- 1937:189 En Sveriges och Nordens fredsplan för en varaktig fred.
- 1937:219 Ytterligare motiveringar till motion nr 189 om Sveriges och Nordens fredsplan.
- 1938: 213 Nordisk samverkan för bildandet av ett Nordens fredsförbund.
- 1938:214 Granskning av kraven på ett Nordens försvarsförbund.
- 1939:49 Om vissa europeiska minoriteters rätt.
- 1939: 192 Alla nationers självbestämningsrätt.
- 1940: 127 Återställande av ett fritt polsktalande Polen.



The post-Soviet TV series “Hetaeras of Major Sokolov” as stylization to atmosphere of the Soviet cinema of the Stalinist time: white buildings, a lake, dapper and elegant Major Sokolov pretends to read a newspaper but observes the surrounding.

MEMORIES OF THE WAR IN SOVIET AND RUSSIAN SPY CINEMA

EVOLUTION OF TRAUMA

by **Viktoriya
Sukovata**

abstract

This paper analyzes Soviet and Russian spy films with respect to maintaining and transmitting memories of the Great Patriotic War (1941–1945) in popular culture. The new Russian post-Soviet cinema (after the 2000s) about the “war spies” is considered not only with regard to its entertainment and ideological functions, but also with regard to its function as a “post-memory” of the traumatic experiences of the war and the Nazi occupation. The new Russian cinema about espionage and spies reinterprets the issues of dependent people, Stalinist repressions, and traumatic memories that were absent in Soviet cinema.

KEY WORDS: Soviet cinema, post-Soviet cinema, spy genre, new Russian cinema, memory, trauma of the war

Soviet and post-Soviet Russian spy cinema is an almost completely unstudied phenomenon despite spy films being enormously popular in Soviet society and many of them continuing to have a cult following even after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The blossoming of the spy genre was connected with the Cold War because the political situation of the Cold War stimulated the production of films devoted to the confrontation between two ideological systems embodied in the images of secret agents and spies. The spy genre was the most convenient format for conveying to the public the negative image of the “enemy” and the positive image of the subject (the secret agent or counter-spy) fighting this enemy. A common opinion in Soviet cultural critique was that the spies in these films were products primarily of Western mass culture

and that the spy detective was the “low”, mostly entertainment, genre that reflected the ideological opposition of the two superpowers of the Cold War and a desire to symbolically dominate the “enemy” through cinematic or literary devices. Despite the fact that Soviet theorists did not use the term “spy film” with regard to Soviet cinema production, the spy genre was alive and well at the time. The majority of these films could be categorized in the “war adventure” genre because they were substantively based on the events of the Second World War or on later events originating from the war (for example, the hunt for former Nazi collaborators or criminals). Thus, the first aspect of the Soviet spy films was that – in contrast to the Western spy films devoted to the conflict between the Soviet and Western intelligence services – the majority of the Soviet spy films were devoted to the conflict between the Soviet and German intelligence services during the Second World War when the war against the Nazis was understood as the fight against the “absolute Evil” on the side of the “absolute Good”.

Canonization of the memory about the Great Patriotic War (the Soviet term which referred to the struggle of the Soviet peoples against the German invasion of the 1941–1945) took significant place in the Soviet public memory, cultural mythology and cinema of different genres. It is important to remember here that the Soviet Union lost more than 27 million people, among them about 17 millions civilians, including Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Jews, Gypsies, and representatives of other nations and social groups who were killed in battles, in the Nazi concentration camps, during forced labor, and so on. This means that almost all Soviet families had relatives who perished in battle or during the Nazi occupation, and the majority of Soviet people understood the war not as a struggle for their freedom or the freedom of their country, but as a struggle for their survival as a people.

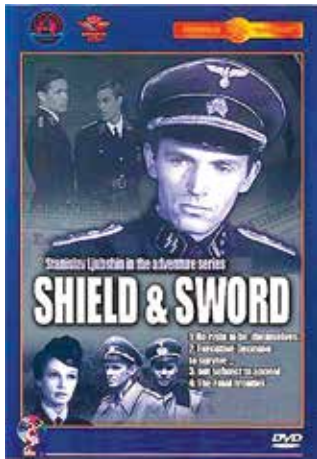
This memory about the brutal war and the difficult victory stimulated the production of hundreds of Soviet films about the war in different genres – epics, musicals, dramas, melodramas, and even comedies. The most widespread genre in Soviet cinema regarding the Great Patriotic War were the “combat films” about the Red Army and Soviet partisan’s struggles, “family dramas” (about the broken family connections during the war), and “romantic melodramas” about the loving wives and fiancées of the wartime heroes. But many aspects of the war remained invisible or little-known in official Soviet art, in particular the Red Army’s retreat of 1941–1942, Stalinist repressions, the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, and the fate of Soviet prisoners of war who survived the Nazi concentration camps and their post-war fates after returning home. These were not prohibited in Soviet art, but they were not “welcome”. Thus the heroic pathos and suffering for the Motherland were the prevailing emotions in Soviet public art devoted to the war, while the personal or national traumas of the war were not embodied in many Soviet films. In particular, narratives of the Soviet victims of the concentration camps and ghettos and the post-war fate of the former prisoners of war after returning home were rarely seen in Soviet war cinema. The hypothesis behind this paper is that spy films re-

mained on the periphery of Soviet official attention as a “low” genre, and thus they had more opportunities to tell audiences about the issues that were not “welcome” in the canonical Soviet war genres. This is especially the case for post-Soviet Russian films that use Soviet cinematic visuality and canonical Soviet spy narratives as a background for the public memory and as a testimony to a bygone era, but re-interpreted by contemporary directors using today’s knowledge about the Soviet past.

The goal of this paper was to research the evolution of the cultural memory of the trauma of the war in Soviet and post-Soviet spy cinema, and I consider how the images of the secret agents were transformed from Soviet to contemporary Russian spy cinema. In this analysis, I use the ideas of French theorist Christian Metz¹ who considered cinema to be a phenomenon at the intersection of the cultural unconsciousness of a society colored by social symbolism and the personal “neuroses” of the filmmakers. Also, I use the concepts of Marianne Hirsch² and Catharine Merridale³ regarding traumatic memory as a cultural phenomenon. Hirsch wrote about the traumatic memory of the Holocaust survivors who serve as the “post-memory” through photos, family stories, and movie images for the generations that did not experience the Holocaust. I extrapolated Hirsch’s ideas to the space of post-Soviet memory about the war and the Nazi occupation and consider cinema to be a “medium” that fixed the visual and emotional “collective memories” about the war trauma and transmitted this knowledge of the war to the Soviet generation’s children in the post-Soviet era. Merridale argued that the “trauma issue” was not popular in Soviet psychological thinking due to the ideological approach whereby people should be rehabilitated through work and by uniting individual emotions to the collective mind. Thus the concept of trauma only began to be discussed after the 1990s. As material for analyses, I chose the spy genre because I share the view of American scholar Lee Drummond⁴ that the popular genres and their stories, which are the most widespread in many cultures, are the most useful for understanding the political and socio-cultural situation. “Auteur cinema” as a rule reflects the personal experiences of the director, but the most popular samples of national culture represent the “mythological base” of a society or the “inner idea” of the culture. Thus an analysis of the spy films will be helpful to understanding the “cultural models” of the Soviet and Russian subconscious.

Traumatic memories of the war in early Soviet spy films

Although the first films on espionage were shot before the Second World War and were connected with Alfred Hitchcock’s achievements (*The Lady Vanishes*, 1938; *The 39 Steps*, 1935; *The Sabotage*, 1936; and *The Secret Agent*, 1936), the flourishing of the spy genre in Western countries was based on the actualization of the fundamental opposition of the Cold War, embodied in artistic images as the opposition of the “democratic West” and the “communist East” in the genres of nuclear thrillers and spy detectives. The main anti-heroes of the Western post-war movies on spies were the “Red agents” and terrorists from the “left



The Soviet TV series "Shield and Sword", 1968. Actor Stanislav Liubshin in the main role of the Soviet agent "under cover"



The Soviet TV series "The Secret Agent's Blunder", 1968, actor Georgiy Zhzhenov in the main role of the Soviet agent.



Illustration to the Soviet TV series "Variant Omega", 1975, actor Oleg Dal' in the main role of the Soviet agent "under cover".

circle".⁵ A classic Western "spy genre" is considered with Ian Fleming's novels and subsequent series of films about the fearless agent James Bond 007, saving the Western democratic values in the fight against "Red Moscow".

The situation was quite different in the Soviet cinema of the post-war years, where the ideological confrontation of the "communist" East against the "bourgeois" West was absent in the first Soviet post-war films. The first Soviet films on the "spy issue" can be classified as "war dramas" because they were devoted to the events of recent Soviet history and to the conflict between "Soviets" and "Nazis". Those films reflected the post-war mood in Soviet society, especially the happiness of the end of the war and the Great Victory and the hope for a flourishing future after all of the sufferings during the war. The most representative Soviet spy film was *Secret Agent* (directed by B. Barnet, 1947), which was based on the story of the famous Soviet spy-saboteur Nikolai Kuznetsov, who operated in the territory of Western Ukraine during the Nazi occupation and who posed as a German lieutenant being all the time among German officers. The real Soviet agent Kuznetsov became widely known in post-war Soviet culture as the most successful Soviet diversionist and as the one who uncovered the German plans to launch a massive tank attack in the Kursk region (1943) and who passed secret information about Hitler's plan to kill the heads of the USSR, US, and Great Britain during the Tehran Conference to the Soviet Intelligence Office. Kuznetsov was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, the highest military honor. In the film, Kuznetsov performs many brave actions against the Nazis, such as kidnapping the German general and stealing the secret German codes, and the secret agent is depicted in the film as a fearless and honorable gentleman who even manages to be ironic in the face of the complacent and snobbish German officers. That first Soviet spy film combined the heroic pathos and drama in depicting the brave Soviet agent with comic elements in the

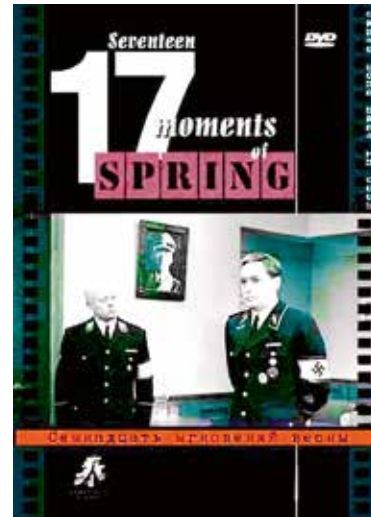
embodiment of the bat-eyed and self-conceited Germans; thus a demarcation between "us" and "enemies" was clearly depicted.

The film was enormously popular among Soviet audiences, and many expressions from the film became integral parts of Soviet mass culture (despite the tragic fate of the real Soviet agent who was the prototype for the film). I propose that this film with its strong optimistic pathos after the victory played a *psychotherapeutic role* in post-war Soviet society, which just a few years earlier had survived the millions of deaths and untold torment and indignity of the Soviet people during the brutal Nazi occupation. The happiness of the end of the war and the Great Victory and the popular belief in a flourishing future for all Soviet people had a strong influence on the Soviet public mood. Thus Soviet cinema of the first post-war decades did not want to focus the audience's attention on the difficulties that accompanied the Soviet people's path to the Great Victory – namely, the first few months of retreat, the ruthless Holocaust of the Soviet Jews, Gypsies, and disabled people in the Nazi-occupied territories, and the Stalinist repressions in the Red Army. Soviet post-war art instead sought to create an image of the Soviet people as a common body, as a great mythological hero who had defeated the most horrible of enemies, the Nazis and their collaborators.

During the war, Soviet film studios created many films devoted to the Nazi crimes towards the Soviet citizens, which served to stimulate the hatred of the Soviets for the Nazis (for example, the famous film *The Rainbow* (1943) depicting the Ukrainian woman Olena being tortured by Germans for being a partisan agent; *The Unconquered* (1943) devoted to the Holocaust and the anti-Nazi resistance of ordinary Ukrainians in Donbass; and *Zoya* (1944) depicting the story of the 17-year-old girl Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya who was tortured and executed by the Nazis for being a Soviet saboteur). Many Soviet people who survived the Nazi occupation or front-line battles knew about the Nazi atrocities not from the cinema, but because they saw them with



The post-Soviet film "In August of 1944", 2001, actors Evgeniy Mironov and Vlad Galkin in the main roles of the Soviet investigators from "SMERSH".



The Soviet TV series "17 Moments of Spring", 1973, actor Vyacheslav Tikhonov in the main role of the Soviet agent "under cover" (right) and actor Leonid Bronevoy in a role of head of Gestapo (left).

their own eyes, and after the war they looked for films that were able to take their minds off the emotional stress and the pain of their losses. The deep trauma resulting from the occupation and the war required psychological recovery, and according to the ideas of Dominick LaCapra,⁶ historical trauma represented through visual art can create a distance between the subject of the trauma (the audience) and the traumatic experience. I believe that the early Soviet spy films performed this function of "recovery" through images of the almost mythological Soviet agents who could be victorious over any enemy, and these films represented the boundless belief in Soviet ideals and the heroics of the Soviet army and intelligence agencies. The influence of the common Soviet mass euphoria after the difficult victory over Nazism facilitated the creation of a distance between the feelings of the post-war Soviet society and the trauma of the Nazi occupation. As a rule, the Soviet agents of the early post-war time were references to the ideological concept of the "ideal Soviet man", who sincerely believed in the Soviet regime and the Communist Party and who had no hesitations regarding his own ability to win against his enemies in any situation. If one uses Freudian terminology⁷, it was a kind of cultural *displacement* of the real memory of the brutal war with a *mythological memory* that was necessary at that post-war stage. In my opinion, the fearless Soviet agents were requested by the Soviet post-war audience because for many people they compensated for the deep sense of defenselessness, vulnerability, and humiliation that was experienced by the Soviet people who remained in the Nazi-occupied territories. Of course, not only spy films played the role of a *collective psychotherapy* for the post-war Soviet society, and many comedies and musicals played this role as well.

Soviet spy films of the 1960s–1980s

The 1960s and 1970s were the "Golden era" for the spy genre, and most of the "classic" spy movies were created in that period. The majority of the Western spy detective films of the Cold War were shot in the "black-and-white" and "noir" mood, with a

focus on global treachery and suspicion between countries. The chronotope of the Western spy movies, in accordance with the opinion of A. Hepburn,⁸ can be described by the words "concealment", "loneliness", and "fear". In my opinion, the famous British film *The Spy Who Came in from the Cold* (1963), which was based on John Le Carre's bestselling book about the British agent who was betrayed by his own commanders, is one of most representative Western films on the poetics of the Cold War.

In the poetic of the Soviet spy films, the majority of the films were shot in the genre of heroic or romantic war adventures where smart and enthusiastic Soviet spies struggled against German counter-intelligence operatives during the Great Patriotic War. The most famous Soviet spy films of that time – *Far From Home* (1960), *Saturn Is Almost Invisible* (1967–1972), *Major Whirlwind* (1967), *The Dead Season* (1968), *Shield and Sword* (1968), *The Secret Agent's Blunder* (1968), *Fate of Resident* (1970), *Seventeen Moments of Spring* (1973), *Variant Omega* (1975), *Where Have You Been, Odysseus?* (1978), etc., were devoted to or closely connected with the history of the Great Patriotic War. The majority of these films and TV series were created on the basis of real stories from the Soviet agents' lives. Many of the films were shot during the period known as the "Ottepel" (Thaw) in the Soviet Union, when political and literary censure was liberalized and many political inmates of the Gulag were released. Many sensitive topics became more open and accepted in Soviet popular culture, for example, the issue of Soviet prisoners of war, many of whom were suspected of treason and collaborating with the Nazis and were sent to the Gulag⁹. Some war dramas about the Soviet captives were censored and were only publically screened much later (for example, the film *Trial on the Road* was shot in 1971 but only saw wide circulation after 1985). The spy film was the first genre where Soviet state liberalization towards the intelligentsia was obvious. It is a well-known point that the Soviet Union was declared as the state "of workers and peasants" where liberal intellectuals and creative intelligentsia were marginalized in the Soviet public discourses because of their class origin. This was

reflected in the unarticulated social hierarchies of the positive and negative personages in Soviet art. However, the situation evolved after the war, and these changes were reflected in Soviet spy cinema as well. For example, the main helpers of the Soviet Resident in Berlin of 1945 in the cult Soviet TV series *Seventeen Moments of Spring* were a courageous German pastor (who was imprisoned by the Nazis for being pacifist) and a German university professor (who also survived the Nazi concentration camps). The novelty was that this was the first time a priest was depicted in Soviet cinema as an absolutely positive personage and as a resistor against the Nazis. One must remember that thousands of Christian priests and representatives of other religious confessions were repressed by the Soviet state and became the objects of Soviet satire before the war. Scientists and liberal intelligentsia were repressed by the Soviet state as well, and many of them were sent to so called “sharashka”, the secret scientific research institutes and engineering bureaus that had been created by the NKVD at the end of the 1920s¹⁰. The liberalization of the Soviet state’s attitude to the religious and “class alien” representatives and pre-revolutionary intelligentsia started during the war, but the image of the honest, brave, smart, and resolute clergyman was a very new one in Soviet popular culture. Of course, the German priest in that movie was a clear allusion to the thousands of Soviet citizens who demonstrated their patriotism during the war but remained priests or believers. Thus it was a step toward restoring cultural justice for certain categories of Soviet citizens.

Another novelty of the Soviet spy films emerged in the construction of the public memory about the Germans during the war, and if the Soviet combat movies and the war melodramas de-personalized the Germans as symbols of the ontologically evil, faceless, and inhuman Nazis, then the Soviet spy films had a strong tendency for individualization of the enemies. As stipulated by the specifics of the genre, the “spy game” was typically a duel between a Soviet agent and a German officer from the German intelligence service or Gestapo (for example, in the TV series *Seventeen Moments of Spring* or in the film *Shield and Sword*). The Soviet spy films presented the differences between the Gestapo officers who were depicted as “butchers”, as stupid and sadistic executioners, and the German intelligence officials who were often portrayed in the Soviet spy movies as intellectuals, sometimes even more dangerous, but sometimes as representatives of the humanistic perspective and as opponents of Hitlerism (for example, in the famous TV series *Variant Omega* and *Where Have You Been, Odysseus?*). Some Soviet films depicted the “suffering Germans” who became Nazi spies against their will and who were violated by the Nazis. For example, the film *Shield and Sword* depicted a female German agent who was forced to have an abortion so that her child would not distract her from her job as a spy, and in *Seventeen Moments of Spring* the female Soviet radio operator was discovered by the Gestapo because she cried out in Russian during her childbearing. The theme of women’s sexuality and maternity in the Soviet spy films accented the vulnerability of the secret agents and added such little-known war realities to the public memory.

Another popular Soviet spy detective demonstrated the trans-

formation of the state attitude to the Civil War of 1918–1922 in Russia and to the former White Russian officers who emigrated from Soviet Russia just after the Bolsheviks’ victory. Traditionally, the representatives of the White Russian emigration were suspected of cooperating with Western intelligence agencies. The Soviet spy TV series *The Secret Agent’s Blunder* (V. Dorman, 1968), *The Fate of the Resident* (V. Dorman, 1970), *Returning the Resident* (V. Dorman, 1982) and *The End of Operation Resident* (V. Dorman, 1986) are of interest as vivid samples of including the Russian emigrants in the Soviet public memory. Thus, Soviet spy cinema tried to reconsider not only the trauma of the Great Patriotic War, but also the traumatic memory of the October Revolution of 1917 and the subsequent Civil War in Russia.

Another influential film was that about the former emigrant Tulyev, a Russian nobleman and professional Russian secret service officer, who came over to the Soviet counter-espionage service from a Western spy agency. The image of Tulyev, transforming from an enemy of the Soviet state to a loyal Soviet officer of the intelligence corps, reflected the realities of the war when hundreds of Russian emigrants struggled against the Nazis in the European resistance in Spain, Italy, and France because they wanted to help their native homeland. Thus, these films were not only about the battle between the Western and the Soviet secret services, but more about the relations of the Soviet state and their former opponents both inside and outside the USSR. In addition to its ideological influence, the image of the converted Soviet agent Tulyev was extremely successful with the Soviet audience because many Soviet spectators felt the “hidden” senses of the films. These were films not about love of the Russian emigrants towards the Soviet intelligence service, but about the dramatic fate of a person who had survived the difficulties faced by the Russian intelligentsia in the twentieth century. Even more, that film was one of the first to refer not to “Soviet” but to “Russian” patriotism at a time when the question of national identity and the different national experiences of the war were not discussed in public.

Another important aspect of the popularity of spy films was that Soviet films about intelligence officers were considered by many Soviet viewers to be a “textbook” for how the state power functioned. Despite the traditional point of view that Soviet intelligence was the most secret area in the state, many Soviet spy films lifted the veil of “working relations” in the intelligence corps and even half-exposed some professional secrets. For example, the films *Returning the Resident* and *The End of Operation Resident* showed the methods of recruiting informants and agents among civilians, the principles behind the verification of agents who “returned from the cold”, and the “lie detector” procedure for the first time. The film *The End of Operation Resident* gave a detailed typology of the Soviet “traitors” who wanted to co-operate with Western intelligence because of moral weakness, love of money, or having collaborated with the Nazis in the past. Also, the film *The End of Operation Resident* depicted the spy games around the Soviet physicist Nesterov with clear allusions to the figure of the famous Soviet “father of hydrogenous bomb” Andrei Sakharov during his exile in Gorky. That film

caused quite the sensation because the topics of Soviet nuclear physicists and Soviet dissidents were mostly absent and highly censored in Soviet popular culture, and this was the first and only time the themes were presented in Soviet cinema. Thus, some of the themes from Soviet political and social life that were taboo in other films were presented in the spy films. A simple explanation for this is that it was a requirement of the genre. The more complicated explanation is that spy films were usually supervised by faceless colonels from the KGB whose names were not indicated in the titles. The result of such supervision was that the usual censorship by the Ministry of Culture could be skipped because the KGB representatives wanted to present their jobs as credibly and professionally as possible on screen. There is a legend from the Cold War that the intelligence officers of all involved countries watched the spy films that were made by their opponents in order to unravel some of their opponents' secrets and their methods.

The Stalinist repressions were not presented in Soviet spy films because the majority of the films and TV series were created at the request of the KGB and were intended to give a positive image of the organization. Despite the hidden propaganda of the genre, it was enormously popular with the Soviet audience, and films were made by talented directors who wanted to tell about the difficulties of making moral choices within a "system" in which one's life was at risk. Soviet composers wrote romantic melodies for the films, and these became symbols of the era. The Soviet actors embodied the images of the Soviet agents who were tall, slender, handsome, intelligent, and elegant men in well-tailored dark suits and who always, despite the risks to their lives, showed self-control, fortune, and wisdom. The paradox of Soviet culture was, for example, that the Soviet actor Georgiy Zhzhenov, who played Tulyev in the TV series *The Secret Agent's Blunder*, was repressed before the war and spent more than twelve years in Siberian camps and in exile. After his release in the 1950s, he returned to Moscow and became one of the most popular Soviet actors. He lived to be ninety (1915–2005) and was awarded the State Prize of the Russian Federation named after the Vasilyev brothers, he was given the title "People's Artist of the Soviet Union" (the highest award in the USSR for actors), and he received special awards from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the KGB along with many other decorations. He played Soviet secret agents, American senators, Soviet war commanders of the highest rank, and other strong-willed men until his death, and one can only guess how his personal experience of repressions helped him in his acting roles. Using Freudian terminology, we can describe this cultural work as the "sublimation" of trauma.

Verbalizing the trauma in the post-Soviet cinema on the war

A new understanding of the Great Patriotic War developed after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991. The poetics and conflicts of the post-Soviet war films were changing, and there were openings for new topics and characters. In the early 1990s, Russian society was becoming more interested in crime stories

than spy stories. However, since the early 2000s post-Soviet Russian society has begun to feel more interested in the Great Patriotic War again, and thus the war has continued to be one of the strongest influences in constructing the national identity in post-Soviet Russia. The 1990s and the 2000s were a time of intense debates about the Soviet past, including the Stalinist repressions and the role of Stalin in Soviet history, the Great Patriotic War, and the victims and heroes of that war, and all of these themes were reflected in the cinema. Many Russian filmmakers returned to the spy plots from the Great Patriotic War (and the Cold War) for the following reasons: it is the most discussable and the most interesting time period for their audiences; it was a dramatic time of cultural and political contrasts that are highly suitable for cinematic embodiment; it was the time when traditions of the Soviet spy genre were created; the spy films have remained the most convenient matrix to create the dynamic and adventurous plots beloved by any audience; and it was the most traumatic time for the Soviet people, and this trauma has not been fully articulated until today. The American scholar D. Youngblood wrote¹¹ that the new post-Soviet Russian films on the Great Patriotic War prefer depicting the "Good War" from the classic Soviet traditions because the post-Soviet audience has nostalgia for a simple demarcation line between "us" and the "enemy", and this feeling is similar to the love of American viewers for the American gangster or noir cinema of the 1940–1960s. It seems that this fact is of an even more complicated character because many commentators on Russian web forums express the opinion that Soviet culture has created many cinematic masterpieces that cannot be surpassed by contemporary directors in terms of dramatic expression, talent of actors, and aesthetic perfection. This might be compared with the concept of "retrotopia" from Zygmunt Bauman¹² whereby people tend to idealize the past more than a better future (because the future is always unpredictable). Thus, a large part of the post-Soviet audience loves the Soviet cinema for its "atmosphere" and for the authenticity of the films regarding these bygone eras.

Russian filmmakers do not dispute the nostalgia of some viewers for the Soviet classics, and they approach Soviet cinema as postmodernists; they use the Soviet plots or cinema aesthetics of the 1950s–1980s but rethink them in the context of new knowledge and new challenges of the time. This means that speaking about the events of the Great Patriotic War in the new Russian cinema has included themes that it would have been impossible to speak about in the Soviet past, including the Gulag, Stalin's repressions, famine in Ukraine, anti-Semitism and the Holocaust, nationalists and Nazi collaborators in Ukraine and the Baltic states, the cruelty of the NKVD against its own agents, and using people against their will in espionage games. On the one hand, such a multifaceted image of Soviet history makes it possible to more clearly ascertain the complex era in which Soviet spies and counter-intelligence agents had to operate. On the other hand, such an approach places the trauma of war in the space of numerous and competing traumas of the past. While Soviet public memory considered the Great Patriotic War to be the main trauma of history, post-Soviet society prefers to depict the

plurality of the traumatic experiences in Soviet society.

How does this multiplicity of traumas work in the contemporary spy films? Since the 2000s, Russian film studios have created dozens of spy films and TV series devoted to the period of the Great Patriotic War. I will focus on several that are the most representative and popular, in my opinion. In particular is the film *In August of 1944* (director M. Ptashuk, 2001), which depicts a counter-espionage operation in Western Belarus conducted by “SMERSH” (which was an acronym for “Death to Spies!” and was the name of the super-secret Soviet counter-espionage department (1943–1946) that had wide authority to conduct its operations). The film was shot in a realistic “black-and-white” style that harkened back to the Soviet war epic cinema of the 1960s–1970s and depicted very tired but highly qualified officers who used the smallest clues in the forest or in cities to identify the dangerous undercover German diversionists and spies. The sensation of the film was that it was the first depiction of the hard and exhausting work of SMERSH agents on screen. The historical background in which the SMERSH agents operated was presented in that film, namely that members of all Soviet armed service branches did not like and were afraid of SMERSH agents because they knew of their broad authorities; the command pressured the agents and did not trust them; the agents were forced to interact with the Belarusian and Polish population, many of whom supported the local nationalists and hated the Soviet power; and the agents risked their lives and their careers at every moment because if they did not produce the desirable results quickly enough they could be repressed as well. The trauma of the war in the film was shown through images that were absent in Soviet cinema – the post-war distrust of each other and denunciations in the liberated villages and cities, poverty, fear, crippled locals who survived the Nazi occupation (a one-armed child and an invalid), and the German collaborators who hid in the woods and kept the natives at bay. It is important to note that Soviet cinema did not create a tradition of depicting the everyday life, survival, and conflicts of Soviet people in the Nazi occupied and Soviet-liberated territories, but this film devoted a lot of time to portraying the everyday life and conflicts of locals in the recently liberated lands. The bitter sides of the Soviet war reality were not idealized in the film, but positive feelings were generated by the fact that the agents were depicted as honest professionals who performed their dirty and hard work as selfless servants who understood that their work would end the war faster and save countless lives.

The TV series *The Apostle* (Y. Moroz, N. Lebedev, G. Sidorov, 2008) has a much darker mood and a more naturalistic depiction of the struggle of Soviet intelligence against the German sabotage school and its head. The series developed several discourses that were not previously represented in Soviet spy films – including the issue of “dependent” people who were used by intelligence agencies and who were forced to be involved in the “spy games”, the wide national and social panorama of Soviet society and anti-Soviet moods as a result of the Stalinist repressions and national ambitions, the sexual harassment and women’s vulnerability during the war, the immorality and even sadistic methods of



The post-Soviet TV series “Apostle”, 2008, actor Evgeniy Mironov as the double agent.



The post-Soviet TV series “Hetaeras of Major Sokolov”, 2014, actor Andrei Panin in the main role.

both the German and Soviet secret police, the severity of the NKVD against own citizens and even its own agents, the suffering of ordinary people from the Stalinist and Nazi regimes, and the impossibility to resist against totalitarian power. A very new theme in film was the reference to the Polish army of general Anders and to the Holocaust, and one of the episodes presented a discourse of the Jews being used as a test for humanity. One of the hidden messages of the series was that becoming a spy requires one to develop cynicism and distrust towards everybody, to be ruthless toward oneself, and to be emotionally cold and pragmatic. Such emotions were absent in Soviet spy films, which were more romantic and idealistic in depicting Soviet agents and their jobs. The trauma of war in the series includes the brutality of not only Germans, but also of the Soviet regime, which was a novelty for Russian cinema. Knowledge of the pre-war Stalinist repressions was widespread in post-Soviet society, but it was hardly accepted in Russian public memory. Another specificity was that the new Russian spy cinema split the image of “hostility”, which was moving from the “Germans” as the “main enemy” of the Soviets during the war to the images of “inner hostility” – the NKVD police and their envoys. The defenselessness of the agent symbolizes the vulnerability of any person in the face of a state machine. The trauma of war was intertwined with the trauma of system pressure in that series.

Another indicative work in this genre is the TV series *Hetaeras of Major Sokolov* (B. Khudojazarov, 2014), which is devoted to the fates of the women in the intelligence and counter-intelligence services. The theme of female agents at the center of the plot was new for post-Soviet cinema – typically women were depicted in Soviet spy films as victims, helpers of Soviet agents, or as the male protagonist’s lover. The plot of the TV series developed around training young girls as saboteurs who could, if the order came, kill the enemy with no compunctions or lure the enemy to bed or endure any torture if the mission failed. An experienced intelligence officer selects the girls for this school

according to certain requirements – not just because they are beautiful and hardy, but also because they have skills in shooting or operating radios, patriotism, and *some vulnerability* in their personal past. The latter criterion symbolically demonstrates the categories of Soviet citizens who were most vulnerable in the pre-war period and who could be used by the NKVD – one of the girls was an orphan, the second was Jewish with experience of anti-Semitism, the third was Ukrainian who had survived the famine, the fourth was from a repressed family of pre-Revolution aristocrats, and the fifth was a former thief and prostitute who was ready to carry out any orders under the threat of separation from her young daughter. The series shows the dark side of the agent's life, which destroys the female soul – all of the girls are young, romantic, and dream of love and motherhood, but according to the needs of the war the girls are taught to kill, to lie, to manipulate, and to remain loyal to the state and their supervisor in any situation. The series presents the very dramatic and cynical requirements of the espionage job, which requires the selfless service of the spy.

Of course, if the films above were devoted to narrating only about the national or social trauma, they would not be spy detectives. In reality, the analyzed films and TV series have issues of “trauma” only as a “hidden” discourse, but they have all the properties needed for a high-quality spy film at the external level, including dynamic adventure and intrigue, unexpected plot twists with double and triple spies and disguises, fatal and romantic love, gunfights, chases, mutual suspicions, and a heart-breaking epilogue. Post-Soviet cinema makes allusions to Soviet cinema in the creation of the cinematic “atmosphere” of that time, the atmosphere of public joyfulness, poetic optimism, and romantic energy, which were authentic for the pre-war Soviet cinema moods, but were artificially reproduced as the background for the spy plots in some Russian films after the 2000s.

Conclusions

To sum up, we can see that Soviet spy films presented the Soviet agents as the most worthy representatives of the Soviet people and the Soviet intelligence corps, but the post-Soviet Russian spy films pictured various images of the Soviet agents who were patriots of their homeland and victims of the state at the same time. The heterogeneous and conflicting identities of the spies in the new Russian cinema reflect contemporary knowledge about the Stalinist crimes, the Holocaust and anti-Semitism, the brutality of the NKVD, and many other topics that were not welcome in Soviet spy movies. I believe that picturing these traumatic issues in contemporary Russian spy cinema symbolizes the liberalization of the post-Soviet memory. The Soviet people who have been deprived of the opportunity to articulate their experience of trauma in the public Soviet memory (such as former prisoners of war, repressed people, and Holocaust survivors) find they can do so through the spy genre.

