Conducting critical area studies

Södertörn University in the midst of Eastern Europe

MEDIA IN CHANGE / GENDER DISCOURSES / ROMANI STUDIES / THE FALL OF THE WALL / POLITICS OF MEMORY
Conducting critical area studies

The first edition of Baltic Worlds’ In-house focuses on the research conducted by scholars both at Södertörn University and connected to the University, on the Baltic Sea region and East Europe. We would like to present our broad perspectives on and approaches to what has been our profile since early 1996: Baltic and East European studies. The occasion is Södertörn University’s 20th anniversary.

On the last page of the issue, Rebecka Lettevall, director of the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) and Associate Professor of History of Ideas, gives an introduction to our perception of critical area studies and how it has developed through the years.

Several other articles explore our profile further. I have invited nine doctoral students to assist me by participating in an editorial board. The texts presented here are the fruit of many ideas and discussions. We are now confident that, yes, we are indeed conducting highly relevant and fascinating area studies at Södertörn University. Hopefully you the reader will come to the same conclusion after browsing through this edition!

Area studies may be seen as multidisciplinary and international research projected at an area. We constantly apply new approaches to the moving target of area studies: exploring how the past can be remembered and related to; how our contemporary data in several countries on attitudes towards the present and the past. Politics of memory is a highly relevant topic. The past is a place to remember, share and visit. Memory studies, heritage, and old conflicts and kyläbiis all have a place in our profile, as do Romani Studies, Gender Studies and Journalism. Many of our research projects have been made possible by generous funding from the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (Österjönfteln).

One of the cornerstones of Södertörn University is the research school: the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS). From the beginning we have helped the school’s students to build international networks. The idea of involving and encouraging young researchers at CBEES and Södertörn University is important to us. We believe in dynamic meetings and constantly altering the discussion with new perspectives. And of course, this is precisely why we have involved many doctoral students in this Baltic Worlds In-house edition: to shed light on and explore our excellence in Baltic and East European Studies.

We also have a collection of articles on the transition and change taking place in Europe. After the fall of the Wall in 1989, Europe was vibrant with promise and faith in the future, as Anu Mai Köll, the former director of CBEES and Professor of Baltic Studies, describes. But today, 25 years after the Soviet Union ceased to exist, Europe is once more being torn apart, and we are building walls, as Irina Sandomirskaja, Professor of Culture Studies at CBEES, comments. And the PhD candidate Adrià Alcoverro even questions the idea of applying the epithet “post-communist” to East Europe and former socialist countries: one generation has passed and maybe it is time to move on, he reasons in a commentary. Joakim Ekman, Professor of Political Science at CBEES, presents a new large-scale project collecting public opinion data in several countries on attitudes towards the present and the past.

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WHAT IS IT THAT HOLDS A REGION TOGETHER?

by Vasileios Petrogiannis and Linn Rabe

If you google the Baltic Sea region you will get 14 million hits in 0.4 seconds, revealing an organizational phenomenon. The top fifty results will be about EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, different forms of councils and regional cooperation, university networks, partnership platforms and programs. Google will suggest narrowing the search with words such as strategy, program, and forum. Looking at the results for images, the top results will show maps in blue and green colors, program logotypes (in similar colors), photos from formal meetings, and Power-Point slides with project plans and goals. The region seems to be a well-established institution. But is this really the full picture? Is the result of our Google search an indication of a fabricated reality? To gain more insight into the structures behind the Baltic Sea region and regions per se, we asked a group of scholars linked to Södertörn University and the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) who study the Baltic Sea region from different angles to inform us about their approaches. For some of the scholars, the concept of “region” is a main characteristic and focus of their study, while for others the regional aspects follow as a consequence of the research objects they have chosen. A common dominator of all researchers in question is that they take the Baltic Sea region as the object of their studies. We asked them to share what they think “region” actually means and what constitutes the region’s borders. How fixed is the concept and what can cause a region to change over time? Do different fields use the term similarly, or are there contradictions? And what contributions may regions bring to the academic discussion?

The Baltic Sea

Even though the common dominator among this diverse group of researchers is that they are using the Baltic Sea region as case, their definitions of this region differ. In natural science the Baltic Sea region is defined as the sea itself and its surrounding drainage area. From a geographical point of view the Baltic Sea region can also be seen as the physical entity, but it can likewise be seen as a sociopolitical construct around water as a means of communication. Péter Balogh explains that when naval traffic was the key means of transportation the Baltic Sea was a connecting element, but as inland traffic became more intense the sea instead had a divisive effect. Charlotte Bydler, studying anthropocene effects as they are expressed through a poetics of Sápmi in the northern area of the Baltic Sea, also refers to historic trade when defining “the cosmopolitan Baltic Sea region”. She confirms Balogh’s presentation of the sea as a historically important means of communication, arguing its importance not only for those who lived on or near the coasts, but also for people from the interior traveling on rivers. By arguing for a definition of regions centered on core regional values, such as cultural practices and shared language, Bydler stands for one of the broader definitions we will encounter of the region, one which includes the Norwegian Sámi as inhabitants of the Baltic Sea region.

But neither Balogh nor Bydler sees the Baltic Sea region as a thing of the past. With increased attention nowadays on environmental challenges, locally produced food, proximity, and regional awareness, the Baltic Sea has started to re-emerge as a positive or at least necessary factor of local and regional development. Balogh states: “As a geopolitical concept, the Baltic Sea Region [...] has experienced a revival to foster contacts between the formerly politically divided Baltic Rim countries. While there is no doubt that cross-border contacts have been evolving, the depth of such integration remains to be seen, and the expectations of various actors should also be realistic.”

On a similar path, Marta Grzechnik discusses actors and interactions, saying that in her understanding of the term, regions in general and the Baltic Sea region in particular are cross-national units based on networks of interactions, but the exact meaning...
The Baltic Sea region is a part of the EU strategy.

Researchers interviewed for this essay:

ELNOR ANDRÉN, Associate Professor of Physical Geography. Ongoing projects include UP/RASER – Understanding Past and Present Baltic Sea Ecosystem Response – background for a sustainable future.

THOMAS ANDRÉN, Associate Professor of Marine Geology. Ongoing projects include the multi-disciplinary project A New Region of the World? Towards a Petrographic & Geological of Water as Barrier and Bridge (eds.), Ongoing projects include the multi-disciplinary project A New Region of the World? Towards a Petrographic & Geological of Water as Barrier and Bridge

PÉTER BÁLÓKI, Postdoctoral Fellow at the Institute for Regional Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. As a former CBEES affiliate, he defended his doctoral thesis Perpetual borders: German–Polish cross-border contacts in the Szczecin area in 2014. He is now researching national narratives and macro-regional images in Hungary and beyond.

CHARLOTTE BYDLER, Associate Professor of Art History (former research leader at CBEES). Project leader of the multi-disciplinary project A New Region of the World? Towards a Petrographic & Geological of Water as Barrier and Bridge with Monica Hammer and others.

MARTA GRZECHKIN, Assistant Professor at the Chair of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Gothenburg. Former CBEES colleague. Latest book: Marta Grzechkin and Herta Hurkslanen (eds.), Beyond the Baltic Sea: The Manifold Dimensions of Water as Barrier and Bridge (BoHau Verlag 2015).
they may look to human beings with a much shorter historical perspective. The Baltic Sea region is no exception. As a human construction or product of human imagination, the Baltic Sea region has been in constant flux. Marta Grzechnik illustrates this by saying that the Baltic Sea region meant something different for an activist of the Polish Baltic Institute in the 1930s, the organizers and participants of the 1937 Riga conference of Baltic historians, the proponents of the 1970s Soviet idea of the “Sea of Peace”, the 1990s enthusiasts of Baltic Sea regional integration in Scandinavia and Germany, and while the EU is the main actor nowadays in creating and deciding the profile of Baltic Sea as a region. However, there is a common history of interaction among people who live both shores of the sea and beyond. In a way, Rebecka Lettevall sees a shared history being the region together, but at the same time it may be this shared history that tears the region apart. Historical events become the point of difference in different narratives, and these narratives give different emphases to the same historical events. Only the Nordic region, which one could argue could be a subregion of the Baltic Sea, has been relatively static in the past 60 years, according to Norbert Götz, “mainly depending on the maintenance of its association with the territory represented by the members of the Nordic Council”. In contrast, organizations dealing with the Baltic Sea region, such as the environmental agency HELCOM and the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS), vary in membership, the latter having been enlarged to include counter-intuitive cases such as Iceland.

**Most of our respondents** argue that human interaction and imagination are the main factors defining the boundaries of a region and that the making of these boundaries may change over time. This means that, again, there is nothing essentialist in our effort to understand how and why the boundaries of a region have been defined in a certain way. Since human imagination is not something that all the human beings, societies, states, or different actors share in the same way, each definition of a region fixes the boundaries in its own way. In the era of nation-states the boundaries of regions are associated with or match the outer borders of the states in their periphery. In other words, a region ends where the national borders of the states that form its periphery also end.

Marta Grzechnik is very clear on this issue: “the national bias in our education is something that we, as researchers, need to overcome”. She further mentions some practical challenges that regional studies needs to deal with, such as “access to sources in different languages composed in different traditions of scholarship”. Furthermore, Peter Balogh points out some other challenges that regional studies bear, as for example the territorial trap or regional essentialism, and the risk of reproducing political discourses in academia.

**Multidisciplinary approaches**

Finally, many of the scholars discuss multidisciplinary approaches as a great opportunity when studying regions. Anders Nordström highlights multidisciplinary research approach, not least in relation to his and Matilda Dahl’s experience in their own research. “The advantage of research on regions is that it is open to many approaches. It is our experience that most regional research prides itself on being multidisciplinary. Our project grew out of collaboration between researchers from political science, language studies, and business administration. We believe the studies of regional phenomena are a good basis for multidisciplinary research. We are convinced that the Baltic Sea can play a part in knowledge building relating to climate history in the longterm perspective and that [their] findings not only supply important data for understanding the Baltic Sea in the best way, but also promote our understanding of how semienclosed seas respond to external pressures in general.”

The respondents whose information contributed to this text agree on the conclusion that the understanding of regions differs in the various research fields. To make a generalization based on how our respondents approach the concept, one can say that human geographers try to detach the research regions from nation-states and focus on a more nuanced notion of territories, including the flows and networks associated with them; political scientists examine how different regions have been politically institutionalized; historians look back to the past to understand the evolution of regions; and geologists view regions in a different way, as the time scale of natural history, measured in hundreds of thousands of years, is disproportionally to that of human history.

Yet what unifies the discussion is that the notion of region is conceptually indefinite; it is difficult to fix in one position. In the postmodern era of globalization, where the nation-state is losing its power and meaning while at the same time trying to resist this, regions gain a specific significance, as both a theoretical and a methodological tool, in how we understand the world. For this reason, region related research and the discussion of it is led by Norbert Götz, who is associated with Södertörn University and the Centre for Baltic and Eastern European Studies for example not only contribute to scientific knowledge and the academic community, but has great relevance for society in general and for our better understanding of the always complicated and interconnected world at large.

Vasilios Petropianis, PhD student in political science, is a member of the project Spaces of Expectation: Mental Mapping and Historical Imagination in the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean Regions, led by Norbert Götz.

Linn Rübe, PhD student at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) in environment science, explores the links between procedural justice and legitimacy in local implementation of nature conservation in multilevel governance context, the Baltic Sea macroregion as a case study.

**Regions and the nation**

Regional and area studies challenge the hegemonic position of the nation-state as the basic unit of research. This current opinion is shared by all the scholars and it is clearly stated in most answers. Norbert Götz points out that regions can work as a remedy for methodological nationalism as he explains: “The nation-state is a significant — and traditionally underestimated — dimensions of human agency, above, below, and beyond the level of nation states”. Anders Nordström and Matilda Dahl very aptly mention that regions and peripheries can be seen “as states in the making” and that the theoretical and methodological contribution of the regional approach is that it enables research to find some other concepts to capture the “in-between” status of regions and region peripheries that do not compete with state-run governance”. The hegemony of the nation-state as an analytical tool is recognized by Charlotte Bylander, who gives a regional dimension to this hegemony as she states that “the national paradigm dominates in the northern hemisphere and especially in Europe”. Hence, trying to avoid the reef of methodological nationalism is a challenge that all researchers confront.

A region ends where the national borders of the states that form its periphery also end.

**References**

1. The selection of researchers involved in this article is intended to reflect a broad-spectrum of different fields and research traditions. The questionnaire of the scholars involved was carried out in two phases. A questionnaire with eleven qualitative questions on the use of the “region” concept and the use of the Baltic Sea region in the given scholar’s research was sent to the invited scholars. The authors of the present article combined the findings in a first version which was reviewed and commented on by the scholars in order to get a dynamic view on the present.

2. Editorial Policy” in: Baltic and Scandinavian Countries. A Survey of the Peoples and States on the Baltic with Special Regard to Their History, Geography and Economics, 4 no. 1 (1918).

**Researchers interviewed for this essay – continued:**

**MONICA HAMMER,** Associate Professor of Nature Resource Management. Former research leader at CBEES. Ongoing projects include East of Cosmopolis. The world Citizen and the Paradoxes of the Sans-papiers.

**REBECKA LETTEVALL,** Associate Professor of the History of Ideas and director of the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES). Ongoing projects include East of Cosmopolis. The world Citizen and the Paradoxes of the Sans-papiers.

**ANDERS NORDSTRÖM,** Doctor of Political Science, former BEEGS graduate. Working together with Matilda Dahl former BEEGS graduate on the transnational practices of region-building in the Baltic Sea region.
EXPLORING DISCIPLINARY CROSSROADS
by Johan Fornäs

In many contexts today, interdisciplinarity is a cherished keyword. One example is the talk of “mode 2” knowledge production, according to which multidisciplinary cooperation to meet extra-academic demands is becoming the rule in university research, replacing the older, discipline-based “mode 1”. Another example is common in area studies, where disciplines combine forces to investigate a specific geopolitical region or some other phenomenon that demands insights from more than one discipline in order to be fully understood.

However, even though interdisciplinarity is a buzzword nowadays, among academic as well as research funders, what it actually means is another matter. In my winding academic trajectory, in collective research projects and the university institutions to which I have been attached, I have experienced very different ways of approaching interdisciplinarity.

Cooperation across disciplinary boundaries can combine different motives and different results. Sometimes the main driver and effect are organizational, for instance, striving for synergies with limited personal and financial resources or revitalizing stagnant faculties. Not least in smaller universities such as Södertörn, there is a need for rather small disciplinary units to gather momentum by working more closely together. This can— but need not— be linked to neoliberal profit demands.

Elsewhere, the central factor is that some particularly complex research object demands collaboration in order to be reasonably well understood. This is an argument often used in area studies such as the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies here at Södertörn University, though there are actually few topics that cannot claim to be “complex” in this respect. There may also be interest for jointly exploring and evaluating how a certain methodology or a specific theoretical model can be used from different disciplinary perspectives. Examples are the elaboration of “metagraphics” or Internet ethnography on one hand, and applications of theories of modernization, globalization, or mediation on the other.

Partly depending on such considerations, different disciplinary models for working together across boundaries have developed, and they can be described in slightly different terms. The following terminology is not quite stabilized, and it is possible to find wide-ranging definitions, but here is how I think the alternatives can be named and described:

First, intradisciplinary work is organized within one single and relatively coherent discipline. All academic disciplines are historical constructions that change over time, and each contains several different branches, but they tend to share a certain jargon, canon, and tradition, as well as a set of basic paradigms, theories, and methodologies.

Second, multidisciplinary research combines people and ideas from different disciplines, working together to address some kind of shared challenge or task. A single scholar can also be multidisciplinary, if she has qualifications in more than one discipline. In such cases, each researcher typically respects the disciplinary identity of the others in the team, and there is no explicit aim to dissolve any borders or merge the disciplines into one kind of new, hybrid, borderline knowledge, but rather to cumulate individual disciplinary units into an additive whole. It is my impression that this mode dominates in the Baltic and East European work at Södertörn University.

Third, cross-disciplinary work implies some kind of exchange or transfer of methods or theories from one discipline to another, for instance in the interdisciplinization spread from social anthropology to many other fields, or when concepts like modernization or mediation spread from sociology or media studies to other disciplines. A slightly different definition is used to denote cases where one discipline highlights another, for instance in the sociology of literature or media history.

Next, interdisciplinarity indicates that genuinely new insights are sought not just by adding disciplinary perspectives, but by going to some extent beyond them and their mere combination, leading to new theory development that does not leave out any of the merging elements unaffected, so that the hybrid outcome becomes larger than its added constituents. New and complex phenomena or problems invite such innovative interdisciplinary activity. An individual researcher can again also be interdisciplinary, if she manages to develop hybrid knowledge forms that cannot be reduced to any single disciplinary field.

Interdisciplinary explorations may well later lead to the formation of new academic disciplines, as in the development of Media and Communication Studies and Gender Studies.

