

An in-house edition from the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEEES), Södertörn University, March 2016

**In-house
edition**

BALTIC WORLDS

**Conducting critical
area studies**

Södertörn University in the midst of Eastern Europe

**Södertörn University
celebrates 20 years**

research profile

Illustration: Ragni Svensson

MEDIA IN CHANGE / GENDER DISCOURSES / ROMANISTUDIES / THE FALL OF THE WALL / POLITICS OF MEMORY

editorial

Conducting critical area studies

This 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 activities are interconnected and depend on specific mechanisms; and glancing into future scenarios – within our control, out of our hands, or with consequences that are foreseen but not always desirable. We like to view ourselves as conducting critical area studies.

What is a region? Is it a geographical space with fixed borders, or rather a space with fluid boundaries held together by far more abstract forces? The PhD candidates Linn Rabe and Vasileios Petrogiannis have taken on the task of exploring the range of views and approaches to the Baltic Sea region.

Multidisciplinarity may mean different things: working beside one another, collaborating, borrowing methods from one discipline and applying them to another. The PhD candidate Elise Remling asked four researchers to reflect on this topic.

“We are now confident that yes, we are indeed conducting highly relevant and fascinating area studies at Södertörn University.”

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.

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 loyalties 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 (Östersjöstiftelsen).

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. ✕

Ninna Mörner

Editor of *Baltic Worlds* at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES).



Baltic Worlds In-house is a special issue printed to mark the 20th Anniversary of Södertörn University.

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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 (CBEEES) who study the Baltic Sea region from different angles to inform us about their approaches.¹ 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

must remain vague. This is because any definition of a region has to encompass the different meanings given to it by the actors involved, and the political and social contexts in which this happens, Grzechnik says. Her research looks for and analyzes such definitions, and the different roles and functions different actors see for themselves in the Baltic Sea region.

MAYBE NORBERT GÖTZ takes this argument the furthest by saying that he leaves the definition of the Baltic Sea region to (political) region-builders and confines himself to analyzing how these region-builders delimit the region in various contexts. According to him, this problem-oriented approach avoids the trap of (ideological) regional essentialism. Other researchers make similar statements. Anders Nordström and Matilda Dahl's work on the transnational practices of region-building also supports an open definition of the Baltic Sea region and basically uses the term in the same way as those organizations acting in the name of the Baltic Sea region. The researchers have chosen this open definition of region in order to capture the "stable state of instability" in the Baltic Sea region. Nordström and Dahl argue that action in the name of the "Baltic Sea region" creates a type of organized social order and that the notion of the region is used to coordinate transnational action, in which the boundaries and applicable rules remain fluid, however. One of Nordström and Dahl's examples is the EU Baltic Sea strategy in which "the region" is actually the actors who conduct specific regional actions.

Nordström and Dahl were puzzled by the picture in regionalization literature which views the Baltic Sea region as lacking a strong regional identity and thus deficient in "regionness" while at the same time being one of the regions with the most regional organizations and transnational action in the EU that is even presented as a role model for regional management. Rebecka Lettevall identifies the region's position in the European Union as part of successful regional branding, since the process of forming regions makes the regions exist in a visible, formal way. Lettevall says the term "Baltic Sea" is difficult to use in communication as many native English speakers assume that it refers to the three Baltic States only, but through the European Union the Baltic Sea region as a brand has been established quite firmly along with some other regions. However, one must not forget that a region also is something that exists beyond political and economic decisions. Just as the European Union is not identical with Europe, the EU definition of the Baltic Sea region is not enough to cover and explain what it is, Lettevall says.

What is a region?

So the Baltic Sea region is not easily defined. Will a more general discussion about regions supply more insights?

The most straightforward answer we get when asking what a region is states that a region is defined as a geographically limited area. However, delimiting this area offers some challenges for individual researchers, regardless of expertise.

For example, drawing from his own and Mathilda Dahl's work, Anders Nordström says that a region is a basic concept used to define something that is both less and more than the units that it is formed from. A region is always defined in relation to something bigger and something smaller. Also relating regions to scale, Norbert Götz says that a region is a subcategory of a greater territorial area, a subcategory with more (or less) overlapping and frequently contested commonalities that either fade out at the edges or are defined by a border line. He contrasts the region to the nation, saying nations are conventionally not addressed as regions, although they would qualify as regions of larger areas under the above definition. Often there is a connection made between regions and countries, which is unfortunate according to Rebecka Lettevall as the concept permits to much more. She found "region" to be a complicated concept to discuss as it is often linked to geography, to some extent necessarily, although she prefers to see it as a political concept.

FROM AN ADMINISTRATIVE perspective regions are often defined from above. For example, the idea of regions has lately been intensified through the European Union. The Baltic Sea region has been branded more firmly through the EU initiative, making it more visible internationally as a region. The EU branding can be defined as a top-down approach to regionalization; many of the examples given in this text are driven more or less from the top down, but regions can also be identified from the

bottom up as Charlotte Bydler's does in regard to Sápmi. Bydler argues that regions are characterized by a shared relationship to territory or topography as well as shared language, costumes, political or economic conditions, and administration – or the historical traces of these factors, as in the example of Sápmi or the Baltic States, which share a common history of Soviet governance.

Despite the struggle to pinpoint exactly what a region is, most of our respondents argue that any definition of the term other than the definition they have chosen to use would not have been possible without changing the objective and nature of the research altogether. For example, Nordström claims that a stricter or more limited definition of the concept would restrict the researcher's scope of interest, and that a different definition would force the scholars to rephrase the questions, ultimately resulting in different answers. Monica Hammer highlights the fact that, when it comes to applied science, it is crucial to match the delimitation of the region with the problem to be analyzed. She gives ecosystem management as an example, saying that it becomes problematic to deal with water quality problems in the Baltic Sea, for example, if one defines the region as the Baltic coastal states, or even just the Baltic Sea itself, and not the drainage basin. From a water management perspective it is more suitable to consider the whole drainage basin, since sooner or later the Baltic Sea will be affected by pollutants, nutrient leakage, or other human activities in the entire drainage basin. Being able

to address whole ecosystems in management policy is one of the practical advantages of the European Union's notion of regions, Hammer says.

What holds a region together?

Most of the scholars follow the constructivist approach in relation to the cohesion of a region. It seems that the factors and actors that initiate and fulfil the creation of a region are those that hold the region together. Identity is a crucial element for the consistency and continuity of a region and obviously this identity must be common and shared among the inhabitants of a region or among the actors that propose and support the existence of a specific region. There is, however, a difference between identity-based and interest-based approaches that our selection of researchers may perceive rather differently. Sápmi (referring both to the Sami homeland, traditional lands and the Sami people) is a characteristic example of how a cross-border region is held together through a shared identity and culture. Charlotte Bydler, working in the field of Sami research, recognizes that the Sami, as a minority and indigenous people, are increasingly facing competing claims and resource extraction activities by state and multinational corporations on Sami traditional lands and shows how cultural identity plays an important role in gaining recognition for Sami cultural and land rights. The Sápmi territory is a good example of how a region can be held together by the inhabitants' identity and interest, she argues, as the region has met most of the imaginable types of resistance: forced demographic change, economic, political, educational, and religious pressure, and nowadays bureaucratic pressure from nation-states.

THE CONSTRUCTION and imposed connectivity of a region can be seen in the Baltic Sea region which has been an area where different actors have tried to establish a solid region with its own identity. Norbert Götz challenges the link between interest and identity and argues that while identities may be built around interests, that does not have to be the case. He distances himself from an identity-based approach in arguing that "a balanced constructivist approach to regions is most fruitful, an approach that neither requests nor is limited to any natural preconditions or (political) institutionalization on the one hand, nor demands the existence of a regional identity on the other."

Fluidity or stability?

There is a consensus among our respondents regarding how static regions are. Regions are characterized by fluidity rather than stability, regardless of whether the discussion is about human or earth history. Time, which one could say is the synonym of history, is a dimension that defines the stability of a region.

Norbert Götz stresses the necessity of some stability "in order to make regions meaningful products of human imagination", while at the same time regions may be "fuzzy, depending on more or less overlapping definitions". Even the geological regions are not static in a "long time perspective", as Elinor Andrén and Thomas Andrén state, regardless of how static

Researchers interviewed for this essay:

ELINOR ANDRÉN, Associate Professor of Physical Geography. Ongoing projects include *UPPBASER – Understanding Past and Present Baltic Sea Ecosystem Response – background for a sustainable future*.



THOMAS ANDRÉN, Associate Professor of Marine Quaternary Geology. Ongoing projects include *IODP Baltic Sea Expedition 347: History of the Baltic Sea Basin during the Last 130,000 Years*.



PÉTER BALOGH, 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 Poetics of Situatedness* with Monica Hammer and others.



MARTA GRZECHNIK, Assistant Professor at the Chair of Scandinavian Studies at the University of Gdańsk. Former CBEES colleague. Latest book: Marta Grzechnik and Heta Hurskainen (eds.), *Beyond the Sea: Reviewing the Manifold Dimensions of Water as Barrier and Bridge* (Böhlau 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 so on, 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 beside the shores of the sea and beyond. In a way, Rebecka Lettevall says a shared history holds the region together, but at the same time it may be this shared history that tears the region apart. Historical events become parts of different narratives, and these narratives give different emphases to the same historical events. Only the Nordic region, which one could argue is 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. So it is these national borders that define the boundaries of the region. Anders Nordström and Matilda Dahl also refer to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion of the members (states) that participate in a region, saying, as “the clearer the membership status, the stronger the boundaries can be, and so if the status of membership is unclear, the boundaries of the region can be more flexible”. The process of inclusion and exclusion of different states or different subregions can also be found in the case of the Baltic Sea. For example, Marta Grzechnik mentions the Polish Baltic Institute’s English-language journal, *Baltic and Scandinavian Countries*, which excluded Germany and the USSR as not being “predominantly Baltic in their orientation” in its definition of the Baltic Sea region in the 1930s.²

Regions and the nation

Regional and area studies challenge the hegemonic position of the nation-state as an analytical and methodological tool. This is an opinion 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 emphasizes “significant – and traditionally underestimated – dimensions of human agency, above, below, and beyond the level of nation states”. Anders Nordström and Mathilda Dahl very aptly mention that regions can be seen “as states or substates ‘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 regional action that does not compete with state-run governance”. The hegemony of the nation-state as an analytical tool is recognized by Charlotte Bydler, 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.

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, Péter 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 constructs in academia.

Multidisciplinary approaches

Finally, many of the scholars discuss multidisciplinary approaches as a great opportunity when studying regions. Anders Nordström highlights multidisciplinary region research, not least in relation to his and Matilda Dahl’s experience in their own research: “The advantage of research on regions are 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”. Elinor Andrén and Thomas Andrén also salute the opportunity (and challenge) in the prospect of working together with colleagues from all nine countries facing the Baltic Sea. They end by summarizing that it excites them to know 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 information towards governing 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 on 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 disproportionately 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 by scholars affiliated with Södertörn University and the Centre for Baltic and Eastern European studies for example not only contributes 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. ✕

Vasileios Petrogiannis, PhD student in political science. He 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 Rabe, PhD student at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) in environmental studies. Her thesis explores the links between procedural justice and legitimacy in local implementation of nature conservation in a multilevel governance context, the Baltic Sea macroregion is as a case study.



references

- 1 The selection of researchers involved in this article is intended to reflect a broad spectrum of different fields and research traditions. The questioning 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 matter.
- 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. 3 (1938).

Researchers interviewed for this essay – continued:

NORBERT GÖTZ, Professor at the Institute of Contemporary History. Ongoing projects include *Spaces of Expectation: Mental Mapping and Historical Imagination in the Baltic Sea and Mediterranean Regions*.



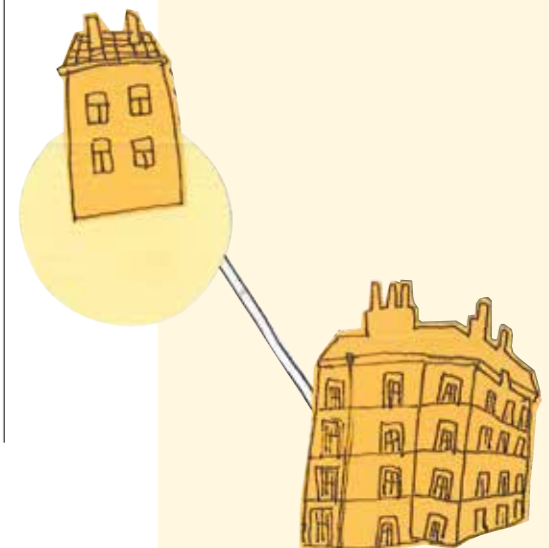
MONICA HAMMER, Associate Professor of Nature Resource Management. Former research leader at CBEES. Ongoing projects include “ECOPOOL”.



REBECCA 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.