Post-Soviet cinema demonstrates the polyphony of the reality of war, which is not limited to the confrontation between the Germans and the Soviets, but includes the conflicts between the different interests and backgrounds of people living in Soviet ter-

ritories and the multiplicity of traumas that originated from the Russian Civil War and Stalinist crimes. Soviet spy films accentuated the opposition of the Soviet agents and the German intelligence or the Gestapo, but paid little attention to the difficulties of ordinary Soviets during the German occupation and those who took extreme risks helping the Soviet people behind German lines. The new Russian spy films are more tragic, and the figure of the spy in post-Soviet cinema is embodied in metaphorical form in the contradictions that existed in Soviet society. In reality, the image of the secret agent in a hostile environment can be understood as a metaphor for the vulnerability of any person during war or in the face of the state machine. In analyzing the evolution of memory about the war in post-Soviet spy cinema, one can see that the concept of “collective” trauma was diverging, and the films have tried to articulate the “competing” traumas of the people who had different national and social experiences or who were in opposition to the Soviet authorities and who have remained “invisible” in Soviet cinema. However, even though contemporary Russian cinema articulates the multiplicity of pre-war Soviet traumas, it still accents the Great Patriotic War as the event that motivated different groups of Soviet people to unify and save their homeland despite their personal and political differences. ✕

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Introduction.

The Baltic Sea Region Archipelagos and Islands: Conditions and challenges

Today, the Baltic Sea is an internal sea in the European Union characterized by diverse geographies of its coastal areas, islands, and many archipelagos, located near the Finnish West coast and the Swedish East coast. Historically, the Baltic Sea has played an important role in the development of shipping and trade between East and West, South and North of the region. The islands and archipelagos of the Baltic Sea region (hereafter called BSR) have at times offered a safe harbor for ships, but also a space whereby people, goods, skills, knowledge, cultures, religions and political interests have met. In addition to maritime transports and trade some of the traditional economic activities in the BSR islands and archipelagos were agriculture and fishing. As the countries and societies around the BSR have been transformed by industrialization and modernization, the foundations for local livelihoods and businesses have changed. During the 20th century, pollution and eutrophication have become major factors changing ecosystems and livelihoods in the region. Today, the number of fishermen and farmers left

in the BSR have become decimated and tourism has become one of the key economic activities.

THIS SPECIAL ISSUE deals with a number of questions related to the livelihoods of people, economic conditions, challenges and opportunities for SME's located on the archipelagos and islands of the BSR. While some local conditions, problems, and challenges are shared by all rural, remote, and peripheral areas, the BRS archipelagos and islands have their own unique characteristics.

Archipelagos and island studies

Most of the studies on archipelagos and islands highlight their unique geographical features such as location and landscape. A recurring theme in these studies is how various geographical features, economic and social conditions separately or in combination create challenges for the population and stimulate the search for creative solutions for such challenges. The debates often highlight the effects of a limited size of the local market for goods and services, limited amounts of natural resources and a

narrow resource base, costly exports and imports (as transportation costs are higher to and from islands), economic vulnerability to the fluctuations of the world market prices, higher risks of natural disasters, and small labor pools with limited availability of skilled labor or highly educated specialists. Thus, for islanders, emigration often becomes a solution for the mentioned challenges contributing to the existing economic problems.¹ Although there is a growing body of literature on islands, our knowledge about archipelagos, especially on varying conditions and issues concerning a conglomerate of islands – that can seem to be quite similar at a first glance but that in practice can be very different – is still quite limited.

MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH the BSR as a region is frequently highlighted in the academic discussion in connection with such topics as geopolitics and security, governance, maritime questions, environmental challenges, economy and growth, territorial and social cohesion, and much more, the archipelagos and islands of the BSR have seldom been in the focus of researchers' attention.

The BSR and the European Union

There is a common understanding, at least at the European level, that the BSR is one of the most dynamic regions in Europe.² Especially its maritime economy consisting of offshore energy production, (cruise) tourism and aquaculture are by the European Union labelled as “a role model” for the entire union.³ Nevertheless, this bright picture is not always positive. Concerns have been raised about various economic challenges faced by inhabitants and business owners in the BSR. Some of these concerns are depopulation, seasonality of economic activities, lack of local opportunities for higher education, deficient (transport) infrastructure and risks for local economies due to the vulnerable status of the Baltic Sea.⁴ Overall, the archipelagos and most of the islands in the BSR are considered to be lagging regions.⁵ The development of ICT solutions is considered to be one of the most important opportunities for archipelagos and islands in the BSR,⁶ but finding people with the right skills who can and want to work on the archipelagos and islands has become an obstacle for local businesses.⁷

UNDOUBTEDLY, MOST of the population in the European Union live in urbanized areas, and only a fraction of the BSR 80 million inhabitants⁸ live on the islands and archipelagos. Consequently, a lion's share of the regional development initiatives and policies outlined and implemented by the European Union concerning rural and pe-

ripheral areas have an urban perspective, with results being in favor of urban areas⁹ and most of the conclusions reached by decision makers are based on urban phenomena and urban based businesses in the countries around the BSR.

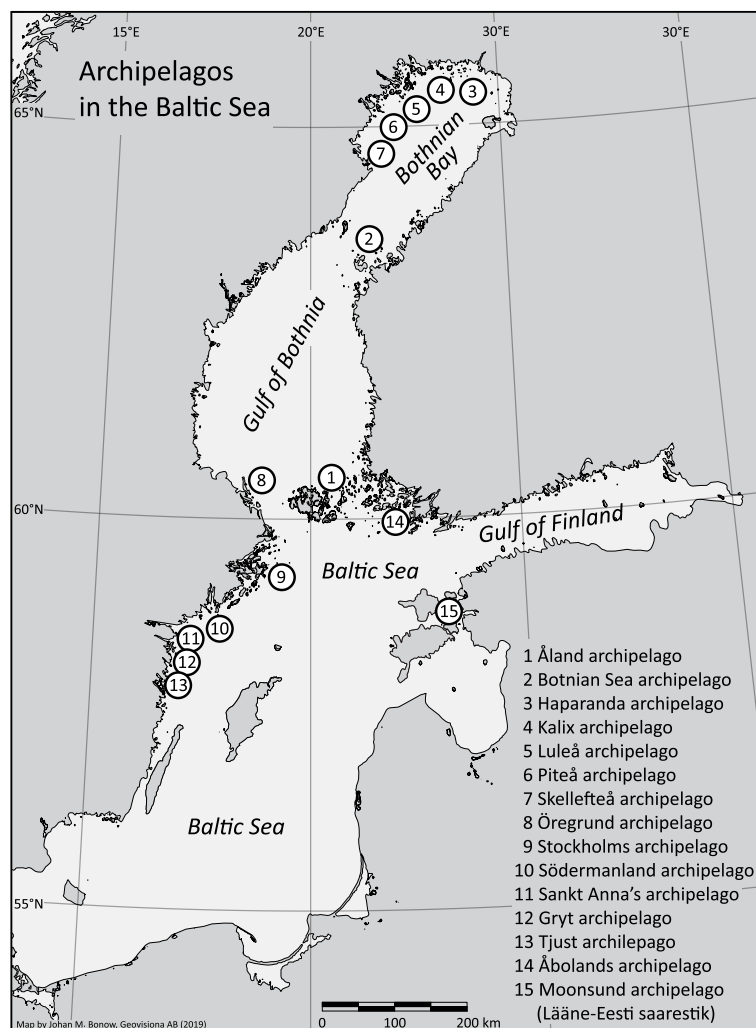
Some of the prioritized areas in the development policy for the BSR are energy production and transportation of energy, smoother solutions for infrastructure, economic integration, tourism (by strengthening the macro region, i.e. main lands and cities), and a number of environmental concerns including limiting the use of hazardous substances and promoting the bio economy,¹⁰ to which the blue economy is expected to make a considerable contribution with production of energy (for

example wind mill parks), production of food (wild and cultivated fish) and recreational services for city dwellers.¹¹ But the perspective of from below, of the inhabitants and business owners in archipelagos and islands have to a large extent been left out in the decision processes. This will be further discussed in this issue in the articles of Tunón et al. (page 40) as well as Rytönen et al. (page 74).

Institutional aspects and governance

Formal and informal institutions as well as governance models and their qualities are essential to promote or curb socio-environmental and economic development. The BSR is highly institutionalized through the presence of a large number of inter-governmental, transnational, national and local authorities and their legislations and practices, as well as through the presence of a large number of non-governmental organizations. The number of laws, agreements, development agendas with a wide range of purposes lead to institutional ambiguity, not only in the questions concerning the common “marine” or environmental issues.¹²

Institutional ambiguity is aggravated by the lack of shared definition of what an archipelago is in the official documents of the European Union. Rural, remote, lagging and peripheral regions in the EU are most often defined as “predominantly rural and low-income regions” and are described in relation to income level, industrial structure, demographic characteristics, distance to urban centers, infra-



structure and educational level. But the remoteness and peripherality of archipelagos and islands is worsened by their geographical features¹³ while income levels may or may not be low.¹⁴ Thus peripherality in an archipelago or an island might sometimes be different to how peripherality is normally defined in other contexts. Moreover, as these challenges are not included in public definitions of archipelagos and islands (with the exception of large islands), policies promoting rural development are likely to be inefficient for addressing challenges in archipelagos and islands.

Innovations and economic growth

In spite of all challenges there are a number of success stories in the archipelagos and islands of the BSR. Some examples are:

- Increased socio-environmental and economic sustainability in fisheries and fish elaboration in the elaboration of vendace, *Coregonus albula* where in contrast to before the entire fish is utilized instead of just the caviar and creation of value added by combining fisheries, food elaboration and tourism
- Local development by developing local culinary practices and products in the island of Bornholm
- Development of new tourism seasons and business models in Utö (Stockholm Archipelago).

There are of course many other examples. But all success stories show that it is possible to innovate and promote local economic development. Innovations, entrepreneurship and economic growth at local level are seen as key features to promote social cohesion and welfare in the BSR.¹⁵

A common denominator of success seems to be collective action from below, institutional settings that create spaces for growth and development oriented local authorities. Analyzing these examples in order to generalize and come up with place-specific development policies is a challenging task for researchers and policy-makers.

Multiple geographies and peripherality

A growing research area that recently gained new momentum is concerned with multiple geographies of development, polarization, and peripheralization at various levels. This discussion raises further questions connected to the consequences of economic and socio-spatial integration in the European Union, as well as its limitations – an issue that is relevant for understanding how to promote integration, but ultimately how to address fundamental issues of the political legitimacy and long-term future of the European Union.

The main perspective in this discussion seems to be geographic,¹⁶ but departing from the complexity and multifaceted dimensions in this topic, it is possible to conclude that such a discussion will deepen and benefit from input from various disciplines. In this case, island studies, entrepreneurship, environmental and natural resource governance at local level, history (in its widest sense) and peripherality are all perspectives that can contribute a better understanding of the causes and outcomes of peripherality. We also believe that focusing attention on archipelagos and islands can bring new dimensions into this discussion, not because of the geographical isolation of archipelagos and islands, but because they are part of and connected with their local, regional, national and global contexts.

It is our hope that this special issue will inspire to more studies in this direction. ✕

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Local communities in the archipelagoes are often dependant on many different local resources.

PHOTO: ROLAND STENMAN

Continued use of ecosystems:

Challenges for fishing and farming communities

by **Håkan Tunón**
Marie Kvarnström
Joakim Boström and
Anna-Karin Utbult Almkvist

Most of the Swedish east coast consists of archipelagoes with a vast number of islands, islets, and skerries facing the Baltic Sea (the Baltic Sea proper and the Gulf of Bothnia, including the Bothnian Bay). The first hunter-gatherer inhabitants appeared already at the end of the last Ice Age, between 12,000 and 9,000 years ago, along the border of the melting glacial ice, and the Baltic Sea archipelagoes have been populated ever since. Hunting, gathering, and fishing were complemented with agricultural activities in the gradual emergence of farmers and farming from the south beginning some 6,000 years ago.¹ Life in the archipelagoes has for millennia been dependent on a diversity of activities where harvesting of local biodiversity has remained the base together with transportation of people, animals, and goods and other activities. Local biological resources have constituted the base of the economy, and life has consequently been dictated by the periodic shifts in the occurrence of different species. For the people in the archipelagoes, life changes were generally slow over the centuries until the mid-20th century when things started to happen much faster with major social and economic changes as well as changes in land use patterns.²

In parallel with the recent societal changes, there is also an ongoing transformation of the landscape due to climate change and, in the north, post-glacial isostatic rebound, i.e. land rising from the last Ice Age. As the decades pass, the shallow bay will turn into a coastal meadow and eventually a new forest. This rebound is today about 10 mm/year in the northern parts of the Baltic Sea and around 1 mm/year in the most southern parts.³ Particularly in the Kalix Archipelago along the most northern coast of the Baltic Sea, these changes are very real for the local people.

During the past fifty years or so, the societal changes in the archipelagoes have included an increasing urbanization, and the number of permanent residents along the coast and in the archipelagoes has decreased. Fewer active farms and a growing number of summer houses for urban people is the current norm in many areas. Fewer active farms means fewer grazing animals and an increasing encroachment of woody plants, resulting in a changing flora and fauna and a lower biodiversity.⁴ Technical developments in the fishing industry over the last half-century have resulted in larger and stronger boats and more efficient fishing tools.⁵ Heavy industrial fishing has changed the balance between different fish species in the Baltic Sea, and it has also changed the relations between large-scale fishers and small scale (often part time) fishers in the archipelagoes. National and

EU legislation has favored industrial-scale fishing, making it difficult for small-scale fishers to continue their practices.⁶

Over the past century, toxins have heavily affected the populations of many fish species as well as top predators, e.g. seals and white-tailed eagles. The present trend shows decreasing levels of toxins in the Baltic Sea, and they are today below EU threshold values with a few exceptions.⁷ However, there is an ongoing problem with increasing concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorous in the sea water and related blooming of blue-green bacteria.⁸ During recent years, seal, cormorant, and white-tailed eagle populations have recovered and grown considerably, and in particular seals and cormorants are today a major problem for the local fishers.⁹

The purpose of this paper is to highlight some perspectives on local human-nature relations and future challenges for local residents along the Baltic Sea coast who still live an essentially traditional lifestyle.

Methods and sources

In this essay we have chosen to abandon the academic tradition of describing the local community and its reality from a purely academic perspective, and instead we have worked across knowledge traditions. Our methodology has therefore been a direct co-production of knowledge and the inclusion of the life experiences of the people directly involved in the reality being studied. Consequently, the writing of the essay has been based on the observations of Marie Kvarnström and Håkan Tunón as researchers, together with observations from the local land and sea users Anna-Karin Utbult Almkvist (a farmer in the Sankt Anna Archipelago) and Joakim Boström (a fisherman in the Kalix Archipelago). Hence, the process has been both *emic* and *etic* (*emic* is the perspective of the community, while *etic* is the perspective of the researcher) with a strong focus on transdisciplinary collaboration in order to achieve a richer picture. We have in this process tried to create an objective text that at the same time highlights the concerns of some of the practitioners living in the archipelago.

Our study thus comprises both academic knowledge production and local knowledge production combined in a similar manner as the procedures and work of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).¹⁰

Focus areas: In this study we have mainly focused on and compared two different archipelagoes: the Sankt Anna Archipelago in the Southern Baltic Sea (approx. 58°20' N 16°50' E) and the Kalix Archipelago.

abstract

Although there have been great changes in the lives and livelihoods of people in the Baltic Sea archipelago during the last century, the lives of local inhabitants are still strongly linked to the local nature, culture, and history. Customary use of local ecosystems provides resources for the household, but it is also an important carrier of local identity, culture, and way of life. Fishing, hunting, and harvesting of berries, mushrooms, etc., function as cultural and intergenerational glue for the local community context even today. This paper reflects upon the cultural and social importance of the small scale and informal economy in the Swedish Baltic Sea archipelago for sustainably living local communities, some of the present challenges to its continuation, and the potentials for positive change. It is based on participatory research on customary use of biodiversity and local and traditional knowledge in the Kalix Archipelago in the northern Bothnian Bay and in the Sankt Anna Archipelago in the Baltic Sea proper.

KEY WORDS: local community, customary use, bio-cultural heritage, local and traditional knowledge, Sankt Anna Archipelago, Kalix Archipelago.



A map showing the locations of local community informants in the process of the Nordic project Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Nordic Coastal Ecosystems – An IPBES-like assessment (2015–2018). 1 = The Sankt Anna Archipelago. 2 = The Kalix Archipelago.

go in the northern part of Bothnian Bay (approx. 65°44' N 23°6' E). Data were also collected from informants in other parts of the Baltic Sea (see map above).

The main data collection for this paper took place within two different research contexts – NAPTEK (Swedish National Programme on Local and Traditional Knowledge related to Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity, a governmental initiative within the Swedish implementation of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 2006–2012) and the Nordic project Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Nordic Coastal Ecosystems – an IPBES-like assessment (2015–2018).¹¹ The latter was mainly financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. Within these two contexts, multiple interviews and participatory workshops have been performed, and there has been close communication between the participants in both projects.¹² Furthermore, in the Kalix Archipelago some 40 local community members are involved in a long-term local ecomapping initiative by the community-based organization Kustringen regarding land use and fishing.¹³

The study areas

Sankt Anna Archipelago is situated east of the town of

Söderköping: The name is taken from the patron saint of sailors – Saint Anne – due to the difficulties in navigating this shallow archipelago. The parish was formed in 1521, and the first settlements are probably from a time when they were mainly used for seasonal fishing. The number of inhabitants increased until the late 19th century when the land was redistributed, farms became scattered, and some families moved to other islands. Today, the number of permanent residents is around 65 people. The area is forested and fertile in the inner archipelago and has countless bare islets and skerries in the outer parts. The waters are shallow and rich due to the large amount of light reaching the sea floor. Most of the archipelago is still owned and used by permanent residents. The area is today set to become a Baltic Sea Protected Area named Helcom Marine Protected Area Missjö-Sankt Anna, which has been developed in cooperation between the county administrative board and the land owners. The farms in the archipelago are adapted to the available resources, and there is arable land in the inner parts and areas for grazing, hunting, fishing, and previously egg harvesting in the outer parts of the archipelago. The land rights are connected both to land and water, and for the farms in the outer part fishing has been the most important activity. This gave food for the people and the surplus could be sold. Previously all farms had fields and animals, mainly sheep and cattle, but when the fishing became more important or when other incomes were made available, many people quit farming. However, there are still plenty of grazing animals in the archipelago, but there are fewer farmers, with larger numbers of animals. Fewer farms are now situated in the archipelago, but animals are transported temporarily from the mainland for shorter periods. This, and the increasing numbers of tourists who disturb the animals, constitute a threat to the farmers who reside in the archipelago.

Kalix Archipelago: The archipelago outside the mouth of the Kalix river is low-lying land that has only relatively recently risen from the water. In the mid-16th century, Kalix municipality consisted of 27 villages and around 140 farms. Hunting, fishing, harvesting, and trade made the living fairly comfortable, and shipping, forestry, animal husbandry, and fishing were the most important sources for income. The villages along the Kalix River each had their own stretch of the river for fishing whitefish (*Coregonus lavaretus*) and salmon (*Salmo salar*), and in the archipelago the villages shared fishing rights in a similar way. The coastal villages caught whitefish, salmon, vendace (*Coregonus albula*), and herring (*Clupea harengus*). Seal hunting on the winter ice continued until the early 1970s. Many products, like salted fish, tar, and seal blubber, were exported to the more southerly parts of the country. In the 17th and 18th centuries, mining started in the area, and from the mid-19th century forestry and sawmills became more important. During the past century, the number of farms has decreased while the remaining ones have grown. There has been a similar development when it comes to fishing. Even if many people fish for their own household, the number



PHOTO: AMIOCHROSS/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



PHOTO: ROLAND NYMAN



PHOTO: HÅKAN TUNÖN

Small-scale fishing is important in the Kalix Archipelago. Baltic herring has been highly valued for many centuries. The “caviar of Kalix” — Kalix löjrom (vendace roe) — is a product of Protected Designation of Origin in the EU and a product of great importance to the area.

of commercial fishers has gone down. Fewer people are getting their incomes from fishing, and municipal activities, e.g. healthcare and education, are now the most important source of income. Still, the use of the landscape for the household and for recreation remains of vital importance, i.e. fishing, hunting, and harvesting of berries and mushrooms. Many inhabitants are self-sufficient when it comes to meat, fish, berries, and mushrooms, and this knowledge is transferred to new generations. Furthermore, from 2010 the “caviar of Kalix” — Kalix löjrom (vendace roe) — has been a product of Protected Designation of Origin¹⁴ in the EU and a product of great importance to the area.

The local perspective on life in the archipelagos

Although there have been major changes in the lives and livelihoods of local people in the Baltic Sea archipelagos during the last century, the lives of most local inhabitants are still very strongly linked to the local nature, culture, and history, and many different resources are still commonly harvested.¹⁵ Furthermore, the harvest of biological resources is often still regarded as an important part of the local cultural identity. For instance, household fishing is not only a way to get food on the table — it is also a way of life and a socially important way for people from different generations to interact and a way to pass on local knowledge to future generations.¹⁶ It is perceived as an inalienable way of life.¹⁷ Even if the people in the local coastal communities could physically survive without the fish, the social and cultural loss would be very high for many people. The surplus of the catch can be given away to relatives, friends, and neighbors, and this strengthens the social

bonds in the community. Extensive household fishing could be a valuable source of income for all ages if the regulations were more forgiving, but changes in regulations have gradually deprived the land and water owners of economic resources. The use of local biological resources and the transfer of related local knowledge from generation to generation are important social aspects of living in the archipelago. The local area is not just a geographical site for one’s livelihood, and here one often talks in terms of a deep sense of place or belonging to the land. The biological, cultural, and societal aspects thus make the place special and unique to the local people.¹⁸

When living for several generations in a certain area, the local community develops a vast body of knowledge regarding the local geography, biodiversity, local climate variations, and different types of customary use of biological resources. The transfer of such local and traditional knowledge from generation to generation is still an important social aspect of living in the archipelago, both as a cultural heritage and for the expertise needed for everyday life when dependent on local biological resources.¹⁹

Biocultural heritage is a concept that has evolved over the last decades and is used to describe the interactions between local culture and biodiversity as well as the results of these interactions. Traditional land use shapes the landscape and the composition of

“TRADITIONAL LAND USE SHAPES THE LANDSCAPE AND THE COMPOSITION OF SPECIES IN THE AREA, CREATING A BIO-CULTURAL LANDSCAPE.”

species in the area, creating a bio-cultural landscape. For instance, grazing on islands creates an open landscape with grass and a rich diversity of herbs, insects, and birds rather than dense bushes of only a few species. When grazing, animals are moved between the islands, hence they are also important for seed dispersal.²⁰ Previously, local people have made different efforts in



PHOTO: LET IDEAS COMPEAT

Kayaks make it easy to visit bays and lagoons with shallow waters.



PHOTO: ANNA-KARIN UTBULT ALMKVIST

Sheep and cattle still graze on some of the islands of the archipelago.

order to favor the desired species and increase the possibility for future harvesting. One example is nesting boxes for seabirds like goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*) and goosander (*Mergus* sp.) that used to be put up for egg harvesting, an effort that also benefited the breeding success of these species. The landscape in the archipelago of today is filled with traces of the historical use of the landscape, such as clearance cairns, stone walls, old house foundations, remnants of jetties, etc.²¹ These traces are remnants of activities with a vital function for life in the archipelago, and the landscape should be seen as a cultural landscape that has been shaped and maintained by traditional land use.²²

Present challenges

The rapid changes during the last half century have created multiple strains on the traditional way of life. There are several conflicting interests in the Baltic Sea archipelago area involving different constellations of actors, creating what appears to be a wide variety of conflict areas viz-à-viz the local community and the connected way of life.²³ Below we discuss some of the important challenges to the continuation of traditional lifestyles in the archipelago.

Tourism vs. local communities: Tourism is often highlighted as a way to contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural values as well as a way to bring increased income to the local community. However, in the archipelago the benefits from tourism seldom reach the local communities, while traditional culture and resource use are suffering from some of tourism's negative effects.²⁴ Tourism in the archipelago mainly focuses on boating, swimming, hiking, and sport fishing. These uses are often considered to be fairly non-problematic, but they come with a host of problems. The archipelago has recently been made more readily accessible, for instance with kayaks that make it easy to visit bays and lagoons with shallow waters, i.e. the biodiversity-rich nurseries for many species. The use of GPS on larger boats makes it easier for such vessels to navigate in shallow waters. Visitors, sometimes with loose dogs, on the islands during the summer often disturb grazing animals and wildlife such as nest-

ing birds. Jet-skis move loudly about at high speed, disturbing both animals and people. Commercial sport fishing tours might affect the local catch, and cases of disturbances in spawning areas have been discussed. Furthermore, sport fishing tackle sometimes becomes entangled in nets used for smallscale household or commercial fishing.²⁵ More local involvement in ecosystem management might benefit local biodiversity. One example in the Sankt Anna Archipelago is the desire of many residents to protect perch and pike from fishing in the spring, which the authorities have not approved so far. Each spring large sport fishing competitions are held in the archipelago with boats fishing in most places. The local residents see this as a disturbance of spawning fish and breeding birds, which they would like to curb. Land owners cannot even protect their own waters and adjoining land areas, and they find little space for dialogue with the authorities.

In Sweden and in the EU there are strong lobby groups favoring industrial fishing and sport fishing over household fishing, and recent changes in legislations and other regulations have made household fishing more difficult (see further below).²⁶

Grazing of animals from the mainland farms vs. from resident farms: Many islands in the Sankt Anna Archipelago are still grazed, which helps maintain their biodiversity when the grazing is undertaken with knowledge of the local ecosystems and traditional land use.²⁷ The farmers move the animals from island to island during the grazing period, transporting them by boat. Previously, the grazing was by resident farmers' animals, but in the last few years an increasing number of animal farms on the mainland have brought their animals to Sankt Anna Archipelago islands for grazing during a limited period in the summer because they have discovered the opportunity to seek both environmental compensation and transportation support for grazing on the islands. They thus get the benefits from grazing in the archipelago but without the extra costs and work of living year-round on an island. In 2017 the funds for transportation support were used up early, and some island farmers had to manage without. This development might mean the end of some of the

year-round animal husbandry in the archipelago, which is important for maintenance of island biodiversity since it includes the opportunity to observe the ecosystems and meadows on the islands year-round and allows the flexibility to choose early or late grazing or to let some areas rest as needed.

Industrial fishing vs. local fishing: Coastal fishing in the Baltic Sea, including the Bothnian Bay, has undergone great changes from the 1950s to today. In the Bothnian archipelago there were no specialized commercial fishers before the Second World War – this is a very recent development. Fishing was earlier always one of several legs that underpinned the livelihoods and economies of coastal families.²⁸ One often had a small farm that was complemented with small-scale forestry, hunting, fishing, day labor, and seasonal employment. These small-scale, coastal fishers were the ones who introduced trawling for vendace in the Bothnian Bay, which is of fundamental importance in the area today. However, nowadays the vendace fishing has largely been taken over by a few commercial fishers. Similar developments have taken place in the Sankt Anna Archipelago, where fishing used to be more important than farming. The farms consisted of strips of land in an east-west direction in order to create opportunities for all for different kinds of seasonal fishing in shallow as well as deeper water. Eel fishing was the backbone of the fishing during the last century according to older fishermen. However, since 2007 only a few registered fishers have been allowed to fish for eel due to the threatened conservation status of the species. Generally the fish stocks have gone down and there are annual variations as well as differences between different parts of the archipelago and local knowledge. Local knowledge is of utmost importance because such fluctuations are followed closely by the local people, especially in the inner parts of the archipelagoes, in order to safeguard fish populations for the future. There is no industrial fishing in the more shallow inner parts, and the specialized commercial fisher is a fairly recent result of modern society's drive for large-scale operations and economic profitability. Recent developments in fishing along the coasts of the Baltic Sea favor industrial-scale fishing further from the coast and with fewer and larger ships. It is therefore increasingly difficult for the small-scale coastal fishers to compete with the industrial fishing. The present legislation and the system with fishing quotas makes it almost impossible to establish a fishing enterprise or to maintain the heritage and traditions around fishing.²⁹ Previous generations of part-time fishers have had the possibility to sell surplus in order to develop their enterprise step by step, but today there are strict regulations with licenses for commercial fishers in order to be allowed to sell fish, with strict requirements on economic profitability and a boat with sufficient tonnage. Hence, there is little recruitment of new younger fishers. At present, an EU law prohibits fishers without a license from selling any surplus fish

“THE BENEFITS FROM TOURISM SELDOM REACH THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES, WHILE TRADITIONAL CULTURE AND RESOURCE USE ARE SUFFERING FROM SOME OF TOURISM'S NEGATIVE EFFECTS.”

from subsistence fishing in the sea.³⁰ A fishing legislation from 1993 made fishing with fishing rods in coastal waters free for everyone, even in private waters³¹, and at present there is a new suggested legislation under review that might result in the removal of the rights of household fishers to use nets and similar fishing gear. The purpose of this would be to safeguard the fish populations for industrial fishing and sport fishing and to increase the fiscal control of catches made³² even though household fishing in all of Sweden only constitutes a few percent of the total fish landed in Sweden.

Protection of species vs. local fishing: When the number of residents in the archipelago goes down, the number of people that perceive the area as “pristine” goes up. The biocultural heritage of historical land use is considered to be a “natural landscape” and the continuous land use, like farming and household fishing, which has shaped the landscape, is misunderstood as a potential threat to the “natural values” of the area. This can be compared to the ideas behind the formation of Sweden's first national parks, e.g. Ångsö in 1909, where the local farmer and his grazing animals, which had shaped and maintained the rich biodiversity, were considered a threat to the pristine leaf meadows that needed to be protected.³³ Meanwhile, the populations of different fish-eating species, especially the gray seals (*Halichoerus grypus*), ringed seals (*Pusa hispida*), and great cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), have increased rapidly over the last couple of decades and are now strongly competing with local small-scale fishing.³⁴ Because these species are on the list of threatened species at the EU level, they are subject to protec-

tive EU regulations resulting in conflicts between the protection of these species and human interests in the areas where they are more numerous. For instance, the seals in the Baltic Sea are today estimated to eat two to three times as many coastal fish as are caught in the fishery³⁵, and in the Gulf of Bothnia small-scale fishing in the archipelago has become extremely difficult in some areas, with seals appearing on the nets within minutes of the catch.³⁶ The seals might even threaten the future production of Kalix löngrömm (the vendace roe). It has also been highlighted that the present seal population might be on the verge of starvation due to its large size. Local people have observed a change in the seal's menu from previously mainly fatty fish, like Salmonides, to leaner fish like perch (*Perca fluviatilis*) with much lower amounts of energy per fish. This is considered a sign of starvation. Protective seal hunting in the vicinity of fishing equipment is legal but very difficult and often risky, and since 2010 there has been a ban on seal products on the EU market.³⁷ The ban can be seen as a disincentive to hunt because the byproducts from the hunt have lost most of their potential use, and the people from the local communities generally consider it disrespectful to the hunted animal to let the products go to waste. There is an exception in

the regulation for seal products “which result from hunts traditionally conducted by Inuit and other indigenous communities and which contribute to their subsistence” if the hunts “are part of the cultural heritage of the community and where the seal products are at least partly used, consumed or processed within the communities”. Seal hunting and the use of the catch used to be an important part of the diverse culture in local communities along the Swedish Baltic Sea coast prior to the population decline in the 1960s and 1970s. Knowledge on how to use different parts of the seal for food and other purposes is still present among some parts of the local community, but this will probably gradually disappear unless the EU ban is lifted.

Authorities vs. local communities: An often highlighted complaint from the local communities in Sweden is that the authorities do not really listen to the knowledge and perspectives of the local residents and communities and that there is no space for dialogue with the authorities.³⁸ In some cases the knowledge of the local communities is ignored or is even ridiculed, which creates a feeling of mutual disrespect and suspicion if a dialogue were to take place. This might give rise to decisions and regulations that have strong implications on factors that are seemingly unrelated to the initial focus of the regulation. For example, in order to protect the wild sea trout (*Salmo trutta*) populations in the region, a general ban was issued in 2006 regarding fishing in waters less than 3 m deep in the Bothnian Bay and Kvarken between April 1st and June 10th and between October 1st and December 31st. However, the local villages in Kalix have documented their catches during the seasons and shown that their bycatches of sea trout mostly are in outer parts of the archipelago and not in the shallow waters in the inner archipelago, meaning that fishing in the inner archipelago should pose no threat to the trout population. The ban has had a significant negative impact on the local culture and quality of life of the local communities, and fishing is now prohibited in large areas of the traditional fishing waters for a large part of the season. The traditional artisanal fishing practices for whitefish, perch, and pike (*Esox lucius*) during spring and autumn are now almost non-existent because the prohibition periods coincide with the main traditional fishing season. As mentioned above, there is also today a political suggestion for a general ban on household fishing with nets in favor of sport fishing and industrial fishing.³⁹ The local people expect that the effect of such a ban will be devastating to their way of life in the archipelago.⁴⁰

There is a problem with rapid changes in the ecosystems, and there is a risk that regulations regarding protection and management might be quickly outdated. For instance, the conflict between fishing and seals has been highlighted from the local communities for a long time, and both household and commercial fishers have wanted to establish a dialogue with the regional authorities regarding this. The fishers think that the processes

that lead to decisions about governance are too slow and not concrete enough, and local experiences of the seal problems are that they have worsened dramatically in just the past couple of years.