COMPARING TO MULTIDISCIPLINARITY, interdisciplinary is better at dealing with the danger of eclecticism, which is one of the most common objections against interdisciplinary research. If the collaboration of disciplinary perspectives is too fast and shallow, potentially conflicting theories and ideas can be combined without sufficient critical consideration of how they interact and relate to each other. This results in explanatory models full of deep-seated but unreflected inner contradictions and inconsistent ontological and epistemological assumptions. To avoid such dangers, it is essential for cooperating researchers to carefully and explicitly discuss and rework theoretical, methodological differences, finding ways to transform mutual contras into tools for ‘better understanding the composite and multi-modal representations of the sociocultural phenomena that are studied. This demands hard communicative work, and needs to be taken seriously, with time devoted to this task, and willingness among all parties involved to critically reflect on their own assumptions, in dialogue with other perspectives.

This hard and sometimes painful work, but it pays off in creating a much more solid understanding both of the phenomena studied and of one’s own knowledge tools.

Finally, transdisciplinarity is perhaps the least clear concept of them all. It is sometimes used in similar ways to cross-disciplinarity, but may instead signify an even more ambitious fusion of perspectives, in which not only new insights are sought in between existing disciplines, but where those disciplines are expected to fade away and be replaced by a new, more holistic unity. Yet even the latter interpretation of the term remains unconvinced that this is a tenable model for academic research in general. Believe there are in fact good arguments for disciplinary specializations, though they are historical, compromise formations that are always being negotiated, contested, and rearranged, and should never be naturalized or frozen. Multi-, cross- and interdisciplinary efforts should hence not be seen as substitutes for them, but rather function as a borderline supplement that adds creativity and momentum precisely by not forming new disciplinary totalities, but rather by giving rise to more or less far-reaching mutual interaction across those borders.

I myself have experienced all forms, except perhaps transdisciplinary, both in my own projects and more generally in the universities settings where I have worked. Sometimes participating researchers shared the same theories and research questions, sometimes methods or objects (media texts, interviews and field notes), and the outcomes have varied between individual texts in anthologies and journals and highly integrated, coauthored books. Both multi- and interdisciplinarity can be inspiring and creative ventures, but neither should be seen as superfluous or in any way mandatory. Sometimes traditional forms of disciplinary research are sufficient, and interaction between disciplinary positions becomes most productive when those initially differ in some clear way, so that interdisciplinary generally requires disciplinarity. In such situations, combinations both demand and result in a heightened self-reflexivity that feeds back into participating disciplinary practice, while they can also lead to transformations of the interacting disciplines themselves, or even in the longer term to the emergence of new border disciplines (such as Gender Studies or Media and Communication Studies).

However, I do believe that it is a good strategy to aim for a balance of these modes of knowledge production. In Baltic and East European studies at Södertörn University, as in many other area studies environments, the balance could very well be pushed towards even more truly interdisciplinary efforts, rather than leaving all monodisciplinary traditions untouched. This may turn out to be beneficial both for supporting closer interactive collaboration between disciplinary traditions. Actively engaging in interdisciplinary debates on theories and methods may be one option; another could be to invite international experts to visiting research projects or to organize workshops where different disciplinary perspectives approach one or more shared question and critically engage with each other’s proposals.

Johan Fornäs is professor of Media and Communication Studies, School of Culture and Education.

references
2 The following discussion builds on my own multiple experiences of interdisciplinary work in many different academic settings and research projects, and I am also grateful to Else Rending for valuable editorial feedback.

Different methods and uses of theory may fecundate each other.

ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

11 essay
The core of my university discipline, geography, has been defined as “the study of strengths for power over the environment” by Torsten Hägerstrand: “On the core area of geography.” Geographical Review, 1960, 40, 348–364. The Greek word geographia literally means “description of the earth”. Geography thus is a discipline in terrestial space, combining natural science, to explain the reasons for the morphology created by nature, and humanistic and social science, explaining the spatially differentiated outcome of human action on the earth’s surface, and consequently the interaction between human action and natural forces in creating or changing the earth. One might say that geography is the study of areas, but area studies are rarely geography. Within the discipline, there was a long tradition of “regional geography” – aimed at the understanding of a given region. But the region itself was rarely questioned, and the relation between the different forces creating the physical, social, and cultural entity was never explored. In fact, area studies have been criticized for the same shortcomings. Area studies were often carried out by specialists on one aspect of the area, e.g. the government, language, or culture. This was often done without understanding the spatial differences within the area.

This calls for multidisciplinarity! My main research area has been the Barents-Baltic Brim, a region that is usually considered to be at the expense of many other aspects. This is necessary. But boundaries also define disciplines. With training already pointed out by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén in 1939, boundary studies is an object for many different disciplines. But boundaries also define disciplines. With training in political science or literature, for instance, you get a deeper understanding of different disciplines in different ways. Boundaries are necessary, but they always have to be questioned.

In a recent project, Teaching Religion and Thinking Education in the Barents Region, we combined four disciplines: the study of religion, political science, and geography. In order to understand how the teaching of religion is carried out it is necessary to understand the political regulation, but also the spatial environment of the schools. Put together, four theoretical discourses had to be bridged, leading to a fruitful synergy, but also to the realization that we had to present the findings to different disciplines in different ways. Boundaries are necessary, but they always have to be questioned.

References
2 Rudolf Kjellén: Studier över bilder på politisk gräns, (Studying the national borders, a political perspective), 1899, 1(3), 183–190.
3 Jenny Berglund, Thomas Lundén and Peter Strandbrink (eds.), Borders, Education, and Religions in Northern Europe (Boston/Berlin: de Gruyter Inc., 2003).

Multidisciplinary research. A buzzword, or the way forward?

Clearly, there are common ambitions today both in research funding organizations and in the academic community to cooperate and collaborate among different academic disciplines and with other holders of knowledge in society at large, in what is known in Science and Technology Studies as “coproduction of knowledge”, involving groups outside academia. Based on my experience, such “integrative” aspirations are evident in research on how to assess and manage environmental problems and risks in the Baltic Sea region. Furthermore, looking at the evaluation criteria used by funding agencies such as the Swedish Research Council FORMAS, it evident that multidisciplinary research (pluralistic and parallel studies) is often seen as less ambitious than interdisciplinary (common analytical and methodological framework) or transdisciplinary approaches (wider collaboration with stakeholders and practitioners). Hence, multidisciplinary research on the Baltic Sea environment is common if not mainstream today: a situation that at least at first glance can be interpreted as a fundamental or even paradigmatic shift from the traditional disciplinary setup that characterized academic research on environmental issues up until at least the 1990s.

However, it should be asked whether the observed shift in the research landscape and research proposals is matched by a similar change in the practices of environmental research. Additionally, in the hope of improving a generation of knowledge and learning, there is a need to assess and reflect on what the actual opportunities, challenges, and limits of integrative modes of research are. Although both of these questions deserve serious analysis and extensive research, I will limit myself in this short text to some initial reflections based on my research experience.

Researchers have to open up to access multidisciplinarity

As a researcher in Slavic Studies, and more specifically Russian literature, I came to the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) here at Södertörn University with some sort of preconditioned confidence that the purpose of doing research in my area, the good multi-disciplinary atmosphere at CBEES has, however, taught me one crucial lesson: to let go of my possession of the knowledge that I represent as a scholar. Although multidisciplinarity is fun, it does not entail a relaxation, but on the contrary, a greater challenge, because it means seeing the issues addressed in my own research in a wider and more unsettling perspective. In other words, to come to CBEES was not to come to what I had previously understood as my own, but to see “my own” in relation to disciplines that were mine at all. To participate in the work at CBEES, with the Monday Advanced Seminar, the Annual Conferences, workshops and summer schools, has allowed me to follow lines of research that take me far beyond the area of the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe, and back. This has made the overarching themes of the modernist Russian literature that I specialize in more strongly felt. A specific strength of CBEES is that, thanks mainly to the close connection to the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies, it joins research in the area with research done in the departments at the University. It is not an isolated center. The study on Soviet aesthetics can meet studies on modernist Russian literature, and the Narratives of Europe”, as Johan Fornás called his research project. CBEES therefore not only plays an important role as “hub for cooperation” in research on the Baltic Sea region and on Eastern Europe, but in doing so it also allows debates on questions related to Sweden, Europe, and the “global” world.

How can such environmental wisdom be promoted? Or is it even possible?

For what it is worth, I will venture to express an optimistic view on these questions. That is, from my experiences from environmental science in the Baltic Sea region, I have in fact found a path that seems to be leading in the right direction. There will certainly be many bumps in the road and problems in finding the way in the future. But with a continued focus on (1) the complex nature of environmental issues, (2) a primary focus on promoting critical and reflective capacities in education and research, and (3) a continuous ambition to improve and widen arenas for cooperation learning, – I believe that the environmental future for the Baltic Sea region can be a brighter one today.

Working side by side or in close cooperation is the question.
November 9, 1989, in Berlin, late in the afternoon. Rather unexpectedly, the gates in the wall dividing East and West Berlin open, groups of people and Trabant cars spout out from the East. With lightning speed, crowds gather on both sides, cheering, waving flowers, cigarettes, and chto, the German sparkling wine. There are tears, embraces, spontaneous singing and dancing. Late into the night, young men climb the wall, tearing away barbed wire, then sitting down to admire unprecedented, almost surreal, views of a happy popular reunion.

These images have become symbols of the disintegration of communism in Europe, conveying the open, joyous, youthful character of the event, resembling a carnival. As time goes by, the symbolic importance of these images has grown. When it happened, hopes for freedom, prosperity, and equality soared high. We expected no less than the end of the Cold War, the end of the nuclear threat, European unity. Indeed there were no limits to the faith and optimism of liberal versus restrictive foreign trade systems were discussed. Legislation on voting rights was discussed in the Estonian Supreme Soviet. Outside the parliament building on Toompea, Russian-speaking protesters had gathered by Alexander Nevski Cathedral; to their left across the street stood an equally large group waving Estonian flags. Apart from shouting and cheers for delegates of different constituencies, nothing occurred. The guards were heavily armed. Actually, violence was restricted to minor drunken brawls at night. Half a dozen newspapers of just two or four pages appeared each day. They mostly wrote about historical events—the Molotov–Ribbentrop pact, the fate of politicians of the 1930s, the deportations in 1941 and 1944, and of course contemporary events in Moscow. The outside world did not exist; this was the centre of the world. Privilege systems were still in place; a visitor could either use the special bars and shops for foreign currency or tap into an Estonian friend’s access to enterprise lunch restaurants and restricted clubs. The rube was not of much use. Late at night, the busy and optimistic mood faltered, and a friend would ask, “Who will come to our rescue if something happens now?”

The Polish example
Not only did Gorbachev leave the East European leaders to it, he also visited them and encouraged them to open up. These visits became extremely popular in the satellites, raising expectations.

Ideological dreams of combining social security and equality with wealth and a sort of third way were sustained among protesters and intellectual reformers. This would of course depend on whom you asked, but the dream of a vivid and just socialism was certainly alive at this moment.

Poland had a more turbulent history than any other satellite country. Protesters had even managed to curtail the collectivisation of agriculture. They gained new force after the Helsinki agreement in 1976. Intellectual movements and industrial strikes reinforced each other after 1980 with the formation of Solidarność. A crackdown by the allies was pre-empted at the cost of internal repression and martial law in 1981–83. Before the fall of the Berlin Wall, round table discussions led to elections in June 1989. The rules allotted a majority of seats in the Sejm to the Communist Party, but 35% were freely elected, as well as all the seats in the Senate. The Communist Party lost almost all of the elected seats, a noncommunist, Mazowiecki, was asked to form a government. A committee worked out a plan for economic shock therapy, the Białowieża plan, presented in December 1989. It later became the model for economic change.

On August 23, 1989, at precisely 7:00 p.m., up to two million Lithuanians, Latvians, and Estonians linked hands to form a continuous human chain all the way from Vilnius through Riga to Tallinn, a distance of some 600 km. They were protesting against the Soviet Russian occupation, and their demand was: freedom, freedom. The date was the 50th anniversary of the infamous Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany, which led to the annexation of the Baltic States by the USSR. The Berlin Wall fell two and a half months later and the collapse of the Soviet empire soon followed. The Baltic Way was added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2009.

The end of the Cold War was, in many ways, a surprise—a pleasant one.
**Soviet and East European studies**

During the Cold War, institutes for Soviet and East European studies flourished in American and Western European universities. By 1985, conflict between totalitarian approaches, mainly concerned with repression and ideological struggle, and revisionists, studying social and economic aspects, had become entrenched. Gorbachev and the development of glasnost and perestroika took both camps by surprise. Empirical studies of the Soviet Union by foreign researchers had previously been restricted to in-depth subjects, suddenly they opened up for serious studies. In some cases, notably the GDR and the Soviet republics leaving the union, archives were opened to a previously unknown extent, including police and military archives. In Russia and the Central Asian republics, access was eventually reduced. A window of opportunity closed in a changed world.

Bewildered politicians abroad wished to get a grasp on events and were prepared to allocate money to area studies. In Germany a state-financed project worked through all the GDR archives. An entirely new region, the Baltic Sea area, was constructed out of previously bilateral contacts across the Baltic Sea. Its mainstay was state-level organizations, backed up with new area studies. After 20 years of peaceful development, however, public and political interest deviated to more dramatic events, only reviving at the Russian intervention in Ukraine.

What have we learned?

In the West much attention was focused on the lack of human rights and inadequate consumption in socialist countries. In hindsight, it seems military spending (the so-called Star Wars initiative) was not a decisive cause of the collapse. Instead his- torians argue that it was not the economic failures that were decisive for the collapse, but rather the political systems were not able to cope with the sudden changes that were taking place. The collapse of communism meant the end of an era that was characterized by a well-functioning democracy (democratization) and efficient market economy.

**The fall of the wall**

**Overcoming the transition**

**TIME TO UNDERSTAND EASTERN EUROPE IN ITS OWN RIGHT**

By Adrià Alcoverro

It has been roughly a quarter of a century since the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe. It is time to acknowledge that the former communist space has experienced an unprecedented and varied transformation during this period. However, many discussions on the subject reduce these events to little stories in a grand epic titled “transition.” For instance, I recently came across an IMF (International Monetary Fund) report written by academics titled 25 Years of Transition: Post-Communist Europe and the IMF. This historical account attempts to elucidate the different paths taken up to the present. They conclude that, despite the steps taken, the former communist states continue to face challenges before they can match the EU core states. According to the IMF, Eastern Europe is still in transition after 25 years. There are still institutions and political cultures to develop, corruption to fight, and so forth. But when will this end? Is it possible to get past transition? This article is a modest reflection on why we should overcome the narratives of transition that still prevail, as a central theoretical thread especially in social sciences when we think about Eastern Europe. Instead, I argue for a conception that examines Eastern Europe in its own right, observing its complex developments in the last three decades in their context beyond the grand narrative of “transition to the West.”

The generic definition of transition is “a passage from one state, stage, subject, or place to another” or “a movement, development, or evolution from one form, stage, or style to another.” A transition is thus a temporal unity that unites a beginning with an end, hence a part that precedes or with a “hypothetical future.” Therefore, employing transition as a theoretical bedrock to define a historical process is problematic simply because the end is presupposed. It is an ahistorical abstraction that imputes a deterministic rationale based on a linear progression that persists in its deriv- ative formulations. This is very evident in the way former communist regime.

Europe has been envisaged for decades as a geographical area that in the majority of cases is inexorably progressing to a defined end: a well-functioning democracy (democratization) with efficient institutions and a growing and diversified market economy. This is often summarized as “becoming part of the West” or returning to the West. Nonetheless, this end is not reached when some still consider, as in the aforementioned IMF report, that many new member states have not yet finished their transitions, and argue that certain standards have not yet been met. Hence, this period called “transition” will persist as long as the goals are placed in a horizon that cannot be reached. This period of unattainability or incompleteness is very intense in the transistory jargon in which words such as “postcommunist,” “economies of transi- tion,” “transition societies,” etc., are often used.

**GENERALLY SPEAKING**

And without wanting to turn this into a literary review, this narrative of transition originates in very significant books in the beginning of the 1990s, such as Huntington’s The Third Wave: Democratization in the late twentieth century and Fukuyama’s End of History. A central thesis of these books is that the collapse of communism meant the historic triumph of Western liberal representative democracy and the market economy. This would signify the eventual and almost inevitable transformation of the former communist Europe into a sea of liberal democracy and market economy. Everything was just a matter of finding the fastest path to this goal. It is important to recall at this point that these teleological formulations were strengthened by the participation of some prominent “transition scholars,” such as Jeffrey Sachs, as advisers to many transitory governments as they embarked on privatizations and institution building. Some academics were not just researching transitions but literally forging the new world.

Today, the very concept of “transition” is considered backfiring. The term is often associated with a lack of success and is seen as an impediment to the development of new political systems. The term is now considered obsolete and has been replaced by more specific terms such as “postcommunist” or “transition societies.” The concept of “transition” is no longer seen as a unified process of transformation, but rather as a series of simultaneous events that must be analyzed separately.

**References**

2. The Balcerowicz plan, developed by a committee that included Jeffrey Sachs, was successful. However, part of the success was due to the fact that half of Poland’s foreign debt was written off.
3. Here, I follow the analyses of Stephen Kotkin and Jérôme Roche, historians writing about the transition in the former Soviet Union and GDR, where extensive sources opened up through glasnost and the Wende. Both see communism in a context of competition with capitalism.
4. Eurostat: GDP per capita in PPS, 2014. If the total European GDP per capita was 100, the average in Western Europe was 126 and in the successful postsocialist economies 75.
5. The Centre for Baltic and East European Studies has made important contributions to the study of this phenomenon. See Nikolay Zaharov, Attaining Whiteness: A Sociological Study of Race and Racism in Russia, and Anna Judith Kurbelinski, Sürdigungstendenz nach der Bedeutung von Staat und Bevölkerung der DDR, both Södertörn doctoral dissertations, 2013 and 2014.
A generation has passed. Maybe it’s time to stop talking about “post-”countries?