TRANS/ INTER/ MULTI/

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”.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 projects² 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 stagnating 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 a wish 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 “netnography” or Internet ethnography on one hand, and applications of theories of modernization, globalization, or mediatization on the other.

Partly depending on such considerations, different 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 widely shifting definitions, but here is how I think the alternatives can be named and described.³

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 doxa, 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 to merge the constituents into some kind of new, hybrid, borderland knowledge, but rather to cumulate individual intradisciplinary 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 when ethnography spread from social anthropology to many other fields, or when concepts like modernization or mediatization 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 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 interdisciplinarity. An individual researcher can again also be interdisciplinary, if he 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.

COMPARED TO MULTIDISCIPLINARITY, interdisciplinarity 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 terminological, theoretical, and methodological differences, finding ways to transform mutual contrasts into tools for better understanding the composite and often conflictual nature 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 is 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. I prefer the latter interpretation of the term but remain unconvinced that this is a tenable model for academic research in general. I 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 borderland 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 transdisciplinarity, both in my own projects and more generally in the university settings where I have worked.⁴ 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 or journals and highly integrated,

coauthored books. Both multi- and interdisciplinarity can be inspiring and creative ventures, but neither should be seen as superior or in any way mandatory. Sometimes traditional forms of disciplinary research are sufficient, and interaction between disciplinary positions becomes most productive when these initially differ in some

clear way, so that interdisciplinarity 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 well gain by being pushed towards some more truly interdisciplinary efforts, rather than leaving all monodisciplinary traditions untouched. This may be fine, but I still believe that more effort could be spent on 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 on transgressing research boundaries, or to organize workshops where different disciplinary perspectives approach one or more shared question and critically engage with each other’s proposals. ✕

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ILLUSTRATION: KARIN SUNVISSON

Different methods and uses of theory may fecundate each other.

Area studies & multidisciplinary. Boundaries and crossing borders

The core of my university discipline, geography, has been defined as “the study of struggles for power over the entry of entities and events into space and time”.¹ The Greek word *geographia* literally means “description of the earth”. Geography is thus a discipline in terrestrial 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 multidisciplinary! My main research area has been the effect of boundaries on people living near them. As already pointed out by the Swedish political scientist Rudolf Kjellén in 1899, boundary studies is an object for many different disciplines.² But boundaries also define disciplines. With training in political science or literature, for instance, you get a deeper understanding of one aspect of terrestrial existence, but it has to be at the expense of many other aspects. This is necessary. But terrestrial existence is in itself not bounded by disciplines, just as society in a broad definition cannot be contradictory in the real

sense of the word while it can be full of internal conflicts. It is our different interpretations or descriptions of society that may be contradictory – and often are.

How to handle multidisciplinary? One starting point is to agree on definitions, or to agree to disagree. The solution is to make operational definitions of the concept used. Just one example: Is a nation a people or a state? A more difficult issue is the bridging of different norms of academic disciplines, and as a corollary the contemporary merit system which seems to favor intradisciplinary references and theory-building.

IN A RECENT PROJECT *Teaching Religion and Thinking Education on the Barents-Baltic Brim*³ we combined four disciplines: education, 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. ✕

thomas lundén

Professor emeritus, geography

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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 modern aesthetics in general; the study on democratization processes in Eastern Europe is brought into dialogue with problems of democracy in contemporary Europe, and fundamental concepts of the different modernization processes of East and West can be debated in environmental studies. As Spivak wrote in *The Death of the*

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 achieve fruitful collaboration among various 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 especially evident in relation to 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 is 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 a 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 rhetoric of funding calls 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.

Discipline, the meeting between area studies and separate disciplines (in her case, Comparative Literature) is a step towards unfolding the ideologies and power struggles behind the area studies as well as behind the individual discipline. Indeed, not only Europe has been a lodestar in the development of Eastern Europe, but, in contrast, the very concept of Eastern Europe has also been crucial for Europe’s self-understanding, or the “Narratives of Europe”, as Johan Fornäs 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. ✕

tora lane

Project researcher and PhD in literature

First, relating to rhetoric vs. research practice, I argue that expressed ambitions for multidisciplinary approaches in environmental research usually go well beyond just giving ‘lip service’ to the requirements of the funding call. In my experience the research community has, in the last twenty years or so, gone through a dramatic re-formulation of what is perceived to be the key research issue and how this might best be addressed. For example, environmental problems and risks such as climate change or chemical pollution are today seen as far more complex, uncertain and ambiguous than before. As a consequence, the type of research questions that engage students and researchers today are more complex and subsequently more in need of integrative approaches than just a few decades ago. In my own research this is clearly seen in a shift of interest from trying to assess the ecological effects of hazardous chemicals to a current research focus on comparative analyses of environmental governance and science–policy interactions linked to different large-scale environmental risks in the Baltic Sea. This shift has catalyzed a very rewarding collaboration with a wide set of researchers trained in a variety of social and natural sciences.

Still, relating to the *second* question of the opportunities and problems of integrative research, my experience is that it is extremely hard to move beyond a pluralistic multidisciplinary approach to interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary modes of research. This is problematic since these different modes correspond to different primary “outcomes” of the learning process. That is, I would argue that a multidisciplinary approach primarily provides understanding of complex environmental issues. Interdisciplinary approaches are needed to analyze implications, challenges and opportunities. Finally, an understanding of how better to deal with complex environmental issues needs to build on a combination of various fields of knowledge, experiences and norms, and hence requires a transdisciplinary approach.

How can then 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, my experiences from environmental science in the Baltic Sea region suggest that we 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 capabilities in education and research, and (3) a continuous ambition to improve and widen arenas for cooperative learning, – I believe that the environmental future for the Baltic Sea region can be a brighter one than today. ✕

michael gilek

Professor, ecology

Researchers have to open up to access multidisciplinary

As a researcher in Slavic Studies, and more particularly Russian literature, I came to the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) here at Södertörn University with some sort of preconscious confidence that the center was carrying out research in my area. The good multidisciplinary 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 multidisciplinary 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 not mine at all. To participate in the work at CBEES, with the Monday Advanced Seminars, the Annual

1989

CELEBRATING THE CARNIVAL IS OVER

by Anu Mai Kõll

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 spill out from the East. With lightning speed, crowds gather on both sides, cheering, waving flowers, cigarettes, and *sekt*, 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 unimagined, 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 hopes attached to the opening, although not everybody held the same hopes.

Looking back, however, another event was equally important in those days. The Baltic republics and Azerbaijan were voting for local laws superseding the Constitution of the Soviet Union. The Soviet leader Gorbachev warned them that this would not be accepted. The importance attached in the news to these warnings conveys the anticipation, even expectation, underlying the whole process. At some point, surely, there would be a crackdown, if not ordered by Gorbachev then by the KGB, the military, the Ministry of the Interior. Tanks would roll, the audacious would be punished, the *sekt* would turn sour. But in Moscow, Gennadi Gerasimov, spokesman for the Soviet government, smiled and evoked his special invention, the “Sinatra doctrine”. The Eastern European countries (if not the Soviet republics) were free to do as they pleased.

Perestroika and glasnost

25 years after the “fall of the Wall”, we celebrate the joy and the suddenly opened horizons. Some attention should also be directed to the lack of serious resistance. After all, revolts had been occurring in East-Central Europe since 1953. The peaceful

change was due to the astonishing development of the Soviet Union since 1985. Whereas extreme or softer repression in the past had not resulted in a major revolt on the Russian mainland, the pursuit of socialism with a human face brought about something new. *Perestroika* was a project of the Communist Party and its most ardent believers. Gorbachev and his postwar generation of communists genuinely believed that reform was possible and repression unnecessary. This was their message to the Union as well as the Eastern European countries.

Through *glasnost*, openness and freedom of speech, old conflicts would be solved and new paths would be found. Not even when *glasnost* revealed horrible tales of the past, previously only locally known, did they waver. In hindsight this confidence is actually surprising, as is the fact that the enormous security forces did not move in to take control. The historian Stephen Kotkin in his book about the Soviet collapse, *Armageddon Averted*,

points to this small miracle. He argues that Gorbachev’s deep reformed socialist beliefs and humanist repudiation of Leninism brought about the dissolution of the system. But precisely because the belief in reformed socialism was genuine and corresponded to socialist tenets, military crackdowns were ruled out. The KGB and the military remained loyal and the coup

attempt in 1991 was less than half-hearted.¹ The Yugoslavian dissolution indicates what could have happened.

In the Soviet republics

Tallinn felt feverish in spite of the usual dark and cold of November 1989. A Popular Front for the support of *perestroika* gathered reformers in and outside the Communist Party and was widely supported. Opposition groups were being formed, mainly by right-wing nationalists and former dissenters. When I visited an inaugural meeting of one of these, basic decisions such as the merits 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

“25 years after the ‘fall of the Wall’, we celebrate the joy and the suddenly opened horizons.”



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.

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 ruble 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 collectivization 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, and a noncommunist, Mazowiecki, was asked to form a government. A committee worked out a plan for economic shock therapy, the Balcerowicz plan, presented in December 1989. It was later to become the model for economic change.²

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 inoffensive 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 historians suggest that belief in the communist ideals, as well as economic inefficiency and, not least, the speed and direction of evolution of the capitalist countries of Europe were the main factors.³ Depression and fascism in Western Europe gave way to the development of welfare states, consumerism, mass culture, and decolonization. This was not at all what the Soviet Union had prepared to compete with. On the contrary, the welfare states were developed with an eye to the socialist project, a fear among elites that the example of the Soviet Union otherwise might become attractive.

Today, the verdict on the command economy is devastating. With the oil crisis in the 1970s, industry in capitalist countries changed rapidly; industrial rust belts of steel and coal still exist all over the developed world, entailing unemployment and urban poverty. In the Soviet Union the rust belt was larger than anywhere else; 70% of its economy consisted of this kind of heavy industry and no alternatives emerged. The massive rust belt existed throughout the socialist world and collapsed in one single blow. The consequences were enormous and did not stop at the change of the economic system. In the privatization process, embezzlement pursued by people with unrestricted access to state assets set a framework for the future. Administrators already knew secret ways to do business, a necessity to fulfil planned economic goals in an unreliable environment. During the transformation, these contacts were used for their own

benefit, further undermining the system. Institutions have been more or less reformed but catching up with the West has proved difficult. Even the most successful economies, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Estonia, among the former Soviet republics, have not reached beyond two thirds of the Western European GDP per capita in 25 years.⁴

In the 25 years that have passed, the frontiers of Europe have been rebuilt further east. The arms race has resumed. When refugees from the Middle East in turmoil landed in Europe, another legacy was revealed: widespread xenophobia in the postcommunist world.⁵ We celebrate the fall of the Berlin Wall in the midst of building new walls and barbed wire at European borders. This time they separate richer and poorer, not communism and capitalism. ✕

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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 transition¹ 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 tem-

porality that unites a beginning with an end, hence a past with a present 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 account of history that implants a deterministic rationale based on a linear progression that persists in its derivative formulations. This is very evident in the way former communist

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 EU 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 perception of unattainability or incompleteness is very intense in the transitology jargon in which words such as “postcommunist”, “economies of transition”, “transition societies”, etc., are often used.

GENERALLY SPEAKING and without wanting to turn this into a literature 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*² and Fukuyama's *End of History*.³ 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,⁴ 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.

Since that period, a vast literature has flourished, developing sophisticated theoretical instruments as well as large empirical pools of data to scrutinize Eastern Europe and explain this varied process of transformation. Nonetheless, this initial teleological tendency towards the inevitability of liberal democracy and market economy prevails.

“This initial teleological tendency towards the inevitability of liberal democracy and market economy prevails.”

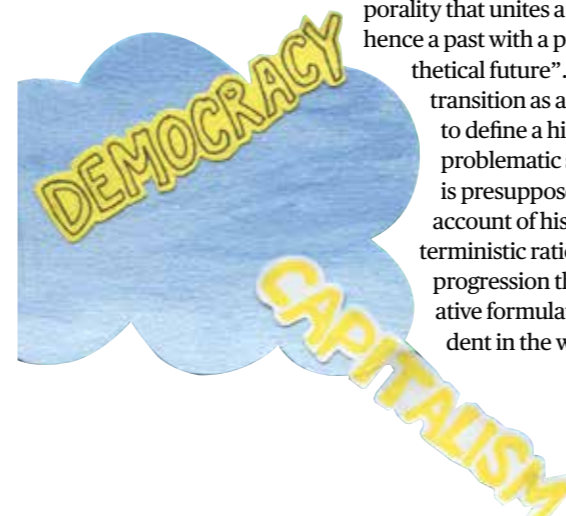




ILLUSTRATION: PAGAN SVENSSON

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. Indexes such the *Democracy Index* have attempted to fill the gap by including civil society, but despite providing interesting information, these indexes are made by institutions that openly embrace liberal postulates.⁵ 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 Viktorov⁶ 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 public and private 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 few weeks ago in Poland by significant parts of society. Poland, one of the most publicized success stories after the 2008 global financial crisis and one of the few countries in the EU that enjoys sustained economic growth, decided to bring back to power the Law and Justice Party: the reactionary, illiberal, Catholic-nationalist party led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski.