Pollution and climate change – large-scale impacts from non-

local sources: For many decades, the Baltic Sea has been affected by nutrient discharges and hazardous substances. In the past century, poisoning from heavy metals, PCB, DDT, dioxins, and other chemicals along with more efficient fishing, heavily affected the populations of many fish species as well as top predators. In the late 20th century, toxin levels in some of the fish from the Baltic Sea were so high that they were banned on the EU market. The present trend shows decreasing levels of toxins in the Baltic Sea, and they are today below EU threshold values with a few exceptions.⁴¹ However, there is an ongoing problem with increasing concentrations of nitrogen and phosphorous in the sea water and related blooming of blue-green bacteria.⁴² Although improvements have been made in recent years, a lot of work remains before the marine ecosystems can be considered close to a natural state. Climate change is already affecting the waters of the Baltic Sea, and projected future changes include acidification, rising sea level, decreasing ice cover, and different precipitation patterns.⁴³ Climate change is expected to have a major

impact on marine ecosystems and fish populations in the Baltic Sea and the Bothnian Bay, with inter alia a decrease in cold water-favored fish species such as burbot (*Lota lota*), grayling (*Thymallus thymallus*), salmon, trout, vendace, whitefish, and herring.⁴⁴ One concern is also a potential 3- to 6-fold increase in methylmercury in the Bothnian Sea due to biogeochemical changes from climate change.⁴⁵ On land in the archipelagoes, the summer drought of 2018

showed how difficult a predicted hotter and drier climate might be for local farmers and other local residents. While the causes of climate change are caused on and need to be mitigated on a global scale, the impacts are felt at the local level. The urgency to curb the use of fossil fuels and arrest climate change is monumental, and much will depend on what decisions are made over the next few years.

Monetary and non-monetary ecosystem services: Companies and authorities often perceive short-term monetary values as one of the most important indicators in planning and governance of resources and the landscape. To some extent this is also true in local communities, but most often other non-monetary values are included in the calculation. With a good proportion of resources harvested from the sea and land, the household income might be sufficient and sustainable at a much lower level than if it were to have to rely solely on monetary sources. Short-term profits often jeopardize the long-term sustainability of the use of a resource, but local communities that are dependent on

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Like a lighthouse, “indigenous and local knowledge” should guide us in our quest for sustainability, according to IPBES. The lighthouse at Lutsjärsgrund in the Kalix Archipelago.

PHOTO: JOAKIM BOSTRÖM

local resources have an incentive not to overuse such resources, and this is often stressed by local residents. Often in these contexts the issue of the tragedy of the commons is brought up, but in both archipelagos studied here there is a fair bit of collective governance of the resources.

To the people in the archipelago, the sea and all the islands of the archipelago have provided livelihoods for centuries through a variety of resources. In every farm or village there are still traces of the close connection to local resources. All year long the archipelago is accessible by boats, skis, or snowmobiles, and people go there for recreation as well as for the resources that can be found there. Fishing areas have been inherited for generations, and the emotional loss through, for instance, the 3 m fishing ban that now makes fishing illegal in many places is tremendous. Either the people continue their cultural heritage and engage in illegal fishing or they simply abandon their traditions. The local people explain that there is a freedom and a sense of belonging in eating your own fish, game, or products harvested from the land. The very reason why the local people live in the archipelago has in our interviews been stated to be the closeness to the sea and its resources.⁴⁶ The way of life and the local culture is centered around the archipelago and the intergenerational learning on how to use and respect the resources of the area.

Needs for change and possibilities for the future

Because the local community members of the archipelagoes often have a close and intimate relationship with nature and spend most of the year in the area, the people have the possibility to follow changes in nature when it comes to fluctuations in populations, habitats, and climate. The local users of biological resources often notice anomalies very quickly. If these are to be detected through research studies or inventories made by the regional authorities, there is a time lag between the change and the relevant inventory or similar activity that can observe the change. Furthermore, a change can then only be detected if a baseline inventory has previously been carried out. For instance, test fishing in order to determine the size and compositions of local fish populations is sometimes performed only once a year or with several years' interval and only at a certain location, and inventories of seabirds are often done at irregular intervals and only seldom at a yearly interval. Internationally, the concept of

community-based monitoring has been used to describe monitoring projects that are planned and performed by the local communities. The permanent residents living in the archipelago spend most of the year in the area observing changes and often have long-term experiences of what might be perceived as some kind of baseline. They are often more likely to observe a change at an early stage than the regular inventories, and together they cover a far larger area of the coast.

Community-based monitoring systems can be used to get more detailed monitoring data from many different locations and might lead to closer communication between authorities and local communities. An interesting example is the PISUNA project. Since 1999 the Greenland government has been piloting a monitoring project of the existing natural resources along the west coast of Qaasuitsup municipality. The municipality has a total area of 660,000 km² and a low population density, and thus conventional biodiversity monitoring would demand huge resources in time, personnel, and money. Consequently, the local people have become directly involved, not only in data collection, but also in analysis and in making suggestions for resource management. Studies have shown that the statements from the hunters and fishers are well in accordance with the predictions of scientists based on conventional inventories.⁴⁷ However, there is still a way to go before PISUNA is systematically used to inform management decisions.⁴⁸ A parallel and increasingly appreciated concept among scientists is that of citizen science, where ordinary people contribute with data collection for the scientists who then do the analyses and make the interpretations. One difference between community-based monitoring and citizen science is that the initiative and design of the work in community-based monitoring comes from the local people rather than from the involved scientists.⁴⁹

According to the local community members, there is an urgent need for a dialogue with the authorities and a need of the authorities to take the experiences of the local people more seriously. From our previous work we have argued that there is a lack of arenas for dialogue between local users of biological resources and the authorities in order to safeguard a sustainable use and conservation of biodiversity.⁵⁰ We would also argue that there is a need for a transdisciplinary sharing of knowledge and experiences in order to make well-founded decisions. The IPBES was formed in 2012 to create a better basis for decisions, and it

represents the idea of co-production of knowledge through the meeting of different knowledge systems.⁵¹ Even if the intentions are good, the methods for the local communities to have their voices heard in the international and national academic and political arena remains to be solved. The IPBES also emphasizes the need to acknowledge the interaction between biodiversity, ecosystems, and human society as well as human wellbeing. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity argues for the importance of “full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities” at all levels of decision making regarding conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and states that local and traditional knowledge as well as customary use should be encouraged and respected. But what does “full and effective participation” mean and how do we interpret “respected” in the administrative work of conservation and the sustainable use of biodiversity?

Concluding reflections

It is possible to estimate the economic values of local biological resources and to value the more tangible ecosystem services, but the social, cultural, and spiritual ecosystem services are often inadequately dealt with in planning and decision making. How can we put a price on the love of our homeland? What is the price of the joy you feel when bringing your own food to the table? How much is it worth to be able to transfer the local knowledge and tales of your parents to your children or grandchildren? It is important to emphasize the value of the cultural dimensions of the use of natural resources in an area and to take them into account in the governance of landscapes and their resources. There is often a multitude of values in a particular use of a biological resource according to the local community, and the “resource” is seldom seen as just a commodity. The economic values are reasonably easy to calculate, but how do we deal with the social, cultural, aesthetic, and spiritual ecosystem services connected with the use? What kind of natural resource use gives us the optimum societal value? How do we achieve the sustainable society that so many are speaking about, and what space in that society should be given to local, small-scale users of ecosystems? As is so often the case, this seem to be a matter of a clash between two different world views. ❌

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Objects found in the water close to one of the shit-pits.

PHOTO: JOHAN HEGARDT

Shit-pits and the archaeology of a lost economy

by **Johan Hegardt**

“Those who possess a treasure will guard it carefully and seek to preserve it or improve it.”¹

It's the end of May 2018 and I am returning to Stockholm from my family's summer residence in the Stockholm archipelago. The property is from 1918 and I have spent my summers there since 1960, the same year that I was born. It was my maternal grandparents who bought the place after my English-born grandmother had inherited a sum of money. In those days the island had three farms, all more or less economically sustainable. Today there is only one left, and it will probably close down soon.

When waiting for the ferry, I talked with one of the inhabitants. When I asked her why she was not out on her jetty that much any more, she replied that there are too many sailing-yachts anchored close to it. She explains: “It's like saying ‘Here I am, and who are you?’ It's not that fun sunbathing when unknown people are watching you.” She also tells me that when

her father came down to their jetty to use his boat, two young kids in a small rubber-boat asked him when he was leaving because they wanted his place at the jetty. Their parents were encouraging them from their sailing-yacht. He made clear that this was his property, but they did not take any notice.

She told me that she is worried about the island and that too many people are moving around on it, with too much pressure on the fragile environment.

Her mother was born and grew up on the island, and her father is from a neighboring island. Their families are inhabitants of the archipelago, and have been a part of the old economy, but a new economy is forcing them to step back, and it's even taking their place, as shown in the example above.

They have a house on the island, where they live all year round, even in the dark winter months when the people from the new economy are absent. It's in the forest and not on the shore, but their jetty is and it's their property. According to the

law those that enter the jetty are trespassing, but what can he do – call the police?

This example is typical. Those who live in the archipelago and who were once a part of the old economy are now facing a new economy and they are pressing back. I will in this essay try to explain why.

This essay derives from a small project that is generously funded by *Helge Ax:son Johnsons Stiftelse*. My sources come from archives, interviews, excavations and inventories, and published material. References to published material have been narrowed down to as few as possible and represent a rather diverse field of texts, ranging from scientific publications to popular books. The archived material comes from *Stadsarkivet* (City Archive). Inventories, excavations, and interviews have been carried out on the island. I have decided not to mention the name of the island, nor the names of the people interviewed. Instead, the island will be called “Island”, and the interviewed individuals will be called interviewee 1, interviewee 2, and so on. Five interviews were conducted: one woman aged 93 when interviewed and four men in the age span between 65 and 98 when interviewed. I have also talked to people about the issues discussed in this essay.

A story takes shape

Since the early 20th century, the summer population and the resident population have populated the archipelago.² The majority of the summer population had and still have their permanent homes in Stockholm. The archipelago was first used in the late 19th century, but only islands close to Stockholm. Rich families erected huge villas in the style of national romantic architecture.³ The whole family, including servants, moved from the city to these fashionable buildings for the summer. This tradition, together with an equally old tradition of sailing in the archipelago, is an important myth in the new economy.

A summer population in the archipelago is of course not unique for Stockholm. A similar phenomenon can be found in Finland, and I assume also in other countries around the Baltic Sea.

As long as I can remember, I have been aware of small pieces of glass, ceramics, and metal fragments in the fields on the Island. A few years ago I wanted to know more, and I asked interviewee 1 what he knew. He told me that they used to transport feces and garbage for fertilizing from Stockholm to the Island. *Skitgropar* (shit-pits) that the farmers dug along the shore and close to the fields were filled. He did not have any experiences of the practice, but his father had told him that it ended during the 1920s, which I later found was correct.

That was not a sufficient explanation to dispel my curiosity. I contacted *Stadsarkivet*, *Stadsmuseet* (City Museum) and *Sjöhistoriska museet* (Maritime Museum) in Stockholm to find out what they knew. They were aware of the word *skitgropar*, but that was all. After some work, I came across archived material at *Stadsarkivet* and some literature at *Kungl. biblioteket* (Royal Library). An amazing story took shape, which apparently was almost forgotten, involving not only the archipelago, but the whole region surrounding Stockholm, and it all began in 1849.

Stockholm 1849

The old woman (interviewee 2) that I interviewed was the daughter of a farmer on the Island mentioned in the archived material, but she had no experience of the practice. Many of the older generation know where the pits are situated on the different islands. They told me stories that as kids they used to stroll behind the plow picking objects out of the field. Among the most fascinating objects found were doll-heads.⁴ Many informed me that they have them at home somewhere, but cannot remember exactly where. I have never seen one and am beginning to suspect that they don't want to show me them for various reasons, or as one person emphasized on a different occasion – “You're not supposed to know everything.” The archipelago has its *secrets*.

When I published a short text about *skitgropar* in the local paper, I was advised by the editor to contact an old man. It turned out that he was 97 and that as a young child he had taken part when his father used the material from a pit. When I told the story about the pits to a man from the summer population, he remembered that his father had passed a pit as a child when fetching milk at the farm and that it had been horrible, the whole pit was full of crawling things.

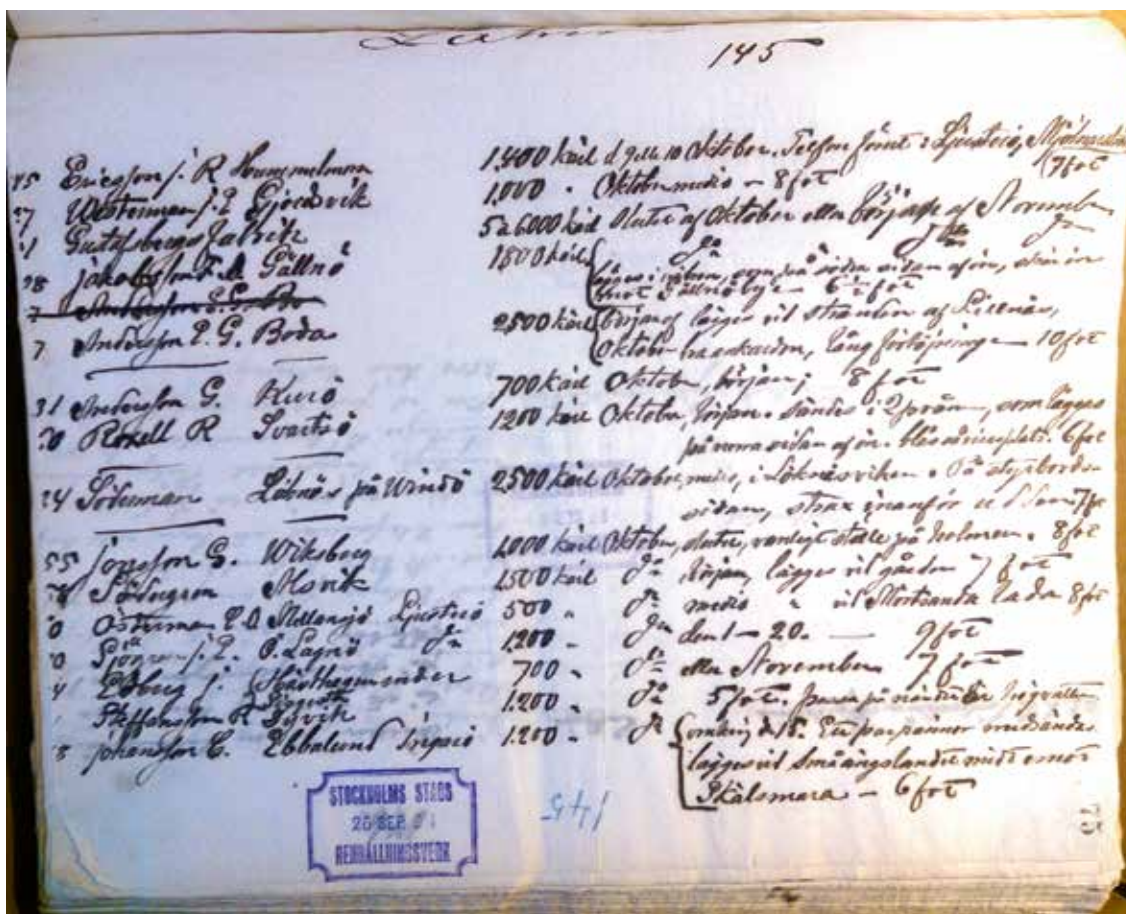
Despite these stories, there is a gap between those who once used the pits, now dead, and a generation after them knowing about their existence but not the whole story.

It all began in 1849. That year the Stockholm City Council bought Fjäderholmarna, a cluster of small islands situated in the Salt Sea in between Stockholm and Lidingö.⁵ Today the islands are a popular tourist attraction and nobody remembers that the islands once were filled with garbage and feces.

Until 1850, garbage and feces were dumped around Stockholm, creating sanitation problems. Polluted water made its way down into the groundwater, and cholera epidemics killed scores of people. Something had to be done, and the islands were bought. A *Kungörelse* (public notice) from 1851 stated that feces and garbage must be placed in barges in the harbors surrounding the city. They were then transported to Fjäderholmarna.

In 1857, Anders Retzius (1796–1860), one of Sweden's more prominent scientists, published the essay “An easy way to handle feces so that it becomes clean and useful.”⁷ Here he explains how to make fertilizer by combining garbage with feces. He also underlines that water should be kept clean. Accordingly, Stockholm now started to combine feces with garbage to produce fertilizer for sale. The archival material is very sparse from the first years, but it looks as if they sold feces and garbage from Fjäderholmarna as early as 1850.⁸ The production of fertilizer for sale became more extensive from the 1860s. Barrels of feces and garbage were placed in barges and towed out to Fjäderholmarna where the barrels were emptied and cleaned and returned to the city.⁶ Feces and garbage were placed in barges and transported by tugboats to the buyers.⁹

The stench from Fjäderholmarna was unbearable. A growing fleet of steamboats passed the islands and the passengers started to complain. The city therefore bought Löfsta and Riddersvik in 1885, two properties on the banks of Lake Mälaren.¹⁰ From this point the production grew rapidly.



In the archives there are hundreds of papers with orders for feces and garbage that came from everywhere around Stockholm.

PHOTO: JOHAN HEGARDT

In 1894 Karl Tingsten (1863–1952), father of Herbert Tingsten (1896–1973), who would become a famous professor in political science, a leading liberal, editor in chief, and a critic of Nazism, took over as a director.¹¹ At this point the archived material is more reliable, and under his leadership they developed a new form of fertilizer called *pudrett*, a combination of feces and peat.

In 1885 there were 89 registered water closets in Stockholm. In 1927 they had increased to 106,187¹² and the amount of feces declined rapidly. The city also started to burn its garbage. The skitgrop system would come to an end, but Stockholm would face a new problem, namely, the pollution of the Salt Sea and Lake Mälaren from the water closets. They had obviously forgotten Retzius' appeal, but that's another story.¹³

The *skitgrop* system was, to use popular words by today's politicians, a "world-class re-cycling system" and a commercial practice that helped Stockholm handle its problems with garbage and feces. In popular language, the system was called *smutsguld* (dirt-gold) or *folk-guano*.

But more important is that the *skitgrop* system demonstrates the archipelago population's trust in future farming. When buying feces and garbage for fertilizer, large economic and physical resources were invested. This is important to remember because there are not many farms left in the archipelago today. The fields are disappearing, and unproductive scrubland or houses for the summer population are shadowing an important part of the archipelago's history.

The Island

The most important archived material is the order list, collected in two volumes. On hundreds of wafer-thin papers the orders have been noted by hand, with different handwriting depending on who took the order. Sometimes it is easy to read the order, sometimes problematic. To be able to deal with this material, with ten or more orders on each sheet, I had to focus on one island, and for obvious reasons my focus fell on the Island. In all I found 11 orders, between 1894 and 1916, but I did notice orders from all around Stockholm.

Orders for *pudrett*, feces, and garbage came from everywhere around Stockholm. Rich people in fashionable suburbs surrounding Stockholm, for example Djursholm, ordered fertilizer for their gardens. They did not handle the stuff themselves, but had gardeners to do the job. Counts from huge estates around Lake Mälaren ordered too, and so did ordinary farmers from Roslagen – mainland areas north of Stockholm – and market gardens around Stockholm.¹⁴

Trains were used to transport the material from Löfsta to Roslagen or to the suburbs. To counts around Lake Mälaren or to farmers in the archipelago, tugboats were used, towing barges. They used two tugboats named the *Ferm* and the *Riddersvik*. Kilander was in charge of the *Ferm* and Bengtsson of the *Riddersvik*. Transportation could only be done when there was no ice.

The year 1907 was a top year when 1,036 barges were transported to buyers around Lake Mälaren and in the archipelago: 911 contained garbage, 70 contained *pudrett*, and 55 contained



Ferm, one of two tugboats that transported fertilizer, at Slussen 1905.

PHOTO: STADSMUSEET IN STOCKHOLM

feces. Transportation started on April 17 and ended on December 30. The total income was 17,264.70 SEK.¹⁵

In the new economy, tourists and the summer and archipelago population travel via high-speed ferries during the months without ice. Vaxholmsbolaget manages these ferries¹⁶, and each ferry travels approximately 21,000 nautical miles during one season.¹⁷

Three to five transportations took place every day, some only taking a few hours, others taking many days, depending on the distance. During an ordinary season the tugboats covered a distance over $2\frac{1}{2}$ times the circumference of the equator.¹⁸ The circumference of the equator is 21,600 nautical miles, and 21,600 multiplied by $2\frac{1}{2}$ is 54,000 nautical miles. If we divide that by two, each tugboat covered a distance of 27,000 nautical miles in an ordinary season. That is 6,000 nautical miles more than Vaxholmsbolaget's ferries travel in one season, and the tugboats had only one captain each. This shows the massive scale of the enterprise and the hard work.

It's possible to connect orders with existing pits, fields, and buyers. I have measured one of the empty pits, and according to my calculations it could contain a maximum of 74 cubic meters. There is an order from 1894 for feces to precisely this pit, and it is related to when, according to the current farmer, the field was cleared. The order was for 800 barrels of feces. One barrel contained 60 liters,¹⁹ which means that the pit at this time was filled with 48,000 liters, or 48 cubic meters, of feces.

Prices between 1900 and 1909 were 0.20 SEK for a barrel of feces. The towing cost for each barge was 5 SEK for a nautical mile,

but this could be reduced depending on how many barges were towed.²⁰ From Löfsta to the Island it is approximately 30 nautical miles, which means that the farmer would have paid 150 SEK for towing and 160 SEK for the feces.

If we multiply this by the rest of the orders we find that roughly 480,000 liters of feces were used on the fields on the Island between 1894 and 1916 at a cost of around 1,600 SEK, a huge amount of cash for an almost cashless community.

The fertilizers did of course have a visible impact on the production, otherwise the farmers and others would not have bothered. It is, however, not possible to calculate the exact impact because there were no scientific calculations done, or at least not left in the archives. What they did was to study what *pudrett* contained. A Professor L. F. Nilsson did the study in 1895. According to him, *pudrett* contained 77.35 units of water, 17.57 units of nitrogen-free organic substances, 0.61 units of nitrogen as ammoniac, 0.49 units of nitrogen in organic compounds, 0.74 units of phosphorous, 0.41 units of "Kali" (potassium), and 2.53 units of other minerals. They also calculated the amount of *pudrett* needed when fertilizing. For example, one hectare needed 3,000 kg or 60 hectoliter (6,000 liter) of *pudrett* for potatoes if the fertilizing was moderate, more if intense fertilizing was needed and less if the fertilizing should not be that powerful.

Regarding feces, it is explained that it is a rather nasty business to handle the stuff, but it is because of this very cheap compared with *pudrett*, and those that used it found that it was the most powerful of all fertilizers.²¹

On the sea floor outside the pit there are broken ceramic and glass objects. These items came with the feces as garbage and were thrown into the sea because the farmer did not want the stuff in the field.

Small objects and fragments of objects ended up in the field. I have partly gone over the field with a metal detector, finding all sorts of metallic fragments of objects and a coin from 1878, but also small pieces of glass and ceramics when digging for the metal objects.

I have not been able to more closely study the metal objects found, but a man told me that he believed that I had found fragments of a harmonica. Other things are more problematic. I suspect that there is a rather large amount of lead in the fields and there might be other environmental toxic chemical compounds in the fields, too. But most of it has probably disappeared long ago.

When the *skitgrop* system disappeared, the farmers had to turn to other fertilizers. One thing always used is fertilizer from the animals at the farms and in modern times different forms of commercial fertilizers.

From 1907 it was forbidden to throw away non-organic objects together with organic garbage or feces.²² Any field that was fertilized with feces or garbage after 1907 therefore does not contain any fragments of objects.

Even though the *skitgrop* system bears witness to a faith in the future of farming in the archipelago, a new economy was on its way, which would dramatically change the conditions not only for farming, but for the whole archipelago.

A new society

It's not a coincidence that the *skitgrop* system disappeared in almost the same year that the future for Swedish society was spelled out by the Social Democratic leader Per Albin Hanson (1885–1946). In 1928 he held his famous *folkhem* (people's home) speech, pointing out a new direction for Swedish society. Two years later the Stockholm Exhibition displayed a new modern architecture, perfectly suited to a future society within a framework of functionalism.²³ What can symbolize this new era better than water closets? Due to new vacation laws, a growing national tourism industry also took form.

In his excellent thesis, Bertil Hedenstierna takes us on a journey through the history of the archipelago. What he shows is the decline of the traditional way of life and how a new economy is slowly taking over. Hedenstierna can even demonstrate how the summer population was starting to own more land in the archipelago, and we should remember that his research was conducted during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Hedenstierna writes: "The importance of the summer population for the archipelago is crucial and has in many areas led to problems that need immediate rational solutions." He even points to a new category that he calls "The 'nomadic' summer population", by which he means those who travel in the archipelago with their own boats.²⁴

Strawberries and nails

Due to ideal climate conditions, there were 1.5 million strawberry plants in the archipelago in 1943.²⁵ Today they are all gone.

I was informed by interviewee 3 that a man once told him that there was more money in nails than in strawberries. What he meant was that there was more money in building things for the summer population than in farming strawberries.

Televisions and the collapse of history

It was a relief when electricity came to the Island in the late 1950s, but it would also have a negative impact on the community. One of my informants (interviewee 4), who has an incredible memory and knowledge of the Island and its history, told me that with electricity television soon appeared and that would mean the end of a long tradition of sitting together talking. Oral history is a well-known phenomenon,²⁶ and this is exactly what my informant told me about. Coming together to talk was a question of bringing the history of the archipelago, families, relatives, and events into the minds of a younger generation, but also of keeping track of relatives on the mainland, sharing information, and telling anecdotes. When television was introduced a new storyteller stepped up on the scene, and from now on the families sat by themselves. The radio did not have the same impact, he told me. The introduction of the Internet has further widened the gap between the past and the present, as underlined by interviewee 2 when I interviewed her. She concluded that today everyone is lonely on the Island because they don't talk to each other anymore.

Today the older generation that is carrying the stories and memories are passing away, and when there is no one left to hold on to the stories, place names, and traditional practices such as farming and fishing history will collapse and disappear, leaving the Island open for a new and exploitative a-historical economy, *the economy of the nomads*.²⁷

The nomads

The nomads – here I include day tourists – have no interest in history, traditions, stories, places, nature, or anything else that defines the archipelago. What they want is beaches, summer-warm cliffs, and entertainment – on land and on water – and bars and restaurants. Entrepreneurs from the mainland and some from the archipelago are doing what they can to serve these people. But to make money they must exploit the archipelago and open it up to as many as possible. One of the most problematic actors is the foundation *Skärgårdsstiftelsen* and to some degree *Vaxholmsbolaget*. The municipalities around the archipelago own the foundation. Its predecessor took shape back in the 1930s, and Bertil Hedenstierna became engaged in it, presumably because he thought that it might have a positive impact on the archipelago, and it probably did to begin with.²⁸ Today it is the largest landowner with the overall agenda to direct, together with *Vaxholmsbolaget*, as many people as possible to the archipelago. Hedenstierna warned against this kind of exploitation, and it's time that we take this seriously again. Compared to 1949, the population in Stockholm has not only grown enormously, it's also much richer. At the same time, Sweden is promoting tourism on all fronts. Thousands of tourists arrive in Stockholm every sum-

mer and many visit the archipelago. No one has calculated the carrying capacity of the archipelago, a capacity that is probably already overexploited.

Mahogany pioneers

I mentioned earlier a tradition of sailing in the archipelago. It started in the early 20th century, and in those days the charts were primitive. The archipelago is dangerous waters, so the first to sail in the archipelago had to rely on the experienced archipelago population and on each other's experiences. They used wooden or mahogany boats specially built for archipelago conditions. Books on how to navigate in the archipelago were published.²⁹ Such pioneers are now mostly forgotten, but the myth of archipelago adventures is still active. Yet, today's high-standard 40-foot plastic sailing-yachts are more like caravans that can be parked anywhere. The charts are digitized and cover every meter of the sea floor. These *nomads* have no interest in the history of the archipelago or even in sailing, and most of the time they use the boat's engine.

A new economy

In his essay "Im Schwarm", Byung-Chul Han addresses the digital age.³⁰ Han explains to me what I have been trying to understand for years, which is the discrepancy between the past and the present on the Island and in the archipelago. The *nomads* and tourists have come with a new reality, the digital economy. The Island is digitized – not in reality, but it is visualized by the *nomads* and the tourists through the digital media. What is not possible to digitize does not exist, Han explains. For *nomads* and tourists, history has no meaning because the digital composition is not a narrative, which history is. As long as the Island is transparently the same as the image, the *nomads* and tourists will arrive. But if the Island changes, which it will when the farm is closed, the Island will take a different shape, which will not correspond with the digital potential, and the *nomads* and the tourists will stop coming because they are not interested in decline or in history. They are not interested in the depth, but only in the surface. A yacht's anchor will, for example, bring with it huge amounts of seaweed. These weeds are ecologically and historically important for the bay, for the fish, for the seabirds, and for the people that once found their economy in the bay³¹, but for the surface-fetishistic *nomads* the seaweed is a problem. Therefore they have technical systems on board to get rid of the weeds, which sink dead back into the depth. For every anchor, the sea floor is ruined a little bit, and they are many, and they come every summer, these *nomads*, who cannot stand the depth, but only travel on a digitized *surface* that is completely transparent and therefore without history, narrative, or secrets. With no past in the present, there is no future either. There are no responsibilities for, as Han puts it, these narcissistic islands of egos³² that travel the archipelago. Therefore the *nomads* can ruin whatever they encounter. Bertil Hedenstierna emphasized the lack of historical consciousness, responsibility, and knowledge among tourists and *nomads* already in 1943.³³

Waste

I read in the local paper in 2013 that the archipelago population is tired of cleaning up after day tourists and *nomads*.³⁴ During a few summer months in the same year, 80,000 people – mostly *nomads* – visited a small cluster of islands in the archipelago, leaving behind 25 tons of garbage and 34 cubic meters of glass.³⁵

Tourism is about moving and feeding people. Tourists do not produce anything or integrate with any society, city, or ecology. That's why eco-tourism is a contradiction in terms. Tourists do not make new friends, nor do they meet with colleagues, and therefore they do not spread new ideas or cultural or scientific influences. Instead, they consume someone's labor, an ecosystem, or city. Believing that tourism will boost the economy is dangerous. Instead, tourists, like *nomads*, often ruin what they encounter. Because it is based on a commodity, tourism lacks social and ecological responsibility. But tourists dislike the decline and the waste that they produce. Therefore, any ecosystem or city must be continuously cleaned. The responsibility is, as the local paper states, in the hands of the local people.

If the *nomads* and the tourists – because of their sheer numbers – have a negative impact on the archipelago, who is the summer population? The summer population is semi-nomadic. We arrive over weekends during the spring, stay for our vacation during the summer, and return for weekends during the fall. Sometimes we show up during the winter. Hedenstierna was right when he warned about the negative impact the summer population might have, but in contrast to tourists and *nomads*, the summer population was and still is engaged in the islands and their history and population. But a new trend is approaching. Tremendously rich people are buying old summer properties. They demolish the old houses and build new and architect-designed buildings including all the comforts of the city. They reach these places from Stockholm with aluminum boats or rib-boats that easily make 40 to 60 knots, and they have the same desire as tourists and *nomads*; they also want beaches, summer-warm cliffs, but their private beaches and cliffs, and entertainment – on land and on water – and bars and restaurants. Because they are a part of the new economy, these people don't engage in the history of the archipelago, nor in its ecology or people.

The end

In his essay, Han returns to Martin Heidegger's farmer, who carries forbearance and constraint, fundamentally secured in the land and in the field. Han compares the farmer's being with the digital being and finds no correlation.³⁶ It's almost ironic how right Han is, because in a few years the farm on the Island will no longer exist. Almost 300 years of farming will come to an end, and with that history, memories, secrets, traditions, place names, *skitgropar*, and knowledge will disappear into an unproductive scrubland, and the history of the Island will fade from memory.