Among other consequences, the prevalence of determinism results in concentrating on causal relations that lead to the expected end. Consequently, research is focused on manageable objects of study interacting in a predictable, normative terrain (parties, state institutions, etc.) placing the historical development, and hence the political, in the hands of the elites. Indices such as the Democracy Index have attempted to fill the gap by including civil society, but despite providing interesting information, these indices are made by institutions that openly embrace liberal postulates. Consequently, they signal a liberal democracy and market economy as a horizon, and benchmark the transition countries accordingly.

The downplay of the larger socioeconomic context accompanied by the linear reading of history often reduces any event either to a step towards freedom, democracy, and prosperity, or to a move back to the old authoritarianism or totalitarianism, contributing to the idea of never-ending transition. For example, it is common to associate Putin’s illiberal authoritarianism with the old methods of the Soviet Union because of his past in the KGB, the long shadow of the Soviet Union still threatening the present. However, the rise of Putin is closely related to the process of formation of the post-Soviet oligarchic elites during the 1990s. As Ilja Viktorov has demonstrated in scholarly Baltic Worlds on numerous occasions, the formation of the Russian elites was a crude and colossal struggle for power characterized by rampant corruption, violence, and the absence of the rule of law in which private and public property became assets to be taken by the strong. All of this occurred against the background of a bumpy democratization process and privatizations that caused the impoverishment of millions of Russians.

**THIS TENSION BETWEEN** past and future conceals many stories and events. One of these stories, present in many former communist countries, is that of the losers of the privatization processes who look with distrust at this promised positive horizon. Their distrust is pivotal to understanding these “democratic setbacks” and the embrace of illiberal parties in Hungary or a move back to the old authoritarianism in Poland after the 2008 financial crisis and one of the few countries in the EU that enjoys one of the most publicized success stories after the 2008 global financial crisis. Among other consequences, the prevalence of determinism results in concentrating on causal relations that lead to the expected end. Consequently, research is focused on manageable objects of study interacting in a predictable, normative terrain (parties, state institutions, etc.) placing the historical development, and hence the political, in the hands of the elites. Indices such as the Democracy Index have attempted to fill the gap by including civil society, but despite providing interesting information, these indices are made by institutions that openly embrace liberal postulates. Consequently, they signal a liberal democracy and market economy as a horizon, and benchmark the transition countries accordingly.

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**ABANDONING THE NARRATIVE** of transition entails connecting the microsocietal developments with the larger political economic structure. This requires research wellgrounded in the daily realities which also has a systemic scope. This is ambitious, but also interesting because it can connect apparently irrational, invisible, or disconnected societal developments to give a better understanding of the general situation in Eastern Europe. Such a task will mostly be achieved by the means of multidisciplinary research that does not shirk from collaborating with disciplines such as political science, sociology, history, political economy, and the like. This is not about writing papers or books together in which each of us writes a chapter within our own disciplinary praxis but about sharing and building new theoretical and methodological tools. In a sense, this means overcoming sometimes rigid disciplinary divisions to rediscover a more universal understanding of knowledge and of scientific practice.

Incidentally, CBEEBS and Baltic Worlds are perfect platforms for working in this direction.

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4. Jeffrey Sachs is an American economist, currently professor at Columbia University. He served as economic adviser to the Polish, Russian, Czech and Estonian governments during their transitions, applying the concept of shock therapy: a rapid full scale liberalization of a planned economy. Sachs conceptualized the shock therapy as a “necessary evil” for a successful transition from planned to market economy and developed a plan for structuring this process.
5. Democracy Index is compiled by The Economist Intelligence Unit, http://www.eiu.com/
 RAPE, REVENGE AND AN UNINTENDED GIFT

THE MANY SCHOOLS OF EUROPE

Not so long ago, in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine, young intellectuals, artists, and political activists organized a biennial, a two-month-long marathon of art shows, artistic performances and happenings, social events, and academic lectures, under the title of The School of Kyiv. The message that the organizers meant to convey was that Europe was neither a place nor an economic and political entity, but a lesson to be learned, and learned continuously. That was a message not only relevant for Ukraine, a nation that is beginning to seek initial contacts with the European Union. It may be even more relevant for those already admitted into the EU’s inner circle, the so-called “old” and “new” Europe, the former West and the former East, respectively, of the bygone era of the Cold War.

UNITED INTO A COMMON Europe after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the USSR, both the old and the new Europeans began by enthusiastically celebrating their Europeanness. As a problem.

Organized on the principles invented at the Maidan, the biennial sought to become a school for the learning of democracy, an educational institution that arose in the wake of the revolution and sought to continue revolution by other means. Here, people were supposed not only to learn the what and how of freedom but also to experience and share its sensibilities: the mourning that comes with the realization of the price of freedom; the loss, loneliness, and displacements in its aftermath; the intonations of freedom’s images, but also the sobriety of its realism, and how freedom matures with the awareness of its responsibility and the impossibility of its consummation. One of the Schools of Kyiv was called the School of Abducted Europa by Zeus in the form of a white bull. Seduced that Europe originated with the abduction of the Phoenician princess Europa by Zeus in the form of a white bull. Seduced and deceived into involuntarily transforming Cadmus to plant the dragon’s teeth. Thus the catastrophes of rape and revenge were crowned with a third catastrophe: that of a gift, an unintended gift of war, the very first war in the mythic history of Europe. The dragon’s teeth grew through the soil and transformed into masses of soldiers who fiercely fought each other until just five of them survived and finally made peace. However, apart from that unintended gift of self-generating war, Cadmus and his men — the avengers of the rape — left still another unintended gift, an unexpected product with far-reaching consequences: the Phoenician alphabet.

Thus, Europa the prostituted child, quite unwittingly, also became Europe’s first civilian artist and educator — or, to express it more precisely, she was seduced and deceived into involuntarily inventing Europe’s literacy and culture. Both of them sustained in the context of rape, revenge, and mass extermination in a war without an end. Such a complicated Europe where abductions cannot be distinguished from gifts, and dragon’s teeth mix with alphabets, certainly needs to be learned as a lesson and confronted as a challenge that presents itself to us all, again and again. We all live nowadays in the aftermath of revolution, in the times of forgetting the European spirit of 1989. The reality of revolution, however, reminds us of itself more insistently the more we try to ignore it. In 1996, such was probably the intuition that led to the foundation of the School of Södertörn, as another institution for the learning of Europe, in the wake of 1989 an institution once again dedicated to the international artists, activists, and intellectuals at the School of Kyiv.

In the aftermath of the Maidan, the School of Kyiv addressed its appeal to all of us, “old” Europeans, “new” Europeans, and Europeans-to-be, to learn, again and again, how to be European, especially when surrounded by the ever-growing dragon’s teeth.

Establishing a school, a university, or any other educational project is the best task to undertake after a revolution. Learning is the finest antidote to counter-revolution, especially in the form of war. We are in the right time — after the Maidan — and in the right place — Kyiv, a key city for today’s Europe — to implement that.

reference


RAPE, REVENGE AND AN UNINTENDED GIFT

THE MANY SCHOOLS OF EUROPE

However, with time Europe was experienced less as a common ground and more as a problem.”
Public opinion research and democracy

In political science, the analysis of public opinion surveys is often closely associated with post-war research on “political culture”, an approach based on the assumption that a stable political system requires citizens who support the fundamental values and institutions that form the core of the political system. By conducting large-scale cross-national public opinion surveys, scholars in the US and Western Europe wanted to study the stability of democracy in different post-war countries, as well as the development of democracy over time. In the 1990s, this approach became common in studies of Central and Eastern Europe. Analyses of public opinion data allowed scholars to make claims about the degree of democratic consolidation in the region. “The underlying assumption in this approach has been that a democratic political system that lacks public support will not work properly, or at worst, will run the risk of collapsing”, Joakim Ekman explains. Of course, democracy is not only about public opinion. The way institutions work, the functioning of party systems, and the role of political elites should also be taken into account, in order to understand democratic stability across countries. Still, orientations among ordinary citizens are ultimately what matters, if we are interested in contemporary challenges to so-called core European values, including support for liberal democracy, respect for minority rights, and the rejection of xenophobia. Following the eastern enlargements of the EU – sometimes described as a “return to Europe” following decades of communist rule – scholars have warned about the rise of radical right populism, Euroscepticism, and xenophobia and chauvinism, throughout the postcommunist region. It is likely that the recent financial crisis and the ongoing refugee crisis in Europe have added to a continued East-West divide within the EU. Also, the authoritarian development in Russia and the crisis in Ukraine have further emphasized the notion of a new East-West divide in Europe. At the same time, this development has not followed a single course, and not everybody agrees that we are dealing with an authoritarian backlash or democratic backsliding. To some extent, the postcommunist setback was to be anticipated, and more notably so in the situation in Ukraine. In other cases, however, the level of autocratic development all over Europe, not just in the postcommunist countries. Still, the troublesome development in a number of countries justifies a closer look at popular opinion in the new EU member states and questions about support for democratic regimes in times of great social, political, and economic change.

Political dissatisfaction

Collecting data from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the research project analyzed attitudinal differences between the ethnic majorities and the Russian-speaking minorities. The idea was to assess the democratic political culture in the three countries, 25 years after the fall of communism in Europe, 10 years after EU accession, and a few years after the global financial crisis. The table below maps the Baltic respondents’ evaluation of the present situation, compared to previous historical eras, in response to the question: “Thinking about the modern history of this country, when would you say this country has been best off?” The response options were: in the interwar era; during the Soviet era (1940—1991); from the restoration of independence up until EU membership (1991—2004); or today in the present period, since 2004.

All in all, the table indicates widespread public dissatisfaction throughout the region. In fact, it is only in Estonia that we find a relative majority of respondents who opt for the “present” response category (38%). In Lithuania, some 33% consider the present to be the best period, whereas 35% go for the Soviet era. In Latvia, dissatisfaction with the current situation is particularly widespread. Only 19% of ethnic Latvians think of the present as the time when Latvia was best off. Slightly more respondents (22%) acknowledge the 1990s up until the EU accession as the best time, and 27% opt for the Soviet era. However, the most common response among ethnic Latvians is in fact the interwar era (33%). Of course, many of the respondents were not even born at that time, and it is likely that the outcome reflects a common notion of the interwar era as a golden age for Latvia, characterized by state-building, prosperity and charismatic leaders. At the same time, the lack of support for the present situation may also be explained with reference to economic development after the EU accession. Latvia was hit particularly hard by the 2008—2010 financial crisis.

Looking at differences between the groups in each country, a clear ethnic divide may be observed. In all three countries, the most popular answer among the Russian-speaking minorities is clearly the Soviet era. On average, 60% of the Russian-speakers identify the Soviet era as the best period. The corresponding figures among ethnic Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians are 11%, 21%, and 26%, respectively. Thus, the minority groups are consistently more dissatisfied than the majority groups with the situation in their country after independence from the Soviet Union.

Another interesting observation is that, as a rule, the Russian-speaking minorities tend to be more critical towards the performance of democracy in the three Baltic states than the ethnic Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians.

The idea of public opinion surveys is to ask a group of people about their opinions or attitudes – a sample, typically consisting of a thousand respondents – in a way that is representative of the total population in a country. In that way, one may generalize from the sample to the larger population. There are a number of possible problems associated with such an investigation, but when conducted properly, public opinion polls appear to be quite accurate. Typically, unless you have an interest in election outcomes, you do not want too much to happen in a country when the fieldwork is being done. One of the participants in the Baltic data collection, Kjetil Duvold, explains: “If we are interested in attitudes towards immigration for example, we want to tap the normal climate in a country. So we do the poll between elections, to avoid possible effects of, say, an election campaign of a populist party catering to anti-immigration voters.”

The initial data collection – in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – took place in the spring of 2014, that is, more or less simultaneously with the political crisis and the Russian military intervention in Ukraine. “Of course, we failed to foresee the Crimean crisis”, Professor Sten Berglund notes. “But in the end, we turned it into an opportunity for our research project to do something very interesting. In our follow-up study in the fall of 2015, in Latvia, Bulgaria, and Hungary, we included a battery of questions about the Russian-Ukrainian conflict.” In fact, the recent tragic refugee crisis in Europe represents a similar opportunity. Recently, Central and East European leaders have been accused of being “heartless” for reinforcing their borders rather than opening them to people fleeing war, but it is not unlikely that such a
closed door policy would be considered reasonable by ordinary people who themselves feel poor and insecure, considering the fragile economic progress that still is the reality in many post-communist countries. The planned 2016 data collection will give us a more accurate picture of how citizens in the eastern part of Europe have responded to the crises, by including a number of questions about refugees, immigration, and cultural diversity.

A data base in the making
In order to analyze postaccession popular support for democracy and liberal values, the idea of the project described above from the very beginning was to follow up on a series of opinion surveys conducted in the 1990s up until the first EU enlargement: the New Europe Barometer (NEB) and the New Baltic Barometer (NBB), originally administered by Professor Richard Rose at the Centre for the Study of Public Policy (CSPP), University of Strathclyde. The most recent wave of surveys initiated by CSPP was launched in 2004, in cooperation with a Swedish research team including Sten Berglund, Joakim Ekman, and Kjetil Davold. Sponsored by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies, a new wave of surveys in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was conducted in 2014, and in yet another research project, also funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (2016 through 2018), the idea is to replicate the study in eight countries in the region. Using similar or identical sets of questions, the different surveys thus constitute a large-scale cross-national study, allowing comparisons across time and space in the post-communist region (1991–2016). The data will subsequently be handed over to the Swedish National Data Service (SND) in Gothenburg, making it freely accessible to researchers from any discipline or university. The database, covering a quarter of a century of post-communist public opinion, will serve as a unique source for scholars with an interest in the political and societal development in the region, and the project will make a point of inviting researchers from all over the world to use the data (e.g. by co-authoring articles with our research team, writing research papers and monographs on their own, or encouraging PhD students to use the data in their doctoral theses). In this way, the project will also be instrumental to research development and research training at Södertörn University.

Joakim Ekman is professor of Political Science with a special focus on the Baltic Sea Region and Eastern Europe, at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), Södertörn University. In 2013, he co-wrote and co-edited a volume on political party systems in 19 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Berglund, Ekman, Dragom-Krause, Knutson, and Aarestad, eds. The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe, third edition. Cheltenham, Edward Elgar, 2013).

Journalism in Change, Gunnar Nygren / Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska (eds.) Journalism in Change. Journalistic Culture in Poland, Russia and Sweden.

Journalism under pressure. Comparing journalistic cultures

What is journalism today and how has it changed over recent years? Are there common features in professional communities to be found across borders, or do journalistic cultures in various countries differ greatly? Those questions are explored in the monograph Journalism in Change, which is published as a result of a three year research project with the same name.

The project leader Professor Gunnar Nygren tells me he was surprised that the attitudes of journalists in each of the countries studied were quite similar, more so than he had expected. But there were also differences: “What differ are the conditions for journalists to adjust to commercial pressure or such things. But basic values are very similar. Of course, there are also differences in values, but there is some kind of basic normative understanding of what journalism is and what journalism should do.”

Among major factors that put pressure on journalistic culture are the development of the networking society, growing commercialization, and political influence that force journalists to adjust constantly to the ever-changing conditions. The study of those conditions and of the means that journalists apply to manage them is among the main objects of the project.

There were 12 representatives to the project from all three countries covered in the research. The editors and leaders are Gunnar Nygren, Professor at Södertörn University, Sweden, and Bogusława Dobek-Ostrowska, Professor at the University of Warsaw, Poland. The authors are academics from Russian, Polish, and Swedish universities: Maria Amikina is Associate Professor at Lomonosov Moscow State University, Russia. Olof Einarsson is an Assistant Professor at the University of Warsaw, Jüran Hök is a Senior Lecturer at Södertörn University, and Elena Johansson is a researcher at the School of Social Sciences at Södertörn University. The project was financed by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies (BEEGS) at Södertörn University.

The notion of journalistic culture is defined as “a whole way of being” within the professional group, including shared values, ideals, and practices. The journalistic cultures of three countries of the Baltic region – Sweden, Poland, and Russia – were analyzed. The goal was to study professional culture on multiple levels, from national features outward by the historical and cultural particularities of each country to the transnational level, in order to define similarities and differences in the global journalistic community. The authors also bear in mind that journalism is in a process of constant change.

The project started in 2010 and ran until 2014. Most of the data for the project were collected in 2012, just before the conflicts between Ukraine and Russia broke out, fueling an information war between Western and Russian media systems. I found it quite intriguing to reflect on whether the surveyed data would have been different if collected after 2012. Would a different picture of the journalistic culture have emerged? Yet in regard to cultures, Nygren does not see great significance in the precise year of the data collection.

Of course the political conditions changed, for example, in Russia. But these conditions can also change back. Things are changing in political parties, but when it comes to journalistic cultures, they are more sluggish, they are developing slowly.