In a recent article in *El País*,⁷ regarding the elections, Timothy Garton Ash acknowledges the existence of two “Polands” 25 years after the collapse of communism: the Poland of the winners and the Poland of the losers. The first is best represented in the parliament of the Civic Platform, the liberal-conservative party that has enjoyed more years in power in recent decades. The second is represented by the rural areas and in the depressed provincial cities with few prospects for the future. These social groups, afraid of growing inequality and immigration, have turned to Law and Justice expecting an improvement of their situation. In a way, the vote for Law and Justice is a mixed vote of fear and of reaction, but also a vote of protest.

This example shows that the rise of illiberal and reactionary or outright pseudo-fascist parties should not be dismissed by relating them solely to some sort of perverted totalitarian seed left by communism that now germinates in the form of the extreme right. Instead of invoking this ahistorical dialectic of the evil past and the prosperous present or future, these events should be analyzed in their own right. In essence, this means replacing the transition narrative and reading this massive process of political and social transformation historically without predefined horizons to better explain the origins of the present complex sociopolitical landscape.

ABANDONING THE NARRATIVE of transition entails connecting the microsocietal developments with the larger politico-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, CBEEES and *Baltic Worlds* are perfect platforms for working in this direction. ✕

Adrià Alcoverro, PhD student at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS) in Political Science. His PhD project is aimed at analyzing the relation between innovation policies and political rhetoric in Finland and Estonia. The core of the research



will be conducted through the analysis of the rhetoric of government policies, speeches, and reports.

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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 liberalisation of a planned economy. Sachs conceived 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/>.
- 6 See Viktorov's contributions in *Baltic Worlds* at <http://balticworlds.com/contributors/ilja-viktorov/>.
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A generation has passed. Maybe it's time to stop talking about “post-”countries?

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, all under the title of *The School of Kyiv*.¹ 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 only 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" Europes, 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 Europes began by enthusiastically celebrating their Europeaness. However, with time Europe was experienced less as a common ground, and more as a problem. The failed attempts to develop a European constitution, followed by the recent expansions deeper into the former Second World, Russia's desperate resistance, and the still unresolved European crisis – these and many other collisions gradually led to the Europeans forgetting the initial European desire, losing sight of that emancipatory power that the very name of Europe possessed to inspire revolutionary changes in the spirit of 1989. Neither attempts to establish a common history (which resulted in the rejection of the idea of the European constitution), nor the re-invention of Europe in a neoliberal mode in administrative and economic terms (which culminated in the unresolvable crisis in Greece) have led to a new recognition and confirmation of the relevance of Europe as a global symbolic force. Now, the young Ukrainian artistic and political activists who organized the Kyiv biennial, a multitude of



participating international artists, intellectuals, and massive audiences, proposed a completely new understanding of Europe. Europe is not history, nor a tradition; neither is it money or management. Europe is a matter of the future, a lesson that is still waiting to be learned, and a challenge to stand up to. The School of Kyiv says,

we all have to study today. That's why the notion of "school" became the main module and structural component of the Kyiv biennial ... trying to frame the main political affects [sic] of the present day, proposing a vocabulary to speak about them.

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 losses, loneliness, and displacement in its attainment; the intoxication 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 Europe*, and I find the choice of topic highly relevant in precisely this context of learning freedom. The old Greek myth tells us that Europe originated with the abduction of the Phoenician princess Europa by Zeus in the form of a white bull. Seduced by the magic beast and carried away from her native shores and her father the king in Sidon, Europa found herself in the wilderness of an unknown land that later on started calling itself by Europa's name. It was a combination of deception, kidnapping, and rape that became the foundational act and

“However, with time Europe was experienced less as a common ground and more as a problem.”

the *Ur-scene* in the origins of European history and myth: a traumatic episode of displacement – a prototypical project of human trafficking, if you will – of a sexually violated and confused woman, or rather, a child who had mistaken her abductor for an innocent pet and followed him into nowhere, later on to give her name to the continent and to disappear from its history to become a tale.

RAPE CALLS FOR REVENGE, and Europa had an avenger, an elder brother by the name of Cadmus. On the order of his father, who threatened him with eternal exile (another instance of displacement), Cadmus took an army overseas to find his sister and her violator, but when he reached the other shore, he predictably found neither the unfair god, nor the violated virgin. Instead, he had to fight a dragon, whom he did defeat, albeit at the price of losing all of his warriors. And the price was even higher than this, for after he slayed the dragon, a goddess appeared and ordered 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 though 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 by-product with far-reaching consequences: the Phoenician alphabet.

Thus, Europa the prostituted child, quite unwittingly, also became Europe's first civilizer and enlightener – or, to express it more precisely, she was seduced and deceived into involuntarily initiating Europe's literacy and culture, both of them arising 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 intuition once again confirmed by the international artists, activists, and intellectuals at the *School of Kyiv*:

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.

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. ✖

irina sandomirskaja



Professor of Cultural Studies at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEEES) at Södertörn University. With a background in theoretical linguistics, discourse analysis and feminist theory, her research in culture theory and Russian and Soviet cultural history (literature, film and art) emphasizes the problems of language and body, language and biopolitics, history and memory. She was awarded the most prestigious Russian prize for literary scholarship, the 2013 Andrey Bely Prize.

reference

- 1 Here and below, quotes from the declaration of the Kyiv Biennial 2015, <http://politicalcritique.org/culture/2015/declaration-of-the-school-of-kyiv-kyiv-biennial-2015/>. Information about the biennial, see at <http://theschoolofkyiv.org>. Both sources accessed November 28, 2015.

LOSS OF COMMON GROUNDS

THE RESEARCH PROJECT *Loss of grounds as common ground — an interdisciplinary investigation of the common beyond liberal and communitarian claims* (2011–2014) was developed at Södertörn University by: Marcia Sá Cavalcante Schuback, Irina Sandomirskaja, Ludger Hagedorn, Tora Lane and the doctoral student Gustav Strandberg.

The project aimed to investigate the notions of "the common" and the "loss of the common" in relation to the conditions of modern society. These phenomena were analyzed with reference to the political experiences

of the 20th century that divided Europe. The project attempted to reconsider the central idea of "commonality" in political philosophy. The notion of a "groundless common" seems appropriate to form a ground for a study of the experience of historical ruptures shaped by the Revolution in 1917 and the changing map of Europe in 1989. On the basis of the expression of this experience this project conceptualizes historical changes, and rethinks commonality in today's societies, which is characterized by markers of uncertainty about the contents of the "common good".

The project resulted in several activities that took place mainly at Södertörn University, but also at the University of Strasbourg (France) and in Vienna at the IWM. Several seminars were organized and a lecture series as well. Numerous books and a great number of articles were published. Ludger Hagedorn was guest editor for a theme On Solidarity in the scholarly *Baltic Worlds*, No 1—2, 2015. There were contributions from Leonard Neuger, Ewa Majewska, Jean-Luc Nancy, Gustav Strandberg and Katryna Mishchenko all exploring Solidarity. ✖

THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE

PUBLIC OPINION AND DEMOCRACY

Analysis of public opinion are not only a typical feature of studies of party preferences and election outcomes. Public opinion surveys are also central to the analysis of democratic orientations among citizens. They provide insights into whether people more generally consider democracy as the best form of government, and whether they are satisfied with the way democracy works in practice. For a number of years, Professor Joakim Ekman has taken part in research projects collecting data on political orientations among postcommunist citizens. The most recent projects, funded by the Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies, conducted polls in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in 2014, and in Hungary, Bulgaria, and Latvia in 2015. In 2016, a series of follow-up surveys will be launched in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia.

“What we can see is widespread public dissatisfaction all over the Baltic Sea region. People are not necessarily unhappy with democracy per se, as a system of government. But quite a few are disappointed with the performance of democracy, and have little confidence in political elites and institutions”, says Joakim Ekman. Together with Professor Sten Berglund (Örebro University), Kjetil Duvold (Dalarna University), and Zelal Bal (Södertörn University) he will work to learn more about the political climate of the region for the next couple of years.

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 postaccession setback was to be anticipated, and moreover, nonliberal attitudes are to be found 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 out 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 (31%). 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 Russianspeakers identify the Soviet era as the best period. The corresponding figures among ethnic Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians are 11%, 27%, and 35%, respectively. Thus, the minority groups seem to be consistently more dissatisfied than the majority groups with the situation in their country after independence from the Soviet Union. This is consistent with other responses in the study: 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, Latvians, and Lithuanians.

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



The EuroPride parade in Riga, Latvia 2015.

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

When was this country best off?

Period	Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania	
	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority	Majority	Minority
Interwar era	20	2	31	14	7	3
Soviet era	11	56	27	66	35	59
1991 to 2004	31	20	22	13	25	18
Present time	38	21	19	7	33	20
Total	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %	100 %

Note: The most common response has been highlighted in each column.

There are clear differences in public opinion. Some cherish the past more than others.

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 Duvold. 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 postcommunist 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 postcommunist 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 cowriting 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 cowrote and coedited a volume on political party systems in 19 countries in Central and Eastern Europe (Berglund, Ekman, Deegan-Krause, Knutsen, and Aarebrot, eds., *The Handbook of Political Change in Eastern Europe, third edition*. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2013).

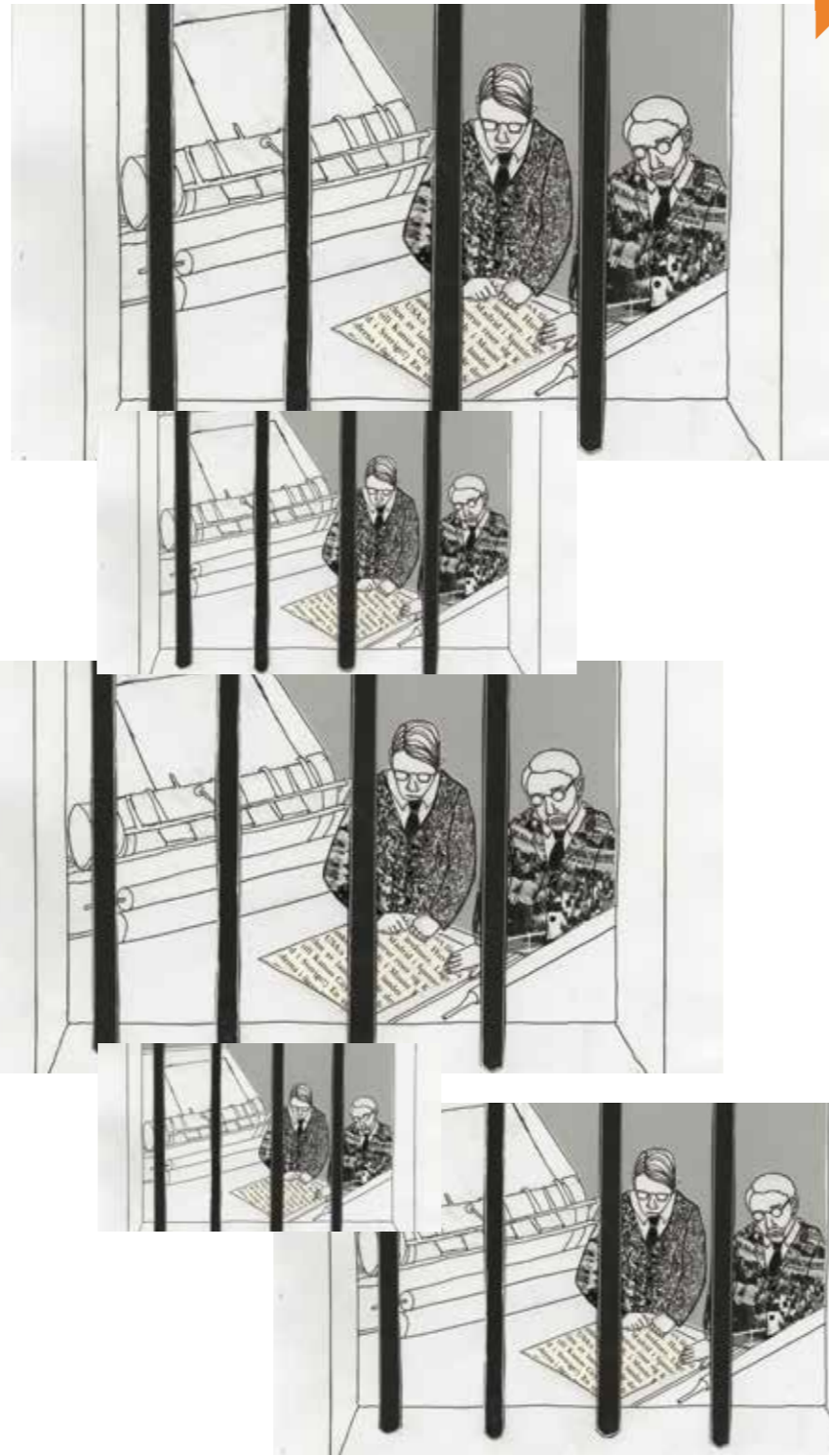


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

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: political pressure, 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 are six contributors 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 Wrocław, Poland. The authors are academics from Russian, Polish, and Swedish universities: Maria Anikina is Associate Professor at Lomonosov Moscow State University, Michał Głowacki is an Assistant Professor at the University of Warsaw, Jöran 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 outlined 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.