To stop this from happening, I suggest that it's time to develop an understanding of the carrying capacity of the archipelago, regulate the number of tourists, force the *nomads* to dock at

special harbors, reduce speed, noise, and waves, and, most importantly, make sure that an economically, ecologically, and *historically* sustainable farming is re-introduced on islands that once had farms because, as we have seen, the fields are not only a resource, but *history and narratives*, through which the archipelago has existed since it rose out of the sea after the latest Ice Age. Only in this way can we make the archipelago ecologically and *historically* sustainable in the future. ✖

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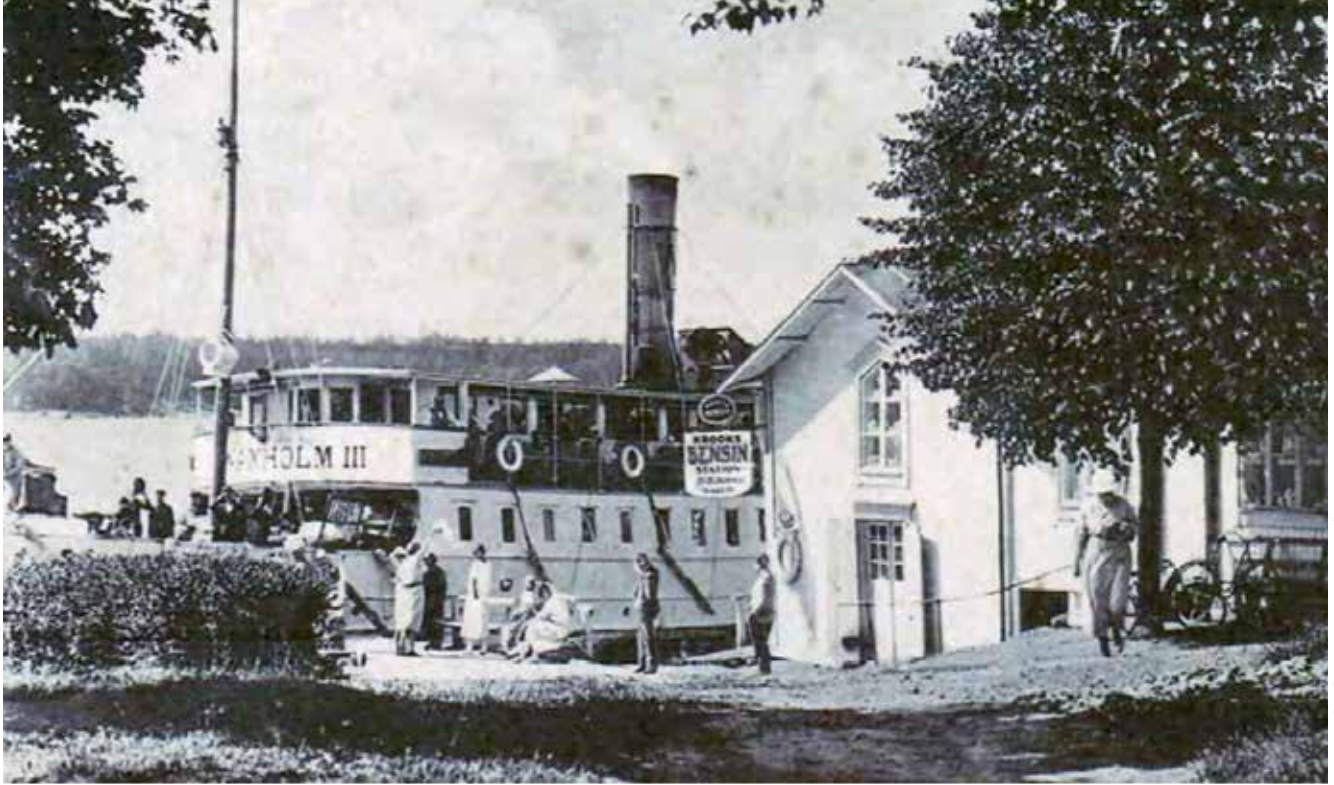


PHOTO: BJÖRKO-ARHOLMA HEMBYGGSENFÖRENING

Waxholm III arrives and fetches summer guests at Marum on Björkö. Image from the early 1900s.

Entrepreneurship in the Stockholm Archipelago

A historical perspective

by **Christian Widholm**

A cursory reading of the literature describing yesterday's societies in the Stockholm Archipelago tells us that people in the archipelago heavily relied on fishing and small-scale farming for their living. With the arrival of modern industrialized society during the latter half of the 19th century, things changed, and other opportunities to earn a living appeared. However, there were and are certain circumstances in the Stockholm Archipelago that make it somewhat inert, preventing it from taking a place in the modern labor market. Some of these have to do with its geographical location and legal frameworks, while others derive from cultural constructions among the nearby town-dwellers over the last one hundred and fifty years. The following reflections will focus on how some of these circumstances have affected entrepreneurs in the archipelago from the 19th century up to today, and what follows is a sketch of a broad outline of the history of entrepreneurship in the Stockholm Archipelago. In addition, being aware of anachronistic pitfalls and possible theoretical shallowness, I

will focus on the element of self-employment in the concept of the entrepreneur in order to be able to generalize among different kinds of entrepreneurial enterprises over time – keeping in mind that a common way to make ends meet in the archipelago has also been to work part time as employees, e.g. as customs officials and/or pilot boat operators.

BEFORE THE ADVENT of modern society, that is, roughly prior to the 1850s, when it comes to Sweden and the Stockholm Archipelago, the entrepreneur in the modern sense of the word (an innovative and self-employed person running a company with or without employees) did not really exist in the archipelago. People living in the archipelago worked as self-reliant small-scale farmers and fishers. Thus, the pre-modern society's labor system cannot easily be assessed against the categories of self-employed and employee. However, yeomen were concentrated in the northern parts of the archipelago while a considerable number of the farmers and fishers in the south lived under the

yoke of the nobility, forcing them to day labor and paying taxes to mansions.¹

During the time of the guild system, the people of the archipelago were prohibited from doing business in some sectors, e.g. transporting cargo by sea, which was the prerogative of the burghers. With the abolition of the guild system in 1846, a new possibility for maintenance was made available, and entrepreneurs started to transport passengers, firewood, and other kinds of goods. This business became unprofitable after the First World War, and the entrepreneurs enrolled as sailors, customs officers, or pilot boat operators.² During roughly the same period, the fishers also became exposed to competition from the emergent fishing industry of the Swedish west coast at the same time as developments on the mainland steadily made the infrastructure and agriculture of the archipelago appear inefficient and archaic.³ From the late 19th century, strawberry cultivation became a rather successful enterprise on the islands of Möja and Husarö. Strawberries thrived in the sunny weather that is relatively typical of the archipelago, although the meager archipelago soil, which negatively affects most kinds of cultivations in the region, was a challenge. To solve the fertilizer problem, the strawberry entrepreneurs bought latrine waste from the town of Stockholm.⁴

AS THE MAINLAND steadily entered the modern age during the latter half of the 19th century, the archipelago seemed to face a period of irreversible decline and oblivion. However, at the same time as the archipelago apparently was left behind, it became the modern city dwellers' idyllic recreational haven, a place where the wealthy families, with their servants, could spend the summer. To begin with, it was the upper strata of Stockholm that purchased land from the archipelago inhabitants and erected impressive merchant villas in the inner parts of the archipelago, but some of them rented their accommodations, which could be of benefit for the island entrepreneurs.

This trend, which eventually spread to the middle class of Stockholm, was founded on romantic ideas about the traditional and untouched countryside and seaside. The ideas originated in Great Britain from the first half of the 19th century and would soon take hold in Northwestern Europe and North America.⁵ Such visions would turn the archipelago into a specific cultural construction that entrepreneurs and others had and still have to relate to whether they like it or not. Thus, besides selling land and renting out houses, entrepreneurs at the beginning of the 20th century started to make money by operating tenders and taxi boats and, in the vicinity of Furusund, running hotels, spas, and boarding houses.⁶ However, these businesses were usually dormant before and after the summer season, and well into the first half of the new century the entrepreneurs had to supplement their earnings with traditional activities like fishing and

farming even though a few novel businesses within fur farming (on the island of Lidö) and mechanical workshops (on the island of Möja) now existed.⁷

From the 1930s onwards, the archipelago was turned into a recreation area. At the beginning, the transformation was unregulated. The Stockholm middle-class city dwellers purchased land, and second homes were erected in their thousands resulting in a situation where most of the islands' shores were turned into small private lots at a time when the political norm stated that the public should have access to the shores and the countryside. Hence, the public authorities soon intervened, ratifying in the early 1950s a law that prohibited further exploitation of the shores (strandskyddslagen).⁸ Despite new regulations and traditionalist notions that obstructed modernization, entrepreneurs in the archipelago were able to take some advantage of the tourists and second home owners' arrival. At the same time, the imbalance between the summer hausse and the rest of the year's almost complete standstill appeared to become cemented.⁹ By the early 1970s, a few of the challenges that the entrepreneurs faced were admitted among state and county bureaucrats who had already investigated the archipelago from many different perspectives since the 1930s. An official report from the 1970s said that ice during winters made transport difficult, that high prices on estates hampered development, that lack of fresh water was a challenge for everyone living in the archipelago, that

the region suffered from lopsided seasonality, and that the military's presence caused unwelcome restrictions.¹⁰ The report, called *A living archipelago* [En levande skärgård], also stated this about the entrepreneurs in the archipelago:

Probably the most striking difference between the mainland and the archipelago entrepreneur is that the latter to a greater extent has to rely on more than one business. For example, farming, service jobs, and cottage lettings [...] the occupation

[of the archipelago entrepreneur] is characterized by being an organized jack-of-all-trades.¹¹

Other occupations among the entrepreneurs were also mentioned, e.g. handicrafts, shipping (e.g. timber, gravel, and refuse), and carpentry.¹² The report proposed a specific term for the entrepreneurial enterprises in the archipelago. The term was informative, though not very creative:

An archipelago company (skärgårdsföretag) is a business with a multi-tasking entrepreneur who combines traditional occupations like farming, forestry, and fishing with cottage lettings, supervision, and service jobs. The report estimates that this kind of occupation has the best prospects of all the businesses in the archipelago.¹³

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Elsewhere in the report it was stated that the most promising sector for the entrepreneurs would be tourism because already in 1969 more than 50% of the turnover in the archipelago derived from tourism.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the entrepreneurs seemed to require support. Thus, during the 1970s the national employer organization (SAF) offered managerial support, and the state and Stockholm County subsidized loans for the entrepreneurs.¹⁵ Other subsidies, like the yearly one hundred thousand Swedish crowns allowance to the grocery stores in the archipelago and free trips on the passenger boats (via the publicly financed passenger shipping company in the Stockholm Archipelago, Waxholmsbolaget) for all permanent inhabitants of the archipelago, were mentioned in the *Living archipelagos* report from the mid-1990s.¹⁶ This report repeated the challenges for entrepreneurs stated in earlier reports, and it also said, which public officials had not admitted before, that “the law which prohibits exploitation of the shores (strandskyddslagen) obstructs development in the archipelago”.¹⁷ In addition, it presented a less optimistic view on the expectations pertaining to the tourism sector.¹⁸ Thus it advocated continuing subvention of the entrepreneurs in the archipelago.¹⁹

From the turn of the 21st century, subsidies have been combined with several public/private-financed projects, mostly about tourism, in order to help entrepreneurs to flourish. However, the businesses still show signs of inertia, and the entrepreneurs appear to have faced a new challenge – so-called project fatigue.²⁰ Another sensation among the archipelago’s entrepreneurs today seems to be frustration²¹ given what they believe to be the unequal competition from business on the mainland that does not have to bother about slow and difficult transport or regulations to preserve yesterday’s archipelago, etc. Still, politicians and representatives from trade and industry repeatedly tout that the future for the archipelago is entrepreneurship, preferably within the tourism sector.²²

FROM THE EXAMPLES above, it appears rather apparent that being an entrepreneur in the archipelago is not an easy ride. The archipelago comprises natural barriers (e.g. rough seas, frozen waterways during the winter, shortage of fresh water, etc.) that subsidies and projects cannot remove. The man-made obstacles, on the other hand, i.e. laws and regulations, might be abolished. In theory it would only take zeal and hard political work. However, and this brings us back to the archipelago as a cultural construction I mentioned earlier, the Stockholm Archipelago is so laden with symbolic content for Swedes in general and the inhabitants of Stockholm in particular that being an entrepreneur there partly includes negotiating with a fiction of the archipelago. The advent of this fiction materialized during the first wave of temporary recreational residents in the archipelago at the end of the 19th century, and this romantic and traditionalist fiction was introduced by novelists, songwriters, and artists. Soon it became a given part of Swedish popular culture and strengthened its position through movies, television series, and even more so in songs and novels. It has evolved somewhat over the decades, but the main theme persists: the Stockholm Archipelago is the place



PHOTO: SVEN ÖSTERMAN

Summer guests at Blidö, in the beginning of the 1900s.



PHOTO: JANEHEIMARK/STOCKHOLMSKALLAN

Nils Jansson ran this food store at Dalarö. Image from 1952.



PHOTO: SCREENSHOT FROM THE FILM JORDGUBBEN

Strawberries being loaded for delivery to Stockholm. Möja, 1967.

of an idyllic summer life. This aspect, that romantic notions about the archipelago can be seen as obstacles for the entrepreneurs and others living on the islands, has not yet been acknowledged in research on the Stockholm Archipelago, with the exception of a couple of fruitful works by the human geographer Urban Nordin.²³ When it comes to politicians, policymakers, and representatives from trade and industry, on the other hand, the fiction seems to be treated as plain reality and as beyond question, and perhaps something that could be turned into business in the name of the so-called experience economy.

DURING A MEETING in October 2014 within the project “The Archipelago Strategy” [Skärgårdsstrategin], which is a publicly funded program for the development of tourist destinations in Sweden, several speakers touched upon the constellation of entrepreneurs and the archipelago. The head of the project said that the entrepreneurs in the archipelago “are of enormous importance” for the project; a liberal politician from one of the municipalities of the archipelago, though with its office located on the mainland, said, “We require creative solutions for how to make our beautiful archipelago better”; a representative from another collaborating body, Stockholm Business Region, said, “We have failed when it comes to the information about the archipelago, and without tourism it will die”; and an archipelago entrepreneur, with a business located on the mainland, said, “The most important wisdom is to take advantage of the positive players in the archipelago. Dare to exclude negative attitudes and focus on those who are positive.”²⁴ Judging by the records from the meeting, it looks as if those who attended first and foremost tried to convince themselves, and maybe the rest of us, that the romantic archipelago fiction should be treated as reality and that possible ontological divergence has to do with managerial failures or plain sullenness. No wonder the entrepreneurs of the archipelago proper, not the ones residing safely on the mainland, suffer from project fatigue. ✕

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New research agenda

Agents of change in peripheral regions

by Nadir Kinossian

Divisions between rich and poor regions remain one of Europe's major problems, as continuous attempts to reduce spatial disparities within Europe have so far had only limited impact.¹ The 2007-2008 financial crisis and subsequent austerity measures have further impoverished those people and places that already suffered from lasting economic problems.² In Europe's peripheries, marginalization, ambivalence, and lack of employment prospects have led to growing popular skepticism about the legitimacy of the EU, and to disillusionment with government, traditional political parties, and the mechanisms of representative democracy. Populist political parties and movements exploit people's fears, claiming that they can help those who have been *left behind* and who have *had enough*. The rise of nationalist and far-right parties in many European countries can threaten political stability at home and undermine European integration at large. Addressing these complex challenges is vitally important for the future of the EU, its political and economic stability, as well as its role in the world.

The problems of peripheries are complex and cannot be solved by traditional economic measures alone. There is no doubt that market forces play a role in defining winners and losers, but so do our understandings of spatial problems, economic development, and cohesion policies. Current approaches praise large cities and metropolitan areas as countries' principal *engines of growth*, while all places *in between* large cities, including rural, remote, and former industrial regions, are deemed less productive and seen as a burden to more privileged areas. In that respect, *peripheral* should be defined not only by geographical proximity to urban centers or transport networks, but also by political marginalization, various dependencies on the centers of power, and cultural stigmatization.³ The complexity of the

problem is that, on the one hand, peripheral regions are sidelined and marginalized; on the other, they still accommodate sizable populations and provide various resources, including clean water, recreational spaces, and agricultural land, on which metropolitan regions are highly dependent. There are many arguments, including political, economic, environmental, and ethical, that indicate the economic potential and important roles that peripheral regions play for the wellbeing of countries as a whole. Yet, achieving positive changes is not a simple task.

Peripheral regions are often in the most disadvantaged position, lacking sufficient resources of their own while also being unable to benefit from growth taking place in more prosperous metropolitan regions. Remote regions may not have labor pools suitable for attracting large firms. Finding new forms of

specialization in former industrial regions may be a particularly challenging task due to the structural, institutional, and cultural legacies of previous specializations. Achieving socially inclusive, environmentally balanced, and economically sustainable development in less privileged regions requires revising the existing approaches. This article discusses the current research and policy approaches towards peripheral regions and offers a provisional conceptualization for a new approach to revive peripheries

using agents of change. The paper argues that a better understanding of the processes and conditions necessary for establishing new development paths in peripheral regions requires new approaches to conceptualizing the process of regional change: specifically, combining approaches of evolutionary economic geography, new institutionalisms, and policy studies.

Current debates on regional development and peripheries

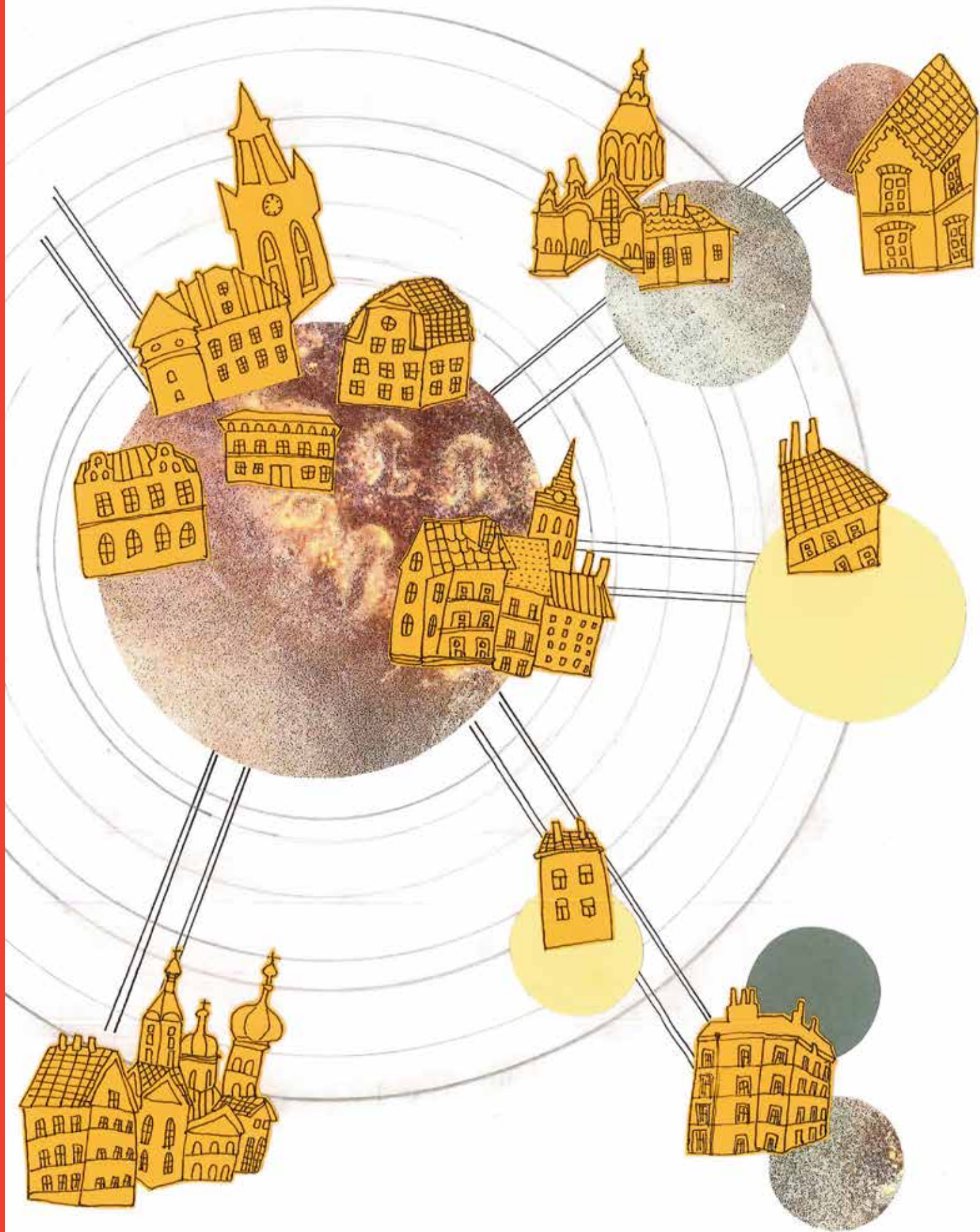
Spatial polarization has become one of the EU's most pressing issues. While the EU Member States have shown convergence in economic development, *interregional* inequalities within states have increased considerably.⁴ Polarization means that urban ag-

abstract

This article discusses the current research and policy approaches towards peripheral regions, and outlines a new approach to revive peripheries using agents of change. The paper argues that better understanding of the processes and conditions necessary for establishing new development paths in peripheral regions requires new approaches to conceptualizing the process of regional change: specifically, combining approaches of evolutionary economic geography, new institutionalisms, and policy studies.

KEY WORDS: Peripheral regions, Europe, regional development, agents of change.





glomerations and capital city-regions demonstrate population growth and increasing prosperity, while a growing number of rural, remote, and old industrial regions suffer from economic and demographic stagnation or decline.⁵ The growing divides between rich and poor regions are caused not only by economic laws. They are also produced by cultural perceptions, planning and budgeting practices, political and economic dependencies, and limited decision-making power, which make poor regions peripheral vis-à-vis centers, and also *peripheralized* by the very structure of the center/periphery relations.

THE CONVENTIONAL APPROACH to addressing economic disparities is based on the idea of closing the “gap” between leading and lagging regions, caused by low economic productivity in the latter. The current consensus postulates that regional development should aim to close the “productivity gap” between the two.⁶ On the other hand, the idea of competitiveness welcomes concentration of investment, people, and industries in large metropolitan regions – on the assumption that wealth generated in these selected locations would create benefits for all.⁷ In that sense, more equitable development should occur as a *by-product* of economic growth in successful regions. Although *catch-up* strategies may be feasible for some regions at certain times, they cannot be a universal solution for all peripheral regions since their conditions vary. The conventional approach is informed by the experiences of city-centers of agglomerated economies that benefit from the positive effects of concentration, agglomeration, colocation, etc. Many positive changes occur there simply because they enjoy concentrations of skills, institutions, and industries. Regions and localities outside agglomerations do not benefit from all those positive effects – on the contrary, they often suffer from thin institutions, small labor pools, outmoded industries, extra transportation costs, worn-out infrastructure, etc.

The EU regional policy sees the answer in establishing new development paths via innovation and diversification. Great emphasis has been placed on smart specialization (*RIS3*) policies that aim to identify sectors and projects capable of providing self-sustained growth.⁸ Although this smart specialization may be the first policy approach to incorporate a bottom-up perspective of the entrepreneurial discovery processes,⁹ the actual policies are often designed in a top-down manner that is insufficiently sensitive to variations of local conditions.¹⁰ Policy often fails to predict economic and political change accurately, as conditions change faster than policy makers can respond.¹¹ Local policy makers may be reluctant to respond to policy directives from higher levels of government.¹² Although the role of the state in supporting innovation, building favorable institutional environments, and facilitating learning in less-developed regions is paramount, the ineffectiveness of top-down policy raises con-

cerns.¹³ This critique suggests that EU regional policy can only work when it appreciates the diversity of local conditions and allows creative responses from local actors.

For disadvantaged regions, establishing a new development path may be a way out of despair and can mean the creation of new areas of specialization, the importation of industries, path renewal, and the creation of a new institutional path.¹⁴ Barriers to path creation include pervasive cognitive, institutional, and network-related lock-ins due to existing specializations. For instance, old industrial regions are often characterized by a homogenous knowledge base and by limited connections to networks of actors outside the declining industry. In such a context, creative approaches are needed to stimulate diversification processes that move the region towards dynamic growth trajectories. Reviving old industrial regions, or “awakening the beauties” as the authors of *The Smartest Places on Earth* put it, requires sharing brainpower across the whole ecosystem of participants involved in innovation activities.¹⁵

Existing regional development theories and related policy approaches raise concerns with regard to their applicability to peripheral regions because they imply a certain universality in the way localities and regions respond to external shocks and dynamic changes in the economic environment. Despite the various similarities that unite them vis-à-vis more prosperous and centrally located regions, peripheral regions are diverse in their geography, development history, and economic potential. New policy

approaches should achieve better outcomes in reconciling the goals of economic growth and human wellbeing and thus ensure that the positive effects of growth are long-term, sustainable, equitable, and inclusive.¹⁶ Establishing development policies for peripheral regions requires creative, non-standard solutions to the diversity of regional challenges in Europe and beyond, including through experimental territorial governance.¹⁷ Policy must respond to the diversity of regional settings and take into account the roles of actors (local and non-local) in order to determine why, despite similarities in their structural conditions, change may happen in one region but not in another.

New research agendas moving between problems, policies & politics

Development policies take the idea of economic growth as natural and inevitable. Demonstration of growth is equated with *success*, and appears instrumental for attracting further growth, thereby becoming a self-propelling force of economic development strategies and planning policies.¹⁸ Alternative visions challenge the idea of development as constant expansion and accumulation of various *assets*, such as population and investment. Despite the hegemonic position of the idea of growth, current debates explore possibilities for defining development and plan-

“REVIVING OLD INDUSTRIAL REGIONS [...] REQUIRES SHARING BRAINPOWER ACROSS THE WHOLE ECOSYSTEM OF PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN INNOVATION ACTIVITIES.”

ning beyond growth.¹⁹ One take on this is to discover non-material values in remote and peripheral regions. People often associate regions, natural and cultural landscapes, heritage sites, and monuments with specific cultural values and uses, and with collective identities. People may choose to live in peripheral regions due to discontent with large cities or the attractiveness of natural and pristine landscapes and the otherness of remote locations.²⁰ People assign cultural values to landscapes and places, creating a sense of sentiment and responsibility among locals looking to protect them and outsiders looking to explore them. Remote habitation may become a value in itself – a phenomenon known as “vicarious habitation”,²¹ suggesting that the minority resides in remote, rural, or peripheral areas “on behalf” of a larger community that approves the moral and aesthetic sentiment of the minority. Despite the possible marginality of such activities, they may help to address the issue of continuing population decline – provided that some support is available to create basic infrastructure and popularize such activities in the media and regional branding strategies.

ECONOMIC GEOGRAPHERS try to figure out what factors are conducive to growth. Factors such as industrial structure, the size of the economy, institutional thickness, and innovation capacity all appear important for explaining why economic activities and investment occur in certain areas. At the same time, the approaches used in economic geography fail to predict why growth happens in one place but not in others with similar conditions. Additional limitations are imposed by the current fascination with agglomerated economies, and its absence in smaller towns and sparsely populated areas that may have a narrow economic specialization and do not benefit from access to large markets, economies of scale, or knowledge *spill-over*. As economic thinking is concerned with the behaviors of people *en masse* and with related economic incentives, little attention is paid to actors, agency, and policy interventions that are considered distortions in economic models.

If development policies are to overcome the limitations of somewhat abstract and universal economic approaches, they should be more sensitive to local conditions, cultures, institutions, and actors.²² To understand the behaviors of actors, several groups of factors need to be taken into account. Institutional theory postulates that actors are constrained by institutions, both formal and informal. The latter facilitate relationships between actors through trust and cultural awareness. For instance, research in Norway suggests that the success of more peripheral regions, dominated by traditional industries, depends on collaboration between industry, university colleges, and applied research institutes; a culture of trust; flat hierarchies; interactive learning, as well as embeddedness in national and global linkages.²³

“SMALL TOWNS IN PERIPHERAL REGIONS ARE OFTEN SEEN AS LOSERS IN THE GLOBALIZING ECONOMY AND MERE BURDENS FOR NATIONAL REDISTRIBUTION MECHANISMS.”

Pinpointing the moment of change has long interested both economic geographers and political scientists. Ron Boschma conceptualized the emergence of a new development path as a “window of locational opportunity” that opens when unrelated industries come to a new location.²⁴ Political scientists conceptualize the moment of policy agenda change as an intersection of three streams: problems, policies, and politics.²⁵ The intersection of all three streams creates a window of opportunity for changing the policy agenda. When the window opens, policy entrepreneurs willing to invest “time, energy, reputation, money – to promote a position for anticipated future gain in the form of material, purposive or solidarity benefit” must act to seize the opportunity.²⁶ Although the “multiple streams” framework is designed to explain change in policy making, it can also be employed to conceptualize the process of discovering new paths in regional development.

Recently, there have been attempts to explore possible linkages between the approaches of economic geography (regional development paths, evolution) and political science (critical junctures and windows of opportunity). Structural factors such as industrial composition, the size of the economy, and level of infrastructure development can only partly explain regional development paths. The concept of *opportunity space* has been proposed to address the eternal question of necessity and randomness in regional development. Building upon the evolutionary approaches to regional development, they argue that history that not only history matters, but that perceived futures also matters due to “actors’ different capacities to detect and construct opportunities and work on them.”²⁷ Any conceptualization of how development paths form should take into account the ambiguity of economic development trends and the multiplicity of actors whose actions may lead to desired outcomes.

There is no predefined list of agents of change that could be applied to different cases, because leadership and entrepreneurship are socially constructed and geographically contingent phenomena. Actors operating as institutional entrepreneurs discover, abandon, and modify institutional paths and configurations in order to achieve their goals.²⁸

Despite possible variations in local conditions, the collaborative, boundary-spanning role of place leadership is identified as its essential feature. Three are three forms of agency responsible for change: innovative entrepreneurs (chasing opportunities to create value), institutional entrepreneurs (looking for institutional changes), and place leaders (promoting local interests). This conceptualization connects “structure and agency, the past and the future” and “breaks with a deterministic view of path-dependency and shifts attention to how – at any moment in time – the future is shaped in an





agentic process.”²⁹ Institutional entrepreneurs are “champions of creeping change” as they do not know what kind of institutions they may end up confronting, changing, or creating over time.³⁰ Combining the approaches developed in economic geography and political science can

help to address the existing limitations of each discipline and enable us to better understand the mechanisms of regional change.

To illustrate this new approach that strives to borrow the best from both geography (with its interest in economic conditions) and political science (with its interest in actors and agency), this article refers to several research projects conducted at the *Leibniz Institute for Regional Geography (IfL)* in Leipzig, Germany. While a full account of any of these projects would easily exceed the limits of the current paper, an attempt is made to outline some of the key ideas behind them.

While traditional thinking associates innovation with large cities in which research and development activities as well as supporting infrastructure are concentrated, the presence of highly innovative firms in *obscure* locations does not fit the current theorizations. The project titled “*Peripheral but Global: World Market Leaders Outside of Agglomerations*” aims to address this paradox by examining the mechanisms of innovation used by such firms that help them overcome the alleged disadvantages of their location beyond urban agglomerations.

As mentioned previously, spatial analysis and policy prioritize urban agglomerations and large cities as the main *drivers* of national economies. Small towns in peripheral regions are often seen as *losers* in the globalizing economy and as mere burdens for national redistribution mechanisms. An international project, “*Agents of Change in Old-Industrial Regions of Europe (ACORE)*”, attempts to challenge this dominant perception of peripheries’ meager and dependent role, by exploring how small towns located in old industrial regions of the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, and the United Kingdom discover new development paths leading to socioeconomic revival.

DESPITE GERMANY’S powerful redistribution mechanisms, small towns in peripheral regions are often places of social and economic problems, such as structural weakness, unemployment, or negative demographic trends. Despite this common perception, a number of small towns perform surprisingly well – contrary to their apparent geographic disadvantages. IfL’s current project, “*Hidden Champions – Stabilization and Development Factors of Small Towns in Peripheral Regions*”, aims to understand the success of some places by looking into the relationships between small towns and *hidden champions* – successful and innovative companies that contribute to local prosperity.

This small selection demonstrates that, despite their different research foci and questions, these ongoing projects have something in common. Namely, they attempt to challenge the dominant, blunt division of space into *successful* metropolitan areas versus *problematic and burdensome* peripheries. By examining development processes and the roles of various actors, the projects strive to understand the mechanisms of positive change in areas

that – according to the current doctrines – have little potential for change; and to contribute toward developing policies that will make positive differences for Europe’s peripheral regions.

Conclusion

Large metropolitan regions and globally connected cities can be seen as the winners of current spatial polarization processes, whereas rural, remote, and old industrial regions face increasing economic and demographic pressures. Peripheral regions not only pose questions concerning economic development but also *backfire* politically when disillusionment and frustration influence people’s voting behavior. In that sense, peripheral regions and small cities pose the stiffest test for economic geography theories and development policy approaches.