Cultures change very slowly, as Nygren remarked in our talk, but the conditions within which contemporary journalists have to work today seem to change much faster. Yet Nygren remarks that in spite of these changes, the change can also be overestimated. For instance, there is stronger political pressure in contemporary Russia than, as Nygren notes, “it does not change the way of thinking among Russian journalists: Perhaps it changes what they say, but not what they think.”

One of the major goals set by the researchers was to evaluate from different perspectives the journalists’ own perception of their position within the professional community. Through the data received from detailed questionnaires and in-depth interviews, a collective portrait of the contemporary journalist was created, and the picture of modern journalistic culture, as seen by its actors, was drawn with the aim of verifying or disproving general assumptions made in previous studies on media.

The complexity of the empirical research was already enhanced from the start by the choice of countries. Sweden, Poland, and Russia differ greatly in all aspects, from size and political regimes to cultural and historical backgrounds.

The unique aspect of this project is that co-
The symmetrical model

- Professional identity and relation to politics, commercialism, and media owners.
- Attitudes towards technology, interactivity and change in work, social media use and multiskilling.
- Professional roles in society; quality and press freedom.

Prominent features of the symmetrical model include:

- A focus on the balanced relationship between media and society.
- An emphasis on the mutual influence of media and society on each other.
- A recognition of the importance of professional autonomy and independence.
- An exploration of the role of journalists in shaping discourse and public opinion.

The asymmetrical model

- Professional identity and relation to politics, commercialism, and media owners.
- Attitudes towards technology, interactivity and change in work, social media use and multiskilling.
- Professional roles in society; quality and press freedom.

Prominent features of the asymmetrical model include:

- A focus on the unequal relationship between media and society.
- An emphasis on the dominance of media over society.
- A recognition of the influence of commercial interests on media.
- An exploration of the role of journalists in navigating these dynamics.

Three research methods were used in the project:

1. A survey, in which each journalist was given detailed questionnaires for quantitative data analysis.
2. An interview, conducted in depth with twenty journalists in each country, for qualitative data analysis.
3. The surveys and interviews covered five major areas of journalist professional practice and personal perceptions of journalist culture:
   - Who are the journalists? — age, gender and social position, income and education.
   - Their daily work — employment and conditions, perceived autonomy and influence.
   - Quantitative and qualitative comparative analysis of the data collected from each of the three countries were performed with the aim of observing results and drawing conclusions that take into consideration the great complexity and many variables of the information received. The authors consciously avoided content analyses of media, claiming that the projects’ results “are only the opinions of the journalists”.

The flawed model

- Professional identity and relation to politics, commercialism, and media owners.
- Attitudes towards technology, interactivity and change in work, social media use and multiskilling.
- Professional roles in society; quality and press freedom.

Prominent features of the flawed model include:

- A focus on the flawed nature of the relationship between media and society.
- An emphasis on the influence of commercialism on media.
- A recognition of the need for greater transparency and accountability in media practices.
- An exploration of the role of journalists in combating misinformation.

The working process initiated many discussions between the involved researchers. The results of the work and data collected from each country were presented at several workshops. Each researcher wrote a chapter that was discussed during the meetings and then further rewritten: “it was a long process of discussions in several locations… and it was quite smooth”.

All the participants in the project are scholars with rich academic backgrounds as well as long experience as practicing journalists. Representing professional cultures in their own countries, they apply different approaches to the research and, as a result, provide analyses from various perspectives. The international team of researchers is a great advantage for the project; yet, without their efforts, it could not be possible to build the model. The multiplicity of analytical perspectives could result in a healthy exchange of ideas, enriched with different national perspectives as “there are big differences between the countries”, but it seems that the project only gained from having experts from each country: “… in this long process we got to know each other, we respected each other’s analyses and opinions and said what we thought. The main aim of the chapter is the paper responsible for each chapter: there were also many discussions about how to evaluate and analyze the results. I am not Russian, so perhaps it is best for a Russian researcher to explain things about Russia to me, and so I listen to her”.

Another outcome of the project is that it provides an all-embracing picture of journalistic culture on national and transnational levels, making the present printed edition a valuable source of thoroughly processed data.

The majority of the population in Russia, according to Dobek-Ostrowska and others, is “rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to social media, is ‘rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to social media, is ‘rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to social media, is ‘rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to social media, is ‘rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to social media, is ‘rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to social media, is ‘rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to social media, is “authoritarian political regime””, as opposed to “democratic countries like Sweden and Poland”. Russian journalists’ opinions are interpreted under assumption that they live and work under a regime which is bad already by definition.

The goal is to provide an all-embracing picture of journalistic culture on national and transnational levels.

### Table 7.9 The independence of journalism can be influenced by state influence (laws and ownership)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>No danger (1–2)</th>
<th>Yes and not (3)</th>
<th>A great danger (4–5)</th>
<th>No answer (5–5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Poland (n=448=100%)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>301</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia (n=460=100%)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>292</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden (n=460=100%)</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

newspapers seems to be the privilege of a few, since according to Dobek Ostrouska, in Russia “citizens in fact do not have open access to tradi-
tional mass media, which serves the government and oligarchs”.
At the same time, these conclusions are not con-
firmed by the data collected and do not reflect the opinions of the journalists who par-
ticipated in the research. Moreover, they con-
tradict the data analysed by Elena Johansson in the chapter that follows, which is devoted to the
digitalization of media and the Internet as the crucial factors that challenge journalism and force it to change.

IN ABSOLUTE NUMBERS Russia possesses one of the world’s largest communities of Internet users; even considering the lower percentage of Internet users in relation to the population, it is big enough to make Internet and social networks an alter-
native to and even a substitute for the state-controlled media and to turn some blog platforms, such as LiveJournal, into “a unique socio-cultural phenomenon”, as Elena Johansson says it.

The final chapters return to the approaches and methods set out at the beginning. In the last section, the authors conclude that “to be a journalist in Poland, Russia, and Sweden means – in many ways – to be part of the same community. Most of the ideals are the same; the daily work is performed with similar tools; community: most of the ideals are the same; the daily work is performed with similar tools; community: most of the ideals are the same; the daily work is performed with similar tools; and the intelligentsia in Russia in relation to the state, whether it be Tsarist or Bolshevik or Soviet power – it doesn’t matter, it is the national culture”. An analogous understanding is necessary in the other countries. In Poland, there is “much influence of nationalism and the struggle for Poland as a country, as Poland didn’t exist for 100 years”.

THOUGH NYGREEN SUGGESTS that they could have gone deeper “under the surface”, the strongest aspect of the project, in my opinion, is that it approached the journalistic cultures of coun-
tries with such different profiles, attentively considering the differences in and yet equality of their existence and activity. With some exceptions, as mentioned above, the interpretation of the data collected for comparative analyses avoids evaluating the cultures as big or small, as coming from “developed” or “de-
developed” countries; it avoids many of the generalizations that blur the picture and simplify its complexity.

The amount of work done to collect and analyze the data in this study was enormous. In spite of the diversity of the area, the number of researchers, the projects met at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (BEEGS). Her thesis will deal with the cultural specificity of Russian journalism, for example, as Nygren notes, “you need to dig into Russian history, the history of literature and the intelligentsia in Russia in relation to the state, whether it be Tsarist or Bolshevik or Soviet power – it doesn’t matter, it is the national culture”. An analogous understanding is necessary in the other countries. In Poland, there is “much influence of nationalism and the struggle for Poland as a country, as Poland didn’t exist for 100 years”.

“A TOT AL OF 1,875 ARTICLES Were analyzed. In addition, journalists of the leading media in the four countries were interviewed about their experiences and reflections on professional roles and conditions of work. The strategies of the global TV channel Russia To-
day (RT) were also studied.

The results show that media images of the war were strongly related to historical and cultural patterns in the different coun-
tries. Words used in the reporting show this clearly: whether the rebels in eastern Ukraine are called “terrorists” or “people’s mi-
litia”, whether the conflict is called a “civil war” or an “anti-terror or operation”, whether Russian actions constitute “humanita-
tarian aid” or “aggression”. There is a degree of political/military control over the media in Russia and to some extent also in Ukraine, but clearly the reporting is the result of self-censorship and patriotism being more important than journalistic ideals. In Poland and Sweden, too, the framing of the conflict is the result of well-known patterns in foreign report-
ing as part of the Western news system with a strong dependency on official news sources. In addition, the coverage of the conflict was used in Poland by strongly nationalist and anti-Rus-
sian political forces, a kind of domestication of the conflict.

This means the audience in each country is given very little opportunity to understand “the other” in the conflict, to under-
stand different perspectives on the conflict. At the same time, accusations of disinformation came from both sides, and the au-
dience has no opportunity to judge what is true and what is not. In the news flow there were also many examples of false news in favor of the Russian side in the conflict, an example of how me-
dia content is “weaponized” in the information war.

Russia Today, a Russian Channel with news in English. Downloaded February 13, 2016.

This means the audience in each country is given very little opportunity to understand “the other” in the conflict.

THE FULL REPORT on the project is to be published in the spring 2016 by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. Scientific pub-
lifications from the research group will also appear during 2016, and the group continues to meet to develop this research.
As a doctoral student interested in the women’s movement in Poland, I am not only grappling with my research focus or passing courses. There is also a more personal, yet academic, struggle going on. First, as a woman and feminist, I question whether it is legitimate for me to study a movement which I, to some extent, see myself as part of — or is this doubt simply an echo of the very traditional notion and ideal of the detached and “neutral” scientist? Connected to this is the question of activism and politics in research: whether of course the question of activism and politics in research: whether it is possible to be both actively engaged in, and a researcher on, the very same movement. Second, there is an East-West issue — ultimately, the issue of interpreting. These are of course concerns which most of us deal with to some extent. However, as the role of researcher is relatively new to me, and as I believe a good researcher is someone who constantly reflects on her role, I decided to go deeper into these contemplations through a discussion with three scholars on gender and women’s movements.

**An insider on the outside**

Elżbieta Korolczuk is a PhD in Sociology and Gender Studies at Södertörn University, who has been involved in various research projects dealing with topics such as Polish civil society, mobilizations around infertility issues, parental movements, and gender identities. With a background within the women’s movement in Poland, yet at the same time studying this movement at the start of her scholarly career, she has a lot to say about these two roles. Thinking it would be a very exciting and fulfilling experience to study those aspects which she wanted to “thrive”, she soon found it somewhat troubling and confusing: “I ended up being very cautious, because I had some friends and colleagues in the movement and I felt constrained by these ties. I was afraid that I would hurt people if I was too critical”. Similarly, Laura Lapinskiene, a BEEGS doctoral student in Gender Studies at Södertörn University who is about to start her research on everyday life strategies among young people dealing with neoliberal transformations in post-socialist Lithuania, anticipates some problems in studying something that she herself is part of as there might be a risk of seeing it one-sidedly. This makes me think of the issue of taking things for granted when you are so immersed in a situation that you stop questioning “normalities”. Joanna Mizielińska uses the obliviousness towards gender issues in anthropology as an example: “Look at how many areas of social life have been silenced, marginalized, forgotten just because male ethnographers did not pay attention to or were not allowed to participate in certain spheres of life”. However, it is hard to deny that doing research on what you are familiar with also gives you a certain strength. Joanna Mizielińska, an associate professor at the Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and a renowned scholar in gender and queer studies, replies that being an “outsider” might sometimes be beneficial, and refers to her own research project Families of Choice in Poland: “Some ethnographers who worked with me and who are themselves queer might not notice things because they are too obvious for them, they ‘lack’ this innocent perspective that makes one ask the naïve questions which those who were straight did dare to ask”. However, it is hard to deny that doing research on what you are familiar with also gives you a certain strength.

**Interview**

Laura Lapinskiene, PhD student in Gender Studies at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS), Södertörn University. Her research concerns the everyday life strategies among young people dealing with neoliberal transformations in post-socialist Lithuania.

**Interviewee**

“I felt constrained by these ties. I was afraid that I would hurt people if I was too critical.”

Joanna Mizielińska, associate professor at the Institute of Psychology of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and main researcher in the project Families of Choice in Poland. Visiting researcher fellow at CBEES in 2009, and has published widely on queer and feminist theory.

**Interviewee**

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research topic, which is something Laura Lapinskiene thinks a lot about: “I feel close to my research because I am a young Lithuanian myself who has experienced these struggles. But now I am here in Sweden, only observing what people are doing there.” However, it is not only a matter of geographical distance. Given that she has a different understanding of, for instance, feminism and an understanding in gender studies, it is sometimes difficult to find common ground for discussion with some peers, which makes her feel a bit distanced. Thus, although anticipated, it is not always acceptable to be “close” as the researcher role in itself creates distance.

Researcher self and activist self
Elžbieta Korołcuk has a somewhat different view as she urges us to look beyond ourselves, to study the unfamiliar. After some time studying the women’s movement she felt uninformed and needed new challenges. Today, her research is focused instead on issues concerning reproductive rights, parental movements, and more conservative, sometimes anti-feminist, movements. She argues that it is an obligation we have as researchers and, as I interpret it, as feminists to try to understand how they construct their social reality. After some looking at how one feels close, or distanced from, our research and what approach we take on knowledge production. “I want to do collaborative research, to try to avoid power relations and hierarchies as much as possible. Instead of coming here as someone more knowledgeable, taking interviews and describing people, I want to coproduce the knowledge, with research participants taking an equal part in the research and contributing their specific knowledge and experiences in their own ways.” In this sense, the people she is studying also become her co-researchers.

Feminist decolonial epistemologies
Talking to Laura Lapinskiene about “studying with”, I am starting to see a connection to my second concern. In Lithuania, where there is no established gender studies discipline, most feminists either come from the activist scene or are educated abroad, including Laura Lapinskiene who did her master’s degree in Gender Studies in London. This has been an eye-opener: “Before that, I didn’t think I wanted to be a feminist. I am pretty anti-feminist, right? But as a researcher I should not dismiss them as uninformed, or backward. If I am supposed to be someone who wants to make sense of the world, I have to give them a voice as well.” So today Laura and Elżbieta Korołcuk urge us, as researchers, need to know where “what we know” comes from, to question our epistemologies.

Joanna Mizielińska also agrees. On the other hand, questions this binary opposition between our research self and activist self, arguing that it is a question of method. “Both want to change the world for the better, and there are different ways of achieving it.” While activism mostly involves working to change the very thing people think by showing them different perspectives, by introducing new topics. Doing science is therefore always political in a sense, only sometimes this becomes more obvious. She explains that “dealing with gender and sexuality issues in Polish academia is, for example, still perceived as controversial, and many times I have to explain all over again what it is I do, so wanting to change this is being political”. For instance, in her own research project the ambition is to make queer families – thus far a silenced topic – visible in Poland. “We gather certain data nobody can ignore any more. The ambition is to influence not only other academics but also the public debate and policy makers, to change the social reality of marginalized and condemned families. Moreover, the research participants themselves are hoping that by taking part in the research, the topic they are struggling with will become a more typical contentious action, such as a Pride parade. Laura Lapinskiene also finds it difficult to separate the two roles: “I am not always comfortable admitting on my own, what I am doing. Working as a researcher is a new role for me so I am just starting to think about how I am going to approach the people I want to engage and do research with”. She says that she wants to challenge norms within academia and keeps coming back to “studying with” rather than about. Again, this is connected to the way we see ourselves as close to, or distanced from, our research and what approach we take on knowledge production. “I want to do collaborative research, to try to avoid power relations and hierarchies as much as possible. Instead of coming here as someone more knowledgeable, taking interviews and describing people, I want to coproduce the knowledge, with research participants taking an equal part in the research and contributing their specific knowledge and experiences in their own ways.” In this sense, the people she is studying also become her co-researchers.

Each and every social, cultural, political, and economic context is specific. The East/West exceptionalism is overrated.

There were also significant differences concerning access to abortion etc. This shows that state-socialist countries were hardly as homogenous as one may think. She also sug- gests that it is important to compare Eastern Europe to very different parts of the world. “Why not Latin America? If you like to think of the mothers’ movement, this is the place I would compare it with, to understand the processes, to see how these types of move- ments, which didn’t happen under state socialism or communism in this region, could develop under authoritarian regimes. This is the type of question which I would like to be asked instead of the usual ‘what’s the difference between East and West?’ “It is very similar to Tostanova’s perspective as she argues for “the colonial, postcolonial gendered Others to get acquainted with from, for instance, alternative non-Western approaches to gendering to be ‘indoc- trinated’ by the theorists and activists of the global South”. Thus, each and every social, cultural, political, and economic context is specific. The East-West exceptionalism is overrated. Instead, what is really interesting is to examine how wider transnational trends and tendencies are translated in local contexts, how ideas and discourses emerge and resonate in specific contexts.

In no solution to my research. However, after our very interesting and thought-provoking discussions, it seems to me that what Donna Haraway calls situated knowledges become inseparable and that the discursive perspective by Tostanova opens a tool in order to look beyond the pervasive character of Western experiences and theories.  

Evona Korołcuk

References

Mizielińska was a visiting researcher at CBEES in September 2009. She has published books and articles in the field of Femininity (2004). She is also a co-author of Conflict or Collaboration? The State, the Union, and Women (2008) and Families in Choice in Poland (2010). In her most recent book, Families of Choice in Poland: Family, Life and Reproduction in Post-Communist Poland (2010), she discusses the difficulties faced by women in Poland in trying to form a family. For more information about the project, see familychoices.pl.