Gunnar Nygren.

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 the growing pressure, the change can also be overestimated. For instance, there is stronger political pressure in contemporary Russia but, 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 con-

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

clusions are drawn from data that represent the opinions of practicing journalists in these countries. They speak for themselves and for their own experiences and practices; thus the results are based on primary sources, derived from the immediate representatives of journalism in the countries studied. In this respect, the published report on the project is a valuable resource for research on different aspects of journalism and media.

A total of 1,500 respondents from three countries were invited to participate in the survey underlying the quantitative data analysis, 500 from each country, which equalizes the sizes of the communities studied in absolute numbers. As the authors explain, “the research design can be described as a most-different selection of cases. The project includes three countries representing different media systems, with different historical and political backgrounds and different sizes.”

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.

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.



- 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.
- 3** Quantitative and qualitative comparative analyses 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”.

TOMY THINKING, this is a strong aspect of the project, since it gives perspective to what journalism is today and how it has been changing as perceived by its immediate actors, which is an underrepresented area in media studies, especially in the regions of Eastern Europe and Russia, even considering the rich history of research on media and journalism.

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 I wondered whether it could be a challenge as well, and whether the multiplicity of analytical perspectives could result in controversy when interpreting the data. Nygren agreed that “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 final aim is the chapter, and the person responsible for each chapter is the author. 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-

Figure 7.9 **Models of the relationship between media and politics in Poland, Russia, and Sweden**



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

Country (1-5)	No danger (1-2)		Yes and not (3)		A great danger (4-5)		No answer	Standard deviation	Mean (1-5)
	n	%	n	%	n	%			
Poland (n 448=100%)	81	18.1	135	30.1	232	51.8	52	1.092	3.45
Russia (n 491=100%)	67	13.6	132	26.9	292	59.5	9	1.119	3.78
Sweden (n 460= 100%)	198	43	147	32	115	25	40	1.150	2.75

Source: The “Journalism in Change” project survey, 2012.

embracing picture of journalistic culture on national and transnational levels, making the present printed edition a valuable source of thoroughly processed data.

There are 10 chapters in the book, giving detailed pictures of journalistic cultures in three countries. Journalists speak for themselves and that is the most valuable approach chosen by the researchers. In some places, however, the strong position of the researcher is more explicit than the opinion of the journalists surveyed. In the chapters devoted to the relationships between journalism and politics and between journalism and commercialization, written by Dobek-Ostrowska, the academic position of the author is sometimes used as a filter to sort the information in order to fit it into preconstructed models that are not necessarily related directly to the data received from respondents (Fig. 7.9). These models refer more to other studies and determinations, such as the *Democracy Index* and the *Press Freedom Index*, than to what respondents say about their position within the journalistic community.

Figure 7.9 shows the “models of the relationship between media and politics in Poland, Russia, and Sweden” introduced horizontally, with the end point of the “partnership model” on the left side, represented by Sweden, described as the “symmetrical model”. The other end is the “domination model” represented by Russia and described as the “asymmetrical model”. Poland is defined as “the flawed symmetrical model” and is placed closer to Sweden, taking a position somewhere on the way to the partnership model that is identified with Sweden.

Referring to this figure, Dobek-Ostrowska states: “Our data confirm that the different models of the relationship between media and politics can be applied in each of the three countries”. The model itself, however, can hardly be constructed on the basis of the data collected. The journalists in three countries were not given the opportunity to define or name the models they think could be applied to their professional community, or to identify their position within given models; thus the models were built on the basis of a particular interpretation of the data received, not the data itself.

There are certain dimensions that may reverse the hierarchical modelling of the cultures. For instance, when we discussed the pressure of commercialization with Nygren, he noted that the tendencies were growing stronger in both Poland and Sweden; yet when it came to dealing with that pressure, Poland and

Russia seemed to be ahead of Sweden. The variety of approaches to the research material makes the data collected for the studies not only a profound data resource, but also provides a basis for many critical discussions and inspires the researchers to continue with new projects. Nygren concludes that they are “six different authors” who have discussed everything, and even though that does not mean they have to agree on every word, such close cooperation resulted in ten carefully composed chapters on various aspects of journalistic cultures in Sweden, Poland, and Russia.

THE HIERARCHICAL MODELING of the cultures leads to generalizations that sometimes contradict the conclusions reached by Dobek-Ostrowska herself, as well as with those introduced in other chapters. After accepting the model based on the terminology derived from the Democracy Index, Dobek-Ostrowska refers to Russia as “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 majority of the population in Russia, according to Dobek-Ostrowska and authors that she cites, seem to live in “the information ghetto”; their habit is to “absorb propaganda passively”, as the range of alternative independent journalism, squeezed out into the Internet and social media, is “rather limited to the inhabitants of the biggest cities in this huge country, and to the better educated”. Yet even the passive absorption of propaganda from state television and

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

newspapers seems to be the privilege of a few, since according to Dobek-Ostrowska, in Russia “citizens in fact do not have open access to traditional mass media, which serves the government and oligarchs”.

At the same time, these conclusions are not confirmed by the data collected and do not reflect the opinions of the journalists who participated in the research. Moreover, they contradict the data analyzed 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 alternative 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 calls 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; formats and expressions are similar. On the surface there are many similarities, but still there are important differences when it comes to the conditions for professionals”.

The project has produced very well worked-out and thought-through data, introduced in an effective and easily accessible manner, through which major aspects of professional journalistic culture in Sweden, Poland and Russia can be observed.

The collective portrait of journalists is drawn on national and international levels. Among the features that make it complete are the age, gender, educational, and professional backgrounds of journalists, as well as detailed analyses of their perceived autonomy, satisfaction with the

working conditions, professional and social status, perception of political and economic pressures, and even visions of their own professional future as well as of the future of journalism.

A huge amount of work lies behind the data collected, analyzed, and presented here, and the most difficult part of the project, as Nygren remarked, was “to get under the surface”: “I mean, when you make a survey, you get opinions and attitudes on the surface. People say, “This is how I feel and this is how we do things”, but is it really the case? To get deep enough was a problem for me. I am not sure that we succeeded, because this is a picture of the cultures on the surface.”

In order to penetrate deeper, one has to possess a “cultural understanding of each country”. To understand 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”.

THOUGH NYGREN 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 countries 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 “developing” countries; it avoids many of those 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 academic backgrounds and positions of the researchers, they managed to introduce high-quality analyses – quantitative, qualitative, comparative, and critical – to the numerous dimensions that constitute the profession of a contemporary journalist and trace how the profession is changing. The project material offers vast ground for further analytical and critical studies on the media on national and transnational levels. As Nygren noted, “When you end the research, you see everything that you haven’t done”, and in this sense, the finished project becomes a great starting point for new research. ✕

irina seits



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“On the surface there are many similarities, but still there are important differences when it comes to the conditions for professionals.”

WAR REPORTING

JOURNALISTIC IDEALS AND PATRIOTISM IN THE INFORMATION WAR

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia has been described as an “information war”. The framing of the conflict in the media is an important part of this dimension of the struggle, and accusations of “disinformation” have been frequent on both sides.

In September 2014, a group of researchers from four countries met at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) at Södertörn University for a seminar on these issues. The group included researchers in journalism from four universities – among them Professor Ilja Kiria from the Higher School of Economics in Moscow, Daria Taradai and Daria Orlova from the Mykola School of Journalism in Kiev, and Michal Glowacki and Roza Smolak from the University of Warsaw. Three researchers from Södertörn University participated: Professor Gunnar Nygren, Jöran Hök, and Andreas Widholm.

With the support of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, a research project was designed to examine how leading media in all four countries described the conflict during the summer of 2014:

- How was the conflict framed in leading media?
- What kind of sources were used, and what was the role of disinformation (or accusations of disinformation)?
- How did journalists handle professional ideals in relation to pressure from political and military power and public opinion?

A TOTAL OF 1,875 ARTICLES and TV news items from leading media in all four countries 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 reporting. The strategies of the global TV channel Russia Today (RT) were also studied.

The results show that media images of the war were strongly related to historical and cultural patterns in the different countries. Words used in the reporting show this clearly: whether the rebels in eastern Ukraine are called “terrorists” or “people’s militia”, whether the conflict is called a “civil war” or an “anti-terrorist operation”, whether Russian actions constitute “humanitarian aid” or “aggression”. There is a degree of political/military control over the media in Russia and to some extent also in Ukraine, but mostly 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 reporting as part of the Western news system with a strong dependency on official news sources. In addition, the coverage of the



Nationalists propose stricter punishment for violations of elections laws
Lawmakers from the populist nationalist party LDPR have drafted a bill ordering an increase in fines or short-term prison sentences for various illegal tricks used at political elections.
Feb 2, 2014 13:31

West's lack of morals & disregard for law caused current political crisis - Duma speaker
The increasing crisis in international relations is rooted in Western nations' lack of morals and their reluctance to observe basic norms of international law, State Duma chairman Sergey Naryshkin has said.
Jan 1, 2014 12:15



Most Russians see Yeltsin legacy in negative light, poll shows
The majority of respondents in a recent poll said Boris Yeltsin's epoch brought Russia more bad than good, while the attitude to the figure of the Russian president ranged between 'bad' and 'neutral'.
Feb 11, 2014 13:33



PACE won't monitor Russian elections if relations aren't restored - MP
No PACE mission will be allowed to take part in the monitoring of Russian polls until a delegation from Moscow is given back its full rights in the assembly, a senior State Duma MP has stated.
Jan 28, 2014 14:24



White House accusations aimed at Putin are insults - Kremlin spokesman
Vladimir Putin's press secretary has blasted as 'insults' the recent allegations of the Russian president's corruption made by a US Treasury official, adding that Moscow expects explanations from Washington over the statement.
Jan 28, 2014 13:01

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

conflict was used in Poland by strongly nationalist and anti-Russian 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 understand different perspectives on the conflict. At the same time, accusations of disinformation came from both sides, and the audience 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 media content is “weaponized” in the information war.

THE FULL REPORT on the project is to be published in the spring 2016 by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. Scientific publications from the research group will also appear during 2016, and the group continues to meet to develop this research. ✕

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

gunnar nygren

Professor of Journalism at Södertörn University



Elżbieta Korolczuk, PhD in Sociology, and researcher at the School of Culture and Education, Södertörn University. She is currently working on the research project *Gender and Cultures of Political Knowledge in Germany, Poland and Sweden*.



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 postsocialist Lithuania.



Joanna Mizelińska, 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.

GENDER RESEARCH AND ACTIVISM IN THE EAST

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 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 here. As a Swede, I am worried that I will see the Polish women's movement through the experience of the Swedish one. How can I avoid adding to the West-centric knowledge of feminism and social movements if I lack a lived experience and prior understanding of the historical, political, and social context in which the Polish women's movement exists? My concerns encapsulate the dichotomies of objectivism/subjectivism and general/specif-

ic, as well as the relationship between global and local or center and periphery – 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 struggles and 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 Mizelińska, 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. Joanna Mizelińska 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, she warns us “to be alike does not mean to be the same”.

The intersectional perspective is essential. “The fact that I am a woman does not make me an expert on women's issues in every part of the world, of every social class etc. I might still be blind to certain aspects”. Being on the “inside” also means being close to, or feeling connected to, your

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

On the hardship of being the “other”, for a woman studying gender in East and West.

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 education in gender studies from abroad, 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 achievable to be “close” as the researcher role in itself creates distance.

Researcher self and activist self

Elżbieta Korolczuk 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 unstimulated 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 those we do *not* agree with; try to understand how they construct their social world in order to see the broader context within which we are functioning. In other words, to get a more diverse view on social reality. And maybe this is where the dividing line between activism and research can be drawn. Elżbieta Korolczuk explains: “As activists we are more engaged in a dialectical relation with our opponents and legitimized by what we do for the cause, and so we are responsible towards our movement. But as researchers, our responsibility is also connected to the scientific community, and we have to be responsible for how science functions in the public sphere”. Thus, intellectual resistance, having a pluralistic viewpoint, becomes important. “As an activist I don’t have the obligation to engage with people who are openly 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”. Ultimately, it is a much more complex position as we, as researchers, need to know where “what we know” comes from, to question our epistemologies.

Joanna Mizielińska, on the other hand, questions this binary opposition between our researcher 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 activists mostly use direct action, researchers want to change the way 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 political *per se*. Both are 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

“I feel close to my research because I am a young Lithuanian myself who has experienced these struggles.”