While most studies on *lagging* regions focus on *catch-up* processes, researchers may look for alternative futures, including *leapfrogging* beyond the standard and mainstream policy recipes. The identification and adoption of new development paths requires policy makers to explore the scope for innovation within the public sector and through the private sector: The former needs to overcome silo-based policy regimes in order to design and deliver more integrated policy solutions, while the latter needs to engage and energize new stakeholder communities if peripheral regions are to find joint solutions to common problems.

To better understand the opportunities for creating new development paths in peripheral regions, researchers should focus more on the *front line* of regional change – actors instrumental for creating new paths of development and links between actors located in different institutional contexts. It may make sense to explore conditions for cooperation between actors, such as the *window of opportunity* that allows the most effective cooperation between various actors in establishing a new development path. Such approaches may help to tackle the presumption that the success of a few *superstar* regions is universally transferable to *lagging* regions.

Addressing these questions would help us understand how remote, rural, and peripheral regions of Europe can create new development paths to achieve economic and social rebounding, while avoiding growth-related conflicts and also strengthening the long-term stability and cohesion of the EU. ✕

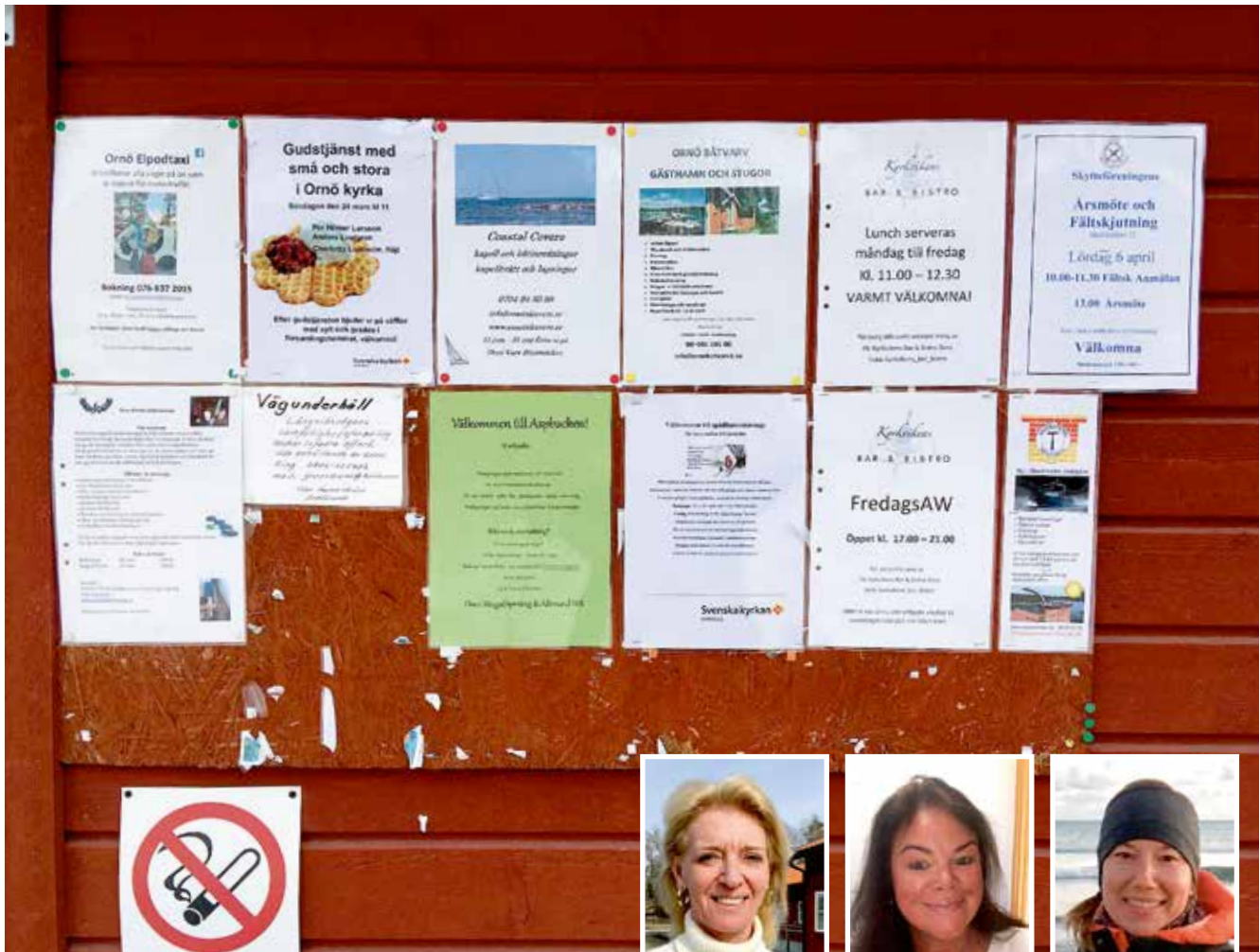
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Various services are offered by entrepreneurs in the Stockholm Archipelago.

Margareta Stenbock von Rosen on Ornö is investing in an archipelago hotel.

Britt-Marie Ahnell on Utö juggles numerous jobs.

Karin Almlöf on Sandhamn is a fifth-generation business owner.

3 islands — 3 entrepreneurs

Jacks-of-all-trades keep the Stockholm Archipelago alive

For a few hectic weeks each summer, sparsely inhabited islands in the Stockholm Archipelago are transformed into coveted destinations for vacationers. For permanent residents who make their livelihood here, running a businesses in the seaside environment entails great challenges.

We have met three entrepreneurs on three different islands, with diverse conditions but a common vision – keeping the archipelago alive.

by **Susanna Lidström**



With 15 employees, Margareta Stenbock von Rosen's Ornö Sjötrafik is the island's largest employer.

Margareta Stenbock von Rosen on Ornö:

The car ferry is the lifeblood of the island

Now she is investing in an archipelago hotel

The mild morning sun sparkles warmly on the lapping waves as the Ebba ferry docks at the Ornö jetty after a half-hour trip from the mainland on Dalarö. A handful of cars roll down the ramp towards the peace and quiet of the largest island in Stockholm's southern archipelago. Ornö is about 14 kilometers long and up to six kilometers wide.

The road south leads through the forest and fields, past a white wooden church and the venerable Sundby Farm – a manor and former entailed estate¹ that has been in the Stenbock family for six generations, since the middle of the 18th century. A few more kilometers to the west, the gravel road comes to an end at the shore of a protected bay. This is the location of the newly established Ornö Skärgårdshotel. The long red building also houses the offices of Ornö Sjötrafik AB. Margareta Stenbock

von Rosen heads both operations, as well as the company Lindviken Förvaltning, which handles property management, rental and forestry operations on the family's extensive landholdings.

"Running a hotel on Ornö has long been a dream of mine, and a few years ago I thought to myself, 'It's now or never.' It took a bit more time than I imagined, what with all the permits and bureaucracy related to building permits and the like, but last year we opened our doors and couldn't have hoped for a better start than the record-breaking heat of the summer of 2018. We were fully booked all the time, despite the fact that we hadn't had time to market ourselves very much," says Margareta Stenbock von Rosen as she shows *Baltic Worlds* around the premises.

Offices and conference rooms are located on one end of the building, and nine double rooms (each with a tiled shower and toilet) occupy the opposite wing. In the middle are the kitchen and the restaurant, which offers direct access to the communal terrace that runs along the water's edge.



Margareta Stenbock von Rosen.

“There used to be a sawmill here. It was fully operational when I was a child in the 1960s, but after that it fell into disuse for many years. The prior existence of a building on the property was crucial to getting permission to build,” says Margareta Stenbock von Rosen, who thinks that the beach protection rules in the archipelago need to be loosened up to make it easier to build and renovate on the island.

IN HER OPINION, the general ban on building closer less than 100 to 300 meters from the water (depending on the conditions of previously constructed buildings) makes it difficult to attract more people to live and work here.

“The proximity to the sea is the big selling point. Here on Ornö there are also large untouched areas of land and nature reserves, which means that public access to active outdoor life would not be significantly limited by new construction in a few more parts of the island,” says Margareta Stenbock von Rosen.

However, as far as the hotel is concerned, she is grateful for the support that the authorities have been able to provide in allowing her to realize her dream. Through the Swedish Board of Agriculture, she sought and was granted certain financial assistance from the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. She also feels that both the municipality and the county administrative board were very helpful in the long process that was required to get all the permits in place – for everything from the construction of the building itself to wastewater technology, water purification, and food handling in the restaurant.

“They saw the need and understood the point of our investment in the tourism industry. Overnight accommodation with a good standard of service creates jobs and opens up the archipelago for more visitors. There have previously been holiday rentals and some bed & breakfasts, but we are Ornö’s first hotel,” says Margareta Stenbock von Rosen.

LIKE HER PARENTS, who saw the number of permanent residents decline from the 1950s onwards, she wants Ornö to be a vibrant place all year round. The ferry connection with the mainland plays an important role, and a young promising politician named Olof Palme² actually played a role in its establishment. In the late 1960s, he was the Minister of Transport and Communications. At a dinner party he bumped into his old classmate Ebba Stenbock – who grew up in the city and moved to Ornö when she married Margareta’s father.

“Palme joked that he’d heard that Mom had ended up on an uninhabited island, and Mom responded that a state-run car ferry was needed to increase access. She told him about how difficult it was to get functional communications, and Palme, who

was a man of action, said ‘Call me tomorrow morning and we’ll see what we can do,’” says Margareta Stenbock von Rosen, who was ten years old at the time and remembers it all as a fun hullo-labadoo.

OLOF PALME URGED Ebba Stenbock to bring some islanders and summer guests to an official lobby meeting at the offices of the Swedish Parliament, where they presented their case to the minister and a number of expert ferry specialists. In the opinion of the experts, the distance was too great to justify a state-run ferry. Instead, another idea came to fruition a few years later. All the property owners on the island established a community

association which acted as the responsible authority for ferry traffic, and the government subsequently granted subsidies covering 80 percent of the costs of running the ferries. The remainder was financed with fees for vehicles and passengers.

“Ornö Sjötrafik was started in 1970. Mom and Dad became entrepreneurs, bought two car ferries and managed the traffic on behalf of the community association. A few years earlier, Dad managed to get permission to parcel out and sell 350 vacation home properties from their landholdings, which provided the necessary initial capital for the ferry business. All the other assets were locked into the entailed estate,” explains Margareta Stenbock von Rosen.

The risk of a reduction in state aid to the community association is constantly imminent. Yet so far the ferry services are still run according to the same arrangement, and with 15 employees Ornö Sjötrafik is the island’s largest employer.

The frequency of services has increased significantly since the 1970s, and the ferry now makes ten to twelve crossings a day, all year round.

“We transport just over 70,000 cars and 150,000 passengers a year. The employees do a fantastic job ensuring that the ferry service runs smoothly, even during the tough winter months. Our vision has always been to make it easier for people to live on Ornö, and the ferry is essential to making that work,” says Margareta Stenbock von Rosen. She points out that it only takes an hour and a half to get here by car from central Stockholm.

TODAY, ORNÖ HAS about 300 residents, and up to ten times as many when the summertime visitors take up residence in their vacation homes. The island has a school, a district museum, and a minibus service, as well as a burgeoning business community with handicraft and service industries including a petrol station, a bakery, a beachfront cafe and electric mini taxis.

As a major property owner on the island, Margareta Stenbock von Rosen has felt a particular responsibility to contribute to the



The ferry makes ten to twelve crossings a day all year round and transports 150,000 passengers and 70,000 cars a year.

island's development and persuade more people to move here, preferably families with children who will breathe life into the school, which both Margareta and her two children (now adults) attended.

However, attractive locations for building vacation homes are in short supply and property prices are high, making it virtually impossible for a young family with a normal income to buy a house on Örnö. Since Margareta Stenbock von Rosen wants the island to be a bustling place all year round, she began to examine the options. Through Lindviken Förvaltning AB, she and her husband Ulric von Rosen have renovated about 20 old summer cottages in their housing stock in recent decades, upgrading them to a permanent home standard that allows them to be rented to year-round residents. This has led to a slight increase in the number of inhabitants on the island.

"Some of the families commute to jobs on the mainland, while others have found employment here. With a growing visitor industry, there's an opportunity for more people to start their own businesses here, but you also have to dare to take that leap. Thanks to the car ferry, you can try to combine life here on the island with a job in the city," says Margareta Stenbock von Rosen. She stresses how important it is to establish a functional everyday life for the whole family when one chooses to settle here.

"Personally, I was fortunate enough to marry a man who understands that Örnö is the center of the world," she adds with a smile.

MARGARETA'S COMMITMENT to the local community is clear, and in all her businesses she exclusively employs people from the island. In addition to the 15 who work with the ferry, the hotel has a year-round staff and five extra employees during the summer season. The main criteria for recruiting staff is that they must be both flexible and humble:

"You have to be prepared to chip in wherever you're needed. I make beds and help in the kitchen to make sure that our guests always get the best possible service. It's also that variety that makes the job and life as a business owner so much fun. I seldom sit still," declares Margareta Stenbock von Rosen. ✕

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- 1 An entailed estate is a decree, usually enshrined in a will, which stipulates that certain property must be handed down through a family or group of people, without being divested, and in a certain specified order (usually according to birthright, with a preference for male offspring). Nowadays, most countries do not allow the creation of entailed estates, and in several countries the existing ones have been done away with, or will soon be abolished. The primary purpose of the formation of an entailed estate was to ensure that the property was transferred to the next generation without being divided and thereby reduced.
- 2 Olof Palme led the Social Democratic Party and was the Prime Minister of Sweden until his death. He was murdered in central Stockholm 1986.

Britt-Marie Ahnell on Utö:

Holiday rentals, conferences, tourist offices, and postal contracts

To manage the seasonal variations, she juggles numerous jobs

The contrasts are clear. On a frosty February day, the guest harbor is peaceful and quiet. Yet on sunny summer days, Utö's largest jetty (where the passenger ferries from the mainland dock) absolutely bubbles with entrepreneurship. Cafes, restaurants, bakeries and activity organizers present their enticing offers to the approximately 200,000 seasonal visitors who come to the island every year.

Most of the people who step off the boats swing by the little red shed that houses the Utö Tourist Office, which is privately operated by Britt-Marie Ahnell. From May to mid-September, she is here almost every day to answer questions and provide tips on what visitors can discover on the island. In addition to beaches and the natural beauty of the archipelago, Utö boasts a rich cultural history as an old mining community, with traces of that industry dating back to the 12th century.

"The fact is that digitalization should make these kinds of personal information services redundant, especially for the younger generation that has grown up with the Internet. But we have lots of young people who come here and say, 'Now that we're here, what can we do?' People want a map and a brochure in their hand," says Britt-Marie Ahnell, who also rents bicycles to those seeking an easy way to explore a little more of the island than the nearby mining village.

HOWEVER, SHE CANNOT make her living running the tourist office. It is operated with the help of a business grant from the municipality of SEK 200,000 per year, which covers the cost of its summer staff.

"So far, the municipality has considered tourist information to be a service for which they should bear the costs, and have therefore awarded the subsidy every three years, following a public procurement process. I've been involved since the very beginning, 25 years ago, and I still think it's just as fun as ever – especially meeting all the people who come here. As long as we win the procurement and the municipality provides the funds, I'll keep this up," says Britt-Marie Ahnell.

Initially it was the Utö Business Association that ran the tourist office. Britt-Marie was engaged to manage the finances and developed the business to include commission-based vacation rental services. After a few years as an employee, she took over the operation of the tourist office and has gradually tacked on



Britt-Marie Ahnell runs, among other things, a tourist information, a hostel and a pharmacy agent.

PHOTO: PRIVATE

PHOTO: BOOKING.COM



Britt-Marie Ahnell runs Gula Villan, which comprises conference services, a hostel and a party room. A lot of logistics has to function in order to live on an island and run a business. Finding staff accommodations for the seasonal workers who come from the mainland is another problem.

more and more parts, giving her more means by which to support her business.

For example, a few years ago she started to serve as a pharmacy agent on the island, and she also has a postal contract that ensures mail delivery for the residents of Utö. The same umbrella company also includes a carpentry business, where her husband works. Britt-Marie also has a separate company through which she runs Gula Villan, which comprises conference services, a hostel and a party room.

“We small business owners who live here year round are used to piecing together various business endeavors to make ends meet. Cooperation between companies is important for developing the island and offering various activities to tourists, and we help make sure that everyone who visits the island feels welcome. We also have common challenges to which we must find solutions. A lot of logistics have to function in order to live here and run a business,” says Britt-Marie Ahnell.

HUBS FOR SMOOTHER transport to and from the mainland are among the issues that have long been discussed among the island’s entrepreneurs. Finding staff accommodations for the seasonal workers who come from the mainland is another problem with which many of them grapple.

“Right now we’re getting by with a variety of solutions – the subletting of summer cottages and the like. I have a small staff accommodation that I rent from Skärgårdsstiftelsen [The archipelago foundation], which I pay for year round even though it’s only used from June to September. The winter season is dead for

us,” says Britt-Marie Ahnell.

Skärgårdsstiftelsen owns a large part of the land and the old buildings on Utö, and rents them out to both private persons (as vacation homes or permanent residences) and companies that operate business such as restaurants and hotels.

“The foundation contributes a great deal by providing land for our operations and collaborating on matters related to the hospitality industry, such as the renting of cottages to short-term residents. But there’s also a constant discussion about how the agreements are drawn up, what should be included in internal and external maintenance of buildings, and the like. The shortage of staff accommodations is another issue we have

been raising with Skärgårdsstiftelsen for quite some time, but so far we haven’t found any sustainable solutions,” says Britt-Marie Ahnell.

She explains that several initiatives have been undertaken. For example, a few years ago the foundation decided to offer a piece of land where the island’s business association was offered the opportunity to construct staff housing for rent, but no one was interested in investing in this because of uncertainties related to the terms of the contract and long-term financing. The companies were afraid that they would be unable to make a return on their financial investment within the allotted time frame.

REGARDLESS OF THE operator and the business, the discussion always returns to the root of the archipelago’s problems: major contrasts between the summer and winter seasons. From a business perspective, it is difficult to justify sitting on expensive premises that are scarcely used for six months out of the year.

“The seasonal variations pose a constant challenge. Most people want to visit the archipelago in the summer, but it’s hard to find folks who want to head out here in the winter,” says Britt-Marie Ahnell. Nonetheless, she notes that matters have improved in recent years.

“When I started at the tourist office, the season was over as soon as the schools started up again after summer vacation. Now there are a lot of events that attract guests well into the fall, at least on weekends.” ✕

Skärgårdsstiftelsen

With the mission of maintaining and developing the archipelago

Opening up to visitors creates opportunities for residents

Utö is the island where Skärgårdsstiftelsen has the most buildings, and many people are concerned about how the island will develop when lease agreements are rewritten and rents are raised. According to the statutes, the mission of the foundation is to “work to preserve the Stockholm Archipelago’s uniqueness, natural values and landscapes while promoting the development of outdoor life, culture, recreation and tourism, taking into account the interests of the resident population”.

This is a complex task, and sometimes it leads to conflicts.

“Our primary mission is to both preserve and develop the lands we own. One clear aim is to safeguard the public’s access to the archipelago. On the other hand, it is not Skärgårdsstiftelsen’s primary mission to ensure the existence of businesses, employment and housing. Yet when we open ourselves up for visitors and provide rental properties, that also creates opportunities for residents,” says Petter Lundgren, Skärgårdsstiftelsen’s regional manager for the southern archipelago and Utö.

THE SPECIAL THING about Utö compared to other foundation-owned areas in the archipelago is that there are so many old heritage buildings in the property portfolio. Several of the houses date from the 18th century and require careful renovation.

“One of the challenges we face is the renovation of our properties. Another is that we must achieve a greater degree of self-



The hostel Skärgården on the island Utö.

PHOTO: CHRISTOFFER THURESSON-BJÖRN/SKÄRGÅRDSSTIFTELSEN

financing through reasonable, market-based rents and leases. We can’t give precedence to any particular type of accommodation and must ensure that all development of the island occurs within the framework of what the nature reserve allows. For example, the construction of new buildings is forbidden, except in instances where an exception to the nature reserve regulations has been applied for and granted by the county administrative board,” explains Petter Lundgren.

He emphasizes that there are several reasons why the lack of staff housing in connection with the tourism-related businesses of the archipelago’s entrepreneurs is a difficult nut to crack.

“Our statutes state that we may not divest ourselves of land or buildings unless doing so is supported by a government decision. However, we can grant the use of land for construction, provided that it is in line with our objectives and that the county administrative board gives its approval.

Even so, often no one wants to make investments on our land. The basic problem is that the season is too short. Many of our entrepreneurs have to pull in a year’s worth of profits in just a few labor-intensive summer months, and can’t be stuck with buildings that are not needed the rest of the year,” says Petter Lundgren. ✕

A large landowner co-financed with public funds

Skärgårdsstiftelsen was established in 1959 at a time when the population of the islands was decreasing dramatically at the same time that interest in the archipelago as a destination for outdoor recreation increased. The basic idea was to safeguard the public’s access to the archipelago’s natural environments, and the foundation gradually bought up new areas. In 1998, the City of Stockholm gifted all its lands in the archipelago to the foundation, doubling its holdings.

Today the foundation owns and manages about 12 percent of the land in the archipelago, including some 40 nature reserves, from the north to the south. In total, Skärgårdsstiftelsen has around 2,000 buildings to take care of, many of which are of major cultural-historical value.

The foundation does not conduct its own commercial activities on its properties. Instead, hostels, pubs, vacation villages, shops and guest harbors are leased to contractors who rent the buildings and run businesses there.

Today 50 percent of the financing for Skärgårdsstiftelsen’s operations is provided through public funds from the county council, but self-financing through leases and rental agreements remains crucial. Private businesses also contribute through sponsorships, and the public provides support through a 16,000-member booster club.

Karin Almlöf on Sandhamn:

A fifth-generation business owner

She works to foster sustainable tourism with a reduced footprint in sensitive marine environments

As the great-great-granddaughter of her namesake Karin Westerberg, who started a general store on Sandhamn in Stockholm's outer archipelago in the late 19th century, becoming a business owner was no major leap for islander Karin Almlöf.

"We grew up in Mom's grocery store, or aboard Dad's cargo boat, so we never saw running one's own business as something special. It's more of a prerequisite for living on an island where there aren't so many employers to choose from. To make a living, you start a company or two. It's a matter of having several legs to stand on when demand varies so much over the course of the year," says Karin Almlöf.

Together with her two sisters, she now continues the family tradition in various company formations. Her older sister Caroline Wedberg has taken over the grocery store and in the summer season her little sister Catharina Almlöf combines work as a sailor with running a kiosk and café in the island's bustling guest harbor, while Karin Almlöf runs a new incarnation of the family's shipping company. The business no longer has its own boats; instead, she arranges sea transport by renting fully outfitted boats – complete with crew – from other entrepreneurs.

"It allows me to operate throughout the archipelago in a more efficient way, for example by choosing the boat that is closest to the customer and coordinating several transports on the same journey. Smart logistics allow me to keep prices down, and now that I'm no longer aboard the boats, I am also able to devote more time to other things," says Karin Almlöf.

IN PARALLEL WITH the shipping business, she also runs the company Greenoffshore, where the goal is to develop solutions for more sustainable tourism, for example through BioDriving. This concept has to do with operating a boat in a manner that is more considerate of the underwater environment and which does not interfere vegetation and wildlife.

"A lot of it has to do with becoming aware of the footprint left by ships and boats when they operate sensitive areas. By changing behavior, it's possible to make a big difference to the marine environment," says Karin Almlöf. She emphasizes that sustainability is a crucial issue for the future of the entire archipelago and its nature-dependent tourism industry.

"When it comes to attracting visitors, the lovely aquatic environment is our special advantage. If we fail to take care of it and ensure that the sea continues to thrive, we will have nothing to live on. Even now we've seen that reports of algal blooms make people hesitant to visit the affected areas. So if there are many such situations or other environmental threats, it will have major consequences for all of us who live and work in the archipelago."



Despite the difficulties, Karin Almlöf sees great potential and many new business opportunities linked to the archipelago's tourism industry.

PHOTO: PRIVATE

Issues related to sustainable tourism are an area Karin Almlöf also works with as chairwoman of the Skärgårdsföretagarna, a business association with just over 200 member companies, all of which are grappling with similar challenges.

"The tourists are necessary to maintaining a living archipelago, but we must free ourselves from the idea that all visitors are good visitors. Sometimes they don't contribute as much as they burden the islands, for example by littering. Guided tours of the outer archipelago in the spring,

when the birds are nesting, aren't a good idea either. That isn't sustainable in any way. To maintain our attractiveness, we need to think more long-term," says Karin Almlöf. She is calling for better support from government authorities and politicians to help keep the archipelago alive.

Communication, infrastructure and competition on equal terms are priority areas in which Skärgårdsföretagarna sees major shortcomings that affect ability of entrepreneurs to run businesses and dare to expand their enterprises in the archipelago.

"We lack many basic functions, such as broadband Internet access, reliable mail and parcel delivery, regular boat services with timetables adapted to the prevailing needs – be they the needs of the hospitality industry or possibilities for commuting to the mainland for us residents. From here on Sandhamn, there's no public transport to the capital between 9 am and 5 pm on regular weekdays without having to spend the night. That creates further obstacles to commuting for work or education," says Karin Almlöf.

DESPITE THE DIFFICULTIES, she sees great potential and many new business opportunities linked to the archipelago's tourism industry. She endeavors to also relay information about these positive developments at network meetings with other entrepreneurs based on the islands, including within the context of the Archipelago Business Development project.

"Digitalization entails better ways to reach out to specific target groups with marketing and targeted activities. We've also noted that interest in the sea is increasing, not least among young people who want to learn more about this important resource. Growing climate anxiety is also leading environmentally conscious city dwellers to reduce their air travel and opt for "staycations", which means that more people are coming here to enjoy what we have to offer in their immediate vicinity," concludes Karin Almlöf. ✖

A comparative study of entrepreneurial responses and local development on three islands:

Facing business challenges with the Stockholm Archipelago as a context

by **Paulina Rytönen, Tommy Larsson-Segerlind, Gustaf Onn, Lars Degerstedt, and Mauri Kaipainen**

The Stockholm Archipelago is often considered a remote rural area in Sweden comparable to and no different than other rural areas. Recently, however, some official documents have concluded that the Stockholm Archipelago (hereafter called the Archipelago) differs widely from what normally is seen as a remote rural area. Therefore, to make accurate decisions and to develop policies suited for the Archipelago it is necessary to broaden current official Swedish socio-geographical classifications with a new category that grasps the actual conditions and characteristics of the Archipelago.¹

The Archipelago is located within the most dynamic economic region in Sweden (and the world according to different rankings). In spite of their proximity to the largest market in Sweden, local businesses in the Archipelago to a large extent operate in the shadow of the urban capital.

Over the last decades, a number of policy initiatives, strategies, and development projects have been launched to support sustainable socio-economic development in the Archipelago. A common feature of policies and initiatives is that the Archipelago is approached as a homogenous region. Policies recognize that improving transport and accessibility to islands without bridges is important for the future,

but actual investments have until now failed and most other aspects, including economic development, have been considered under the same frame as rural businesses and areas on the mainland, with no considerations to the geospatial features of the Archipelago. For example, investments to overcome the geospatial challenges in the Archipelago are insignificant, and all of the appointed development hubs are urban. At the same time, the physical attractiveness of the Archipelago is highlighted as crucial for attracting tourists to Stockholm.² Thus, the subordination of the Archipelago vis-à-vis the urban area of Stockholm is constantly reproduced by policies. In addition, when looking at the industries highlighted in development plans and policies, a key argument is that the heavy dependence on tourism needs to be broken;³ however, most public investments are directed towards promoting the tourism industry, while important future industries, such as energy and cleantech, IT-based service industries, and consultancies have until now been neglected.⁴ Therefore, one question raised in this study is if the Archipelago should be perceived as a homogeneous region or if it is better to use a more local perspective and level of analysis to capture, explain, and/or promote entrepreneurial and economic opportunities and obstacles in the Archipelago.

abstract

By conducting a comparative qualitative and systematic study of the local (island) pre-conditions for creating sustainable socio-economic development through entrepreneurship, here defined as a process of identifying, evaluating, and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities, this study aims to shed light on entrepreneurial responses to challenges and opportunities on three islands in the Stockholm Archipelago and how context influences these responses.

KEY WORDS: entrepreneurship, archipelago, business challenges, local development



Stockholm Archipelago. Map by Mona Petersson.

To our knowledge, there are no previous studies or reports that highlight differences in entrepreneurial dynamics and outcomes within and between islands, but a pilot study conducted at an early stage in our project indicates that business owners on some islands have managed to create a more dynamic local environment and have achieved some interesting entrepreneurial outcomes, while inhabitants on other islands are still struggling with the same problems as they were decades ago.⁵ These differences cannot easily be dismissed as a result of differences in physical infrastructure or spatial geographical differences, and they can also be the result of local institutions, they can be defined as formal and informal rules and constraints, and they can be connected to local contextual issues, all of which cause more or less path-dependent behavior among business owners and entrepreneurs.

In fact, in an overview conducted by King in 2009,⁶ he concludes that the outsider and inward-looking perspective of scholars leads to a focus on geographical concepts such as time and space and/or geographical features. Some recurring themes and explanatory variables are smallness, insularity, and economic handicaps. Thus, most studies miss out on islanders' outward-looking orientation and by doing so they also miss out on single agent's or groups of agents' agency.

We are aware that we, as scholars, are outsiders in relation to the Archipelago, but we have tried to "bring the entrepreneur and the island back in" by highlighting their perspective and thus taking into consideration the critique issued by King.⁷ The research process leading up to this article was therefore mostly

inductive, letting entrepreneurs and groups of entrepreneurs on the islands present their issues, their concerns, and their ideas. In addition, our approach differs from previous studies by offering a new way to study entrepreneurship on islands and by problematizing concepts that are new to this discussion.

By conducting a comparative, qualitative, and systematic study of the local (island) pre-conditions for creating sustainable socio-economic development through entrepreneurship, here defined as a process of identifying, evaluating, and exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities,⁸ this study aims to shed light on entrepreneurial responses to challenges and opportunities on three islands in the Archipelago and how context influences these responses. The following questions will be addressed: What makes entrepreneurial responses/communities on some islands in the archipelago vibrant and resilient and others less so? In what ways do context and social capital influence individual and collective business decisions and outcomes? What are the causes behind negative lock-in mechanisms and (risk of) failure?

Methods and sources

The methodology behind this article rests on two approaches. First, the data collection departed from an inductive, qualitative case study approach by studying "a spatially or temporarily delimited phenomenon (a unit) observed at a single point in time or over some period of time"⁹ and relying on naturalistic (real-life) data, triangulation, group interviews and in-depth interviews with the objects of study (entrepreneurs), and literature reviews.¹⁰ To increase the internal validity and help us systematize the analysis process, we also employed a comparative approach. Comparisons contribute to the conceptualization of results and to the development of new theory departing from a more or less inductive approach.¹¹ In this article the comparison is implemented at one level, namely the *comparison of interviews from different groups* (i.e. results from respondents from different islands). Comparative entrepreneurial studies can contribute to understand the contextual differences within and between regions, local groups, and individual firms.¹² The method was also influenced by a phenomenographic approach¹³ in the sense that we departed from an inductive approach and that we were trying to identify variations in the perceptions between groups and individuals. The latter was done by using phenomenography to elaborate on the interview answers¹⁴.

To secure the robustness, credibility, and confirmability of the study, we implemented triangulation of methods (phenomenography, triangulation, comparison) and of sources (interviewing business owners both individually and as groups, business organization representatives, and public officers involved in business development in the Archipelago). Rather than triangulating theories, we implemented an inductive approach with the ambition to find better tools to analyze entrepreneurship in the Archipelago. To ensure the dependability of the data, the results from the study were presented to and discussed with the partners in Finland who performed the same study on the Finn-

ish side of the Archipelago. We also shared our results with some of the firms after the results were summarized and anonymized. Because it was not possible to get feedback from all firms, we focused on requesting feedback from and discussing our results with business association representatives. Although we recognize that the study has a limited geographical focus, we believe that departing from the width and depth of previous literature allows us some ground for transferability.

While most previous analyses and studies have treated the Archipelago as a uniform body and as one unit and region with the same challenges and opportunities, this article studies the dynamics and differences in the Archipelago from within, thus allowing us to shed light on the differences within and between different parts of the Archipelago.

The initial sources used are a database containing information about 1,599 firms in the Archipelago in 2014. The content of the database offers valuable input to understand the structure and composition of the supply side of the market. We complemented the database with updated data about the businesses on the three islands in focus, and we conducted in-depth interviews with business owners (either in groups or individually) on the three islands (I1, I2, I3). Additional interviews were conducted with business development officers in the municipalities in which the islands are located. I1 is located in municipality 1 (M1), and I2 and I3 are located in municipality M2. We also used public policy reports. Due to ethical considerations, our informants were anonymized using a code for each island and for each informant. The interviews are accounted for below in Table 1.