Professor Tostanova is an influential scholar in the field of globalizations, modernity, and post-socialist Eastern Europe. In November 2011 she was a visiting researcher at CBEES. For her discussion on decolonialism, see for instance Madina Tostanova, Gender Epistemologies and Eurasian Borders (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielińska (eds.), De-construing Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives (Amsterdam: Fahlgren, 2011).

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contemporary challenges

GOING BEYOND THE MYTHS ABOUT POSTSOCIALIST CIVIL SOCIETIES

Since the collapse of state socialism, the development of civil society in postsocialist contexts has repeatedly been depicted by researchers as passive, ambiguous, and “a pale reflection of its counterparts elsewhere in the world.” Characterized by distrustful and individualistic attitudes, combined with learned helplessness and scapegoating, “civilizational incompetence” or simply an uncivil character? Another common assumption about postsocialist civil societies is their nonexistence, or the active role of formal and institutionalized civil society. The authors contend that these parts of civil society activity with the activity of NGOs does not reflect the more recent development of civil societies in this part of Europe.

The International Society for Third-Sector Research has organized a conference in June 2016 for which Södertörn University at the Institute for Housing and Urban Research, contributing to the empirical and theoretical understanding of civil society in the area by focusing on grassroots movements and their urban expressions in particular. The authors point to the lack of research into urban grassroots movements in postsocialist contexts and its probable explanation, based on the use of Western empirical and theoretical models, to assess the functioning of civil society and the inability of such research to see the most recent changes that these civil societies are undergoing.

The Darker Side of Civil Society development was uncovered in the 2014 conference “Parental Movements: The Politicization of Motherhood and Fatherhood in Central and Eastern Europe and the Post-Soviet Region.” Exploring conservative and nationalist features of social movements mobilizing around parental rights and issues. The forthcoming volume, Raducanu: Parental Movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia, gives an overview of a field of parental movements that have generally been overlooked by social movement researchers particularly, in the postsocialist region. Moreover, the forthcoming special issue of the scholarly journal Baltic Worlds on the topic of squatting, or the unauthorized taking over of buildings and land, in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia is pioneering in its field as the focus of research on squatting has previously been primarily directed towards Western contexts (i.e. Western Europe and Northern America).

Urban Grassroots Movements in Central and Eastern Europe is another anthology born out of an international conference held at CBEES. It includes in house and international researchers examining the hitherto unexplored features of civil society in the area by focusing on grassroots movements and their urban expressions in particular. The authors point to the lack of research into urban grassroots movements in postsocialist contexts and its probable explanation, based on the use of Western empirical and theoretical models, to assess the functioning of civil society and the inability of such research to see the most recent changes that these civil societies are undergoing.

Furthermore, research conducted at Södertörn University has also contributed to the field of civil society studies by treating civil society as an indicator of societal challenges, broadening its definition to combine the economic, political, and social dimensions with the sphere of the family and noninstitutionalized mobilization and social movements. Above all, they have drawn attention to the region of Central and Eastern Europe and Russia as an important field of study (without denying its internal diversity), contributing to the empirical and theoretical understanding of civil society’s functioning, development and importance to democracy and social change.

Urban Grassroots Movements in Central and Eastern Europe

Urbane Bewegungen in Zentraleuropa

ACTA protests in Sosnowiec in southern Poland.

PHOTO: OLIVER FISCHER

references

6 Kerstin Jacobsson and Steven Sassenberg, Beyond NGO-ization: The Development of Social Movements in Central and Eastern Europe (Farnham: Ashgate, forthcoming).

Dominika V. Polanka
PhD in Sociology. Researcher at the Institute of Housing and Urban Research (IBF) at Uppsala University and leader of a project started in 2015 at Södertörn University, financed by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies, called “Challenging the Myths of Weak Civil Society in Post-socialist Settings: Unexpected Alliances and Mobilizations in the Field of Housing Activism in Poland”. In the scholarly journal Baltic Worlds she is guest-editing a theme section on “Squatting in the East”, issue 1/2016.

Civil society can appear in many shapes. Social activism also occur beyond NGO-ization.
Piotr Sztompka. Change is possible

In short

Piotr Sztompka, Professor of Sociology at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, was selected as the recipient of Södertörn University’s first honorary doctorate in 2013. Piotr Sztompka is known worldwide in sociology and social science, and has written many influential works.

In 2007 Sztompka was a visiting scholar at CBEES at Södertörn University, and was interviewed in the very first issue of the scholarly journal Baltic Worlds, in 2008. The lengthy interview can be read on www.balticworlds.com.

One of the things Sztompka discussed in it was the role of civil society. “Before 1989 we had civil society underground, and civil society against the state. Then the underground civil society won, and there was an immediate change. Civil society stood up for, not against, the new political system. But the old civil society was lost in the newness of the situation.”

However, later came things that I see as a kind of trauma. This was due to the social costs of transition and the disillusionment that followed. Necessary but painful reforms undermined optimism, trust, and a feeling of empowerment. Then, for a long time we had constant changes of government, with the pendulum swinging back and forth between the right and the left. This time we had constant changes of government, with the pendulum swinging back and forth between the right and the left. This was due to the social costs of transition and the disillusionment that followed. Necessary but painful reforms undermined optimism, trust, and a feeling of empowerment. Then, for a long time we had constant changes of government, with the pendulum swinging back and forth between the right and the left.

Sztompka’s analysis of civil society may be supplemented by the latest facts presented by Dominika Polanska on the paralyzed civil society for quite some time.

“Necessary but painful reforms undermined optimism, trust, and a feeling of empowerment. Then, for a long time we had constant changes of government, with the pendulum swinging back and forth between the right and the left. This was due to the social costs of transition and the disillusionment that followed. Necessary but painful reforms undermined optimism, trust, and a feeling of empowerment. Then, for a long time we had constant changes of government, with the pendulum swinging back and forth between the right and the left.”

Sztompka gave a lecture on the occasion of the bestowal of the honorary doctorate. In the lecture, he presented various forms of risk and danger people subject themselves to. To deal with uncertainty and survive together, we need to have trust, a belief in the future, and a sense that we can have an effect on our lives, Sztompka noted. He seeks to make clear that people lead and shape their future, and continually make progress: “I am an optimist. I have seen in my own country what is possible. No one could have predicted the changes that occurred in the ’80s. It was possible because people made it happen!”

Editor, Baltic Worlds at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at Södertörn University.

EUROPE’S MIGRATION CRISIS

UNDERSTANDING NATIONAL RESPONSES, EAST AND WEST

As early as mid-September, when the refugee waves to Europe escalated, there were thoughts of arranging a seminar on the topic here at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), Kazimierz Musial says. He and the other research leaders at CBEES subsequently decided to arrange a roundtable meeting, on January 18, 2016, to explore and analyze the range of responses in Europe to date.

“The migration crisis that accelerated dramatically in autumn of 2015 has induced a remarkable variation in national responses. Why do we see such variation? Has the crisis exposed a fundamental difference in values between European countries?” such were the questions asked by Nicholas Ayloot, research leader at CBEES, who chaired the roundtable.

Five invited scholars — Péter Balogh, Heike Graf, Michał Kryzanowski, Branika Likic-Bibroxt, and Irina Sandomirskaja — each gave a brief presentation at the round table, which was followed by an hour’s intense question-and-answer session.

Prejudicial posters in Hungarian

The most sensitive period in Hungary was when hundreds of thousands of refugees crossed the country’s borders in late summer, noted Péter Balogh of the Institute for Regional Studies at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

“As early as May – before the large refugee wave – a survey was quickly distributed by the authorities for migration: a survey with very leading questions, such as “Do you favor strengthening the border controls”?: “Are you afraid of the large refugee wave”? “Do you favor protecting Hungarian culture”?: etc.

Publicly displayed posters announced, “If you come to Hungary, you should respect our laws”, and other messages clearly not intended first and foremost for the refugees, but rather to influence public opinion. As Balogh noted, the texts were in Hungarian and the posters were placed on Hungarian ground.

The important role of the intelligentsia

All countries, including Sweden, have some people with prejudices against immigrants willing to spread disinformation and take action to keep refugees out. But the liberal intelligentsia in Sweden, and many other Western European countries, has promoted a rhetoric of open hearts, doors, and borders. One should not underestimate the value of the role of the intelligentsia, said Balogh.

Heike Graf of the School of Culture and Education, Södertörn University, described the German position as follows: To have open doors is a moral necessity to Germany, as Chancellor Angela Merkel has expressed it. But, of course, there are also forces in Germany that condemn Merkel’s position. The far-right move...
ments in Germany also express hatred towards migrants and oppose the German policy. Furthermore, there are also other, unconventional voices, opposing the policy of open doors, ac-
cording to Heike Graf. “Leading feminists state that Germans are
decreasing themselves and that, with the refugees, Germany is
importing male violence and anti-semitism. They urge introduc-
ing border controls,” she said.

In Sweden, part of the feminist movement has said “Not in my
name” to warnings of the danger of “importing male violence”.
Leading Swedish feminists have not fallen into the trap, ar-
gued Jenny Gunnarsson Payne, research leader at CBRES.

It seems that most European countries do have far-right
movements making politics of prejudice, although not all have
politicians in leading positions who share those prejudices. How-
ever, it seems to be even more significant if part of the intelligen-
tia feeds discourses of the “others” as a threat and expresses
worries about attacks on the country’s culture and values. It
was even suggested during the round table discussions that
this kind of discourse has a momentum of its own and escalates fast.

Biased media escalate the discourses
Michał Krzyżanowski, Professor of Media and Communication
Studies, Örebro University, presented an analysis of the discours-
es in the media in Poland. In mid-September, Poland was in the
midst of an electoral campaign and there was a rapid and radical
shift in the discourse against letting refugees entering Poland.

“Before the refugee crisis, interest in immigration was very
low in Poland. Emigrated Poles were mentioned in the media, but seldom people im-
migrating to Poland,” said Krzyżanowski.

Thus there was a very rapid politiciza-
tion of the topic. The role of the media was
central, Krzyżanowski pointed out. There was
top-down media reporting on the elec-
torial campaign and also the self-referential
social media raising concerns from the grass
roots. It seems that the aversions and antipathies expressed in
the media also support the movement’s electoral momentum and
it seems hard to estimate how far it will go before it stops, if at all,
Krzyżanowski said.

In Hungary, as in the Czech Republic, Ralph noted, there had
been little interest in refugees and immigrants before the crisis.
The topic was a novelty in the Eastern European media.

Serbia first stop on Balkan route
In Serbia and Macedonia, over half a million refugees made
a first stop on their way towards Europe. They took the Balkan
route, noted Branka Ljilja Brboric of the Institute for Migration,
Ethnicity and Society, Linköping University. In Serbia, there was
no significant anti-refugee sentiment, although 300,000 Serbians
have moved abroad to find work and employment, and although
nearly every second young person is unemployed (6%). Fur-
thermore, wages in Serbia are low. In spite of all that, Serbians
as a rule mobilized to assist refugees. Ljilja Brboric added that
Serbia received funding from the EU to bundle the situation, and

that the refugee crisis did, in fact, create employment for Serbi-
ans in the short term. However, Ljilja Brboric told us that there have been some con-
cerns recently that if Northern European countries such as Austria
and Germany now close their borders, and send the refugees back
to Serbia, then the situation may be different, with many refu-
edes in the media in Serbia, trapped in Serbian territory, between the sea and the EU.

Is EU falling apart from the inside?
Irina Sandomirskaja, Professor of Cultural Studies, CBRES,
Södertörn University, pointed out in her summing up that the
discussions of the refugee crisis to date mainly concern the crisis
of Europe and the EU. The disaster and distress that hundreds
of thousands of refugees are going through is placed outside the
discourse. Refugees are called “those people” and the discussion
is very Eurocentric, focusing on our reactions to the wave from
abroad into our territory, as well as on sexual assaults on our
women.

Sandomirskaja finds that today’s collapse of Europe has simi-
larities with what the author Mandelstam described in 1922, the
year of the end of the Great War and revolutions in Russian his-
tory: namely, the end of the political. He proclaimed that Europe
had met its end by imagining itself in terms of national totalities,
the “wheat of humanity” failing to cohere and bake into the
“breads” of nations. The crisis of today witnesses a return of the
geopolitical following the post-Cold-War period of relative open-
ness after the end of the Cold War, the period when “the wheat
of humanity” joined the processes of global-
ization. The return of geopolitics manifests itself in the increase of conflict: Europe,
according to Mandelstam, is a territory of
“political rampage” that would always seek
to redraw its borders. There is a kind of
violence in the Europe of today that comes
from its political constitution, the violence of
securitization.

“There are many people today, including some made Europe, who
feel they are outside the system: lonely losers in the globaliza-
tion quest, as described earlier by Ljilja Brboric;” Irina Sandomir-
skaja said. She warned that they are easily drawn into the security
rhetoric that now prevails. A process is taking place in the EU to
protect what is left, and often to secure it against ‘others’.

Sandomirskaja added that many countries in the East are
afraid of Russia and Putin and feel a need to increase security.
Instead of building walls and borders to keep people apart, we
should make people come together and help them to believe in
a joint future. Irina Sandomirskaja spoke of the need for a new
agenda after the end of the Cold War, the period when “the wheat
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The line between what is strictly ‘politics’ and what is, for instance, ‘economics’ is thin at best.

Jaakko Turunen

PhD, licentiate in Political Science, the Institute of Social Sciences, Södertörn University

“ISO...”

The Ukrainian doctoral students saw no alternative to engagement.

The line between what is strictly ‘politics’ and what is, for instance, ‘economics’ is thin at best.

Jaakko Turunen

PhD, licentiate in Political Science, the Institute of Social Sciences, Södertörn University

PhD student, Media and Communication Studies, Södertörn University

There are many ways and reasons for researchers and universities to get involved in the political.

The Ukrainian doctoral students saw no alternative to engagement.
Research project 2013–2016: VISIONS OF EURASIA

Origami formulated by Russian émigré nationalists in the 1930s and 1990s, Eurasianism represented an entirely new vision of Russia as Russia-Eurasia: a distinct and autonomous historical world stretching from Russia’s western borderslands east to the Pacific. Beginning in the late 1980s, these old doctrines were rediscovered and began to be resurrected. They were appealing because they offered a compelling ideological narrative for those who opposed the breakup of the Soviet Union and believed that Russia needed to be a strong state capable of resisting its external opponents, especially those from the West.

By the beginning of Vladimir Putin’s first presidency, Eurasianism had become a common term of reference in Russia. Its influence was apparent not only in academic and political discourses but in the popular imagination as well, and it figured prominently in representations of Russia in popular culture. Eurasianism is also highly influential outside of the Russian Federation, for example in Kazakhstan, where it has been as a sort of official state ideology. Most recently, Vladimir Putin has formally endorsed the Eurasian vision as one of his key foreign policy projects for his new presidency. The importance of Eurasianism calls for complete reassessment of its contemporary role.

We are considering these questions through 5 subprojects for his new presidency. The importance of Eurasianism calls for complete reassessment of its contemporary role.

The AIM OF THE PROJECT
The Vision of Eurasia: Eurasianism Influences on Politics, Culture and Ideology in Russia Today (2013–2016) is to evaluate the degree to which Eurasianist concepts and perspectives have penetrated across public and political life in Russia today; secondly, by analyzing the reasons for this penetration; and finally by investigating the ways in which these perspectives still reflect the doctrines of the “classical Eurasianism”, and alternatively how they are being adapted to fit the post-Soviet realities of the 21st century.

The project held workshops in Stockholm in the spring of 2014 and 2015, and co-sponsored a further workshop at Kings College London in summer 2015. A final meeting will take place in March 2016 at George Washington University in Washington DC.

Publications Based on project research include a monograph by Mark Bassin: The Gambit Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia (Diasca NY: Cornell University Press) and two edited collections: Between Europe and Asia: The Origins, Theories, and Legacies of Russian Eurasianism, Eds. Mark Bassin, Marlene Laruelle and Sergei Glebov (Pittsburgh PA: University of Pittsburgh Press), and Eurasia 2.0: Post-Soviet Geopolitics in the Age of New Media, Eds Mark Bassin and Mikhail Stalnov (London MD: Rowman and Littlefield). A third collection, The Politics of Eurasianism, is currently being prepared.

Mark Bassin
Professor in History of Ideas at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBBEES).

For the modern cultural human sciences, time is the medium in which their aspirations are articulated. While the geographers travelled around the globe to explore and chart the spatial material world, the human sciences took off on a journey into a territory that they designated as History, the potentially all-encompassing representation of the Past. From timeless sources it seemed to be speaking to them, in order to be heard, retrieved, remembered, retold, re-enacted, and ultimately in order to be controlled. Containing the past through conceptual and archival means was intended to give the present too a clearer shape and form, as both a center of vision and a culminating moment of the historical time itself. Chronology – the measuring and the explanation of time – became the fundamental form in which the desire for knowledge could be hardcoded itself. Hegel is the modern philosopher most often associated with both the desire for and the conceptualization of this aspiration. Through his Phenomenology of Spirit (1807), philosophy obtains the shape of a temporal historico-philosophical journey from the origins to the present and beyond, from the most primitive to the advanced, up to the point of visualizing the whole of time or the culmination of time. In the form of “historicism”, the present is to contain everything, and in this all-containing gesture there could also somehow dissolve into the all-knowing eye and mirror of all that has been, as the conceptual and intellectual culmination of humanity.