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 her research, they will achieve more than they would in a more typical contentious act, such as a Pride parade. Laura Lapinskiene also finds it difficult to separate the two roles: “I am still the same, but I adjust my communication depending on what I am doing. Being a researcher is a new role for me so I’m only 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* people. 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.

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 Budapest. This has been an eye-opener: “Before that, I didn’t want to be associated with the term ‘feminism’, but then after just one year I got a broader understanding of the term and I saw my Lithuanian context as conservative, stagnant, and ‘lagging behind’. To me, people were so closed-minded and there was no critical thought, so I didn’t want to go back”. Today she is critical of this negative view and instead wants to contribute and be part of a change. The problem is, however, how do you do this when you have become an “outsider” yourself? “It is a bit like being a Western missionary going to some third country wanting to help”, she says and laughs. “Like a colonizer you mean?” I ask. “Exactly! So now I have discovered this decolonizing perspective by scholars such as Madina Tlostanova,³ Walter Mignolo, and Maria Lugones, I think we have to start from the ground, what is here. But it is the biggest challenge I can think of!” One way of doing this is of course the collaborative research approach which she aims at implementing. Seeing together *with* people, in their own terms, how they deal with everyday struggles, how they manage to be feminists in a Lithuanian context, is a good starting point. For instance, she has already thought of calling one of her chapters *What*

does it mean to be a feminist in Lithuania?

Laura Lapinskiene explains that people who she would definitely call feminists do not necessarily identify with this term – just as she used not to. On the one hand, Western feminism implicitly connects with certain social services and commons, which to many is associated with communism and values they are trying to move away from. On the other, feminism in Lithuania is often perceived as a kind of replica, a formal requirement dropped top-down from the West and pushed forward along with other liberal agendas of the European Union. Thus, it is “important to look at our own context and somehow create our own understanding of what it is, to see our own history and how feminism could develop into something that is specific and needed in this place, which might perhaps be different from the ‘imported Western’ version. Maybe then feminism could get rid of this negative connotation”, she concludes.

This has also been one of Joanna Mizielińska’s missions in her research on sexuality in the East: “We try to theorize this problem and present particular struggles with Western theories on sexuality in different locations in CEE”. On example is how Polish queer activists look for the Polish equivalent of the US Stonewall event, as if there is only one correct path for a movement’s development. Together with Robert Kulpa, she has written:

If, in a Western context, “queer” is to somehow relate to (and presumably reject) identitarian politics of the “Stonewall era”, this volume asks what is left for “queer” in the CEE context, where Stonewall never happened; where it stands as an empty signifier, a meaningless figure, and yet is still a pervasive and monumental reference.⁴

Joanna Mizielińska thus questions the progress/backwardness and original/copy narrative of sexual politics in which the East will always be perceived as delayed copy of the Western original. This is dangerous as it “forecloses a recognition of genuine unpredicted logic of local historical narratives on sexuality” she argues. If we look at the gay movement again, Polish LGBT parades are called “equality parades” (rather than Pride parades) as they try to summon everybody in favor of the aim, rather than on the basis of identity. This is more inclusive than the Western model, but can easily be dismissed as “less developed” if we follow the progress narrative. Consequently, we need to take into account the specificities of different geopolitical locations, and remember the different histories of the concepts we use.⁵ Elżbieta Korolczuk agrees but also emphasizes that she would like to see the very simple dividing line between East and West dismantled as the areas are not homogenous. As an example she mentions the issue of public childcare. State-funded childcare facilities were available in all socialist countries, but the actual percentage of children benefiting from this in 1989 ranged from 80% in East Germany to less than 10% in Poland.

“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 suggests that it is important to compare Eastern Europe with very different parts of the world. “Why not Latin America for example? If you 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?’”. This is very similar to Tlostanova’s perspective as she argues for “the ex-colonial, postsocialist gendered Others to get acquainted with some alternative non-Western approaches to gender, to be ‘indocinated’ by the theorists and activists of the global South”.⁶ 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.

There is no solution to my dilemmas. However, after our very interesting and thought-provoking discussions, it seems to me that what Donna Haraway calls *situated knowledges* become inescapable and that the decolonial perspective by Tlostanova offers a tool in order to look beyond the pervasive character of Western experiences and theories. ✕

eva karlberg



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- 1 Mizielińska was a visiting researcher at CBEES in September 2009. She has published two books, *Sex/Body/Sexuality* (2007) and *(De)Constructions of Femininity* (2004). She is also a coauthor of *Collaboration or Conflict? The State, the Union, and Women* (2008) and *Families of Choice in Poland: Family Life of Nonheterosexual Persons* (2015).
- 2 For more information about the project, see familiesofchoice.pl.
- 3 Professor Tlostanova is an influential scholar in the fields of globalization, modernity, and post-socialist theory. In December 2013 she was a visiting researcher at CBEES. For her discussion on decolonialism, see for instance Madina Tlostanova, *Gender Epistemologies and Eurasian Borderlands* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).
- 4 Robert Kulpa and Joanna Mizielińska (eds.), *De-centring Western Sexualities: Central and Eastern European Perspectives*. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 2.
- 5 See Joanna Mizielińska, in “Travelling Ideas, Travelling Times: On the Temporalities of LGBT and Queer Politics and the ‘West’”, 85–90.
- 6 Madina Tlostanova, *Postcolonial post-Soviet trajectories and intersectional coalitions*, *Baltic Worlds*, 8 no. 1–2 (2015): 42.

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,¹ ambiguous, and “a pale reflection of its counterparts elsewhere in the world”,² characterized by distrustful and individualistic attitudes, combined with learned helplessness and scapegoating,³ “civilizational incompetence”⁴ or simply an uncivil character.⁵ Another common assumption about postsocialist civil societies is their nonexistence during state socialism and their emergence “from scratch” in the late 1980s and 1990s. This negative and incorrect view has been combined moreover with the tendency to focus on and emphasize the role of formal and institutionalized civil society since 1989, expressed in the large number of studies of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Even if the NGO-ization of civil society in postsocialist countries was predominant in the first decade of the systemic change, this tendency to identify civil society activity with the activity of NGOs does not reflect the more recent development of civil societies in this part of Europe.

Scholars at Södertörn University have been challenging these views of postsocialist civil society or societies for a while now. Conferences and workshops have followed one another along with research projects and publications undertaken at the university. The anthology *Beyond NGO-ization*⁶ is one of the results of conferences held at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), which have updated research on social movements in Central and Eastern Europe and gone against the conventional view of civil society as detached from the local context and solely focused on attracting financial support. A conference held in Warsaw in 2013 in collaboration with Warsaw University uncovered new perspectives on civil society and social activism in Poland, resulting in *The Challenge of Collective Action. New Perspectives on Civil Society and Social Activism in Contemporary Poland*⁷. The book gathered research on examples of grassroots and overlooked examples of civil society mobilization on issues of motherhood and parenthood, tenants' organizations, mobilization of people in precarious positions, and right-wing mobilization. The authors contend that these parts of civil society have been marginalized in research due to their socioeconomic status, gender, religious identity, or ideological standpoint.

*Urban Grassroots Movements in Central and Eastern Europe*⁸ 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.

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, *Rebellious Parents. Parental Movements in Central-Eastern Europe and Russia*⁹ 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).¹⁰

The International Society for Third-Sector Research is organizing a conference in June 2016 for which Södertörn University is one of the co-organizers, and studies on civil society and the functioning and development of the third sector in Central and Eastern Europe and Russia will be an important part of the conference's content. All the plans initiated at Södertörn University have accentuated the inaccurate and outdated character of previous studies on postsocialist civil society and the need to update our empirical and theoretical knowledge on the issue. They have shown that the conventional view of the passive, donor-dependent civil society has been a misleading interpreta-



ACTA protests in Sosnowiec in southern Poland.

PHOTO: OLO81/FLICKR

tion since the beginning of this century. The lack of perspectives covering informal, grassroots, “uncivil”, marginalized, or in some regard “distasteful” features of civic engagement has been demonstrated in these studies, highlighting the importance of including them in civil society research in order to gain a more nuanced picture of both the similarities and the specificities of the development of civil society in the area.

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. ✕

dominika v. polanska

Dominika V. Polanska, 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”, in issue 1:2016.



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Piotr Sztompka. Change is possible

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 paralyzed civil society for quite some time."

Sztompka's analysis of civil society may be supplemented today by the latest facts presented by Dominika Polanska on the field of activism in Eastern Europe.



Piotr Sztompka.

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!" ✖

ninna mörner

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

The third sector in Eastern Europe

The 12th International Conference of the International Society for Third Sector Research (ISTR), "The Third Sector in Transition: Accountability, Transparency, and Social Innovation", will be held at the Ersta Sköndal University College, Stockholm, Sweden, from June 28 to July 1, 2016. Södertörn University is cooperating with Ersta Sköndal and will arrange several workshops and panels especially devoted to research on the third sector and civil society in Eastern Europe. Professor Apostolis Papakostas is the facilitator of the cooperation.

"We have seven panels, accepted after peer review, with all together around 30 papers, all with an East European angle", says Apostolis Papakostas, who also is a former research leader at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES).

Apostolis Papakostas is currently the coordinator of the Swedish Research Council's program on civil society and leads a comparative project on the development of civil society in Russia, Poland and Sweden. "We have several research projects studying civil society in Eastern Europe at Södertörn University and many projects financed by the Swedish Research Council studying civil society in different parts of the world: the idea is to bring them together", he adds.

Founded in 1992, ISTR is a global community of scholars, policymakers, and third sector leaders dedicated to the creation, discussion, and advancement of knowledge pertaining to the third sector and its impact on civil society, the welfare state, and public policy.

The third sector is playing a critical role and has significantly gained importance in many countries. Marketization and its impact on the third sector is attracting renewed research interest as welfare budgets are cut and the role of nonprofits is called into question in difficult fiscal times. In many nations, including Scandinavia, for-profit health and social welfare organizations are actively competing with third sector organizations for public funding. ISTR's 12th International Conference in Stockholm offers an opportunity for further dialog on these and other changes in an environment of rigor, reflection, dialog, and creativity.

Read more about the conference at: <https://www.istr.org/?StockholmConference>

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 Musiał says. He and the other research leaders at CBEES subsequently decided to arrange a round table 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 Aylott, research leader at CBEES, who chaired the round table.

Five invited scholars – Péter Balogh, Heike Graf, Michał Krzyżanowski, Branka Likic-Brboric, 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 he explained, 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 borders?", "Do you favor not permitting persons to cross borders illegally?", or "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.

Prejudice against

migrants and especially Muslims exists in Hungary – not only among parties on the far right, such as Jobbik, but also among the liberal intelligentsia that otherwise tends to criticize the government. Leading figures are taking a stand for a policy of shutting refugees out and sealing the borders. The Nobel Prize Laureate Imre Kertész is one such person, according to Péter Balogh.

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-

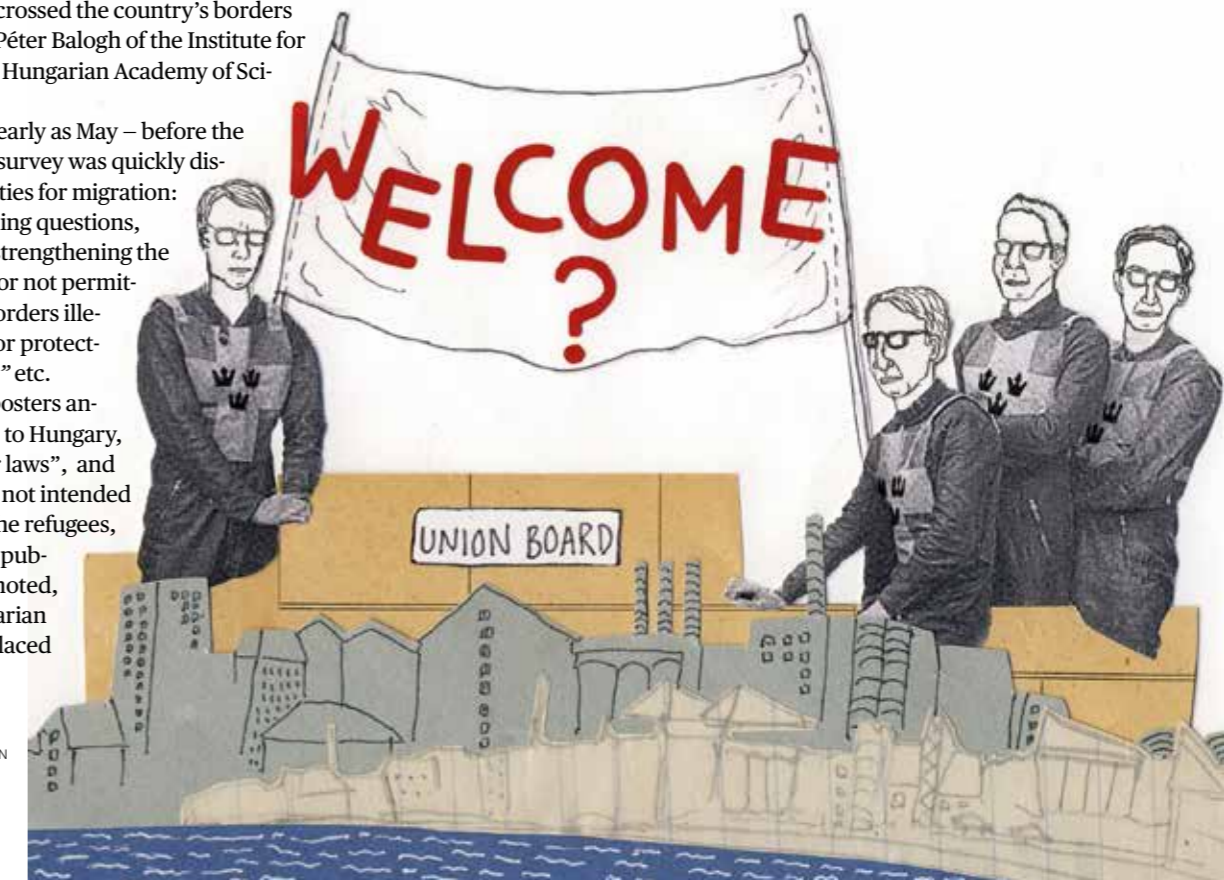


ILLUSTRATION: RAGNI SVENSSON

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, according to Heike Graf: “Leading feminists state that Germans are deceiving themselves and that, with the refugees, Germany is importing male violence and anti-semitism. They urge introducing border controls.”