Entrepreneurship on islands

“Island entrepreneurship” has been coined as a concept to highlight and include the specific challenges experienced by entrepreneurs running businesses in island environments. Islandness means that businesses have limited amounts of resources, including land and natural resources, that it is difficult to achieve agglomeration effects, and that access to the local market and logistics are limited due to the physical characteristics of islands.¹⁵ In general terms, this also applies to the Archipelago. However, archipelago entrepreneurship differs from entrepreneurship on single islands because the geospatial features of archipelagos also include local contextual aspects of several islands and the interactions between islands and the mainland.

There is wide consensus in previous research that agglomeration, access to markets and resources, reasonable infrastructure, the presence of human capital, moderate competition over available resources, a formal and reasonably high educational level and/or the presence of needed skills and know-how, high levels of employment, financial stability and availability of capital, technological progress, a tax level and tax structure that helps stimulate businesses, relatively stable prices, and favorable institutions that stimulate the allocation of activities and resources, decrease incentives for over bureaucratizing society, and prevent corruption are important determining factors behind successful entrepreneurial development.¹⁶ An additional pre-condition or determining factor behind entrepreneurial development

Table 1. Group interviews

Municipality	Orientation of participants	Date
M1	Boat workshop/shipyard (1), Restaurant and hotel (1), Shipping and logistics (2), Convenience store (1), Gift shop (1), Activity tourism (1)	13/10 2017
M2	Shipping/commuter boat (1), Taxi business (1), Gas station and convenience store (1), Shipyard (1), IT- infrastructure and software development (1), Hotel/restaurant, B&B (1).	16/11 2017
M2	Representatives from the municipality (2) Tourism destination businesses (2), Cottage rental (2), Restaurant/hotel (1), Brewery (1), Boat taxi (1), Gift and clothing store (1).	1/6 2017

Table 2. Individual in-depth interviews and orientation of businesses

Municipality	Business orientation*
M2	Brewery/food artisan
M2	Fish and vegetable production
M2	Hotel and restaurant
M2	Tourism, cottages, conferences, and carpentry
M2	Tourism destination businesses
M2	Boat taxi
M2	Shipping/commuter boat
M2	Taxi company
M2	Gas station and convenience store
M2	Boat workshop/shipyard
M2	Digitalization infrastructure and software development
M2	Restaurant and food artisan
M2	Tourist office/destination development and construction company
M1	Sales of handicrafts, local art, and maritime and local souvenirs
M1	Tourism and destination development
M1	Retail
M1	Boat workshop/shipyard
M1	Hotel and restaurant
M1	Management consultancy, logistics, shipping, and related activities
M1	Tourism and destination development

* Orientation was defined from the official description in the company's registration certificate

highlighted in recent decades is globalization – a force that is claimed to either promote or hamper entrepreneurship.¹⁷

To cope with the shortcomings of islandness under the specific geospatial characteristics of the Archipelago, the state (at the regional level) has developed and applied different policies to either compensate for spatial and contextual challenges or to reinforce underlying factors that create favorable business conditions.¹⁸ Such policies are not unique for the Archipelago; in fact, the state has for decades systematically favored entrepreneurship as a tool for meeting the challenges of globalization in rural and remote areas.¹⁹ However, as Nuur and Laestadius stated in 2010, the impact of these strategies on local and regional development has seldom been studied.

The Archipelago is characterized by several distinctive features that increase the complexity of the area. In addition to its remoteness (i.e. most islands can only be reached by boat), the Archipelago is officially classified as an economically less favored/marginal area. One of its main challenges is that it is located within the same regional boundaries of the larger Stockholm County; therefore, the Archipelago exists in the shadow of the dynamic urban economic center. The structural dependence of the Archipelago on the economy of the capital city shows signs of a classic case of core-periphery dynamics.²⁰

According to public reports, some of the main challenges for businesses in the Archipelago are a heavy dependence on tourism, short seasons, high logistical and transportation costs, the inability to reach the majority of islands other than by boat, an ageing population, sparse social infrastructure (hospitals, schools, elderly homes, etc.), a steadily decreasing number of people in the workforce, a negative migration ratio,²¹ unsuitable environmental regulations, and poor information and communication technology infrastructure.²²

New policies to promote and enable entrepreneurship are launched every few years, but although regional and state policies are the same for the entire Archipelago, our empirical results show that when islands with similar availability (can be reached by boat or by bridge), infrastructure (or lack of infrastructure), population size, etc., are compared, the outcomes in terms of entrepreneurial responses (and thereby also economic results) vary widely.²³

In the academic literature, different types of entrepreneurship are highlighted, namely innovative, imitative, and unproductive.²⁴ In the case of the Archipelago, the differences observed between islands can be classified as innovative entrepreneurship (i.e. combining available resources in new ways and finding new ways to achieve economic success) or as passive business ownership (i.e. just running a business as it always has been done, showing clear signs of resistance against change, and not responding to opportunities and challenges), with many different combinations of these two in between. There are also signs of unproductive entrepreneurship, which is exemplified by the actions of businesses that are located outside the region and that use the Archipelago brand and its resources without contributing to the creation of income in local communities in the Archipelago. One specific example is the presence of “rib

boats” that take on food and tourists in central Stockholm and visit the Archipelago but leave only waste and environmental damage to the seabed and the islands. There are also large international cruise ships that are allowed to dump their grey water just outside the Archipelago when they pass through to central Stockholm.²⁵

Analytical framework

Within the field of island studies,²⁶ it is argued that entrepreneurial success on islands is related to local ownership, small firms, an export-oriented industry (that produces commodities rather than services), and technologies adapted to local conditions. Thus, the explanatory factors are related to the structure of the economy rather than the causes behind the structure. Other scholars highlight the role of social embeddedness as a vehicle to promote or hamper entrepreneurship, where personal relations and exchange are key features. This line of research problematizes the effects of differences or similarities between company/personal goals and community goals.²⁷ At the same time, although social embeddedness might help us to understand what individual entrepreneurial decisions are related to, i.e. how they reproduce path-dependency,²⁸ social embeddedness is not equipped to help us understand the underlying causes of entrepreneurial responses and patterns. Thus, we argue that there is a need to develop new theoretical concepts for studying islands. In addition, it is also essential to emphasize here the fact that this study has an archipelago as its object of study; therefore, any conceptual tool used in the analysis needs to include and embrace the “bigger picture” and all those aspects that might influence each island within the Archipelago differently. This is why our search for an analytical framework starts off from context.

Societies, regions, and individual firms engage in entrepreneurial responses depending on many different contextual, spatial, endogenous, and exogenous aspects.²⁹ Some of the most critical aspects of entrepreneurship, e.g. identifying and exploiting economic opportunities under conditions of genuine uncertainty,³⁰ are enabled by the characteristics of the opportunity combined with the nature of the habitus/social capital in the local community becoming the vehicle that enables or hampers entrepreneurship.³¹ There is currently an intense debate that argues for the need to contextualize the study of entrepreneurship.³² Scholars propose that context should be the main unit of analysis instead of entrepreneurs and outcomes and that the focus on context will avoid the objectification of entrepreneurship and open up for discussing the becoming entrepreneurship.³³ Business context – i.e. the existence of different types of capital, institutional settings, and policies – influences business activities in different ways, and social (values, skills, priorities, and attitudes), cultural, political, geographical, and economic contexts can positively or negatively affect the way in which business act and perform.³⁴

One argument is that the possibility of discovering and exploiting opportunities is always context dependent. External conditions in society might promote or hamper entrepreneurship and thereby also influence economic development at any

level of aggregation. Jelinek and Litterer³⁵ argue that the study of entrepreneurship needs to highlight cognitive aspects of society and context in order to make sense of entrepreneurial actions and responses (or lack thereof). The mentioned arguments have gained recognition among scholars who increasingly underline the role of context as pivotal to the study of entrepreneurship.³⁶

Contextualization implies the consideration of situational and temporal boundaries and opportunities for entrepreneurship – theoretically as well as methodologically. Welter proposes the operationalization of context departing from four dimensions, namely *Industry* (the degree of maturity of existing industries and markets and the number and nature of competitors), *Social networks* (in this case families/households as well as their composition and roles, the structure of networks within and between islands, and the nature of network relations), *Spatial geographical environments* (in this case islands, communities, and neighborhoods, industrial districts and clusters, the characteristics of physical business locations, the business support infrastructure, and the characteristics of local communities), and *Institutional culture and society* (political and economic systems, societal attitudes and norms, legal and regulatory aspects, and policy and support measures).³⁷ But while Welter's contribution can be useful for categorizing and maybe even organizing a study, each category needs to be problematized and given a conceptual content.

It can be beneficial to dig deeper into the social, institutional, and cultural aspects of local communities. A discussion that can be fruitful for this purpose deals with social capital, e.g. a theoretical strand that highlights how social interactions, social ties and relations, the existence of trust or distrust, and value systems influences the actions of individuals or groups of people within a social context. As such, social capital is considered to be the underlying force behind positive and successful social interaction and the engine behind positive networks.³⁸ Social capital is described as “both the glue that binds to create a network and also the lubricant that eases and energizes network interaction”.³⁹

Institutions also influence the possibility of exploiting entrepreneurial opportunities.⁴⁰ While formal institutions (e.g. laws, rules, and formal restrictions) are easy to identify, the role of informal institutions (e.g. business culture, deeply rooted habits, traditions, well established and dominating ways of thinking, etc.) can be perceived as more diffuse. However, institutions have the power to channel entrepreneurial actions in a productive direction⁴¹ by offering tools to understand “the bigger picture” and to connect it to the micro context in which the firm operates. Institutions are often described as “history condensed into our actions”⁴² or as a “measurement of the degree of economic freedom in society”.⁴³ In this study, context is used as a starting point for creating a general analytical framework, but we also test concepts that can help us to dig deeper into the different dimensions of context. This study therefore aims to con-

tribute theoretically by problematizing context and by borrowing some concepts from institutional theory and social capital and the interaction between them.

Entrepreneurial responses on the three islands

Island 1

I1 has since the 19th century been a popular tourist destination in the Archipelago. During the summer the island receives over 100,000 visitors who arrive with the public commuter boat or by private boats that stop by to take on fuel and/or water, eat at the local restaurants and bars, or participate in other activities. There are also 2,500 summer cabins. The local economy is highly dependent on the summer season, but lately some efforts have been made to increase the number of visitors during the Christmas season.⁴⁴ In addition, in recent years a large number of new houses have been built on the island and new people have moved in. The island also has a long history of hosting some smaller state agencies. One of the advantages of I1 is that the business activities on the island, and most of the housing, are concentrated and located close to the guest harbor and the public jetty, and thus there are also large areas of unexploited nature for recreation.⁴⁵ I1 has a permanent year-round public transportation line, and the regional authorities have appointed I1 as one of its transport hubs for the surrounding islands.⁴⁶ In addition, private ferry lines use the island as a destination. With the exception of the hotels, many local businesses are characterized as small or solo businesses with diversification strategies and with

a portfolio of activities and services during different parts of the season (interview, chairman of the business association, 2018). It is notable that despite the very large number of visitors, especially in the summer season, the island has a small number of businesses compared to other islands. Moreover, the internal competition between business activities is low, with often just one or few busi-

ness actors in each niche or sector.

Lately, businesses on I1 have been exposed to several challenges. First, a large annual event that used to take place on the island was relocated to the urban city center in Stockholm because the city offers “more recreational opportunities, better and wider food offerings, and a more exciting environment”.⁴⁷ Second, the largest employer and hotel/conference venue has failed financially. Since 2017 it has only been open when it was booked for conferences, and it is now for sale. Third, a prohibition against refilling freshwater in private boats was recently adopted by the regional authorities. These three challenges constitute a future risk for all local businesses. The financial problems of the large hotel/conference venue led to a decrease in income for several firms, and two small firms were forced to close down for the winter. The attitude from Stockholm is just one of many examples of how outsiders exploit the Archipelago landscapes

“WE ARGUE THAT THERE IS A NEED TO DEVELOP NEW THEORETICAL CONCEPTS FOR STUDYING ISLANDS.”

(where the actual competition will take place) without giving anything back to the local community.

Business responses to upcoming challenges have been quite different. Some business owners claim that the island has a sufficiently strong trademark and therefore there is no need to act or react to recent challenges with the argument that “people will come anyway”,⁴⁸ and during the warm summer of 2018 they estimate that they had a record number of visitors.

There have been some former unsuccessful initiatives “to prolong the summer season”. A major problem with these initiatives is that the climate and weather in the early or late summer season do not fulfill the expectation from the visitors as a “summer destination”.

There is growing awareness from some of the entrepreneurs of the necessities to instead develop “new seasons” to attract visitors also during autumn, winter, and spring. One problem is that the I1 trademark is very positioned as a summer destination, but also that the local business community has not been able to mobilize collective action to develop new attractions and activities for new seasons. Another shortcoming on the island is the lack of affordable housing solutions for employees, especially during the summer season.

Social capital and institutions

On I1 there is a long tradition of handling common problems by establishing associations. There are eleven associations on I1, some of which are the business association and some important landowner and road associations. In contrast to the rest of the Archipelago where most of the land is owned by public entities, most land on I1 is privately owned⁴⁹ and some key locations are owned cooperatively through associations. An advantage on I1 is that they have succeeded in making some recent investments in new houses, and old buildings have been renovated. There is a long tradition of local autonomy, and locals prefer to find local solutions to problems without the involvement of authorities from the mainland or other islands. Lately the Swedish state has located some smaller government agencies on the island. During the individual interviews, the entrepreneurs expressed an awareness of the need to cooperate locally to solve local problems, and during the group interview the entrepreneurs expressed a collective frustration about a communication gap between themselves and the public authorities. The islanders claim that the authorities do not take into consideration the specific contextual circumstances of running a business on an island. This gap can be confirmed by comparing the interviews with the entrepreneurs to those with the municipality officers. On I1, several entrepreneurs are trying to find support for the development of “new seasons”, while officials in the municipality (M1) and the support systems are oriented towards “prolonging the summer season”. Thus, the entrepreneurial perspective is not always present in the minds and policies of local authorities. One of the public documents referred to by public officials shows that the mainland is the priority of the municipality and the county council. M1 has no specialized officers for Archipelago businesses⁵⁰, and the archipelago is officially considered to be

a tourism and recreation destination to serve the needs of the urban population.

The business association on I1 is characterized by having a vague mandate. The association has mostly focused on common issues related to infrastructure on the island, e.g. waste disposal problems and freshwater issues. The business association was involved in a publically financed project to further develop I1 as a tourism destination, but when the money for the project was used up the engagement dropped.⁵¹ In addition, when a larger hotel on the island started to have financial problems, no one else stepped in to take the lead in the destination project. During the individual interviews, it was expressed that there are rather few businesses on the island and that these simultaneously run several different types of business activities. In that sense, most of the entrepreneurs are highly intertwined in complex social networks and associations in which they play several different roles depending on the purpose and mandate of the specific context. The entrepreneurs confirmed that the initial enthusiasm to solve common problems or to act on common opportunities only lasts a few years if the proposed solutions meet resistance. The entrepreneurs also expressed how it is quite exhausting to contribute and invest unpaid time in making changes for the better of the greater business community while at the same time running several of their own businesses.⁵² The business association needs to internally balance the interests of different sectors on the island. If the focus is too heavy on tourism, businesses within construction or other sectors will lose their commitment.

In general, business owners seem to trust each other, although the entrepreneurs have different agendas and some are more progressive and future oriented, while others want things to remain as they have always been. There are two main causes behind the lack of collective, proactive entrepreneurial responses to emerging challenges. First, the differences between companies looking at future industries (in addition to tourism) and those who want to preserve their economic activities as they always have been are quite large. An example is the quality of accommodations offered to visitors. Some entrepreneurs claim that there is a need to offer modern or at least updated quality (i.e. single bedrooms with an in-suite bathroom) to attract visitors all year around and especially business conferences. Such a development is important to all entrepreneurs because even the ones with the smallest businesses are dependent on the success of others. At the same time, other entrepreneurs claim that visitors are spoiled and therefore they offer their services only to customers who “understand that the standard in the Archipelago is simpler than elsewhere”. Therefore, investments in the modernization of accommodation simply do not take place. Second, the fixation on having a strong trademark tends to eliminate incentives for investing in marketing the island, which probably prevents potential visitors from knowing about ongoing or future events and activities.

In terms of social capital, numerous interactions, social ties, and relations emerge between business owners, not the least because there are few entrepreneurs and because local businesses depend on each other's success, especially that of the larger ac-

tors. In addition, all of them operate in close proximity to each other, but they have different values and interpretations about the future, and this paralyzes the business collective and prevents it from reacting to emerging challenges. Moreover, local rules and established practices, such as the distrust towards the power structures in the mainland, have become institutionalized and play against the possibility of getting additional support to overcome the challenges that businesses currently face. Thus, the tension between local and regional and national institutions seems to be one of the main challenges on I1, and the interviews clearly show that entrepreneurs have no answers for how to handle this.

Island 2

I2 is one of the largest islands in the Archipelago. Business activities and houses are spread all over the island, although the major businesses related to tourism are located in relation to the public jetty and the guest harbor. I2 receives some 100,000 visitors every year, mostly during the summer, but the largest hotel also arranges conferences for businesses from the mainland and a number of activities are offered all year around, thus guests are present during the entire year. In addition, during the Christmas season (which starts in November) a large number of firms arrange their Christmas parties with customers and staff on I2. Local business owners and inhabitants have been skillful at attracting investments in infrastructure, which are promoted and financially supported by the municipality. One example is a recent investment in new and updated walking/biking paths, including an outdoor gym, which helps the island to profile itself as a destination for an active vacation. Efforts to get financing from official funding are channeled through the business association. I2 has also managed to attract a new and large sports activity that takes place during the off-season. It has also become a base that attracts visitors who come to train for different sporting events during the off season. In addition, I2 profiles itself through cultural activities, and several museums and historical places have been updated and made available.⁵³ Also, because the largest hotel is open all year around, I2 also profiles itself as a place to relax and eat good food. I2 can be reached through public ferries all year around, but public transports to the island are seen as a major problem by entrepreneurs because changes in timetables are unpredictable and because of poor coordination between different public transportation systems from Stockholm.⁵⁴

I2 faces several challenges. First, the armed forces have traditionally engaged in intensive activities on the waters that surround the island. Business owners agree that rules set by the armed forces restrict their investments because considerations for security issues often lead to prohibitions against business activities (for example, establishing a brewery). Second, major parts of the land and properties are owned by the Archipelago

Foundation. Leases are relatively short term, and the Foundation demands that investments made by tenants are passed on to the Foundation no later than 10 years after the investment has been made. Thus, because most of the land and buildings in the Archipelago are in the hands of the Foundation (due to a decision reached by the state), the ownership structure eliminates investment incentives and negatively affects the possibility of updating many facilities or establishing new businesses. Third, it is difficult to recruit staff with the needed experience, and if a person is recruited there is no affordable housing available (either to rent or to buy). Thus, the property market constitutes a constraint towards businesses. Fourth, the population is getting older and thus there is a need to increase public services, but the possibility of establishing a nursing home, for example, is restricted by the lack of agglomeration and problems related to access to properties (see above). Fifth, Wi-Fi capacity is a

challenge because passengers on boats passing by or day visitors might take up all the available Wi-Fi, which disables payment terminals for credit cards, etc.⁵⁵

Local responses to various challenges have in a sense been quite dynamic, although this approach does not apply to all

business owners. The local business association is the forum in which solutions to problems are found collectively. For example, the night staff working at the local pub are responsible for attending emergency calls from the elderly during evenings and nights, and this enables some older inhabitants to remain on the island.

One of the most important strategic decisions has been to organize a publically funded project to develop the island as a tourism destination with an elaborated focus on creating new tourism seasons rather than focusing on extending the summer season. Although entrepreneurs claim that they still have a long way to go, they seem to have a plan and they are managing to implement it step by step. A key factor behind this positive trend is that business associations quite early on decided to engage in digital marketing and the implementation of a business development strategy that embraces the principles of the digital economy. One important reason behind this attitude is that the leading businesses have worked in a pro-active fashion, especially by increasing the number of visitors by developing new attractions that helped to create new tourism seasons. The largest business on I2 has also gradually diversified without crowding out other businesses. The positive effects spill over from larger to smaller businesses as the new visitors walk around, make purchases in the local shops, rent boat taxi services, and also visit and buy various things from other local businesses. Not all the businesses agree with the chosen strategy, but they accept the actions of the stronger firms because they benefit from the actions of stronger and more active partners. One example is that there was an initial resistance against digitalization of the island's value offer and the new orientation toward tourism, but since these changes

“THE TENSION BETWEEN LOCAL AND REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SEEMS TO BE ONE OF THE MAIN CHALLENGES.”

were adopted all businesses have profited from them. The tension caused by the different approaches illustrates a generational gap and possible differences in access to capital (not everybody has the necessary capital to develop their businesses). Moreover, employing qualified staff to narrow the gap with other businesses is difficult, not only because of the problems mentioned above, but also because employers with outdated businesses and lack of capital cannot compete with businesses that can offer both a good salary and development possibilities⁵⁶.

Social capital and institutions

It seems that the business association on I2 works decisively to solve problems, often in collaboration with public authorities. The business association and the entrepreneurs on I2 seem to take advantage of the opportunities and support offered by the municipality or the state by upgrading or developing infrastructure and other projects with financial support from local/central government. The business association is furthermore characterized by a rather hierarchical structure with a few influential individuals at the top who are closely linked to a publically funded destination project and to the strongest businesses. The interviews show trust in the business association and a strong mandate from the entrepreneurs to represent them and to work for their common interest. The work of the leading group within the association has been decisive for the economic upturn on the island. The business association shows a collective learning ability, and their comprehensive analysis of the role of social media in a business model has led to a new and deeper understanding by most entrepreneurs of the demands from potential new visitors. Interviews with entrepreneurs and the municipality also showed that the more hierarchical structure of the local business association has enabled communication with different public authorities to take place in a positive and efficient manner. The attitude is reciprocal, and the municipality (M2) has facilitated the communication by appointing an officer with a specific responsibility for Archipelago businesses.

The negative side of the hierarchical structure of the business association and the focus on developing the island as a year-round destination is that entrepreneurs in other sectors, for example, IT-consultants and builders, feel neglected by the narrow focus on tourism. There are also indications that some firms in other industries have left the island or reduced their activities. In addition, the interviews indicate that the high level of trust in the leading persons in the business association is used as an excuse by some entrepreneurs not to get involved in activities to increase the specific skills and business competences that could have been crucial to developing their own businesses.

Island 3

I3 is a large island with more than 200 permanent residents. In contrast to the other two islands, only around 25,000 tourists visit I3 every year, mainly during the summer season. Transports to I3 are run by the regionally owned Waxholm Ferries and by a private car ferry line that transports people, cars, and goods several times per day every day, all year round. There is also

a permanent bus connection within the island.⁵⁷ The car ferry enables people to commute to work on a daily basis and was initiated in the 1970s. At that time residents had difficulties taking care of their daily affairs on the mainland because there were no regular transports, thus a simple visit to the doctor required planning and staying overnight on the mainland. The government decided that establishing a regular public ferry to I3 would be too expensive, therefore a private initiative managed to find a solution to this problem by finding a way (with the support of government experts) to subsidize a private ferry. The solution was a re-interpretation of the implementation of the rural road subsidy regulations. This new interpretation allowed the private ferry company to start this business because the rural road subsidy made it possible to charge affordable prices to commuters.⁵⁸

The number of businesses is limited, but their orientation is quite varied. There are large unexploited areas and some protected natural areas with interesting flora and a rich bird life. The population is scattered between two main locations. There are roads and trails for walking and biking,⁵⁹ but the roads are not built to carry heavy loads, therefore local transport of heavy goods is a challenge. Most walking paths are privately owned and sometimes covered by old easement arrangements that are difficult to follow and/or combine with modern ownership rights.⁶⁰

The community is active in a large number of local associations working for various purposes, but there is no business association, which was highlighted as a shortcoming by some entrepreneurs, while others expressed that they did not want additional associations. The central meeting point is a community center that holds a smaller library and the hub for the high-speed IT cable.⁶¹ Until recently there was also a restaurant and a small shop, but the lack of visitors and new online-based food delivery services drove them out of business. On I3, tourism is still a marginal activity, but various stakeholders agree that there is a large potential for increasing tourism and attracting visitors, not the least because a modern hotel and a B&B were opened during 2017/2018.⁶²

Businesses on the island face several challenges. First, the land ownership structure has historically been very unevenly distributed, and this has conditioned social and economic relations for generations. Second, zoning plans are not updated for the island, and businesses have not been able to reach a consensus on how new zoning plans should be outlined and what businesses would be appropriate to establish on the available land. Third, the island does not have a port to load and unload goods, and the jetty used by the car ferry is too small and inadequate, especially for heavy transports. Fourth, the private car ferry line is threatened by the state's plans to withdraw subsidies to rural roads, which would decrease the possibility to commute to work on a daily basis. Fifth, the community (and especially the second home owners) in the place where the car ferry docks on the mainland work against the possibility of using the jetty in the future because they feel that their summer paradise is destroyed by the traffic passing to and from the ferry.⁶³

Traditionally, businesses have emerged and acted individually on some issues that are of common interest. In general, the municipality grasps some of the more problematic issues, but

some entrepreneurs have especially good relations with regional and national authorities and through these relations they have been able to influence the development of the island in a positive way, for example, by enabling the company that runs the private car ferry to keep the ferry running through public support from state funds for rural roads. In addition, a few entrepreneurs have managed to become assigned on behalf of the regional authorities to conduct some investigations regarding issues that are important for I3.

Social capital and institutions

With the absence of a formal business association, there is no clear forum to discuss, represent, or work on common local business questions. The interviews revealed a high degree of fragmentation. The absence of a representative business forum on the island also means problems with the communication between the municipality and the local business community on I3. When discussing social capital and institutions on I3, it seems inevitable to depart from history because the interviews showed that a historically rooted way to solve problems has been to form associations on order to gather forces and to cope with the power imbalances caused by the uneven distribution of land (with one large private landowner on the island). The practice of forming or running specialized associations has continued until today, and while some stakeholders are positive towards this practice, others resent it for preventing local stakeholders from being able to leave past relationship dynamics behind them. On I3 there are two nodes of development, one revolves around several relatively new small-scale businesses who show enthusiasm for investing in the future. One of these investments is the recent installation of a high-speed IT connection to all of the households and firms. It was possible to achieve consensus on this because one of the new firms has the necessary knowledge and can afford to do the installation for a fraction of the cost and because this is of general interest for all inhabitants and summer guests. However, to achieve broader business development and to attract new firms to the island, it is necessary that entrepreneurs from the second development node, composed by the larger landowners, are willing to sell land or to make it available through other arrangements. No consensus has yet been reached between entrepreneurs in the two nodes about this issue.

The members of the second node are also quite active and creative. One example is the way in which one family circumvented the ban on building close to the water, the so-called Beach Protection Act⁶⁴. The family purchased old buildings located just by the water (which were built long before the Beach Protection Act was adopted), some of which were actual ruins. Thereafter, permission to renovate them was applied for from the municipality. Because the buildings were already in place by the water (even though it was a long time ago that they were last used), it was possible to get the renovation permit and build a hotel with modern standards. The lack of a modern hotel that could offer venues for meetings and serving lunch was recognized as a shortcoming by all of the entrepreneurs during the

first group interview. The establishment of the new hotel was an important step forward in the future development of I3.⁶⁵

An unfortunate consequence of the lack of unity between business owners on I3 is that the business association located in the mainland port from which the car ferry arrives and departs is trying to move in and satisfy its own needs by annexing the island's entrepreneurs. This contributes to fomenting a business environment in which collective action within the entrepreneurial community becomes more and more difficult.⁶⁶

Thus, on I3 old structures and institutional arrangements and old practices clearly work against building social capital because actions by individuals and groups are influenced in such a way that general entrepreneurial development is inhibited. Fragmentation also contributes to limiting the possibility of getting as much as possible from public funds, and although the municipality (M2) shows an understanding of the challenges of entrepreneurship on the islands (see I2), the lack of coordination from the local businesses on I3 helps to create a more passive attitude from M2 vis á vis I3.

Social capital, institutions, and entrepreneurial responses

In the sections above, results from the individual islands have been presented. In the table on next page, the results are further elaborated by comparing different groups.

An important result of the comparison above is that none of the explanatory factors behind successful entrepreneurship put forward in previous research, e.g. local ownership, small firms, an export-oriented industry that produces commodities rather than services, and technologies adapted to local conditions, were found to be important on these islands. At the individual/firm level, conflicting formal institutions at different levels (nation, region) are quite relevant obstacles, but other aspects such as the possibility of investing in a property were also found to be important.

The differences illustrated by the table above highlight that entrepreneurial dynamics and outcomes are clearly influenced by local contextual and institutional factors, which in turn condition the businesses' space for action and the development of (collective) social capital. There is a clear interaction between the creation of a dynamic entrepreneurial environment and formal and informal institutions and collective action. What, then, are the local factors that influence entrepreneurial responses, i.e. how do they act when faced with opportunities and challenges?

First of all, the building of social capital and, in particular, collective social capital, seems to be fundamental in order for a positive development spiral to gain momentum. In the illustrated cases, this does not mean that everybody needs to agree on everything all the time; instead, it seems sufficient to have a basic understanding of and trust in the stronger businesses and their actions. The lack of collective social capital, in terms of a lack of an arena for collective action or an inability to agree on how to act and who can lead possible actions, clearly seems to be an obstacle to acting on upcoming threats and locks businesses into

Table 3. Differences and similarities between I1, I2, and I3

	I1 – Island 1	I2 – Island 2	I3 – Island 3
Social capital in the business community	Close and intertwined roles and high internal trust, but with restricted mandates and resources for the leading representatives to realize change	A hierarchical organization with representatives who have the trust, mandate, and resources to create a partial interest in change	No formal organization. Fragmented groups and individuals with different interests.
Land ownership structure	Dispersed private ownership by individuals or collectives.	One major large landowner through a foundation. Local businesses rent properties from the foundation.	One major large private landowner.
Local collective representation as an island	High collective representation but low implementation capability means poor outcomes of collective action.	High collective representation, actions by stronger businesses create positive spin-offs for less active firms.	No collective representation and thereby limited possibility of internal and external collective action.
The structure and characteristics of the business demography	Low degree of internal competition. Mostly small business with a portfolio of activities, and the larger business actors are financially weak. Businesses are mostly in tourism, retail, transport, shipyards, consulting, construction, and state agencies.	Low degree of internal competition. Mostly small businesses, including some that are more focused and some with diversification strategies. One large and dominant business actor. Businesses are mostly in tourism, transport, construction, agriculture, fishing, IT-consulting, and state agencies.	Low degree of internal competition, but also a low degree of cooperation. Mostly small firms with a varying range of orientation. Tourism infrastructure is scarce. Two firms that are owned by the same family dominate.
Relation with authorities on mainland	Arms-length distance and problems with communication with an inexplicit counterparts.	Close relation and direct communication with an explicit counterpart	Some individuals have good and close contacts and cooperation with authorities, while most others lack this and are therefore poorly represented in front of the authorities.
Type of entrepreneurship	A few firms show innovating thinking, while the majority show clear signs of passive entrepreneurship and do not respond to threats or opportunities.	Dynamic environment in which unexploited opportunities are discovered and acted upon. Actions of larger businesses benefit most local businesses.	Individually many firms do well, but the social context and old structures and institutions promote inaction and a poor entrepreneurial climate.

Sources: Authors' elaborations based on group interviews and individual interviews on I1, I2, and I3.

old tracks thereby preventing creative destruction to take place. On the other hand, social capital and individual agency can lead to institutional change, which is clearly the case when building permits were obtained for renovating old buildings by the water.

Land ownership structure can have both positive and negative influences. Land on I1 and I3 is privately owned, and even though the land ownership structures are different (scattered owners on I1 and one dominating owner on I3) they have both led to the creation of action patterns and traditions that served a purpose in the past but that currently constitute a problem for the building of collective social capital and thus act as an obstacle to local development. In the case of I2, land is not privately owned and the conditions to create a safe investment environment are questionable, but while some business owners are reluctant to invest, others find ways around the problems and manage to distribute their risks through diversification and

collaboration with other local firms. It is also clear that in these cases the actions and attitudes of larger businesses are decisive for development on the island.

An additional aspect is the relationship with authorities and entities outside the island. In the case where islanders have worked collectively to gain benefits from public finance and to establish relations with outsiders as a collective unit (I1), businesses have benefited, while in the other two cases (I2 and I3) distrust towards outsiders and a lack of collective action have prevented the efficient exploitation of opportunities, for example, the capture of public funding or influencing emerging regulations, and have even led to actions from outsiders that can work against the island. On I3 the positive effects are limited by the lack of collective action because public resources are distributed unevenly within the island, and thus a positive spin-off effect is prevented.