At the same time it was clear that this same period also contained an anxiety and inner instability that concerned precisely the nature of its own present. Michel Foucault once argued in an essay on Kant and the Enlightenment that what this period sets in motion is a new theoretical preoccupation that he named the “ontology of actuality”. It is a philosophical obsession with the future, of the nature and character of the present, with the question “What is now?” as a theoretical and empirical pursuit in its own right. What Kant is really asking and setting up as task for thinking is: Where are we now, and what does this specific now demand from us? A few generations after Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche would question the entire self-understanding of the historicist cultural paradigm. In the second of the essays titled Untimely Meditations, with the subtitle “On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life”, he turned his gaze against its utopian ideal of a final and completed historical memory and suggested in its place the necessity of having a form of forgetting and amnesia in order for a culture to be able to move on and be creative, and not succumb to an overdose of history.

Nietzsche’s essay visualized an inner tension that inhabited the heart of the historicist culture. It showed how its apparent “objectivity” also contained desires and pathologies: an anti-Enlightenment desire to preserve its identity through a collecting of the past, a monumental desire that cultivated the knowledge of the past as a matrix for future action, but also a critical desire to tear the past apart in order to make new room for the present. It pointed to how historical knowledge also marks an anxiety in the present, and how knowledge in this domain is inseparable from active uses of the past.

"Memory Studies" has gained a new topicality in recent decades, following the critical reflexive turn in the human sciences from the 1970s on. Through the emergence of Marxist, feminist, and postcolonial critique, hermeneutics and critical theory, and research on the sociology of knowledge, it has become increasingly clear how the subject of knowledge is also an integral part of the field that it is trying to understand and conceptualize, how the study of the past also implies questions of justice, use, and emancipation, and how the theoretical and practical aspects of the study of the past appear more intertwined than ever.

This was already the situation in the 1970s, when many of these critical interventions began to take hold of the academic disciplines. Through the collapse of the Soviet Union and the unification of Europe, there emerged not only new geopolitical constellations but also new collective mental spaces. The dismantling of power structures opened up the frozen histories of the formerly occupied states. Memories that had been sealed during the dismantling of power structures opened up the frozen histories of the formerly occupied states. Memories that had been sealed during the

Histories have been written, erased, or shared, but it can’t be ignored.

Mark Badin
Professor in History of Ideas at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBBEES).

He has a strong academic background in the field of human geography.
At an early stage it produced a comprehensive collection of articles, Rethinking Time, which can be downloaded from its website, together with many other articles and extracts from books and collections (www.histcon.se). Currently it is preparing the largest collection of articles ever to be gathered in one book in Sweden on the theory of history, a three-volume work that will be published in May this year under the title Historiens rumvit, the “domicile” or “ethos” of History. The group has had an international advisory board, and has begun collaboration with the International Network for Theory of History (INTIH), based in Ghent.

OVER THE COURSE of this work it has become increasingly clear how politically important it today is to be able to understand and conceptually master the phenomena of historical consciousness and of the uses and representations of the past. As the mental — and also material — geological imagination of Europe is rapidly changing, we need to understand the underlying mechanisms of these transformations in order to properly interpret and hope-fully anticipate what promises to be a continued and increas-ingly intense period for the politics of memory. In the earlier debates on the theory of history from the 1980s on, the focus was often on epistemological and aesthetic questions, how and whether history can really be represented and understood. Today these more academic concerns have been replaced by the more urgent need to properly understand the turbulent times through which we are living, with old and new ethnic and na-tional memories competing for the initiative.

Phenomena of this complexity demand a broad perspective that must combine synthetic interpretative models of tem-porality and historical consciousness with sociological and me-dia-theoretical analyses of the modes and the institutions used to represent the past, and do so with a critical eye and possibly with an emancipatory purpose. To study historical conscious-ness is also, inevitably, on one level to live historical conscious-

ness. In the end it is not a phenomenon from which the subject of knowledge can completely distance and separate itself, but a reflexive condition in which we have always been, and which we must therefore try to understand as we live and try to orient ourselves through its reality. 


cOLLECTIVE MEMORY

Monuments are symbols of what is worth remembering. They often awaken strong feelings.
The past as a resource for memory is endless, as any event can be taken up by a community for mnemonic purposes. Yet, as we can see, not all historic events form "memory veins" that can produce "memory events." Glorious victories or horrific suffering are most likely to become the veins through which the formation of memory events would flow, since these histories in particular are typified by emotions. What is more, battles, conquests, and victories often become the "founding" memory events that serve as founding myths of the nation.

The memory boom and the mushrooming of monuments is not a coincidence in post-1989 Eastern Europe. Redefining statehood and reorienting the nation are intertwined with the refiguration of memory. As Olick and Levy pointed out, "Mythification of the past as a resource for memory is endless, as any event or the metaphors of national life, " (26) references to it serve as a sign or indication that something is remembered. As a catalyst of the remembering process, a monument can be taken up by a community for mnemonic purposes. Yet, as we can see, not all historic events form "memory veins" that can produce "memory events." Glorious victories or horrific suffering are most likely to become the veins through which the formation of memory events would flow, since these histories in particular are typified by emotions. What is more, battles, conquests, and victories often become the "founding" memory events that serve as founding myths of the nation.

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The monument: catalyst of the remembering process

In my study I focused only on one specific kind of mnemonic representation: the monument. The monument is a part of the cultural and political process of the invention of tradition. At the same time it is embedded in an established tradition that shapes its meaning through the appearances, location, and rituals involved. Scholars see monuments as an apparatus of social memory and consider them "vases of rhetorical meaning," "staged events," and "the official memory book of significant events or the metaphors of national life."2 Where they fail their function of "significant events or the metaphors of national life," they interest me the most.

I decided to concentrate on monuments because they are the most visible representation of the past. Moreover, they usually afford an opportunity to access a wide range of discussions, debates, conflicts, and negotiations around the memory of the past that is represented in bronze or in stone. In my study, monuments serve as an entry point to the discussion of memory and as a limiting device that restricts the unmanageable volume of the material that could be studied in relation to memory. The monument as seen in my book, is first and foremost, a symptom and a catalyst of the remembering process. As a symptom, a monument points to the important area in the system of meaning as it signifies that some episode of the past enters the mnemonic space and takes up its position in cultural memory. Thus it serves as a sign or indication that something is remembered. As a catalyst of the remembering process, a monument becomes involved in the debates, negotiations, agreements, and disagreements concerning a particular episode of the past that is represented by the monument.

1 Yuliya Yurchuk, Uncovering the Meaningful World: Memory of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalism and the Ukrainian Home Guard Army in Post-Soviet Ukraine (Stockholm: Acta, 2010).
6 Political parties, however, sometimes treat the past as if it were a limited resource which makes memory politics rather influential. See Ilya Khamin, "The Struggle for History: The Past as a Limited Resource, Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe." At Ulm is for evermore, Alexander Eiltz and Julia Fodor (eds.), Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe (Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 13-26.
7 Georges Mink and Laure Neumayer, "Introduction," in Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Memory Games, ed. Georges Mink and Laure Neumayer (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).
11 One of the characteristics of cultural memory in Alida Assmann’s understanding is that it is “founded on durable carriers of symbols and material representations” (Alida Assmann, “Reframing Memory Between Individual and Collective Forms of Constructing the Past,” in Performing the Past: Memory, History and Identity in Modern Europe, ed. Karin Tilman, Frank van der Voo and Jany Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 35-43. Monuments are a very important example of representations of this type.

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the hedge, it was as if the trees sensed it. Even if all participants were affected by the "auratic quality" of the place, the experience of being self-in-place had different implications for the bearers of direct memories of the events and bearers of postmemories. For former POWs, revisiting Tambov enabled them to pay a last homage to their fallen fellows, but above all it was a way of re-encircling the experience of captivity in the present and of reappropriating it. The journeys, undertaken voluntarily this time, enabled them to put aside the experiences inflicted on them during the war and to redelineate themselves in the present as the empathetic, sensitive individuals they strive to be. As a matter of fact, when I interviewed the former POWs about their interment, they all deplored their loss of humanity during their time in captivity, a time marked by their daily struggle for survival. By undertaking the journey, the former POWs were creating a physical space and a significant place where things could be put into place retrospectively. By taking leave of their comrades during the pilgrimages, an act that was not possible at the time of their interment, they could regain the humanity that was unattainable during the war. To be physically present at the place where the bones of the fallen are buried might also be a way for bereaved relatives to come to terms with an uncertain past. What is at stake here is the need for relatives and next to kin to have a place for their dead. As the philosopher Jean-Luc Nancy stated, "The dead must be somewhere." Yet when a human being is discarded in a mass grave or left on the side of a road without a ritual through which the place and time of his or her departure is attested, his or her passage on earth is annulled. To this end, the ceremonies, taking place at mass graves near the former prison camp function as symbolic burials, providing the mourning relatives with the possibility of finding some measure of closure.

Postmemories and bearers of postmemories give it a place (outside one's own body). At the same time it might be a process of placing the vicarious memory in the pilgrim's own lived body: breathing in the air, moving one's body onto the place, digging with one's hands in the soil. In other words, to be self-in-place, to be a process of replacing the memory and of "making it one's "ongoing life." Accordingly, it is by being self-in-place that the process of memorialization can take place. Yet it is through the lived body, through bodily experience, that place and memories become intimately entangled. Consequently, the encounter with the very place where an event occurred provides the opportunity to deposit additional memory traces of the past and to reframe the past in the present. Being self-in-place is therefore the determinant for "opening up" the past in a different way, and for providing the opportunity to heal a past "that doesn't want to pass." 8

**Florence fröhlig**
PHD in Ethnology and former BEEGS graduate.
Her thesis engages with memory and mourning processes, counter-memories, working-through processes, resilience, and the transmission of memories. Currently she is a postdoc in the NORFACE project Transwel concerning welfare portability in Europe. She is also engaged with the research project presented on page 51.

**References**

1. The youth pilgrimages had about 15 participants aged between 16 and 40 years, while the pilgrimages of the ancients had about 15 participants between 22 and 86 years. Pilgrimages bring together three or four generations: survivors or contemporaries (spouses and siblings), children, children's spouses and nieces (of survivors or dead POWs) and grand children.

2. Alasoe and Moseley were assassinated de facto to the German Reich after France was defeated in the spring of 1940. But it was only in August 1942 that all Alaskan and Moseley men born between 1918 and 1938 were conscripted by force into the German army.


5. The term postmemory, coined by the literary critic Marianne Hirsch, refers to the memories of "those who were not there to live it but who received its effects, literally, through the narratives, actions and symptoms of the previous generation." Marianne Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).


8. The expression "un passé qui ne passe pas" was coined by Julia Kriesteva (Paris: Gallimard, 1987), 70.

**Postindustrial Landscape Scars**

Postindustrial landscapes are all around us, not least in European city centers where they often occupy attractive waterfront locations and have become the focal point of many urban redevelopment projects. The historical trajectories of these industrial landscapes and their associated communities, the abandonment and decay propelling the landscapes into a postindustrial situation, and sometimes also the rediscovery, reuse, and the attachment of new meaning to them — these factors make up the topic of *Post Industrial Landscape Scars* (PILSC; Pragmacrave Macmillan, 2014). The scar is a central metaphor in the book’s structure. A scar is understood here as a reminder and trace of a wound. It is organic and connects physical and mental realities, past and present. For many, a scar spontaneously represents something negative, but a scar is actually much more ambiguous. Think of Memur scars, veterans’ scars or Caesarian section scars — scars that speak of survival, courage, and even resilience.

One key message is therefore that postindustrial landscapes are characterized by ambiguity. These landscapes simultaneously carry the experiences of welfare communities, professional pride, and bright hope for the future on one hand, and on the other, injured bodies, contaminated natural environments, and weakening social structures. This ambiguity must – I argue – be considered and respected when former industrial sites are transformed and put to new use.

In my work with this book, I have enjoyed being on tour in the postindustrial landscapes of the Baltic Sea region, and grateful to meet some of the individuals who articulate their significance. In my opinion, all these landscapes are remarkable, spectacular, and astonishing. At the same time, they are generally regarded as peripheral, ugly, and merely functional, or dysfunctional — if they are noticed or known at all. Why is this so? This has been the personal starting point of my investigations. Why are these obviously significant stories not written, these sites not full of tourists, these scars not recognized? One part of the answer is connected to accessibility limitations and to risk, but that is in fact just part of the answer.

**The Book Presents**

Five case studies located in Lithuania, Germany, and Sweden, and Denmark, and more specifically in Malmöberg, Barsebäck, Ignalina/Visaginas, Duisburg, and Avesnes. The case studies represent the iron and steel, mining, and nuclear power industries: branches of industry of both symbolic and economic importance for national independence and identity. All the cases also speak about contemporary utopian visions of society, of fear and resistance expressed by popular movements, of individual and state investments of considerable dimensions, and of special relationships between industrial workers and those in power.

Some postindustrial landscapes become ruins, others find new uses, and others still remain as scars.
Five case studies

What does it mean to live on an unstable mountain in the mining town of Malmbärg, Sweden? This settlement is marked by a huge and continuously growing open pit in its midst, a hole that has literally swallowed large parts of the former town center. I argue that the absence of the old town center in combination with the decisive presence of the hole is the most important heritage marker in the landscape, a marker that should be better articulated in discussions about the future of Malmbärg.

Exploring the history of Barsebäck, a closed-down commercial nuclear power plant in southwest Sweden, I assert that a geographical distance of four exists in relation to the plant. Those living close to the plant are not afraid, or at least their words and actions reveal a trustful approach to nuclear technology. In contrast, a little further away and especially from the viewpoint of Copenhagen, located twenty kilometers from Barsebäck across the Sound, the plant has long been a dominant symbol of potential catastrophe.

In relation to the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania, I examine the front otapia. Here I argue that the plant carries the heritage of two betrayed dreams: first, the dream of the Soviet paradise, and second, the dream of the independent Lithuania. Both these dreams were to some extent betrayed, one by the Soviet collapse and the other by the political decision to close the plant as a concession to Lithuanian negotiations on EU membership.

The concept of industrial nature is posed when visiting Duisburg and the Ruhr area in Germany. I argue that the ecological concept of urban industrial nature as a “fourth nature” yields more than simply an ecological understanding of overgrowing industrial sites. In fact, it connects to an understanding of growing vegetation as a way to heal difficult pasts, yet also, paradoxically, as a way to conceal difficult and unjust social relations in contemporary society.

Finally, I examine the enduring spirit of the company town of Avesta in Sweden. In relation to a reuse process of the old ironworks I argue that the “spirit of a company town” – based on a collective identification between the company management and the workers, and the role of the company manager as a father figure in the local community – has lived on, and that the hegemonic manager role has been taken over by municipal leaders.

Relations with the past

What then is the broader relevance of these empirical investigations for projects aimed at transforming and reusing former industrial areas? A first answer is that if we know a lot about the historical and contemporary significance of a post-industrial landscape, we are probably more capable of making conscious and thoughtful choices in landscape design, in architectural features, and in the communications between different actors involved in and affected by the changes.

Another answer is a categorization of postindustrial landscapes that puts individual projects in perspective. In what way is a certain project an expression of a larger trend, and in what way might it be unique? How does a project relate to postindustrial landscapes which are not regarded as attractive for reuse? Are there values connected to a specific project that become visible if we choose to approach the site with another categorization in mind? The book proposes three categories of postindustrial landscapes, each with specific characteristics.

The first category is simply the reused postindustrial landscape, which is most closely linked to a canonized understanding of heritage. In a physical sense, this is typically a 19th century brick building located along the waterfront in a city center. It is considered beautiful by many and is reused for housing, exhibitions, restaurants, schools, and offices. The history of this kind of reuse can be traced to the United States in the 1960s, and the practice gained momentum in Europe in the 1980s. Today there is a very strong visual emphasis in this category and a focus on uniqueness, character, authenticity, and sometimes sustainability. Reuse often implies processes of gentrification, commodification, and a domestication of industrial aesthetics.

The second category, ruined postindustrial landscapes, are defined as abandoned and decaying industrial sites, at once romanticized and considered a disgrace for modern society. The third category is undefined postindustrial landscapes, signifying places and processes that are not acknowledged as important, and left outside the arena of contemporary heritage recognition and planning. The three categories are not clear-cut, and most places to some degree show mixtures of the categories’ characteristics. In addition, over time, many sites shift from representing mainly one category to another.

The book Post-Industrial Landscape Scars provides a journey to five intriguing sites in the Baltic Sea region. By introducing the scar metaphor, it attempts to broaden the relevance of heritage thinking in contemporary planning concerning postindustrial landscapes. It asks for more attention to be directed towards existing physical structures and cultural significance, and it asks for greater variety in design choices in redevelopment projects, based in local historical contexts and local future imaginaries.

Notes

A former Soviet military shipyard in Karosta, Latvia, raises questions about imperial dreams, hard work, and vanished communities, as well as about contamination, and aestheticizing industrial romanticism.