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, argued Jenny Gunnarsson Payne, research leader at CBEES.

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. However, it seems to be even more significant if part of the intelligentsia feeds discourses of the “others” as a threat and expresses warnings 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 discourses 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 discourses 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 immigrating to Poland,” said Krzyżanowski.

Thus there was a very rapid politicization of the topic. The role of the media was central, Krzyżanowski pointed out. There was top-down media reporting on the electoral 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 escalated fast. There was a significant 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, Balogh 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 Likic-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 (49%). Furthermore, wages in Serbia are low. In spite of all that, Serbians as a rule mobilized to assist refugees. Likic-Brboric added that Serbia received funding from the EU to handle the situation, and

that the refugee crisis did, in fact, create employment for Serbians in the short term.

However, Likic-Brboric told us that there have been some concerns 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 refugees trapped in Serbian territory, between the sea and the EU.

Is EU falling apart from the inside?

Irina Sandomirskaja, Professor of Cultural Studies, CBEES, 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 similarities with what the author Mandelstam described in 1922, the year of the end of the Great War and revolutions in Russian history: 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 openness after the end of the Cold War, the period when “the wheat

of humanity” joined the processes of globalization. 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 inside Europe, who feel they are outside the system: lonely losers in the globalization quest, as described earlier by Likic-Brboric,” Irina Sandomirskaja 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 utopia to give us hope. ❌

ninna mörner

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



Note: The round table is available as a video stream: <https://bambuser.com/channel/cbees>

The intelligentsia and media play an important role in forming national discourses.



Kjetil Duvold.



Anne Kaun.

CAN RESEARCHERS

STAY AWAY FROM POLITICS?

In autumn 2015, following the days when refugees were held up at the Budapest Keleti railway station, the Central European University (CEU) made a public statement in support of the free movement of refugees and against the “inconsistent policies and procedures at EU and national levels”.¹ In the open letter, the President of CEU, John Shattuck, made an appeal to remember the human dignity of the refugees – irrespective of their legal status. He further urged a public discussion on Hungary’s asylum policy and commissioned a special CEU Refugee Task Force to organize the students and other volunteers to help.

Similar initiatives to produce a joint statement emerged at Södertörn University, but they were not realized. Instead, there were other activities on the responses to what has been called the migration crisis: seminars, new research funding, exhibitions, and discussions at the university. These events were publicized both inside and outside the university. However, the university itself issued no public statement on the events, and a discussion emerged about the appropriate role of the university in this kind of a situation. On the one hand there were arguments for open public and political engagement, like that of the CEU, and on the other hand there were those who viewed the university as an umbrella for different activities.

This led me to ask: Why do some re-

searchers find it problematic to engage in political debates *qua* researchers? How do other researchers understand their willingness to take a political stance in and through research? What is the role of an academic institution in public political debates?

ONE IDEAL OF SCIENCE is its objectivity. To put it crudely, this can be manifested in the scientific method that is able to mediate between events “out there” and scientific theories. Very few subscribe to such a crude version of producing objective knowledge, knowledge that would bear no signs of its producer. And perhaps that kind of objectivity has never really been that important for the humanities or social sciences; it is better suited to the world of experimental sciences.

The main difference between those who openheartedly support the social and political engagement of academic institutions and those who are more wary of it appears to lie in the very specific nature of what constitutes politics. Kjetil Duvold, a political scientist,

“Why do some researchers find it problematic to engage in political debates *qua* researchers?”

draws a line between humanitarian statements and realms that belong to government policies. Calling for social action in the realm of human dignity can be combined with the academic duties of a university, but not action directed against the government or its policies.

The linguist Kimmo Granqvist shares a similar opinion. For him, politics is a kind of “zone of freedom” where individuals should have exclusive rights to their decisions. The academic community can be thought of as a specific guardian of such freedoms by virtue of its capacity to produce knowledge – but it should be left to individuals to freely choose what pieces of knowledge they consult. In democratic countries, political freedoms belong to the classical negative rights, freedoms from external interference.

Granqvist’s own research at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES) concerns the Roma language – an area of clear political potential and power. Studying the Roma language is a continuous intervention in social affairs. However, as Granqvist sees it, it is the researcher’s individual ethical responsibility to estimate the consequences of research. This, he acknowledges, is not a straightforward task and no general rules can be applied to these ethical considerations. However, he prefers this to encroaching on the political free zone of other individuals.

THE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY’S involvement in politics is often defended on the grounds that the Law on Higher Education in Sweden (1977:218) stipulates that universities should “spread knowledge about research”. The law also stipulates the purpose of higher *education*: namely to increase critical skills, understanding of other countries, and students’ personal development. Higher education, therefore, is not only about increasing the amount of information, but about preparing students for an open-minded and critical relationship to society.

Anne Kaun is a Media and Communications scholar at Södertörn University. For her the idea of politics as a zone free from external influence is a dangerous illusion. The line between what is strictly “politics” and what is, for instance, “economics” is thin at best. Moreover, the more research is funded by private bodies or driven by government’s economic interests, the less it can be argued that the resources researchers have at their disposal are politically neutral. Kaun argues that scientific objectivity is not compromised by political engagement, for objectivity is a property of the research itself and can be assessed immanently, that is, by upholding principles of transparency in the conduct of research.

It appears to be the different concepts of the political sphere that are at stake in the dispute about whether academics should or should not get involved in politics. The challenge posed by the withdrawal from the political sphere is that treating different choices as ethical questions reduces their assumed impact on the public life. But perhaps even more, it diminishes the scope that public discussion can have. Politics does not confine itself to contests between parties or the policies the government proposes. Politics concerns the collective regulation of life in society.

Inga Brandell, an Emerita Professor of political science at Södertörn, puts forward the fact that universities have a privileged position as publicly funded and academically free knowledge-producing institutions to contribute to public debates *alongside* the more partisan interests of civil society organizations, political parties, or the business community. Academic

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

freedom – ideally – guarantees the plurality of opinions that do not limit themselves to strategic action driven by the ideological or calculative concerns characteristic of political parties, trade unions, and civil society organizations.

Academic institutions have the capacity to push the public debate beyond today’s partisan

interests. This can happen as at CEU with an open letter, or as at Oslo by organizing public lecture series,² collecting books,³ and international cooperation in the European University Association⁴ or the European Commission.⁵ The fact that the president of the CEU has spoken in the name of the whole institution, or that the University of Oslo has acted, does not mean that each individual employee’s conscience has been sacrificed. It only means that some of the employees have received support for their actions.

OLENA PODOLIAN, a doctoral candidate in political science and a native of Ukraine, is similarly worried about the state of public discussion in the West. She points out that news is not colorlessly factual but comes with nuances. She feels that it is imperative for her to be engaged and try to contribute to the plurality of facts about Ukraine. She points out that, in the wake of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, it was mainly the western Russia experts who were given the privilege of commenting. This framed the conflict as something concerning primarily Russia’s interests – their legitimacy or illegitimacy – but ignored the fact that Ukraine, too, has interests in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine, as any other sovereign state would in its own territory. Taking an open stance in a political matter does not need to imply infringement of others’ right to freedom of opinion. It simply contributes to the plurality and quality of the opinions in the public sphere.

The difference that emerged among the researchers concerns the proper relationship between state funded research institutions and open public engagement that can have political overtones. This in turn concerns what is meant by political overtones. For some, they contribute to the plurality of the public sphere; for others, they may compromise the primary task of scientific independence from the political sphere. ✕

jaakko turunen



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Euromaidan protesters fill central Kyiv in December 2013.

PHOTO: NWSSA GNATOUSH

Letter from the Ukraine Research Group at Södertörn University: We revitalized the debate on Ukraine in Sweden

Whether academics should engage in activism or maintain a position above the fight can be a matter for endless discussions. It was, however, a redundant question to Ukrainian doctoral students at Södertörn University, including myself. We watched from afar or pursued our individual lines of action during much of the Euromaidan protests that swept our home country; but when the February 20, 2014, massacre was followed by an escalating European crisis with the annexation of Crimea and, later on, a war in Donbas, we could no longer afford to maintain a contemplative position. We sensed that the time for collective action had come.

The situation was so grave and the lack of information and understanding so critical that the initiative group that gathered in the last days of winter at Södertörn University saw its mission in the active transformation of the situation. Following in Marx’s footsteps, the initiators sought to change the world rather than just to interpret it. The group included Olena Podolian (Political Science), Iuliia Malitska (History), Yuliya Yurchuk (History), and, initially, Oksana Udovych (Environmental Studies). I volunteered to spearhead the activity as the coordinator of the Ukraine Research Group, URG (the name chosen for this initiative).

THE GROUP BEGAN its work with a seminar at CBEES on March 17, 2014; monthly seminars became the main form in which discussion was fostered and information and opinions from Ukraine flowed to the university audience and beyond. URG has organized 12 seminars so far, giving a platform to many younger academics and ordinary people from Crimea and Donbas, and to such well-established names as Vitaliy Portnikov, Serhiy Vakulenko and Yevhen Fedchenko. Notably, URG succeeded in assembling



On the URG’s group blog members post opinions and updates from fieldwork.

Södertörn University’s own experts on Ukraine, including Igor Torbakov, David Gaunt, Per Ståhlberg, and Göran Bolin, at a single platform and at the same event. The high point of this work was the all-day roundtable “Revolutions and Their Aftermath: A Year after Euromaidan” on March 27, 2015, attended by Mykola Riabchuk, Torgny Hinnemo, and Jakob Hedenskog, among others.

URG also initiated a group blog (<http://blogg.sh.se/re-ukraine/ukraine-research-group/>) where the members post their opinions and updates from their fieldwork. A large book project carried out in close collaboration with Lund University has resulted in the peer-reviewed volume of *Slavica Lundensia* in memory of George Shevelov (edited by me and Niklas Bernsand), due out in 2016.

FROM THE VERY beginning, the work was welcomed by the University and the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies. Rebecca Lettevall supported the initiative and opened the Monday seminars at our suggestion. Irina Sandomirskaja sympathized with the group’s work and lent her professional and personal advice in the kindest manner. Södertörn University’s communication department was instrumental in setting up the blog. Ninna Mörner suggested hosting the group’s situational analysis on the *Baltic Worlds* website (<http://balticworlds.com/whats-up/>). Nicholas Aylotte kindly agreed to become the moderator of our seminars beginning in the autumn semester of 2014. Of course, there was also some skepticism, and Ukrainian voices spoke from the URG tribune to open as well as closed minds. But such is the lot of all who break the silence.

I would like to thank all those who made possible everything that was achieved. Every kind of support we received – sometimes even a friendly smile was enough – is appreciated by me and my URG colleagues immensely and will never be forgotten. ✕

roman horbyk

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

Originally formulated by Russian émigré nationalists in the 1920s and 1930s, Eurasianism represented an entirely new vision of Russia as Russia-Eurasia: a distinct and autonomous historical world stretching from Russia's western borderlands 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. Drawing on wide spectrum of sources and materials, our project seeks to do just that: firstly, by examining 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 Eurasianists", and alternatively how they are being adapted to fit the post-Soviet realities of the 21st century.