Conclusions

In this study we have chosen to deepen the analysis of the role of context on entrepreneurial responses to opportunities and challenges by looking especially at institutions, social capital, and the interactions between the two. Our results indicate that while some dimensions might affect businesses in the Archipelago relatively equally, institutions, traditions, and habits as well as the possibility of building social capital are all crucial factors to enabling or disabling entrepreneurial responses. The entrepreneurs who managed to create a more dynamic business environment to overcome the contextual challenges posed by islandness were able to do so because they could overcome old practices and traditions and could build collective capital, strong networks, and the capability to learn from and respond/adapt to a changing environment. The opposite is seen in cases where outcomes are either passive or far below their potential.

However, entrepreneurial responses were not enough. Path-dependency in the formulation of development policies, support systems, and attitudes from the municipality (M1) clearly worked against more dynamic development on I1. Entrepreneurs conduct their businesses within the framework of many different types of interactions, and while they might be able to influence their business relations with customers and suppliers, everything that is dependent on public decisions and public policies (for example infrastructure, waste management, etc.) requires an entrepreneurial-friendly institutional setting and the necessary types of social capital in the authorities that are set to develop or guarantee institutions that live up to their expectations. Thus, institutional change and the construction of the right type of social capital are equally important to develop within public authorities in order to influence/promote growth.

Is social capital only dependent on institutional change? At this point we believe that social capital is not enough to break old structures and to leave old ways of thinking behind, and there is always a personal dimension involved. However, we cannot answer what these dimensions are based on our current results. An additional result from this study is that policies and the competitive attitude of regional authorities (the city of Stockholm, the municipalities, and the Stockholm County Council) act in a way that makes the subordination of the Archipelago a permanent feature. However, this question needs further scrutiny.

This article argues that using a comparative approach might raise the internal validity of the study, and this approach has proven to be helpful in our search for a new understanding of why regional policies and/or opportunities are exploited and why outcomes in a seemingly homogenous population might be very different. Indeed, studying archipelagos is useful for understanding the complexity of island entrepreneurship because it forces the scholar to look beyond just one case.

In addition, departing from previous studies, this article argues that there is a need to develop new concepts that will allow for a more accurate analysis of entrepreneurship on islands and archipelagos. This article has shown that there is a mutual influence between social capital and institutions, as the latter might condition the first, but it has also been shown that social capital

might also influence and change institutional settings at the national, regional, or local level.

Context as a whole, as well as its individual dimensions, deserves to be further conceptualized. In this article, the use of institutional theory allowed for a better understanding of the interplay of institutions at various levels of abstraction (nation, region, island) by analyzing the underlying causes behind entrepreneurial challenges, opportunities, and responses beyond the micro/local level. Highlighting the role of agency both in relation to social capital (see the example of I3) but also in relation to institutions and institutional change might be a fruitful strategy for future studies. A next step in this direction is to dig deeper into the experiences of island entrepreneurs and to focus on entrepreneurs' decision-making principles in order to better understand entrepreneurial success as well as passive or negative entrepreneurship. ✖

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- 39 A.R. Anderson, and S.L. Jack, “The articulation of social capital in entrepreneurial networks: a glue or a lubricant?” *Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*, Vol. 14, (2002), 193–210.
- 40 North, *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*; L. Fuentelsaz, J.P. Maicas, and J. Montero, “Entrepreneurs and innovation: The contingent role of institutional factors”, *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*, 36:6, (2018), 686–711.
- 41 Baumol, 1990; North, *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*; Fuentelsaz, et al., “Entrepreneurs and innovation”, 686–711.
- 42 North, *Institutions, institutional change and economic performance*.
- 43 Fuentelsaz, et al., “Entrepreneurs and innovation”, 686–711; R. Aidis, S. Estrin, and T.M. Mickiewicz, “Size matters: Entrepreneurial entry and government”, *Small Business Economics*, 39, (2012), 119–139.
- 44 “Projekt Ö för Ö” (Island by Island), accessed January 3, 2018, www.oforo.se.
- 45 Interview, Chairman of the Local Business Association on I2, February 14, 2018.
- 46 *Regional utvecklingsplan 2001 för Stockholmsregionen* [Regional development plan 2001 for the region of Stockholm], (Regionplane- och Trafikkontor, SLL, 2002b), accessed August 15, 2015, http://www.rufs.se/globalassets/d.-rufs-2010/rufs-2010-planen/rufs_2001_hela.pdf.
- 47 Still, although the center of the activity with sponsors’ tents and activities have moved from the island, the competition will still exploit the physical environment in the Archipelago.; Group interview with local business owners on I1.
- 48 Interview with entrepreneur I1E5.
- 49 Most land and properties in the Archipelago are owned by the Swedish Fortifications Agency (that owns and manages land for the Swedish Armed Forces) and by the Archipelago Foundation.
- 50 Group interview and individual interviews with entrepreneurs on I1.
- 51 Group interview with local entrepreneurs on I1.
- 52 Group interview with local entrepreneurs on I1, individual interviews with entrepreneurs I1E1, I1E2, I1E4
- 53 Group interview and individual interviews with entrepreneurs on I2.
- 54 “Project Ö för Ö” (Island by Island), accessed January 3, 2018, www.oforo.se.
- 55 Group interview with entrepreneurs on I2.
- 56 Group interview with entrepreneurs on I2 and individual interviews with I2E1, I2E2, I2E3, I2E6.
- 57 Group interview with entrepreneurs on I3.
- 58 Individual interviews with ferry owner and family.
- 59 “Project Ö för Ö” (Island by Island), accessed January 3, 2018, www.oforo.se.
- 60 Group interview with entrepreneurs on I3, October 31st 2017.
- 61 “Project Ö för Ö” (Island by Island), accessed January 3, 2018, www.oforo.se and interview with entrepreneur I3E1.
- 62 Group interview I3.
- 63 “Project Ö för Ö” (Island by Island), accessed January 3, 2018, www.oforo.se; Group Interview with local entrepreneurs.
- 64 BFS 2011:6. Boverket’s building regulations – mandatory provisions and general recommendations, BBR BFS 2011:6 with amendments up to BFS 2016:6.
- 65 Individual interview on I3.
- 66 Group interview and individual interviews with entrepreneurs on I3.

The Archipelago Business Development project gave new insights

Lappo has been inhabited since the 13th or 14th centuries. Today the number of year-round inhabitants is around 30, but in the summer you will see more people as the tourists arrive. In 2004, there were 58 inhabitants on Lappo, so like for many other islands in the archipelago the trend has been decreasing. Consequently, the local school closed down in 2010 and now the children attend school on Brändö. Once on Lappo, you do not really need a car because you can walk or cycle around the island, which covers 8 square kilometers and measures 4.3 kilometers from north to south. You can also arrive by boat, and there is a well-equipped guest harbor that is open between mid-May and mid-September. In addition to the harbor, you can find a post office, library, museum, shop, and summer restaurants on the island.

For accommodation, there is Tiina Thörnroos, who can host up to 50+ people in her different lodging alternatives. Tiina Thörnroos was one of the participators of the project Archipelago Business Development.

“This is a full-time job for me, and during the summer months we also hire a cleaner. My husband, parents, and in-laws provide a helping hand when needed. My husband works in mainland Åland during the winter, so I am very grateful that he is around during the busiest summer period. Our children are growing up, so it is not a problem that I work full-time, and they always know where to find me if they need me. When autumn comes, I have sometimes worked 90 days in a row without a break, so I am quite tired and it can take up to a few months to recover. By that time, it is time to start again. Falling ill would be a disaster, so you do not fall ill – you take a pill and go to work.”

How do you market your services?

“I have many guests who return every year. In addition, I market through my website, on Facebook, at fairs, and

With an aim to develop new business models

ARCHIPELAGO Business Development is a project financed by the Central Baltic Programme 2014–2020. The total budget for the project is 1,638,511 euro, of which ERDF is providing 1,228,883 euro. The project aims at developing new business models in the archipelago by forming partnerships between entrepreneurs and start-up companies in Finland (including Åland Islands) and Swe-



Tiina Thörnroos was born in the archipelago.

through retailers. We lack a clear marketing strategy, but we are constantly striving to find new ways to reach people.”

What are your biggest challenges?

“The biggest challenge comes from changing operating conditions due to decisions made by others without a proper impact assessment. As an example, ferry schedules, booking rules and regulations, or the way the travel agents prioritize might change. These changes have a large impact on our business. Our next challenge is to gain visibility and stand out from all the noise and the sea of different offerings. Those who would need us the most, i.e. those who need a break from everyday life, are perhaps the hardest to convince.

Is there anything you think that the state or the municipality could do to improve the conditions of businesses?

“We are completely dependent on functioning traffic arrangements. All of the uncertainties regarding traffic and schedules make it difficult for both residents and visitors. Fewer inhabitants results in fewer people able to take care of

things, and a place that is not taken care of is not attractive to visitors.”

Who do you cooperate with?

“On Lappo, everyone is dependent on each other, so we cooperate with more or less everyone on the island, which is a definite strength. However, we also collaborate with other entrepreneurs outside Lappo, including different coaches, travel agents, and Visit Åland, and we are open to all possible future ideas for cooperation because we realize that nobody is strong on their own.”

What is your vision for the future of this place?

“We want to be a part of making Lappo an attractive visitor destination so that we can make a living here all year long. I cannot really say how to achieve that vision, but one thing that visitors are interested in is a wide variety of services. However, that would need further investments and more service providers because one person cannot do everything. Another thing is that it should be easier for visitors to reach Lappo, but we have the same dilemma there; who would do it and how could they make a profit from it? It would also help if our guests would realize that the archipelago is well worth visiting also outside of summer season.”

What have you got out of participating in the project Archipelago Business development?

“Previously, we used to ‘shoot from the hip’; we did about everything that came to mind and seemed like fun. Now we have realized that we have to analyze and choose carefully what to focus on instead of doing everything we consider fun. Moreover, the analysis and selection needs to be based on where we can make a profit. For example, I would love to have more shops for selling different things, but I would need high sales in order to achieve a return on the investment and to pay salaries for people to work in the shops.” ❌

Annemari Andrén

Project leader of Archipelago Business Development at the Department for research and development, Yrkeshögskolan Novia, Åbo University in Finland.

den. The project also aims at exchanging knowledge between existing businesses and new potential entrepreneurs.

Existing businesses’ start-up expertise, paired with coaching techniques and the “Loopa”-method models for cross-border business development, will be used to educate and support entrepreneurs and business-counselling services. Students will be involved in co-coaching companies, internships, projects and thesis-work. The project

will also organise international seminars to stimulate networking, knowledge-sharing and business development involving key stakeholders. The use of digital technology will result in the creation of platforms and applications to support cooperation in partnerships, business activities, sales channels and recruitment pools.

The target is to develop 10 new business models for existing companies through diversification, new seasonal solutions or

cross border cooperation. A minimum of 60 existing SMEs will take part in the development process and we expect to trigger the creation of five new startup businesses.

Read more at: www.archipelagobusiness.eu

App speeds up anchoring on busy islands

by Ninna Mörner

The ideas of two Media Technology students added value to the project

For the students who got the chance to test their knowledge in a real-life scenario, their participation in Project Archipelago added value to their university experience. The promotion of entrepreneurship in a unique archipelago environment means thinking outside the box, note the two students Nathalie Westergren and Andrea Viberg, who are studying Media Technology and IT Management at Södertörn University. They use mobile and digital solutions to promote entrepreneurship. They talk animatedly about the assignment they completed within the framework of Archipelago Business Development project (read more at page 86).



Nathalie Westergren and Andrea Viberg, Södertörn University.

“Every student was assigned an island, and we got Sandhamn, which is a very popular island – especially at midsummer. It’s located next to the larger island of Möja, which has about 300 permanent residents, as well as access to a school, doctors etc. Sandhamn, however, is more of a pure summer resort, with just 85 residents and mostly summer houses,” says Nathalie Westergren.

She is a great friend of the archipelago, and has herself spent many summers on Sandhamn and on the lake. She is very fa-

miliar with the places and the environment, while for Andrea Viberg it was unknown terrain.

“We had both my insider’s knowledge and Andrea’s ‘outsider perspective’, which together led to our idea of creating an app to facilitate the logistics for boats that want to anchor.”

Andrea Viberg recounts that when they departed from Sandhamn by boat, she saw how the island was surrounded by jetties and anchorage areas, the vast majority of which are private. At the same time, Nathalie Westergren told her about how the boats line up in the summertime to moor at Sandhamn’s marina. The little harbor is very crowded, and long lines can develop.

“Boats waiting in line can’t turn off their engines, because then they drift with the wind or waves,” explains Nathalie Westergren. She confirms that there are clearly also environmental aspects to take into account.

SHE ALSO NOTES that one can call in to find out how long the line is. It is also possible to pay to bypass the line – which is quite expensive – and thus scoop a prime spot to drop anchor. According to her, certain people who know someone on the island or have relatives there may also gain faster access to the marina. This leads to bad feelings among boat owners who do not enjoy those benefits.

In the summertime, boat owners often dock briefly at Sandhamn to stock up on provisions. They thus contribute to the livelihoods of the islanders. It is during these few summer months that the islanders must earn incomes that will last them the entire



Sandhamn is a popular summer resort in the Stockholm Archipelago.

PHOTO: BENGT NYMAN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

year. It is clearly a financial downside that a large number of prospective customers simply cannot gain access to the island, or perhaps refrain from anchoring there due to the long wait times.

That is why Andrea Viberg saw potential in creating a way for small boat owners to anchor at all the jetties on the island, including the private ones. Using an app, one can see which jetties are available and book a berth for a certain period of time in exchange for a small fee. In the app, private jetty owners can specify when they have an available anchorage. Apparently it is not unusual that permanent residents opt to vacate the island during the busiest part of the summer tourist season – or sometimes they are simply out on the water themselves, leaving behind a vacant mooring.

“We actually used an existing idea (the Airbnb concept), but reframed it in a new context. The app is a tool, while it’s the berth itself that is the service,” explains Andrea Viberg.

How has the idea been received by the locals themselves?

“We conducted a survey about whether they could imagine renting out their berth, and a fair number of people did express concern. ‘What happens if they litter or damage a neighbor’s boat?’ ‘Who is responsible?’ The response was mixed.

The matter of payment must also be resolved before the book-

ing app can be implemented. How will those who rent out their jetties receive their share of the revenue, and how should this be administered? The students believe that the app’s primary purpose is to contribute to increasing the flow of visitors and reducing wait times; it is not meant to be a source of income in itself.

“**WE PRESENTED** the idea at a trade fair and there was a lot of interest. We actually gave it to representatives of entrepreneurs in the Finnish archipelago, who thought it was a promising solution,” says Nathalie Westergren.

She notes that there is increasing interest in Sweden as a vacation destination, including among Germans, Dutch and even French tourists.

They sail up and want to enjoy the Swedish nature and animal life. The Swedish right of public access is also unique and creates a completely different, universal access to nature.

Nathalie Westergren goes on to explain that she is currently traveling around the various islands, lecturing and educating entrepreneurs about digital solutions that facilitate making the archipelago environment more accessible and increasing income opportunities for business owners.

The student participation has thus also yielded added value for the entrepreneurs, who have gained new ideas and knowledge. ✖

**“WE PRESENTED THE
IDEA AT A TRADE FAIR
AND THERE WAS A LOT
OF INTEREST.”**

Writing the War. Literature about the war in Donbas

**The Length
of the Day
(2017)**
**The Boarding
School (2017)**

Volodymyr
Rafeenko,
Dovhi Chasy,
Lviv: Vydav-
nytstvo Staroho
Leva, 2017,
336 pages.

Serhii Zhadan,
Internat,
Chernivtsi:
Meridian
Czernowitz,
2017,
272 pages.

Writers from Ukraine have written extensively about the war in Donbas, and it is no coincidence that two popular novels about the current war are written in Ukrainian and in Russian by writers who were born in Donbas. Although they come from different cultural backgrounds, these writers present a very similar picture of the war, where the main characters are civilians lost in the debris and absurdity of the war.

Every war produces its own stories, and the current war in Donbas is no exception. Since 2014, hundreds of books have been published in Ukraine by writers, journalists, and all kind of experts as well as by soldiers where they tell us their own stories of the war in the eastern part of Ukraine. The two most famous novels about the war in Donbas were written by authors who were born in Donbas. These are Volodymyr Rafeenko's novel *The Length of the Day* (2017) and Serhii Zhadan's novel *The Boarding School* (2017).

These two authors had different statuses in society before the war started. Rafeenko lived in Donetsk, worked as an editor, published his books in Russian, and was awarded the Russian Prize (Russkaja premija), which is given to authors who write in Russian but who live outside Russia. In short, Rafeenko was very well integrated into the Russian literary scene. When the war started, Rafeenko left Donetsk for Kyiv. Zhadan was born in Starobils'k in Luhansk oblast. Since the 1990s he has been living in Kharkiv, where he has published poetry and prose in Ukrainian and has become a leading figure in the Ukrainian cultural scene. Indeed, Zhadan has the status of a rock star in Ukrainian literature (he sings in the rock band *Dogs in Space*, which makes him popular even among those who never read his prose). To a certain degree, we can say that Rafeenko and Zhadan represented different literary traditions before the war – the former belonged to the Russian literary sphere while the latter was the main voice in the formation of contemporary Ukrainian literature. Nevertheless, it was exactly their novels that became the main literary works presenting the current war. Despite the different cultural traditions these writers repre-



Apartment building destroyed during War in Donbas. Lysychansk, Lugansk region.

sent, it is remarkable how similar their approaches are to literary representations of this war.

Rafeenko's *The Length of the Day* is a continuation of his earlier science fiction dystopia *Descartes' Demon*, which centers on life in the mystical city of Z and ends with war coming to the city (this novel was awarded the Russian Prize). In a way, Rafeenko foresaw the war, or at least, as he explained in his interviews, he could feel that something bad was on its way. Rafeenko won several prestigious awards for *The Length of the Day* both in Ukraine and abroad. The famous Ukrainian writer Juri Andrukhovych praised *The Length of the Day* as the best Ukrainian novel in many years, and Zhadan said that this is the most important novel about the current war where reality is shown from the perspective of an inferno.

The Length of the Day takes place in the city of Z, which is occupied by a foreign power with whom many locals collaborate. The problem in the city of Z is that the only way of leaving the city is by dying. The city of Z is a mystical place that instead of being connected to Russia connected itself to the Soviet Union, which no longer exists. The narrative of the novel combines two dimensions – one is written in the form of the fantasy that describes the characters' reality, and the other is written in the form of realism that describes the dreams of one of the main characters. In such a way, reality and fantasy trade places. As commented by Rafeenko, this is a novel in which the main part is a fairy tale for adults and the inserted novellas are concrete and tough injections of realism. Such a phantasmagorical style of writing reminds of the best traditions of Nikolay (in Ukrainian writing Mykola) Gogol's writings. Rafeenko himself compares his writing to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's mystical realism. He claims that it was exactly this mystical realism that helped him to overcome the hardships of reality and to write about these hardships. Ukrainian literary critic Hanna Uliura noted that Rafeenko plays with the main myths of



PHOTO: LYONKHIN/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

this war as presented by the Russian writers Vladyslav Surkov, Zakhar Prilepin, and Eduard Limonov. These myths represent the current war as a metaphysical contestation between past and present where archaic myths from the Second World War are reactivated. In this mythical contestation created by the above-mentioned Russian writers, Ukrainians play the role of fascists. Indeed, in his novel Rafeenko plays with this myth and shows how limited this myth is; it gives nothing for understanding reality and serves only for deception of the public. On the other hand, he also openly makes fun of the oversimplifications and excesses in the tendencies of present-day Ukrainian nationalism, which is best exemplified in the novel by the figure of the Hindu god Ganesha dressed up in a Ukrainian folklore costume who serves as a “Holy Grail” for those who want to leave the mystical city of Z. In the same way as the Ganesha figure in the Ukrainian folklore costume seems ridiculous and out of place, the folkloristic manifestations of nationalism by the current political establishment seem redundant and out of date.

IN ANOTHER PROMINENT novel of the current war in Donbas, Serhii Zhadan’s *The Boarding School*, we also do not see a concrete place where the events happen. We see only an unnamed town under siege. Zhadan shows us three days from the life of the novel’s main protagonist, a young teacher of history, Pasha, who goes on a self-imposed mission to take his nephew from the boarding school that is located on the other side of the town. Pasha has a small injury from his childhood that keeps him safe from recruitment into the army. At the beginning of the novel, we see an indecisive person who tries to escape from reality and who avoids thinking of the dangers of the encroaching war. In Pasha’s understanding it is not his war, it is a matter of big politics and he is only a small human being who can influence nothing. Gradually, though, Pasha’s perception of the world

and his own place in the world changes. He decides to go to the boarding school to take his nephew home. This trip to the boarding school transforms Pasha, and he begins to see that he is also involved in the world and that it is not possible to escape it. Throughout the novel Pasha repeats one phrase as a mantra, “nothing to worry about.” But in reality he cares a lot about his nephew and risks his own life to save him and bring him back home. This novel belongs to the genre of Bildungsroman in which we witness the growth of the main character. *The Boarding School* also reminds of beatnik novels. Like in Kerouac’s famous novel, all of the events in Zhadan’s novel take place on the road as the main character travels from one part of the city to another and back again. Zhadan commented that although this novel is fiction, it in fact shows the real world. Theoretically there could have been such a teacher and such a situation. As the background, he took a real event – the Debaltseve operation when the Ukrainian army was leaving the town in February 2015. The novel is written using the optics of the civilians. It shows the war from the perspective of civilians who have no strong political or ideological convictions. It is a novel about people’s choices and lack of choices, about responsibility and a lack of responsibility, and Zhadan vividly shows that war is silencing the voices of the civilians. By writing this novel, he tries to give a voice to those who are not heard or who are not seen. Because of high expectations of the public who were waiting for the “main novel about the war” written by Zhadan, some readers and critics were disappointed with *The Boarding School*. They criticized the writer for not stating clearly who is guilty in this war and for failing to call enemies by their names. But both Rafeenko and Zhadan make no clear distinctions between victims and perpetrators, the guilty and the innocent. Rafeenko shows the life of the civilians who live in the occupied territories, while Zhadan shows the life of the civilians in the city under the siege. The readers do not see any heroic deeds; they only see the absurdity of the war and the precariousness of the human condition when the war comes to one’s home.

Both of these novels were acknowledged by prestigious literary awards in Ukraine and abroad, and the translations of these novels into English and German are soon to be published.

Continued. Writing the war

While writing about the literary representations of the war in Donbas, I kept thinking about the cinematic representations of the region in the films that were shown in Stockholm in November 2018. Serhii Loznytsa's film *Donbas* was shown within the program of the Stockholm International Film Festival, and Yaroslav Lodyhin's *Wild Fields* – based on one of Zhadan's novels *Voroshylovhrad* (the Soviet name for Luhansk) – was shown at the Fourth Nordic Ukrainian Film Festival. Loznytsa's *Donbas* showed only one side of the war – the absurdity and hypocrisy of power fully corrupted by the ideology of the “Russian world”. Although many of the scenes were literally taken from documentary videos and then shown in the film through reenactments of these scenes by professional actors, the voices of the civilians and displaced people are totally absent in this film. Lodyhin's *Wild Fields* shows life in Donbas before the war came to the region. Perhaps this portrayal of the peaceful life in the past (the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s) actually brings more understanding about the current situation in the region than Loznytsa's film that focuses exclusively on the war's atrocities. To get a more nuanced picture of the war, one needs to get more complex and multifaceted perspectives. By this, I do not mean a limited (and limiting) discourse disseminated by some uncritical voices about the need to represent all voices as if they all were equally legitimate players in the war (some of these players are criminals and they should be seen as such in contrast to the civil population). I rather mean the need to avoid stigmatization of the citizens of the occupied territory as a collective figure of collaborators and instead to make an effort to understand the different constellations that lives take under the tremendously difficult conditions of war and occupation. As we can see in the literary examples, the representations of war can be as complex and multifaceted as life itself. Such portrayals do not divide the world into closed boxes, and they give the opportunity to look toward the future with hope. ✕

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Between memory and courage. Rune Ottosen's *Tourist in Utopia*

**Tourist in
Utopia.
Travels in
Ideology and
the Albanian
landscape
[Turist i
Utopia, reiser
i ideologi
og albansk
landskap]**

Rune Ottosen
(1950-).
336 pages.

During the late 1960s and the 1970s, totalitarian regimes like Democratic Kampuchea, the People's Republic of China, and the People's Republic of Albania attracted the sympathies of thousands of Europeans, including many young Marxist-Leninists from Scandinavia. Some of them even travelled there to see with their own eyes the utopias they chose to believe in. Forty years after his last visit to communist Albania, Rune Ottosen has chosen to re-open this page of his biography and to finally face his responsibilities as a former “fellow traveler” – meeting the survivors of Hoxha's regime and providing a fresh insight into the Norwegian Marxist-Leninism Workers' Party history. To begin with – the past is a foreign land; to visit it requires no visa. Depending on the methods chosen for facing the journey, pre-established interpretative schemes help the traveler to understand the past agency of individuals and groups in given contexts. Memory provides decisive help in shedding light on an untold past and giving insight into forgotten dynamics. In the twentieth century, the acknowledgment of witnesses as sources for historical investigations has allowed the emergence of knowledge previously confined to the private sphere or to the margins. However, to analyze one's own past is a much more slippery road. The distance to the object of study is diminished by the personal involvement of the traveler into his own past expectations, utopias, emotions – that baggage of personal successes and failures, pride and regrets that all individuals carry in their personal journeys across time.

Tourist in Utopia is both an autobiography focused on the author's involvement in the activities of Norway's Maoist and pro-Albanian Workers' Communist Party [*Arbeidernes Kommunistparti (marxist-leninistene)*], subsequently referred to as “AKP(m-l)”, and also an attempt to reconcile both with those who actually lived the “utopia” of Albanian communism and with the author's own past. Ottosen does so by using a very original method: he investigates the past utopianism of young comrade Rune, who was a member of the AKP(m-l) and editor-in-chief of the Marxist review *Røde Fane (Red Flag)* and who traveled to communist Albania three times in the 1970s, from the perspective of his mature self, Rune Ottosen, professor in Journalism at Oslo Metropolitan University.

The author asks himself how he and his comrades could have considered communist Albania to be a serious alternative model for Norway: ‘Why did I come to believe that communism was a sustainable idea? Why did it look right at first, and then after a while very crazy, to tie your life so strongly to a political project that was actually so brutal and inhuman under the surface?’ (p. 9). The answers he finds come from contextualizing his own involvement in the AKP(m-l)'s activities within a historical perspective, verifying the perceptions and aspirations of the young Rune against a proper historical investigation and speaking with the survivors of the Enver Hoxha regime's atrocities. Visiting Albania in the 2010s, Ottosen recalls his three visits to Albania in the seventies (1973, 1976, and 1978). The landscape presented to



Propaganda photos of the Albanian dictator Enver Hoxha (left and center). The Norwegian review *Røde Fane* (Red Flag) (right).

the reader in the first part of the book is an overlapping of personal memories, past Norwegian and Albanian political utopias, present-day Albanian politics, and memories of political and cultural repression shared by the survivors of Hoxha's regime.

APPARENTLY, OTTOSEN learnt of the atrocity of Albanian communism when he read the 2009 English translation of *The Second Sentence* by Fatos Lubonja, former dissident and writer convicted to seventeen years for being the son of Todi Lubonja, head of Albanian national television, who fell into disgrace in 1973. The reading was "like a knife-stab in the stomach" (p. 27), since Ottosen finally understood the sufferings imposed by a regime he and his associates celebrated in Norway and even in "friendship journeys" that allowed them to enjoy the beaches of Durrës. Back in the seventies, the young Rune and his AKP(m-l) comrades learned the history of Albania directly from the English translations of the Albania Party of Labor's publications (p. 43). In those narratives, jail, deportation, inhuman forced labor, discrimination due to family origin and other forms of human rights violations, including death sentences, were not even mentioned. The paradigm of the class struggle, in its anti-revisionist version, acknowledges violence as a means for achieving justice against a wide array of ideologically-defined enemies: the bourgeoisie, the revisionists, the capitalists, the imperialists, etc. Ottosen is explicit about the cognitive dissonance that he and his comrades chose to perform. When Amnesty International published the Year Report 1978 describing the persecution of the Catholic priests in the Land of the Eagles, the Norwegian Enverists (like all the others in the West) did not believe it: 'There was information available that we chose to ignore or did not consider' (p. 11).

However, it is never too late to enrich one's perspective, as Ottosen illustrates to the reader in the over 300 pages of the volume. Dozens of historians in the last thirty years have documented the brutality of the Albanian communist regime, while since the Cold War a vast literature on political tourism that investigates the thinking and agency of the former "fellow travelers" has been published and translated, also into Norwegian. In this regard, Ottosen's narrative discusses Norwegian and English works, offering a synthetic, but thematically complete reference

list to investigate these topics. This corpus of literature permits him to contextualize the meetings held with former Albanian dissidents Fatos Lubonja, Tomor Aliko, Maks Velo, Zenel Drangu and Vera Bekteshi, who had all suffered under the regime that young Rune and his comrades idolized. He also met Sevo Tarifa, former personal secretary of Hoxha who succeeded in establishing himself even after the fall of the regime, and some of the same tour guides who had conducted his visits back in the seventies, giving them the opportunity to share interesting insights on what organizing the staged authenticity of communist Albania for foreign tourists meant.

In their travels, the Western "friends of Albania" chose not to question the touristic and political stage they were inserted onto, since "fellow travelers see willingly what they prefer to see" (p. 63). Ottosen, having removed his ideological spectacles, was finally able to see Albania and its past. In an act of reconciliation with himself, he implicitly admitted his naivety as a young Marxist-Leninist and listened the witnesses of the survivors of Hoxha's regime. This has allowed him to step away from the responsibility the young Rune carried, and at the same time to accept it as a historical fact.

THE SECOND PART of the book is dedicated to re-contextualizing Rune's involvement with the AKP(m-l) in Norway. Making use of the political literature published by other Marxist-Leninists in the 1970s, he shows that the anti-revisionists swallowed any kind of belief that the foreign offices of China, Albania, and the like proposed to them (pp. 189–195). In order to support the acceptance of communist Albania at the international level, they established the Norwegian-

Continued. Between memory and courage

Albanian Association, aimed at inviting Norwegian tourists to spend their holidays in Albania. With the help of several memoirs and internal AKP documents, Ottosen also describes the touristic format he contributed to organizing, providing an account of the blurred line that existed between being a propagandist, a tourist, and an actor into a pre-established format, posing for pictures and writing travel reports that were meant to propagandize an already-established (positive) picture of Albania in Norway. The concluding pages are dedicated to recalling the days of the Sino-Albanian split of July 1978, when Western Maoists and Enverists discussed the future of Marxism-Leninism on the sunny beaches of Durrës. Although, by then, the young Marxist-Leninists considered those days “dramatic”, Ottosen provides us with the grotesque picture of a milieu that considered itself to be an elite but that was actually led by young “useful idiots” on holiday.

It is highly doubtful that those youngsters who called themselves “comrades” were unconscious of the meaning of the words “Revolution”, “armed struggle”, “proletarian justice” and other similar appeals against the constituted order.¹ It is dubious that the “cognitive dissonance”² they performed would have prevented them from recognizing the violence they chose to subscribe to. Those words, in the Norwegian political context, were merely meant to demonstrate the identity of a group that, politically, counted less than zero. Most probably, they knew exactly what those words meant, but at the same time they refused to admit they would ever use violence as a political means. The files of the Norwegian secret police show that they were good citizens.³

OTTOSEN SUGGESTS that “fanaticism” was an explanation for their “cognitive dissonance”, but this seems doubtful. Any ideology is a stratification of slogans, propaganda appeals, and other calls for action that have a precise historical origin but that once removed from their contexts do not maintain univocal significance. They adapted concepts tailored by the foreign propaganda bureaus of China and Albania to the very different circumstances of Norwegian political life, with the goal of establishing themselves, which they did, accumulating a huge amount of cultural capital within the students’ milieu. They also adapted those words against their rivals within the milieu. In 2011, former Swedish Enverist Magnus Utvik interviewed his old antirevisionist comrades. They all felt very uncomfortable in recalling their past militancy. They remember careerism, manipulation, and determination towards personal affirmation to be the main traits of the individuals who ran such milieus.⁴ In *Turist i utopia*, Ottosen drastically downplays those very power relations. Nor does the book provide a prosopography of the Marxist-Leninist milieu, whose leading individuals are nowadays established profiles in Norway.

However, Ottosen is largely successful in providing the reader with an inspiring journey within the cultural poverty and hopeless naivety of the Norwegian Marxist-Leninist milieu and with the witnesses of the communist regime’s brutality in Albania. No mat-

ter if “solidarity” was a propaganda word and a loosely-implemented practice within the pro-Albanian milieu, professor Ottosen has chosen to face the past actions of young comrade Rune and to testify that the utopias of the antirevisionists brought nothing more than meaningless results for political action at home (in Norway and in the rest of Europe) along with disturbing memories of summer holidays spent praising regimes run by cold-blooded executioners. Ottosen succeeds in demonstrating that no dogma is needed to encounter people transnationally and to learn from them. Having done so and reconciled with his own past, Rune Ottosen preserves a good memory of Albania and its people. ✕

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The Gulag memory. The sites and places of commemoration

**Gulag
Memories.
The re-
discovery
and com-
memoration
of Russia's
repressive
past**

Zuzanna
Bogumil
New York & Ox-
ford: Berghahn
Books 2018.
302 pages.