Nuclear legacies

Off about 540 commercial nuclear reactors in the world, 100 have already been taken out of use. In the near future, many more will be closed down as the first generation of reactors is becoming obsolete. Regardless of shifting political views on nuclear power and ongoing new construction, we have entered an era of postnuclear sites in large numbers. What nuclear legacies do they convey? What crucial questions face us if we are to manage these highly contaminated places in a responsible way? The current answers to the challenges of radioactivity are marked by a striking asymmetry of power, which forms an underlying rationale of the project.

The aim of the research project Nuclear Legacies. Negotiating radioactivity in France, Russia, and Sweden is to investigate nuclear legacies at postnuclear sites, in accompanying settlements, and in heritage and future-oriented interpretations. Four case studies deal with (1) ways to live in a post-nuclear community, (2) negotiations on radioactive waste, (3) official storytelling and, (4) emerging postnuclear natures. Theoretically, we rely on the concepts of social memory, governmentality, authorized heritage discourse, and industrial nature. The case studies are conducted in France (Fessenheim), Russia (Moscow and St. Petersburg), and Sweden (Barsebäck), three countries with a long nuclear history and a heavy reliance on nuclear electricity production.

The intention is to analyze four intertwined kinds of nuclear legacies to better understand and manage the urgent and complex set of undertakings that we are currently facing because of the expanding postnuclear landscapes.

The project team consists of Anna Storm (history of technology), Florence Fröhlig (ethnology), Tatiana Kasperski (political science) and Egle Rindzeviciute (cultural studies). The project is funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies and runs from 2015 to 2017.

Note: The article is a slightly revised version of a book presentation in Topos magazine, December 2015.
Thousands of Roma were killed in Ukraine between 1941 and 1944 by Nazi Einsatzgruppen and local collaborators. The Roma victims were practically never deported to extermination camps but instead their bodies were left where they had been murdered. Babi Yar (Babyn Yar in Ukrainian) in Kyiv is considered a single largest Holocaust massacre in Europe. The place is a chime of seven deep ravines in the north-western part of the city. There on September 29–30, 1941, more than 33,000 Jews were exterminated by Nazis in a single mass killing. In 1941–43 hundreds of Ukrainian Roma were also murdered there. The total number of victims (Jews, Roma, undergound fighters, people with mental disabilities, Ukrainian nationalists) killed in Babi Yar is estimated to 100,000 people. However in the postwar report published by the Extraordinary Commission for Investigation of War Crimes (ECGR), the Roma were not specified, they were rather counted as “murdered civil citizens”. The Soviet leadership discouraged placing any emphasis on the ethnic aspects of this genocide. In April 1945 the leading Soviet newspaper Pravda informed their readers that according to the party decision a memorial and a museum will be built in Babi Yar. Nothing was done. The Nazi policy of extermination of Roma was neglected; the war was depicted as a tragedy for all Soviet peoples. Until 1966 the site of mass killing in Babi Yar was unmarked and the first monument was built only in 1976 after a number of protest actions such as a famous epic rally in Baby Yar in 1966. This rally, which was devoted to the 1976 Soviet memorial legalization practices of dissidents: Viktor Nekrasov, Boris Antonenko-Davidovich, Ivan Erasmus University Rotterdam, in March 17, 2015. Here we publish an extract concerning the memorialization of the massacre 1941 in Babi Yar.

Andrej Kotljarchuk

babi yar, thousands of roma were killed in ukraine during 1941 and 1944 by nazi einsatzgruppen and local collaborators. the roma victims were practically never deported to extermination camps but instead their bodies were left where they had been murdered. babi yar (babyn yar in ukrainian) in kyiv is considered a single largest holocaust massacre in europe. the place is a chime of seven deep ravines in the north-western part of the city. there on september 29–30, 1941, more than 33,000 jews were exterminated by nazis in a single mass killing. in 1941–43 hundreds of ukrainian roma were also murdered there. the total number of victims (jews, roma, underground fighters, people with mental disabilities, ukrainian nationalists) killed in babi yar is estimated to 100,000 people. however in the postwar report published by the extraordinary commission for investigation of war crimes (ecgr), the roma were not specified, they were rather counted as “murdered civil citizens”. the soviet leadership discouraged placing any emphasis on the ethnic aspects of this genocide. in april 1945 the leading soviet newspaper pravda informed their readers that according to the party decision a memorial and a museum will be built in babi yar. nothing was done. the nazi policy of extermination of roma was neglected; the war was depicted as a tragedy for all soviet peoples. until 1966 the site of mass killing in babi yar was unmarked and the first monument was built only in 1976 after a number of protest actions such as a famous epic rally in baby yar in 1966. this rally, which was devoted to the 1976 soviet memorial legalization practices of dissidents: viktor nekrasov, boris antonenko-davidovich, ivan

in 2013, the swedish government commissioned södertörn university to develop school curricula and to launch a teacher education program for upper secondary teachers in the roma language, roma chib, as part of the effort to provide school education in all five national minority languages in sweden.

the establishment of roma studies at södertörn university has led to increased collaboration among teachers and researchers. the position of research leader connected with the centre for baltic and east european studies has been established in order to coordinate different research activities; kimmo granqvist is the first appointment to the position. kimmo granqvist is also the editor of södertörn’s series on roma studies.

research and education related to roma studies were being carried out even before the strategic move to establish södertörn’s profile in the field. courses for roma mediators in schools and social work, and recently, special training for roma mother-tongue teachers, have been organized by the school of culture and education.

the research in roma studies has so far taken place in projects examining the roma language and culture, education, religion, and the history of the roma people. the research themes include the school situation of the roma minority (christina rojell-oligak), the genocide of the roma people in ukraine in 1941–44 (the project carried out by pier wawrzyniuk, andrej kotljarchuk, david gaunt, and anders blomqvist – see opposite page), pentecostal christianity among roma people (david thurp), roma language and culture (kimmo granqvist) and the police, experts, and race (this newly started project is carried out by madeleine hurd and steffen werther).

a number of diverse research activities have been organized in relation to this study field, including seminar series, workshops, and the nordic conference on roma studies. two series of seminars are being held: the first presents public lectures on roma studies organized by christina rojell-oligak of the school of culture and education. the second seminar series comprises the cbrees higher seminars on roma studies, in which the researchers meet and discuss their recently published or draft texts or research related to this theme.

david gaunt, professor emeritus in history at cbrees, has written a text book (soon to be published in swedish) that will function as an introduction to roma culture, history, politics, human rights issues, and socio-economic conditions in the baltic sea region and eastern europe. he has tried to give as much space as possible to the roma people’s own voices. he has also chosen to not focus solely on well-known problems and discrimination, but looked for positive examples as well.

research and education in roma studies are growing at södertörn university and various collaborations have become established. the developments in this field can be followed on the university’s web page and through the seminar programs.

Ekaterina Tarasova

PhD student in Political Science at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS)
Kimmo Granqvist, research leader at Södertörn University:

“Networking is of particular interest to me.”

How would you describe the research field of Romani Studies in a few words?

“The Roma constitute a heterogeneous population living mostly in Europe. They are often approached as an ethnic group that migrated from the northwestern Indian subcontinent about 1,500 years ago. The reasons for this migration are still unknown, as are the exact numbers of Roma today. In Europe alone, estimates vary between four and fourteen million. Romani studies is an interdisciplinary ethnic studies field concerned with the experiences of the Roma, Kale and Sinti. Romani studies draws on aspects of history, sociology, anthropology, ethnography, linguistics, and political science. Particular areas of focus include the origins of the Roma people, experiences of persecution and political oppression, the Romani language, Romani society and culture, and Romani customs and traditions. Romani studies as a formal university discipline was first established at Charles University in Prague in 1991, and later in the 1990s, in the United Kingdom and other places as well.”

What are your main aims and challenges as a research leader at CBEES?

“Networking and collaboration are of particular interest to me in order to develop a Nordic stronghold of Romani studies with a European scope of activity at Södertörn University. I have prepared a strategy for Romani Studies at the University. Other main activities include networking, maintaining scientific discourse, developing research infrastructure, and increasing cooperation between European actors in Romani studies. Networking and collaboration are of particular interest to me in order to develop a Nordic stronghold of Romani studies with a European scope of activity at Södertörn University. A very important concrete step is the upcoming establishment of a Network of Academic Institutions in Romani Studies in February 2016. Nordic and European conferences (the annual Nordic Conference on Romani Studies established by me in 2015, the Gypsy Lore Society Annual Meeting and Conference on Gypsy Studies, the 12th International Conference on Romani Linguistics) and workshops are organized and, in future, to implement cross-national, interdisciplinary, comparative research activities. As an additional means of maintaining scientific discourse and disseminating research findings, the Romani Series on Romani Studies was established in 2015 as the only Nordic peer-reviewed publication series in the field.”

Could you please tell us a little about the importance of working in dialogue with the Romani communities?

“Working with representatives of different Roma communities as beneficiaries is an essential part of the job and a prerequisite for its success. I currently cooperate with the Roma as a member of Romani language boards in Finland and Sweden. I cooperate with Romani activists both nationally and internationally in questions of language planning, education, and Roma inclusion; I have been a member of different Finnish state working groups and committees on Roma issues, including the development of the first national curriculum for teaching Romani language and culture in schools (2004) and the preparation of the first Finnish national policy on the Roma (2009). Internationally, I cooperate with Roma activists and as an NGO member in Slovakia and Poland.”

What is the status of Romani studies in other academic institutions in the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe?

“In Sweden, Södertörn University is the main multidisciplinary research site on the Roma. At CBEES, the central themes in Romani Studies currently include Romani dialectology, history, and grammar, pedagogy, language politics, and also issues of Roma inclusion and anti-Gypsyism, migration, transnationality, identity, belonging, representation and manifestations of religion, and gender relations among different European Roma communities. Migration research is also being conducted at the University of Uppsala and Malmö Högskola. The Swedish Scandoromani language has been studied at the University of Lund. Romani language and culture is a minor subject program (60 credits) in the Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian, and Scandinavian Studies at the University of Helsinki. University of Helsinki currently holds an internationally significant, attractive, and well-networked multidisciplinary cluster of academic research activities in Romani language and culture. It is one of the world’s leading locations for research in Romani dialectology, history, and grammar, while a growing body of research also addresses the issues of migration, transnationality, identity, belonging, representation and manifestations of religion, and gender relations among different European Roma communities. In addition to the Department of Finnish, Finno-Ugrian, and Scandinavian Studies, research is being carried out at Helsinki University in the Department of World Cultures and in Social and Cultural Anthropology. Outside Helsinki University, research on different aspects of Romani studies is going on, among other places, at the University of Eastern Finland (cultural studies, music) and the University of Oulu (Pedagogics).”

“I taught individual courses in Romani linguistics at the University of Tallinn in 2015. An MA thesis is being prepared there on Estonian Romani by Anette Ross. Otherwise, fairly little academic work is being conducted on the Roma in the Baltic countries. In the Russian Federation, Romani studies are being conducted at least in St. Petersburg and at the Russian Academy of Sciences. Elsewhere in Eastern Europe, perhaps the most prominent academic institution working on Romani studies is Charles University in Prague, which offers a full MA program as well as a PhD program; the main areas of emphasis in Romani studies there are linguistics and anthropology. Work on Roma issues also takes place at the Czech Academy of Sciences. A number of Slovak universities at least offer courses in Romani studies, often linked with sociology or pedagogy. Work on Roma issues is also conducted at the Slovak Academy of Sciences. In Poland, a very central academic institution working on Roma issues is Jagiellonian University in Cracow, which offers a PhD program. PhD programs and other academic training on Roma issues are also offered by various universities in Romania, most importantly the University of Bucharest.”

PhD student in Political Science at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGSS):

Ekaterina Tarasova

Romani Studies demands clarity of concepts and close cooperation with Roma people.
Young researchers from different countries and disciplines meet, learn, and create networks.

Networking and interaction in governance are very important; they can in themselves create a very new quality and potential — this was my personal impression from the seminar on network governance given by Georg Sootla from Tallinn University. The new regional policy could be based on utilizing differences instead of eliminating them, and on creating networks of actors instead of a hierarchy. These would be innovative ways of creating conditions for the development of new forms of cooperation. Phil Werner Jans from the University of Potsdam presented us a comparative study of administrative reforms around the Baltic Sea. This short seminar was an introduction to understanding more about examples of how states in the Baltic Sea Region deal with problems in creating efficient administrations.

MACROREGIONALIZATION and the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea region were topics introduced to us by Toms Rosoks from the University of Latvia. This study field covered both theoretical aspects of regionalization or macroregionalization and the governance structure of the EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region.

The environmental perspective was highlighted by Michael Gilek from Södertörn University. We discussed major challenges related to environmental problems connected with the Baltic Sea. These included eutrophication, pollution, and the impact of fishing on the Baltic environment.

A seminar on regional cooperation with Russia as well as on regionalization in a wider context was led by Pernett Jormsniemi from the University of Eastern Finland. During the classes we learned not just about EU-Russian cooperation, but also about examples of city twinning in Baltic Sea region.

Personally I found it inspiring and meaningful to see the connection between theory and practice. We had the chance to ask...
“What the meetings with practitioners were also a very valuable experience as we observed the passion of the people working in this area.”

2016 Summer School on Culture/Memory
2016 CBSS Summer School on Cultural Memory is arranged by BEEGS, CBEEES. The Summer School will take place June 16–23 at Södertörn University. Södertörn’s partners in this project, besides CBSS, are the University of Gdansk, the University of Grefswald, the University of Lund, Saint Petersburg University at Economics (UNECON), and the University of Tartu. The course will also include leisure time activities, fieldtrips, and guided tours. The course is open to master’s and doctoral students who are conducting their studies or research in the humanities or in the social sciences. http://www.sh.se/beegs_summer_schools

Questions and see whether the concepts and trends we had just learned about were relevant to governance on a daily basis. The meetings with practitioners were also a very valuable experience as we observed the passion of the people working in this area. We also observed certain values that create conditions for cooperation, such as mutual respect, understanding, and openness. Local settings should be taken into account as well – there are always multiple versions of reality, but some tools to understand it are always useful.

So what were the main benefits to be gained from the Summer University, for me as a participating student? Knowledge – for me personally, I needed time to put it in a broader context in my life while reading the news and talking to my friends at home about sensitive political or practical issues. Several months after the course I was surprised to discover how the highly theoretical knowledge I had gained affected my understanding of processes taking place around me. Although, at first glance, the knowledge that we had obtained sometimes appeared to be distant from practice, it was confirmed over time on numerous occasions. For an example, a historical model explaining the relations of the past and the history of society or mentality to present institutions, which Georg Souza from Tallinn University explained to us, proved to be a very illuminating context when I am listening to politicians debating reforms during the current parliamentary election campaign in Poland.

There is also the great value of interpersonal contacts – it’s impossible to overstate their importance. It is not only enjoyable, but also incredibly educational, to become part of a culturally and politically diverse group, all placed in a new social situation. This was a valuable outcome of the summer university. Combined with non-study-related integration and meetings till late at night, this was a perfect opportunity for networking and even finding friends in different countries, not to mention overcoming widespread stereotypes, or learning about real differences in perceptions of certain topics.

The meetings with practitioners were also a very valuable experience as we observed the passion of the people working in this area. Combing the intense 48-hour trip started on Wednesday afternoon, October 7, when the Swedish participants boarded one of the big ferries from the Stockholm pier near Slussen. After settling into their cabins, the group shared a good meal while enjoying the picturesque Swedish archipelago just before sunset. The cheerful group awaited the coming days with excitement and anticipation about their presentations. Before the seminar, each student had to hand in a research paper on their current topic or thesis chapter, focusing on research methods, in order to prepare a common ground for discussion.

Arriving on Thursday morning to a cold and crystal clear Finnish sky, the participants rushed to a waiting bus which took them directly to the Aleksanteri Institute’s main building, prominently situated in central Helsinki. The Aleksanteri Institute is an independent institute of the University of Helsinki and is a national center of research, study, and expertise on Russia and Eastern Europe, particularly in the social sciences and humanities. More than 50 researchers, including doctoral students, are currently connected to the center.

Markku Kivinen, Director of the Aleksanteri Institute, welcomed us all before we Swedish and Finnish doctoral students introduced ourselves to each other.

The theme of the first lecture session was “States, Nations and Borders redefined”. Professor Markku Kungasguro reflected on conflicting perceptions of the strong state in Russia and the need to redefine the state. Professor Jeremy Smith from the University of Eastern Finland argued that the nation-state is in fact inevitable. Questions addressed to the speakers led to fruitful discussions.

Lunch was served in an adjacent room in a beautiful setting. During the delicious meal, the participants had the first opportunity to make proper contact with one another and discussions revolved around their fields of study and progress of their doctoral work.

The second lecture session concerned topics related to global trends and modernization in Russia, mainly discussing public sector reforms and the ongoing development. Meri Kulmala presented her research on Russian civil society and the social welfare system. Anna-Liisa Heusala focused on administrative
reforms in Russia today, relating them to globalization. Kristy Beers Fägersten, and her co-organizer Ira Jantis-Vockangas, Head of Research Training at Aleksanteri Institute, then all participants went directly to the seminar sessions.