THE AIM OF THE PROJECT *The Vision of Eurasia: Eurasianist Influences on Politics, Culture and Ideology in Russia Today (2013–2016)* is to evaluate the degree to which the concepts, arguments, and tropes of Eurasianism have penetrated across public and political life in Russia today. Research leader is Mark Bassin, Professor at CBEES. Other researchers connected to the project is Irina Kotkina, Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEES), Marlene Laruelle (George Washington University, USA), Igor Torbakov (Uppsala University) and Gonzolo Pozo (Kings College, London).

We are considering these questions through 5 subprojects examining the relation between Eurasianism and a) Russian



Alexander Dugin's vision of Russia as a Eurasian Empire.

Foreign Policy, b) Centre-Periphery relations in Russia, c) public debates about national identity d) Political Parties and the Church, and finally, e) popular culture and artistic production. This project will present the first fully comprehensive overview of Eurasianism's current status in Russian politics and culture.

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 Gumilev Mystique: Biopolitics, Eurasianism and the Construction of Community in Modern Russia* (Ithaca 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 Suslov (Lanham 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 (CBEES).

He has a strong academic background in the field of human geography.



HISTORY MATTERS

Reflections on the research program *Time, Memory, and Representation*

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 endless 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 historical time itself. Chronology – the measuring and the explanation of time – became the fundamental form in which the desire for knowledge could henceforth articulate 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 historical journey from the origins to the present and beyond, from the most primitive to the advanced, up to the point of visualizing the knowledge of time as the culmination of time. In the form of "historicism", the present is to contain everything, and in this all-containing gesture it should 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".¹ It is a philosophical obsession with 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 Advantage and Disadvantage 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.²

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-quarian* desire to preserve its identity through a collecting of the past, a *monumental* desire that cultivated the memory 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 *activity* in the present, and how knowledge in this domain is inseparable from active uses of the past.

NIETZSCHE'S ANALYSIS 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 1980s, 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 were reactivated. Often these were memories of oppression and



suffering and with them came new demands for justice, which in many cases resulted in political violence and even new wars. Histories that had seemed to belong “to history” suddenly emerged in the present. One Europe was buried, and other Europes rose from their graves.

This new political landscape and its pathologies have motivated and generated new ways of thinking about history over the last two decades. Not least, it has placed the focus on the politics of *memory*. In his epic depiction of the postwar history of Europe, published in 2005, the British-American historian Tony Judt wrote of how we must try to understand this avalanche of the politics of memory, the destruction of old monuments and the building of new monuments, precisely as an immediate consequence of having to handle a century of suffering and destruction on a scale that humanity has never experienced.³

The increasing monumentalization of history also has a parallel in new ways of representing history. Through its technologies of information and communication, humanity has entered into a new phase of technically transmitted production of contemporaneity. A whole world becomes the potential witness of history in real time. The global culture turns in toward itself, in a constant struggle to capture *the now*. At the same time, history becomes the object of a desire to *be* historical, with new types of global media events which also include increasingly theatrical forms of violence. “The historical” is no longer just something that has happened before, but a type of event that the present desires and actively creates through the medialization of itself, in a *staging* of the historical.

ALL OF THESE phenomena point towards a heightened sensibility and preoccupation with the temporal-historical as a category of experience, as forms of (collective) consciousness, and as modes of representation. For researchers in the human and social historical sciences this whole area presents us with a series of important tasks, theoretical issues that concern the very form and shape of time and its representation, but also the specific ways in which different historical memories are maintained and lived. It can be seen in a flood of literature on memory and history, its mediation, and its use. Together these concerns form the background of the research program *Time, Memory and Representation: On Recent Transformations in Historical Consciousness*, which was organized by Södertörn University from 2010–2015 with the support of Riksbankens jubileumsfond [The Swedish Foundation for the Humanities and Social Sciences]. It is a unique enterprise in scope and size. It consists of twenty-five researchers from five universities, representing thirteen different disciplines. For the last six years the group has met approximately twice every semester for seminars, guest lectures, and workshops. It has collaborated with several different institutions, academic, political, and artistic, organizing large popular events with both Bonniers Konsthall and Moderna Museet in Stockholm, and also with Historiska Museet. It has organized a one-week workshop in Johannesburg together with colleagues at the University of the Witwatersrand on the topic “Is history history?”

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 Swedish on the theory of history, a three-volume work that will be published in May this year under the title *Historiens hemvist*, 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 (INTH), based in Ghent.

OVER THE COURSE of this work it has become increasingly clear how politically important it is today 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 – geopolitical imagination of Europe is rapidly changing, we need to understand the underlying mechanisms of these transformations in order to properly interpret and hopefully anticipate what promises to be a continued and increasingly 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 national memories competing for the initiative.

Phenomena of this complexity demand a broad perspective that must combine sophisticated interpretative models of temporality and historical consciousness with sociological and media-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 consciousness is also, inevitably, on one level to live historical consciousness. 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. ✕

hans ruin

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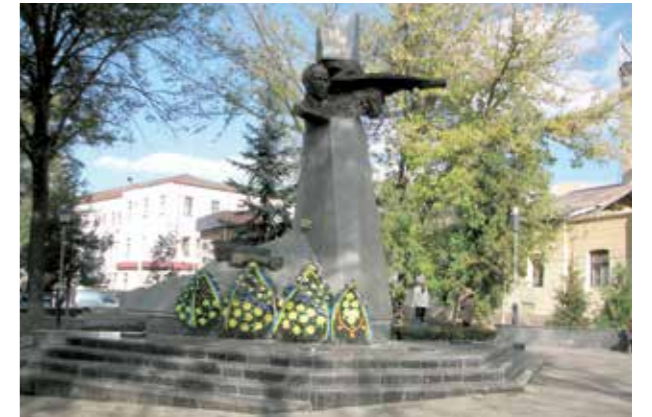
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- 3 Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: Vintage, 2005).



Left: Monument to soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) who were killed in the battle of Hurby in April 1944, Hurby, Rivne Oblast, Ukraine.

Bottom left: Memorial Stone where the monument to Taras Bulba Borovets (the founder of UPA) is to be built, Rivne, Ukraine.

Bottom right: Monument to Klym Savur, one of the leaders of the UPA, Rivne, Ukraine. Photos: Yurchuk, 2011.



MONUMENTS, COLLECTIVE MEMORY & NATION-BUILDING

Memory is one of those concepts which are rather difficult to define as it is a term widely used in everyday communication as well as in scholarly works of almost all disciplines. In my book *Reordering of Meaningful Worlds*,¹ which also was my doctoral thesis, I explore the changes in memory culture in contemporary Ukraine and examine the role of memory in producing new meanings under the rapidly changing conditions from the collapse of the Soviet Union to 2014.

In using the terms “memory” and “remembering” throughout my book, I realized that they have a rather metaphorical meaning as they transfer something which is possible in individual cognition to the level of collectivity. The focus of my study was not on individual or autobiographical memories, however. What interested me most was the relationship to the past which is formed and shared in larger groups of people who are distant

from the events in time so that they do not have any personal recollection of those events.

When Maurice Halbwachs introduced the term “collective memory” (*mémoire collective*) in his seminal work on memory, he emphasized the decisive role of collectivity, which provides a sociocultural context that shapes the act of remembering. He referred to this context as “social frameworks of memory” (*cadres sociaux*). In my view, however, the term “cultural memory” is more appropriate in this respect, as it underlines the link between memory and sociocultural contexts.² Thus the term “cultural memory” also refers to collective ways of remembering but it specifies exactly how collectivity matters, i.e. because it provides sociocultural frames.

HISTORICAL STUDIES OF collective memory went hand-in-hand with studies of nation-building, in which the past is seen as a

Monuments are symbols of what is worth remembering. They often awaken strong feelings.

resource for building collective affiliations.³ On the other hand, interest in memory proliferated when national identity ceased to be a point of reference and national collective identities fragmented into smaller identities – ethnicity, gender, group, etc.⁴ At this juncture, Nora wrote his famous work on *les lieux de mémoire* in which he developed the idea that history as a national project succeeds memory as an identitarian project of fragmented groups.⁵ This interest in memory which comes from seemingly different directions – studying consolidation of the nation, on the one hand, and its fragmentation of the nation, on the other – demonstrates a significant feature of memory: its ability to be both the resource for the consolidation of collective identities as well as the grounds for splitting these identities and eventually building new alliances, which shows that these two processes are actually closely connected.

The past as a resource for memory is endless, as any event can be taken up by a community for mnemonic purposes.⁶ Yet, as we can see, not all historic events form “memory veins”⁷ that can produce “memory events.”⁸ 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, “Mythical and rational images of the past sometimes work together and sometimes do battle, but these images always shape identity and its transformation.”⁹

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 as “sites of rhetorical meaning,” “staged events,” and “the official memory book of significant events or the metaphors of national life.”¹⁰ Where they fulfil 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 symp-

tom, 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.¹¹ Thus it serves as a sign or indication that something is remembered. As a catalyst of the remembering process, a monument causes and accelerates debates, disputes, negotiations, agreements, and disagreements concerning a particular episode of the past which is represented by the monument. ✕

yuliya yurchuk



PhD in History and researcher at Södertörn University, linked to the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEEES), where she is responsible for the Advanced Seminar series. Researcher in the project *Propaganda and management of information in the Ukraine-Russia conflict: From nation branding to information war*. Yurchuk has written comments and reviews related to the situation in Ukraine in the scholarly journal *Baltic Worlds* and elsewhere.

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- 9 Jeffrey Olick and Daniel Levy, “Collective Memory and Cultural Constraint: Holocaust Myth and Rationality in German Politics”, *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 6, (1997): 921–936, 934.
- 10 Christine Boyer, *The City of Collective Memory: Its Historical Imagery and Architectural Entertainments* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 343.
- 11 One of the characteristics of cultural memory in Aleida Assmann’s understanding is that it is “founded on durable carriers of symbols and material representations” (Aleida 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 Tilmans, Frank van Vree and Jay Winter (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 35–50, 43). Monuments are a very important example of representations of this type.

VISITING PLACES OF DEATH. HEALING THE PAST



PHOTO: ASSOCIATION DU PELERINAGE TAMBOV

of desertion or capture, waiting for repatriation to France.²

At the end of the war, the survivors reintegrated in their French motherland. But the cold war atmosphere and the specific postwar socio-political climate in France were not favorable to the rehabilitation of these survivors within the nation. Accordingly, the survivors often kept a low profile, reluctant to open up their painful memories and uncomfortable about having to justify themselves constantly to confirm that they really had been enlisted by force. However, in the 1990s, with the fall of the Iron Curtain, some survivors, divided between their desire to let go of the past and their urge to resist the disappearance of their painful experiences, initiated journeys to pay tribute to their comrades who had fallen on the Eastern Front.

I have been mainly interested in the phenomenological aspect of the pilgrimages, in the importance of moving one’s own body from Alsace to Tambov, to the very place where the event took place during World War II. The focus

have long been intrigued by the current urge of many people to visit places where their forefathers trod during World War II. In order to gain an insight into my contemporaries’ motivation to visit such places, since 2008 I have been following two sorts of journeys undertaken by French people to the former Soviet prison camp 188, journeys the organizers call pilgrimages: journeys dedicated to former prisoners of war (POWs) and their caring relatives (called the *anciens* pilgrimages), and a working camp during which grandchildren of POWs take care of the memorial sites.¹ This prison camp, situated near the town of Tambov, 500 km south of Moscow, was known as “the French prison camp” since Alsatian and Mosellan prisoners who had been conscripted into the German army by force from 1942 on and sent to the Eastern Front ended up there as a result

has therefore been less on the political or ritual aspect of the journeys than on the importance of being self-in-place, on the relationship between place, memory, and the lived body.

To put the past into place

The importance of moving one’s own body to the very place where the event occurred is linked to the fact that recollections thrive on places. Places furnish convenient points of attachment for memories and offer an emplacement from which past experiences can be recollected. For the pilgrims, the past permeates the place. Past events have left traces in the landscape: for instance, cracks in the soil or mounds of earth attest to the presence of mass graves. As the former POW Arthur Keller told me, “It was as if we could sense the dead’s presence in the branches,

People take part in pilgrimages to feel in their body that they experience the past.

the hedge, it was as if the trees sensed it”.³ Even if all participants were affected by the “auratic quality” of the place,⁴ the experience of being self-in-place had different implications for the bearers of direct memories of the events and bearers of *postmemories*.⁵

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-emplacing* the experience of captivity in the present and of re-appropriating it. The journeys, undertaken voluntarily this time, enabled them to put aside the experiences inflicted on them during the war and to redefine themselves in the present as the empathic, sensitive individuals they strive to be. As a matter of fact, when I interviewed the former POWs about their internment, 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 internment, 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”.⁶ 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 annihilated. In this sense, 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.

The physical encounter with the actual place not only offers survivors and mourning participants the opportunity to “put the past into place”, but also provides bearers of *postmemories* with a location for the remembered past.