Although the number of books concerning the Russian memory of communist terror in the former Soviet Union has been increasing, none of them has so far presented a complex analysis of sites of this memory in locations where communist concentration and labor camps with their cemeteries were once situated. Polish sociologist and cultural anthropologist Zuzanna Bogumil has written the first study of this kind and expressed an admirable ambition to study a large number of places and issues connected with the “Gulag memory” in four regions from the White Sea in the north of European Russia to the far eastern edge of the Asian part of the country, symbolizing more or less the entire “Gulag landscape” in Russia. The four chosen regions are of particular historical significance: The Solovetsky Islands with the Solovetsky monastery and the territory of the former SLON, the Solovetsky special purpose camp, at the center, the Komi Republic (especially Vorkuta, the “Russian Buchenwald”), the Perm Krai/Region (Perm-36 in Kuchino) and Kolyma (with the “Russian Auschwitz” – Magadan – in focus). The site of memory in Moscow’s suburb of Butovo is also partly included, while other sites in the Russian capital (such as the Lubyanka and Butyrka prisons and Kommunarka, for example) are left aside.

THE AUTHOR STUDIES the “return” of the Gulag memory to Russian society mainly during two initial periods – the first that could be described as the time of “careful memory” during perestroika in the Soviet Union before 1989, and the second from the end of the 1980s to the early 1990s. During the first years of Gorbachev’s reforms in the Soviet Union, the memory of communist terror was carefully described only as a memory of “Stalinist repressions” without further references to the oppressive character of the entire Soviet system. At the same time, it was still forbidden to include even Lenin’s period in power in the process of terror that was cautiously being revealed. Inspired by Mikhail Bakhtin, Russian philosopher and literary critic, Zuzanna Bogumil calls the second period a “carnival of memory” because it was then that the “memory revolution” in Russia became particularly intense, colorful and multi-layered. The sense of the necessity of bringing



Mask of Sorrow, dedicated to victims of the Gulag prisoner camps, in the port of Magadan.

PHOTO: SERGEY KOVALEV/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

the memory of political terror into the center of that time’s Russian historical culture can be illustrated by the fact that even the KGB, the Soviet state security and political police, did not oppose and sometimes, as in one case in the Perm region, even actively supported some actions within this memory carnival. Thus, the Solovetsky Stone that linked the Soviet capital with one of the first important Soviet concentration camps in the White Sea appeared in central Moscow in 1990, just in front of the KGB headquarters in Lubyanka where it soon symbolically replaced the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, founder of the Soviet oppressive forces. As Bogumil shows, the symbolism positioning the Solovetsky Islands at the center played an extremely important role both in spreading awareness about Soviet terror in general and in the development of a special narrative of “new martyrdom”, developed by the Russian Orthodox Church after the “carnival of memory” period.

Zuzanna Bogumil convincingly shows that sites of memory of Soviet terror situated on Russian territory lacked a common narrative and strategy and were constructed with very different focuses in the minds of their creators. Important factors behind these differences were, for example, whether or not the former prisoners and their descendants remained in the regions where

Continued. The Gulag memory

they were persecuted and where the memory was to be kept, or whether the exact locations of the camps and cemeteries where the victims were killed and buried were known. While mutual coordination of the memory processes was poor, the ambitions, on the contrary, were very high. A number of monuments built during this time were originally intended only as temporary solutions until more permanent sites of memory could be built. However, when society started to focus on different priorities during the economic transformation of the 1990s, these temporary solutions unintentionally became permanent.

A rich variety of commemoration strategies during the “carnival era” was developed by a rather rich variety of actors. This process not only showed the great pain that was previously “hidden” or at least openly invisible in society, but also led to some forced compromises and extraordinary paradoxes. As shown in the case of the Komi Republic, for example, the memory of Soviet terror became combined with the memory of heroism supporting the Soviet economy, where the prisoners simultaneously became both victims of political repression and “heroic conquerors of the taiga” in the name of a bright future of the same Soviet system. Moreover, it was not rare that various exhibitions and memorials that became dedicated to the Gulag memory were originally intended and developed as sites of positive Soviet memory but included unofficial Soviet propaganda.

Two groups are particularly important for the author of the study: The Memorial Society, focusing on human rights and liberal political values, and the Russian Orthodox Church. While they were able to collaborate and work for similar goals in the beginning, the contrast between them in the long run is striking. The Church, as Bogumil concludes, has managed to create its own coherent interpretation of the Gulag memory, operating on multiple levels, which aims to ensure that a response in a desired direction can be found on any question related to the meaning of the repressions. Since this interpretation is very close to the

goals of the current Russian political leadership, the Orthodox Church has become one of the most important actors of the Gulag memory in the country. On the other hand, as the author stresses, Memorial was not equally able to create a meaning-laden system capable of delineating a framework for a civilian community and responding to such questions as “What made the Gulag possible” or “How should we live in the future?” This criticism of Memorial, that has been fighting for its survival against numerous restrictions from the Russian state, might sometimes seem too strong. On the other hand it provides an explanation of why the liberal-oriented form of the Gulag memory remains relatively limited in contemporary Russia.

IN THE INDIVIDUAL CHAPTERS of the book, Zuzanna Bogumil studies the development in the four regions already mentioned separately and without mutual or continuous comparisons and confrontations. This, however, leaves some important questions unanswered. While she mentions, for example, the contribution of foreign organizations to the memory of the Gulag in the case of the Perm-36 museum, she does not analyze the same aspect in the case of the Solovetsky Islands at all, despite the fact that the Solovetsky Monastery was the very first Gulag memorial in the territory of the Soviet Union to be added to the UNESCO World Heritage list. Moreover, the author sometimes seems to struggle between the fact that her main research was conducted in the years 2006–2008 and the ambition to update the context as much as possible and to include even the newest developments in Russia. The analysis of recent developments thus sometimes lacks the depth of the analysis of the 1990s. These partial weaknesses, however, by no means overshadow the fact that Zuzanna Bogumil’s thoroughly and well-researched book represents a major contribution to the field of her study and cannot be ignored by any serious scholar who is interested in sites of memory of communist terror in the post-Soviet world and in this memory in general. ❌

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PHOTO: ALEXEI KOUPIRIANOV/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS



Memorial to the victims of political repression in the USSR, on Lubyanka Square, Moscow, next to FSB headquarters, made of a boulder from the Solovetsky Islands.

Politics of colonization.

Russian imperial governance through the institution of marriage

Negotiating Imperial Rule. Colonists and Marriage in the Nine- teenth- Century Black Sea Steppe

Julia Malitska,
Södertörn
Doctoral
Dissertations
135, Stockholm
2017,
392 pages.

The last twenty years have seen a renewed scholarly interest in the Russian Empire and its politics of colonization. By examining Russia's state-sponsored colonization of the Northern Black Sea Steppe during the first half of the nineteenth century, Julia Malitska's doctoral dissertation forms part of this imperial turn in Russian history. Following the expansion of the Russian empire to the south and west in the final years of the eighteenth century, the Russian government tried to attract foreigners to the newly acquired regions. Immigrants from the war-torn German lands were invited to settle on the steppe north of the Black Sea. These "German colonists", who were in fact of varied ethnic origin, established colonies all over the region.

Negotiating Imperial Rule tackles the issue of imperial governance through the institution of marriage. In a commendable way, Malitska shows how the institution of marriage was used by the imperial state to control and govern the colonists, but also how the politics of marriage was encountered and managed locally in the periphery. The state desired stable households and farms that generated revenue. Thus, the economic welfare of the colonies formed the basis of the legislation and rules concerning marriage. Malitska has examined a large number of documents in regional archives to find out how the legal requirements were implemented in practice on the ground, as well as how they were negotiated by local actors. She argues that the Russian state tried to control colonist marriages and household formation through the current marriage regime (the official system of rules, rituals and procedures regarding colonist marriages), but it lacked actual means to exercise this control locally. Instead, the marriage regime was challenged and negotiated in different ways by different local actors (government officials, priests, colonial communities, and colonists). A central aim of the book is to reveal the divergences between the laws and norms of the central imperial state and the practices in the periphery.

AS WITH MANY dissertations, little will be lost to the reader skipping the introductory chapter. In this case, the problem is not that the introduction contains too much abstract theory or too



Drang nach Osten (Push to the East) – German colonists resting in their travel to a destination village near Kamianets-Podilskyi (now the Ukraine).

PHOTO: MICHAEL GREIM

much sophisticated methodology, but rather that it contains too little. There are sweeping references to microhistory and discourse analysis, but these references are not followed through properly. As a result, the dissertation lacks a systematic account of the analytical method. Moreover, the contribution to previous research is not clearly stated. A more focused engagement with relevant literature would have been useful, especially regarding colonization and marriage and negotiated practices of imperial governance in a comparative perspective.

The first chapter is followed by more rewarding chapters on the history of the Black Sea Steppe and its inhabitants. Malitska describes the administration of the colonies, the status of the Evangelical Lutheran and Roman Catholic churches in the Empire, the situation of the priests, and the legal status, rights and obligations of the colonists, before discussing marriages as an instrument of control and the bureaucratization of colonist marriages. From 1816, marriages involving colonists could only be concluded after permission from local authorities. The legal marriage regime was introduced to enhance productivity and to ensure the prosperity of the colonies. What is lacking here is a discussion of the possible significance of the colonists' ethnic and cultural identity in the context of the Empire. Culture and ethnicity as analytical categories are virtually absent in the book.

The most interesting parts of *Negotiating Imperial Rule* are the two chapters about concrete cases of marriage among German colonists. This part of the book could well have been extended to include arguments about the "civilizing" role of marriage in

Continued. Politics of colonization

the politics of colonization. Chapter 5 deals with marriages between colonists and non-colonists. Here, Malitska points to the noteworthy fact that colonist women played a rather significant role in the regulation of marriages, in a way that Russian peasant women did not. In fact, legal restrictions on marriages particularly targeted colonist women who intended to marry non-colonist men. This was due to the state loans that had been granted to the colonists, which were granted on the basis of the total members of the household regardless of sex or age, making all the household members debtors whatever their age or gender. Indebted colonist widows and daughters were prohibited from marrying non-colonists and leaving the ranks of the colonists unless their share of the debt was first repaid. Chapter 6 discusses the colonists' problems with the marriage norm – broken marriages and divorce. Through narratives of marital breakdowns, this truly fascinating chapter allows the reader a glimpse into the lives of the colonists. Malitska presents reasons for marital breakdown and various grounds for divorce, both spiritual and secular, as well as the role of regional officials and priests in managing marital breakdowns. Reading about these cases of colonist marriages, one is struck by two interesting details. The first is the way that colonists consciously framed their petitions in order to be granted a divorce or be allowed to marry. The second is the fact that colonist women not infrequently lived in extra-marital relationships.

Malitska claims that different local actors held conflicting interests regarding colonist marriages, but this interpretation seems somewhat exaggerated. The colonial administration regarded marriage as fundamental to the economic prosperity and stability of the colonies. This was also the general view held by the colonial communities. The colonists also wanted their farms to flourish and knew well that for this both wife and husband were needed. Unsurprisingly, priests often had other motives than purely economic ones and they did come into conflict with the state at times, but this happened on only a few occasions. Even though individual colonists at times managed to marry non-colonists or escape dysfunctional marriages, the imperial state seems to have mostly got what it wanted to make the colonies economically viable (payment of debts, remarriages, transfer of farms). Thus, it is difficult to maintain that the Russian state lacked the means to exercise control over colonist marriages locally.

Nevertheless, *Negotiating Imperial Rule* makes an important contribution to our knowledge of Russian colonization by illuminating “German” colonist marriages and sexual relations in the first half of the nineteenth century, as well as explaining how these were managed by the colonial administration, local priests and colonial communities. ✕

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Art History outside the nationalist paradigm. Soros art centers in a global perspective

**Globalizing
East
European
Art Histories.
Past and
Present.
Routledge
Research in
Art History**

Beáta Hock
and Anu
Allas (ed.),
London:
Routledge,
2018. 232
pages.

The thinking of the late Piotr Piotrowski (1955–2015), professor ordinarius of art history at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, continues to influence the work of a generation of art historians. His focus on the historiography of primarily Eastern European art of the 20th century included the development of concepts such as “horizontal art history” and “provincializing the centers” that are still pertinent, although in some cases they are re-theorized or even disputed. *Globalizing East European Art Histories. Past and Present*, edited by Beáta Hock, senior researcher at the Leibniz Institute for the History and Culture of Eastern Europe, and Anu Allas, art historian and curator at the Kumu Art Museum in Tallinn, adds to the body of scholarly work on the transnational aspects of the art of Eastern Europe. The conference in Lublin, October 2014, that was the departure point for this volume appears to have been the last conference that Piotrowski contributed to before his untimely death in May 2015.¹ One of the qualities of his anthology is its broad scope and ambition to histories the relation of art historical canons to art from Eastern Europe of the early modern period up to today's art projects and the *Anthropocene era*.

NATIONALLY COMPARTMENTALIZED art history is the target in Beáta Hock's important theorizing, important not the least by dealing with art from geographies that have been highly politically unstable throughout time and where today's national borders are young phenomena. She scrutinizes earlier leading contributions to the field such as the American art historian Stephen Mansbach's *Modern Art in Eastern Europe* (1999), which aimed to challenge Western-centered art history by approaching certain artistic movements and assessing individual artists and artworks in Eastern Europe, while at the same time making transregional comparisons. Hock's point is that studies like Mansbach's in practice still fall back on vertical ideas of diffusion and on traditional presumptions that creative innovation takes place in a few “centers” before spreading to peripheries in various ways. Mansbach's appraisal of Eastern European artist's inventiveness in combining styles from abroad appears problematic for Hock by making them appear helplessly dependent on Western Eu-



Portrait of Krzysztof Wiesiołowski (1636, anonymous painter, National Arts Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk).

ropean influences. This is a valid point and can be extended to a much wider discourse of scholarship of, for example, modernisms, avant gardes, or post-avant gardes and can be extended to socio-political areas such as the Nordic countries. Hock points out alternative projects like the ones of Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel and the artl@s team at ENS in Paris, where studies of networks through artist journals challenge canonical art history using concepts such as “will to cosmopolitanism” as the explanatory factor rather than different ideas of the creative sovereignty within centers like Paris.

CONTRIBUTIONS ON the early Modern period and the Polish-Lithuanian state (1569–1795) expand the topic. In *Challenging the National Container*, Tomasz Grusiecki suggests how to deal with such art, where European and Ottomanesque traits coincide formally, as he sees it, rather than clashing or signifying a conflict of expres-

sion. In a portrait of a Polish-Lithuanian nobleman, *Portrait of Krzysztof Wiesiołowski* (1636, anonymous painter, National Arts Museum of the Republic of Belarus, Minsk), the *all'antica* and *all'anturca* remain in sync with each other, and the stylistic plurality is presented with integrity within the work. Seemingly imitative artifacts become more relevant to wider art historical concerns when these pieces are considered as part of a greater infrastructure of cultural entanglement that transcends regions and nations. This portrait, instead of reproducing different styles from cultural centers, is a result of a gradual process of creation and re-formulation of Polish-Lithuanian ways of life. This model proposes a shift in the purported peripheries away from dominant models of art historical explanation that over-emphasize linear causalities to one where the peripheries' active participation in wider cultural processes is asserted. The anthology's other contribution to art of the Polish-Lithuanian state contextualizes the historiography of this era as marked by the destruction of cultural property during the Second World War, recent political biases, and of course, again, the focus of much art history writing on nations in a case when the nation as such was not preserved after 1795. Anglophone art historians' bias towards a vertical art history – where Polish art has been assessed through art in more studied regions such as Italy, France, and the Dutch region – has been counterbalanced with indispensable Polish scholarship, with the need to legitimize Polish art in the eyes of an outside readership, and with frequent comparisons to art within the Western canon. Carolyn C. Guile pertinently introduces the fruitful name “History of a form of intellectual disquietude” for this important research field.

Kristóf Nagy, in his study *The emergence of the Soros network in Eastern Europe*, contends along with Slavoj Žižek that the Hungarian investor and philanthropist George Soros is an old type of capitalist because his business and charitable activities remain separated. The Soros art centers that emerged all over Eastern Europe constituted an important factor for the post-Soviet art scene from the early 1990s, and in terms of decision-making regarding content they were quite independent from the funder. George Soros is quoted by Nagy as saying that he did not even like most of the art in the centers. Nagy chooses the concept of *hegemony* while discussing the relationship between the Soros Foundation and the Hungarian art scene in the 1990s. His text points to the delicate double reception of the Soros art centers as a catalyst for the integration of Hungarian and Eastern European artistic life with the Western paradigm, while also constructing new kinds of political, economic, and cultural dependencies. He points out how the figure of the Soros art centers as a part of the operation of “helping” Eastern Europe out of its belatedness has its roots in the Age of Enlightenment. Nagy reaches so far as to place the Soros art centers as instrumental in incorporating the Hungarian artistic scene into the uneven and hierarchic networks of the globalizing art world. He thereby connects with an emerging research field regarding the role of Soros art centers

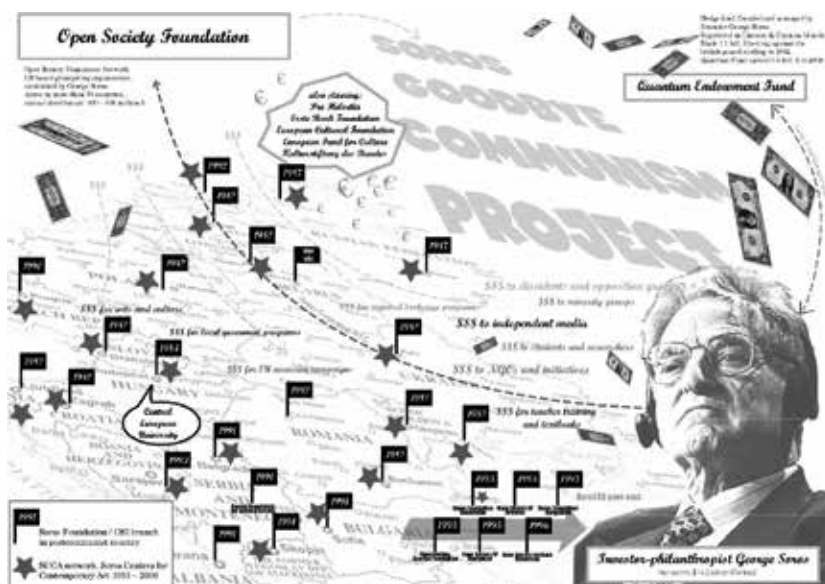
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Art History...

in the art of Eastern Europe that takes a more critical approach, perhaps, than that of the generation of artists, art historians, and curators who had their formative years in the 1990s. This position is an important contribution because it can be accused of being critical while coinciding with recent state developments in Hungary and the attacks on Georg Soros's Open University.

AGATA JAKUBOWSKA, in her thorough investigation of the circulation of texts and the mobility of some individual artists, rejects the notion that Polish feminist artists of the 1970s worked in a vacuum, lacking an audience with keys to feminist ideas. Artists like Natalia KK, Magdalena Abakanowicz, Krystyna Piotrowska, Izabella Gustowska, and Anin Bednarczik were part of exhibitions and projects with feminist themes or at least a clear reference towards the specificity of art by female artists. While feminism as a political idea and an ideological base remained alien in the general discourse, Jakubowska shows how, paradoxically, feminist concepts were clearly present and how many actors found them to be meaningful. Feminist art appeared synchronically but developed differently in different countries, although traveling ideas of feminism could still have impacts on the art in many different places.

Anu Allas discusses the concept of the neo-avant garde in connection with Czech artist Milan Knizak's text *Aktualuniversitata 10 lekci* (Aktual University: Ten Lessons) stressing that the high level of *performative* value in manifestos and statements of artists from socialist nations should be given careful attention. Her understanding of Knizank's position, made through a textual analysis, is one within an Eastern European neo-avant-garde. From there he initiates a conversation between inside and outside views that makes visible both the consonances and conflicts between different contexts. Katarzyna Cytlak's essay discusses the reception of Polish theater directors Grotowski and Kantor in Argentina, thus using the concept of a colonial matrix of power on the Cold War margins and thereby widening the geo-political beyond that of nations and the East-West paradigm. Contemporary artists' practices in exploring and addressing matters of global transfer, critical art geography, flow of cultural goods, and LGTBQ identities within Eastern Europe and Asian America are in focus in the last section in chapters by Joanna Skolowska, Amy Bryzgel, and Alpesh Kantital Patel.

Globalizing East European Art Histories. Past and Present takes a stand towards the positioning of the East European region, not as a space of collective identity, but as a heterogeneous field with a certain historical shared geopolitical and epistemic position as the idea of temporal approaches that inherit and propose a certain belatedness, which is then projected towards Eastern Europe as a claimed periphery. What are needed today, as Bèata



The Soros art centers emerged throughout Eastern Europe constituted an important factor for the post-Soviet art scene.

ILLUSTRATION: NAOMI HENNIG

Hock rightly emphasizes, are methodologies of knowledge production that “consciously work toward a differentiated paradigm; that invent and implement context-bound concepts and terminologies in order to fully explore phenomena that are issuing from shared historical experiences and current local concerns.” Relating to Larry Wolff’s 1994 account of how Eastern European art was invented during the 18th century, the editors manage to uncover the relation between different historical situations within Eastern European art through a number of cases written by scholars and artists from different geopolitical positions. (These contributors could have been given personal presentations in order to make this even more meaningful for the reader, and one or two essays could have been just as effective if shortened.) This volume comes out as a rewarding, rich, and important contribution and academic reader, and the editors while collecting work dealing with art from a wide historical scope have been able to pursue fundamental and unsettling theoretical questions of the writing of art history outside the nationalist paradigm. ❌

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reference

- 1 See Charlotte Bydler, "Piotr Piotrowski in Memoriam", *Baltic Worlds* 3–4 2015, pp. 12–13 and on balticworlds.com, and Piotr Piotrowski, "Why Were There no Great Pop Art Curatorial Projects in Eastern Europe in the 1960s?" in *Baltic Worlds* 3–4 2015, pp. 10–16.



BERLIN & EUROPE:

1989 AND NOW

ILLUSTRATION: MOA FRANZEN

On May 13–14, 2019 the Körber History Forum took place, where some 200 experts on European history and politics had gathered in the capital of Germany to discuss current European affairs and global issues. In particular, the imminent threat of Russia and the historical roots of the return of “strong leaders” in European politics were in focus in this year’s debates.

Organized by the *Körber-Stiftung*, the event took place at the Humboldt Carré in the very heart of Berlin, just a few minutes away from the Brandenburger Tor, where the Wall came down in the dramatic fall of 1989, some 30 years ago. Thus, it was inevitable that “1989” should be brought up, both in the opening speech delivered by Thomas Paulsen of the *Körber-Stiftung*, and in the keynote address by Mary Elise Sarotte (Johns Hopkins University, Washington). Focusing on the post-Cold War order after 1989,

Sarotte noted that the present security situation in Europe is obviously very different from what it was in the early 1990s, and euphoria has thus been replaced with gloomy realism. European security and the issue of NATO expansion remains a very sensitive issue, and with the benefit of hindsight, it would seem that the developments that followed 1989 did in the long run produce deepening antagonism between Russia and the West. Sarotte concluded that the short post-1989 era came to an end in 2014, with the Russian aggression in Ukraine.

A SPECIAL PANEL discussion was organized to address the issue of strongman rule and threats to democracy, where among others Timothy Snyder (Yale University), Archie Brown (University of Oxford) and Zoltán Balog (Foundation for a Civic Hungary) participated. The debate on strongman rule is not new, but it has become more accented in recent years,

not the least with the developments in Hungary and Poland. Timothy Snyder, author of *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (2010) challenged the whole idea of “strong leaders” in the region, arguing that the individuals that typically come up in these discussions today are in fact neither “strong” nor very much of “leaders”. As for leading, there is simply nowhere to lead their respective countries; since countries like Poland and Hungary don’t want to abandon the benefits that comes with EU membership, the only future someone like Viktor Orbán can offer would be some mythical place in the past – but going there would not necessarily make the real Hungary better off. Moreover, compared to the historical examples of the 1920s and 1930s, the so-called “strong leaders” in the region today are certainly weaker, both in terms of popular support and political visions. Still, that does not mean that people like Orbán, or Putin for that matter, are harm-

less. If we really take these sort of populist and nationalistic leaders seriously, the EU could probably do more to counteract their illiberal behavior.

Having written a number of books on the subject – among them *The Myth of the Strong Leader* (2016) and *Personality and Power* (forthcoming, 2020) – Archie Brown noted that a “strong leader” could simply mean any unscrupulous politician with the ability to get rid of political rivals. That kind of centralized leadership, however, does not necessarily lead to economic development or to making the country “stronger” in the world, nor is it a sure recipe for political stability.

Historically, it is rather collective leadership (like in an ideal parliamentary democracy) that would seem to matter when it comes to strong government, political stability and economic development. Dictatorships, on the other hand, tend to be poor.

THE KÖRBER History Forum not only invites scholars to their events, and people from politics, the diplomacy, media – among them *Der Spiegel*, *The Guardian*, *Le Monde* and *Süddeutsche Zeitung* – and civil society also participated this year. The panel discussions and lunch seminars covered a number of very interesting topics, including for example Europe and colonial injustice, security issues in the past and in the present, as well as the significance of Europe today, as understood by Former Polish President Bronisław Komorowski (2010–2015). Moreover, to mention just a few, Andres Kasekamp (University of Toronto) held a seminar on cooperation and conflict in the Baltic Sea region, Nikolay Koposov (Emory University, Atlanta) talked about history and memory, and Alina Mungiu-Pippidi (Hertie School of Government, Berlin) reflected upon the transformation of Central and Eastern Europe from 1989 and onwards.

Propaganda and “fake news” also received quite a lot of attention at the conference. A panel discussion on “The pow-

er of manipulation: On dealing with propaganda and ‘fake news’ in the past and present” attracted a large crowd, as it formally ended the 2019 Körber History Forum. The panel encompassed among others Anne Applebaum (Institute of Global Affairs, London School of Economics) and Jo Fox (University of London), a specialist in the history of propaganda. The moderator of the panel discussion, Natalie Nougayrède (*The Guardian* and previously the editor-in-chief of *Le Monde*), noted that “fake news” is not a very helpful label for the different kinds of political accusations and various forms of disinformation and social media discourses presently found

on the net. Maybe just “propaganda” would be sufficient? But of course, modern information technology has already changed the rules of the game. Applebaum, who is perhaps best known

for her books *Gulag: A History of the Soviet Camps* (2003) and *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine* (2017), noted that what we have now is a global digital arena, where anybody can reach anybody. In a manner of speaking, Russia can thus take part in the US elections, and China can take part in, say, the Swedish elections, and so on. This could perhaps be referred to the dark side of globalization.

HOW MUCH SHOULD we worry about this? Are we getting closer to what Hanna Arendt once warned us about, in her seminal work on *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: a post-fact era in which the distinction between fact and fiction no longer matters? We should probably worry more than we do about junk content on the net, just as we worry about junk food in our daily diet. In particular, as underlined by Jo Fox, we should worry about attacks on universities and scientific research. ✖

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Peter Handberg



Swedish author and translator with a long list of books. Döblin's book *Reise in Polen* (Journey to Poland) will be published as a Swedish translation by Handberg in autumn 2019. Handberg's upcoming book *Världens yttersta platser – Judiska spår* [The world's outermost places – Jewish traces] will be published simultaneously by the same publishing house – Faethon förlag.

Johan Hegardt



Associate professor in archaeology at Uppsala University. Project researcher in “Art, Culture, Conflict: Transformations of Museums and Memory Culture in the Baltic Sea Region after 1989”, at Södertörn University.

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PhD and retired professor of Media Technology at Södertörn University. At the core he is a cognitive scientist and a researcher of conceptualization, applying his theoretical framework to a range of fields.

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Freelance writer based in Stockholm. Reports for various publications and takes great interest in the environments of the archipelago, where she also enjoys spending time for recreation.

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Tomas Sniegon



Historian and Associate Professor in European Studies at the University of Lund in Sweden. Focuses on memory of traumatic events of the 20th Century (including both world wars, the Holocaust, and Stalinism) in Central and East European historical cultures and on the development of Communism in Europe during the Cold War. Currently works on a project about "patriotization" of the Gulag memory in present-day Russia.

Viktoriya Sukovata



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Anna-Karin Utbult Almkvist



Farmer in Sankt Anna archipelago outside the city of Norrköping and representative of archipelago farmers in the National Association for the Swedish Archipelago.

Christian Widholm



Historian and lecturer in Tourism Studies at Södertörn University. Widholm has published several works on Swedish nationalism and the mass media. Some of his recent publications deal with how childhood memories influence heritage entrepreneurs and how nostalgia influences the world of sports.

Yuliya Yurchuk



PhD in History currently working as a researcher at Södertörn University in the projects "Information management in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict" and "Religion and Politics in Ukraine: The Influence of Churches and Religious Traditions in the Formation of Collective Memory" funded by the Baltic Sea Foundation.

Francesco Zavatti



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Annika Öhrner



Associate Professor in Art History and a faculty member of Södertörn University since 2013. Research interests include the early artistic avant-garde and the art and the art field during the decades after the Second World War, with a focus on transnational cultural transfer.

Work for international scholarly solidarity

On the 6th of May this year, *Baltic Worlds* arranged a seminar at CBEES, Södertörn University on the topic of the shrinking space for academic freedom. The seminar was based on *Baltic Worlds*' recently published Special Issue 2018:4 on "Academic Freedom under threat".

At the seminar, the audience took part of several reports on threats towards the academic freedom. Elżbieta Korolczuk (Institute for Advanced Study in Warsaw and Södertörn University) discussed the growing anti-gender tendencies in Poland, and the related fact that Gender Studies is presently targeted as an academic discipline. Because of the situation fewer students chose to go on with their studies in Gender Studies. Péter Balogh (Hungarian Academy of Sciences) described how governmental decisions and imposed legislation endanger the academic freedom in Hungary, not only for institutions as the Central European University (CEU), but also the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Balogh also stressed the growing feeling of insecurity among scholars and students, as well as the emotional stress this causes.

THE TWO PRESENTATIONS were followed by a general discussion on how to understand and define academic freedom, and how to make sense of the recent attacks on it. The speed of restrictions and illiberal developments in Poland and Hungary was brought up during the discussion. Also, it was noted that the attacks as such tend to create a negative normalization process, as it were.



Protests against the closure of the Central European University in Budapest, Hungary, in March 2017.

Researchers become accustomed to being questioned or controlled, even if it means lack of access to, for example, library resources and archives. What is probably worse is the isolation that follows, most notably experienced by scholars from Gender Studies in Turkey. Due to political pressure, they face the absence of a critical open dialogues with academic colleagues and the loss of an international network to collaborate with. Therefore, it was stressed, there is a great need for cross-border networks. At the seminar there were further presentations, also on

the autocratic learning in Eurasia. The seminar closed with a wider discussion on how to protect academic freedom and work for international scholarly solidarity.

AYŞE GÜL ALTINAY, Professor of Anthropology and Director of Sabancı University Gender and Women's Studies Center of Excellence (SU Gender) is one of the scholars standing trial in Turkey for signing the petition for peace "We will not be part of this Crime". *Baltic Worlds* now publishes her statements at court online, to support her cause. *Baltic Worlds* intends to continue to monitor and publish on the issue of Academic Freedom. ✖



Ninna Mörner

* On *Baltic Worlds*' website you find a report from the seminar May 6, Peter Balogh's presentation, and the above-mentioned statements.

Baltic Worlds' statement of purpose

BALTIC WORLDS is a scholarly journal published by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies at Södertörn University, since 2008. It publishes articles in social sciences and humanities as well as environmental studies, practicing a double-blind peer-review

process, by at least two independent specialists. *Baltic Worlds* is listed in the Norwegian bibliometric register (DHB), included in EBSCO databases, DOAJ, and Sherpa/RoMEO.

Baltic Worlds is distributed to readers in 50 countries, and reaches readers from various disciplines, as well as outside academia. In order to present multi- and interdisciplinary ongoing research to a wider audience,

Baltic Worlds also publishes essays, commentaries, interviews, features and conference reports. All content relates to the Baltic Sea Region and the wider Central and Eastern European area, including the Caucasus and the Balkans.

Baltic Worlds regularly publishes thematic sections with guest editors, enabling deeper explorations into specific fields and research questions. Interna-

tional scholarly collaborations are encouraged. *Baltic Worlds* wishes to advance critical engagement in area studies and to apply novel theoretical and methodological approaches to this multifaceted field.

The journal's Scholarly Advisory Council consists of international scholars, representing different disciplines and with specific knowledge on the area.

The Scholarly Advisory Council