Three parallel workshop seminars were held with two senior researchers as chairs in each, in keeping with common academic procedures. Vasilios Kitos, a doctoral student at BEEGS, was satisfied, finding that the discussions provided a “good first feed-back on how to proceed” with his research project. The Aleksanteri doctoral student Mila Oiva expressed the view that the “discussions of the papers were the most valuable”. Although the students come from different research fields, it became obvious that all the doctoral students are tackling similar and comparable problems along the way. In some cases it could even be Kristy Beers Fägersten pointed out that the peer reflections in particular proved to be hugely successful and appreciated by all participants. “In the end”, she found, “the seminar met all our expectations.”

AFTER THE DISCUSSIONS: On Thursday, all the participants met again for dinner, enjoying a buffet and celebrating their successful and eventful day. Next morning, after the arrival back in Stockholm, a bus took the whole group to Södertörn University. Rebecca Lettverall, the director of CBES, welcomed us all. Professor Irina Sandozinskaja addressed a critical theory of cultural history in her lecture. Focusing on the Soviet legacy in conjunction with world heritage, she gave a fascinating lecture on Russian patrimony. Liudmila Voronova introduced her research on the issue of gendering in Russian political journalism during the Ukrainian conflict, focusing on the discourse on journalistic practice, labeling Russia as masculine and Europe as the feminine counterpart.

After the event, the participants shared a quick lunch at Södertörn University. Last discussions, exchanging contacts, and closing speeches by the organizers from both universities rounded off the event. This year’s floating seminar was a very well-organized activity which provided both room for reflection and networking possibilities. It opened up opportunities for serious and focused work on methodology. The whole shipboard experience and many cheerful moments of socializing added to the good spirits we will retain from the floating seminar.

PhD student in Media Technology at the Baltic and East European Graduate School.

Four participants’ viewpoints:

SARI ERIKSSON, ALEKSANTERI INSTITUTE, doctoral student in Political Science

– This was my first floating seminar and I liked it a lot. I live and work in Poland and it’s always fascinating to meet colleagues from Finland and Sweden. The best part of the seminar was getting feedback from other PhD students who are dealing with similar problems in their research but come from different disciplines. Besides the workshops and lectures, the dinners and evening programs were also important and fun.

VASILEIOS KITOS, BEEGS AT SÖDERTÖRN UNIVERSITY, doctoral student in Sociology and Urban Studies

– The seminar provided good initial feedback on how to proceed with my research project. I thought that the presentations of my fellow PhD students as well as those we took part in at the Aleksanteri Institute were relevant and interesting. The seminar provided an opportunity to get familiar with the Institute and the people involved.

MILA OIVA, ALEKSANTERI INSTITUTE, doctoral student in Cultural History

– I enjoyed the seminar, and I think that the most valuable aspects were the discussions of the papers and meeting each other. I would have wished that we could have had more interactive discussions on different topics instead of lectures. For my own work, it was beneficial to write and discuss from the perspective of methods.

MARK TERAMAE, ALEKSANTERI INSTITUTE, doctoral student in Political Science

– My favorite part of the floating seminar was actually interacting with the Swedish students, as it’s very useful to have new people and fresh perspectives. I thought it was a good idea not just to present your own research, but also to have comment on others’ work. I also really liked the entire concept of a seminar on the Viking Line boat; mixed work and play and was a lot more interesting than just sitting in some classroom.

The celebration of the BEEGS anniversary was well attended. Here alumni, students, research loaders, project researchers, professors, and a mix of students – all from different disciplines – listen to Helene Carlbäck, former Director of Studies at Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS).

Baltic and East European Graduate School: WITH AN INTERNATIONAL MIX OF STUDENTS

DECEMBER 2, 2015: the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) celebrated its 15th anniversary. Since its inauguration in 2000 with ten doctoral candidates, the graduate school has grown to its current size with more than 50 graduate students, representing eighteen different subjects in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. At the time of the anniversary, 74 dissertations had been produced by students admitted in 2000–2011.

Kristy Beers Fägersten, Director of Studies at the Baltic and East European Graduate School, arranged a well-attended meeting to celebrate the occasion. She had collected updated information on all 74 former doctoral students in a folder distributed to all participants. Kristy Beers Fägersten here characterizes BEEGS as follows: “An international mix of doctoral students, a multidisciplinary emphasis, specific disciplinary studies, and a unifying focus on regional studies have remained the cornerstones of BEEGS, continuously combining to create contemporary and cutting-edge doctoral degree programs of both breadth and depth.” Helene Carlbäck, the former Director of Studies at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (2000–2010), held a much-appreciated speech at the anniversary. Here we publish an extract.

In the late 1990s, Södertörn University’s management initiated a broad collegial discussion about the organization of a multidisciplinary and multicultural graduate school. Södertörn took three Ms as its trademark: mångvetenskap [multidisciplinarity], mångkulturalitet [multiculturality], and medborgerlig bildning [education as an instrument for democratic culture]. The new graduate school would be characterized by two of these three Ms: multidisciplinarity and multiculturality, or internationalization.

Prominent discourses in society and politics at the time, the late 1990s, regarded it as important to close gaps and unite the Baltic Sea region. The Soviet Union had collapsed as an entry and empire, and Sweden seemed to have an important task in promoting processes of change in the former Soviet republics, especially in neighboring areas such as the Baltic States. The fall of the Berlin Wall created new sorts of relations with Poland, the Czech Republic and other states that had abandoned their former systems of planned economy and centrally governed political regimes for market economies and parliamentary political systems. To make the economic and political aspects of the changes understandable and relevant, studies of cultural and historical contexts and processes were also considered indispensable by those who planned BEEGS.

The Baltic and East European Graduate School opened in

BEEGS is open to students from around the world. We like being a dynamic workplace.
The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies: RESEARCH AND FUNDING

As we all know, when the Wall came down, there was a resurgence among scholars of interest in post-socialist Europe. Since then, academic interest in the region has grown and developed, and courses in the field have blossomed into schools, and numerous interdisciplinary research projects have been conducted with funding from various sources.

The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies was formed in 1994, and is a product of these changes – for the need to learn more about the underresearched area became manifest after the fall of communism – but it is also an institution that has contributed to refining and developing theoretical models for studies of Eastern Europe and the Baltic Sea region.

The foundation’s research director, Marianne Yagoubi, says that two different goals came to be united in the bylaws formulated for the foundation: to build a structure for higher education in southern Stockholm, and to support the growth of what then was an extremely relevant area of research in need of development and exploration, the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe. “These two aims are that the foundation’s grants should be dedicated to research linked to the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe, and that they should be linked to a specific higher education institution in southern Stockholm, now Södertörn University, which was founded in 1996,” she explains.

The Foundation’s dual goals have been the subject of discussion, and debate, and investigation since the foundation’s very beginning. The first major change was made in 2002, when the Foundation established its own office and its own administrative organization, clearly separated from Södertörn University. Yagoubi says that this clarified the division of roles between sponsor and recipient: “Research projects gained greater legitimacy because applications were sent straight to the foundation, where a research committee took care of reviewing them and of hiring external experts.”

In the first decade of this century, the Foundation worked to strengthen the Eastern Europe profile at the university and to create and maintain a good environment for research on the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe. To achieve this, three significant initiatives were undertaken: the establishment of a Baltic research center (the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, CBEES), a graduate school (the Baltic and East European Graduate School, BEEGS), and the “professor program”.

Current research projects

Here we present nine of the several projects that the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies is currently sponsoring.

Gender and Political Cultures of Knowledge in Germany, Poland, and Sweden

Teresa Kulak, Gender Studies

The aim of the project is to explore the interaction between gender, knowledge, and politics in Poland, Sweden, and Germany under the conditions of societal and political change. The research will focus on two policy areas: gender equality and biomedicine. The analysis will explore the changes in the legal and institutional framework since 2000 and the transformation from women and gender towards intersectionality and diversification.

A New Region of the World?

Charlotte Bydler, Art History

This project is the onset of a new era, termed the Anthropocene, “the age of man”.

Note: Applications for admission to the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) are usually invited once per year. Applicants from all countries are welcome to apply. Fluency in English is required. More information at: http://www.ssh.su/se/begis.
The aim of the present study is to investigate whether citalopram-exposed three-spine sticklebacks (Gasterosteus aculeatus) are designed to have biological effects, there is increasing concern about serious effects on behaviour and physiology in fish. The aim of the present study is to investigate whether citalopram-exposes of three-spine sticklebacks early life results in behaviour effects when they are older. Our hypothesis is that brief exposure to citalopram during early development affects stress-related behaviors in adults.

The Phenomenology of Suffering in Medicine: Explorations in the Baltic Sea Region
Håkan Olsén, Zoology

Being and Becoming: A Phenomenological Perspective on Formative Dimensions of Pre-school Education in Sweden and Germany
Eva Swartz, Philosophy

Art, Culture, Conflict: Transformations of Identity and Memory Culture in the Baltic Sea Region after 1899
Dan Kanholt, Art history

Driving Forces of Democracy. Context and Characteristics in the Democratization of Finland and Sweden 1890–2020
Kjell-Dagbjörn History

Firm Demography and Entrepreneurship in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Baltic Region
Karl Gratzer, Business Administration

CBEES was originally a means of embodying the foundation’s need to clearly delimit and boost the Baltic component of its financing. Yagoubi explains. In consultation with Södertörn University, the decision was made in 2005 to establish a research center focused specifically on the Baltic in order to develop the university’s profile in Eastern European and Baltic Sea area research, as well as to strengthen its multidisciplinary orientation. The publication of Baltic Worlds, starting in 2008, was a way of highlighting research findings internationally.

The total amount of the Foundation’s grants has varied over time, primarily due to the fluctuating returns on the foundation’s endowment. In the early years of the two thousand- aughts, the research grants amounted to almost 140 million Swedish kronor (0.2 million, or €26 million) annually. The amounts paid out increased significantly starting in 2004. The dividends peaked in the four-year period of 2007–2010, when they averaged over a quarter of a million kronor per year, and then stabilized at 175 million annually.

Which projects receive funding?

“Around half of the funding has gone to project grants, where the majority of the projects are research in the humanities and social sciences.” The board works in a range of ways to assure and follow up the quality of the research it supports, as well as carrying out regular external follow-ups and evaluations of the research, says Yagoubi.

Discussions have been carried out with the university about working in a more strategic manner with targeted subjects and areas in which the university has an interest in building up research. This research has a natural focus on the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe, which is now more relevant than ever.

What the Mars may have looked like.

The Ships at War project has been formulated as a cooperation between the subjects of archaeology and history, with one aim being a joint project in the Historical Studies research area at Södertörn University. However, the ambition to expand the project and involve other researchers and institutions.

The well-preserved wrecks in the Baltic Sea are hard to find, but very intriguing.

Divers on the sunken battlefield of 1564.
Scholarly Baltic Worlds. A rich journal with an ambition

Baltic Worlds has been published by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at Södertörn University. CBEES has selected a Scholarly Editorial Council. The council is responsible for the peer-review process, and ensure the scientific quality of the journal.

The members are: Sari Audu-Sarasa, senior researcher, Economic History, Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki University; Sofie Bedford, PhD Politics and Political Science, post-doctoral researcher, Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University; Michael Gentile, professor, Urban Geography, Department of Geosciences and Regional Studies, Södertörn University; Katarina Leppänen, senior lecturer, History of Ideas and Science, Gothenburg University; Thomas Lundén,chair, professo remeritus, Human Geography, CBEES, Södertörn University; Barbara Törnqvist-Plewa, professor, Cultural Studies, director of the Centre for European Studies, University of Lund. Additional members of the Scholarly Editorial Council: Ninna Mörner, editor of Baltic Worlds; Rebecka Lettevall, editor of CBEES and associate professor, History of Ideas and Science; Joakim Elman, publisher of Baltic Worlds and professor, Political Science, CBEES, Södertörn University.

To further enhance our network, we also have corresponding members: Alja Lulle, director of the Centre for Diaspora and Migration Research, University of Latvia; Michael North, professor, Modern History at Ernst Moritz Arndt University Greifswald; Andrei Nowak,professor, History, Jagiellonian University in Kraków; Andrea Petö, professor at the Department of Gender Studies at the Central European University in Budapest; Jens E. Olesen, professor of Scandianavian and Finnish history at the Ernst Moritz Arndt University in Greifswald; Olga Schchalažov, senior lecturer, Religious Education in the Faculty of Theology at Tartu University.

All members at the meeting in May 2015.

Besides peer-reviewed articles, interviews with scholars, comments on current political developments, and conference reports, all of it can also be found online.

What about the election coverage?

Yes, on the web site we regularly publish election coverage of all countries that took place in the vast area I mentioned before. We have comments on elections in Azerbaijan, Croatia, Poland.... I think these comments are useful for researchers and students. Sofie Bedford, PhD in political science, Centre for Russian Studies at Uppsala University and member of Baltic Worlds’ Scholarly Editorial Council helps me out here.

What is the role of the Scholarly Editorial Council?

They are responsible for the double-blind anonymous peer review by at least two independent specialists. A peer-reviewed article published in BW generates one publication point for the authors and their institutions in the Norwegian bibliographic register (DBH). The chair of the council is Thomas Lundén, professor emeritus in human geography at CBEES, who certainly is a central figure for Baltic Worlds! The journal invites researchers to write about the Baltic world, with many activities through the year. The publishing of this special edition of Baltic Worlds in-house is one of those activities. We will also publish a book on the journey this University, placed in the suburb area outside Stockholm, has done. Becoming an institute with excellence in the Baltic and East European area is namely one of many qualities of the University.

Please visit us and among our numerous events in 2016 and beyond. You find all the details in English at www.sh.se.
When Södertörn University was founded twenty years ago in 1996, there was an urgent demand for research on the political situation after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Ever since, emphasis on the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe has been one of the cornerstones of research and research training at Södertörn University. The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies is a generous funder of this research.

In 2005, this important profile was defined more clearly through the establishment of the Centre of Baltic and Eastern European Studies (CBEES). At that time it still often seemed appropriate to refer to the area as a “post-Soviet area”. From the very start, the multidisciplinary and international centre was founded with a mission to develop, coordinate, and strengthen Södertörn University’s most important research field: research on the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe. Since then, CBEES has attracted junior and senior scholars from throughout the region as well as colleagues at Södertörn University. With the university’s strength in the social sciences and humanities, the most important research has been in these areas, but environmental science has also been influential in the formation of CBEES.

In general, urgent and important questions relating to contemporary development and its background benefit from being studied in a multidisciplinary and international environment. Such is the mission of CBEES, which for many years has offered a fruitful environment for researchers from Södertörn University, other Swedish institutions and almost all countries in the region, as well as from our partner centers around the world. CBEES has a young profile thanks to the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS), in which more than 70 students have benefited from the training provided and earned their PhDs. Their important work is followed by more BEEGS dissertations and PhDs every year.

The nucleus of CBEES consists of three permanent professors – soon to be four – and three research leaders who, together with researchers and visiting researchers, conduct and perform research on topics such as the change in values among citizens in elections over the last 20 years, the importance and development of Bakhtinian thinking up to the present, conceptual changes from West to East and back again, reproductive technologies and kinship, Eurasia as a geopolitical setting, Baltic Sea regional cooperation and public diplomacy, social movements such as squatting, gender and environmental activism, postindustrial legacies, Romani studies, and media changes to mention some examples. Several of these researchers are presented in this journal, and you can read more about CBEES research on our website.

Since Södertörn University and CBEES were founded, the definition and the outlook of area studies have changed quite a bit to become more critical and self-reflecting towards its heritage and its task. However, in many cases it is extremely relevant to speak of Eastern Europe as having a different history and experience. But that is also true about other parts of Europe, and the world. Sometimes this “Eastification” leads to mystification and the isolation of the other, not least when the East is not defined more clearly than simply as “the East”. The definitions of Europe, of Eastern as opposed to Western Europe, of Central Europe, of Southern and Northern Europe and the Baltic Sea region all change over time. There are no such things as fixed borders, while at the same time we as researchers have to set borders and limits to what we study.

Over the last 10, 15 or even 20 years – some would even say 500 years! – globalization has been in constant dialog with every local, regional, national, and global society. This relation certainly complicates area studies even as it makes them more interesting.

Europe has many diversities, but it nevertheless represents a particular shared place, with a particular history and a particular present. The region attracts scholarly inquiry not least because it possesses contingent places of memory, perceptions of the present, and visions of the future. Through Europe’s current challenge of global migration, the similarities and differences between Europe’s different parts become topical once again. Almost every day we are reminded of the relevance of the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe – continuing to study the region may never become superfluous. The concept of Europe changes through globalization in a very concrete way and will most likely continue to do so.

In order to continuously develop CBEES, we benefit from our national and international networks. We constantly strive to improve the work we do with our colleagues as part of the center’s daily activities, for example through the weekly CBEES Advanced Seminars which are publicly announced, the CBEES Fellows Program for visiting researchers, through the CBEES Associates, the CBEES Distinguished Lecture, and, in the past three years, through the CBEES Annual Conference. In 2016, we will be able to announce a couple of CBEES postdoc positions. We communicate through research publications, through the monthly CBEES newsletter, and, of course, through our scholarly journal Baltic Worlds. If you wish to know more and perhaps take part in the networks and shape the future of CBEES – please let us know!

Rebecka Lettevall
Director of the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at Södertörn University and Associate Professor of the History of Ideas. Ongoing projects include “East of Cosmopolis: The World Citizen and the Paradoxes of the ‘Sans-papiers’.”