Emplacement and *implacement*

What I mean here is that being self-in-place is a prerequisite to anchoring a fragment of memory, the experience of forced enlistment that is only known by hearsay. By being self-in-place, the pilgrims gain the opportunity to give an emotional and affective dimension to their cognitive knowledge of the events. As a matter of fact, *postmemories* are placeless memories since they have never been physically dwelled in by the descendants. As memory is dependent on a place, as Casey has proved, the physical presence of the following generation in the place where the event occurred can be seen as a way to *emplace* the memory, to give it a place (outside one’s own body). At the same time it might be a process of *implacing* 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 physically at the place is a way to take on this part of the family

or community’s legacy, a way of appropriating the memory and of “making it one with” one’s “ongoing life”.⁷

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”.⁴ ✕

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.



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1. The youth pilgrimages had about 15 participants aged between 18 and 40 years, while the pilgrimages of the *anciens* had about 50 participants between 22 and 86 years. Pilgrimages bring together three or four generations: survivors or contemporaries (spouses and siblings), children, nephews and nieces (of survivors or dead POWs) and grandchildren.
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memory studies



What will happen to the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania, once the “queen” of the Soviet civilian nuclear empire, since 2009 closed down as a concession to Lithuanian negotiations for EU membership?

POSTINDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE SCARS

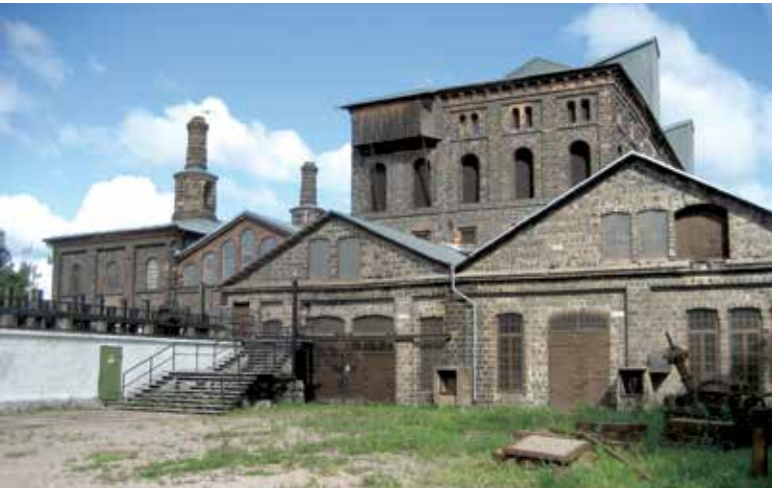
Postindustrial landscapes are all around us, not least in European city centers where they often occupy attractive waterfront locations and have become the foci of many urban redevelopment projects. The historical trajectories of these industrial landscapes and their associated communities, the abandonment 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* (Palgrave 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 *Mensur 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 the 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 Malmberget, Barsebäck, Ignalina/Visaginas, Duisburg, and Avesta. 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 twentieth-century 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.



A blast furnace plant in the company town of Avesta, Sweden, built in green-gray shimmering slag stone around the turn of the 20th century is today restored and reused as an art gallery and teaching facility.



When the former ironworks in Duisburg, Germany, opened as a landscape park, visitors could climb one of the blast furnaces and get an extensive view, both of the site and of the surrounding landscape.

Five case studies

What does it mean to live on an *unstable mountain* in the mining town of Malmberget, 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 Malmberget.

Exploring the history of Barsebäck, a closed-down commercial nuclear power plant in southwest Sweden, I assert that a geographical *distance of fear* 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 *lost utopia*. 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 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 posited 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, de-

PHOTOS: ANNA STORM



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.

notes 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. ✕

anna storm

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Note: The article is a slightly revised version of a book presentation in *Topos* magazine, December 2015.



The control rooms at Barsebäck nuclear power plant today stands mostly empty and silent, awaiting the planned demolition of the plant.

Nuclear legacies

Of 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 interrelated 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.

THE NAZI MASSACRE OF ROMA IN BABI YAR

ANDREJ KOTLJARCHUK PRESENTED part of the results of the ongoing research project *The Roma Genocide in Ukraine 1941–1944: History, memories and representations* (project leader Piotr Wawrzeniuk, project participants; David Gaunt and Anders Blomqvist) at a symposium at the Center for Historical Culture at Erasmus University Rotterdam, in March 17, 2015. Here we publish an extract concerning the memorialization of the massacre 1941 in Babi Yar.

Thousands of Roma were killed in Ukraine between 1941 and 1944 by Nazi *einsatzgruppen* and local collaborators. The Romani 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 chine 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 (ChGK), 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 *Babi Yar* published by Yevgenii Evtushenko in 1961 and an unpermitted rally in Baby Yar in 1966. This rally, which was devoted to the 25th anniversary of the tragedy, was attended by a number of well-known Ukrainian and Russian writers, filmmakers and dissidents: Viktor Nekrasov, Boris Antonenko-Davidovich, Ivan Dziuba, Petr Yakir, Sergei Paradzhanov, Vladimir Voinovich and Sergei Dovlatov. Despite the silence on the Jewish and Roma genocides, the 1976 Soviet memorial legalized practices of mem-



Roma in Babi Yar, International Roma Genocide Remembrance Day August 2, 2012.

ory. Every year on September 29, the monument was visited not only by Jews but also by Roma. It was then that the Romani tradition was born to bring to the monument the photos of relatives murdered by the Nazis. This practice continues to this day. By this ceremony the Roma are trying to overcome the problem of de-personalization of the genocide victims.”

andrej kotljarchuk

PhD in History, associate professor at the Department of History and Contemporary Studies at Södertörn University. Ongoing projects include *Soviet Nordic Minorities and Ethnic Cleanings on the Kola Peninsula* (Foundation for Baltic and East European studies 2013–2016). He is also the coordinator of an international network on Stalin's terrorists against minorities in the Soviet Union (Swedish Institute).



Note: The full report from the symposium is to be found at <http://balticworlds.com/the-nazi-massacre-of-roma-in-babi-yar-in-soviet-and-ukrainian-historical-culture/>. Available May 28, 2015.



Christina Rodell Olgac, above to the right, has developed a teacher education program in Romani čhib. Angelina Dimiter-Taikon is lecturer at Södertörn University.



Preparing for an Advanced Seminar on David Gaunt's paper on Roma history writing, May 2015. David Gaunt to the very left and Kimmo Granqvist to the very right.

ROMANI STUDIES. PART OF THE PROFILE

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 Romani language, Romani čhib, as part of the effort to provide school education in all five national minority languages in Sweden.

The establishment of Romani 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 Romani Studies.

Research and education related to Romani Studies were being carried out even before the strategic move to establish Södertörn's profile in the field. Courses for Romani mediators in schools and social work, and recently, special training for Romani mother-tongue teachers, have been organized by the School of Culture and Education.

THE RESEARCH IN Romani studies has so far taken place in projects examining the Romani language and culture, education, religion, and the history of the Roma people.

The research themes include the school situation of the Romani minority (Christina Rodell Olgac), the genocide of the Roma people in Ukraine in 1941–44 (the project carried out by Piotr Wawrzeniuk, Andrej Kotljarchuk, David Gaunt, and Anders Blomqvist – see opposite page), Pentecostal Christianity among Romani people (David Thurffjell), Romani language and culture (Kimmo Granqvist)

and the Police, Experts, and Race (this newly started project is carried out by Madeleine Hurd and Steffen Werther).

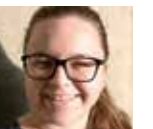
A number of diverse research activities have been organized in relation to this study field, including seminar series, workshops, and the Nordic Conference on Romani Studies. Two series of seminars are being held: the first presents public lectures on Romani Studies organized by Christina Rodell Olgac of the School of Culture and Education. The second seminar series comprises the CBEES higher seminars on Romani 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 CBEES, has written a text book (soon to be published in Swedish) that will function as an introduction to Romani 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 Romani 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 Romani Studies are growing at Södertörn University and various collaborations have become established. The developments in this field can be followed on the University's webpage 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 Romani 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?

“One of the primary goals is to continue a line of high-quality multidisciplinary research, covering and combining themes of linguistics (Romani čhib) and language pedagogy, history, anthropology, and political science, and maintaining a special focus on Baltic and East European area research. One of my interests is also to promote studies in Romani linguistics and Romani teacher training in Sweden.

“Great importance is attached to establishing an effective multidisciplinary and international research milieu for Romani studies 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 to discuss and, in future, to implement cross-national, interdisciplinary, comparative research activities. As an additional means of

maintaining scientific discourse and disseminating research findings, the Södertörn Series on Romani Studies was established in 2015 as the only Nordic peer-reviewed publication series in the field. I am its first editor.”

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

“Romani studies draws on aspects of history, sociology, anthropology, ethnography, linguistics, and political science.”



Kimmo Granqvist, research leader in Romani Studies at CBEES, Södertörn University. Editor of Södertörn Series on Romani Studies, established in 2015 as the only Nordic peer-reviewed publication series in the field.

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.”

“Internationally, I cooperate with Roma activists and as an NGO member in Slovakia and Poland.”

ekaterina tarasova

PhD student in Political Science at the Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS).

Romani Studies demands clarity of concepts and close cooperation with Roma people.

CBSS SUMMER UNIVERSITY BRINGS PEOPLE TOGETHER

The CBSS Summer University “Governance and Administration in the Baltic Sea Region” is a joint project initiated by the Department of Northern European Studies at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEEES) at Södertörn University, together with the University of Turku and the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The first CBSS Summer University was held in Stockholm at CBEEES, Södertörn University. In August 2015, a second CBSS Summer University was held at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin. Students, government officials, and NGO members from various countries of the Baltic Sea region gathered during two intense weeks to study and discuss topics of major importance for Baltic Sea cooperation. Keywords for this year’s event included Quality of Government, Multilevel Governance, Environmental Policy and Political Cooperation.

I WAS ONE OF TWELVE STUDENTS chosen to attend this course. We were all from different countries around the Baltic Sea region, and are conducting studies in various disciplines. I study law; others were students of business administration, human geography, international relations, etc.

The main part of this 2nd CBSS Summer University consisted of theoretical seminars with different academics representing various universities around the Baltic Sea region. Before the seminars started, we had an opportunity to meet Jan Lundin, Director of the CBSS Secretariat, who gave us a general introduction to the idea of a Baltic Sea regional identity and cooperation. During the opening sessions we also met Professor Bernd Henningsen, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, and the editor Ninna Mörner, Södertörn University. We appreciated the value of com-

ing together as young students to build new ideas and networks. One of the main ideas presented at the Summer University’s opening session is that, as representatives of different countries and perspectives, we would have fruitful discussions and prepare the ground for future cooperation across borders.

Governance in a time of change

Let me give some examples of the lectures and lecture topics that we all followed attentively. Quality of government as a concept in political science was the main subject of lectures by Marina Nistotskaya from the Quality of Government Institute at the University of Gothenburg. This fresh concept allowed us to look in a totally new way at politics in general. Although highly theoretical, the concept showed us the importance of impartiality, and reminded us how useful an aspirational perspective (“how things should be”) can be. The potential usefulness of this theory was not just about understanding differences between qualities of government in different countries; it also led us to reflect briefly on how can we shape policies and government to focus on quality.

MULTILEVEL GOVERNANCE was another concept from political science, presented by Claudia Matthes from Humboldt-Universität. This theory helped us to learn about how very different actors are involved in decision-making these days. Politics and governance have undergone significant changes in recent decades and it is valuable to understand what these changes entail. The growing involvement of international and intergovernmental organizations, the European Union, international companies, and NGOs are very specific processes for contemporary politics.

Young researchers from different countries and disciplines meet, learn, and create networks.



“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it.” Karl Marx, Eleven Theses on Feuerbach. Participants of the 2nd CBSS Summer University in front of the famous quotation by Karl Marx in the foyer of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.

PHOTO: TOMAS MILOSCH

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.

PhD Werner Jann 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 Rostoks 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 Pertti Joenniemi 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.

Practicing new knowledge

Alongside this main theoretical program, the Summer University also offered us a great opportunity to meet practitioners. The packed program included a day trip to two cities, Hamburg and Kiel.

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

- 7:00** Departure for Hamburg.
- 11:00–13:00** Meeting with practitioners of Baltic Sea cooperation in the State of Hamburg: Stefan Herms, Director General, International and European Affairs, Senate Chancellery of Hamburg; Klaus v. Lepel, Director, Research Policy, Innovation, European and International Affairs/Hamburg Ministry of Science and Research; Christiane Schadow, PAC EUSBSR PA Education; Katarina Röbbelen-Voigt, ScienceLink + Baltic Sea Labour Network.
- 13:00** Travel to Kiel.
- 15:00–17:00** Meeting with practitioners of Baltic Sea cooperation in the State of Schleswig-Holstein: Stefan Musiolik, Head of the Baltic Sea Unit, Ministry of Justice, Culture, and Europe an Affairs; Mario Schulz, INTERREG Programm Manager, Ministry of Justice, Culture and European Affairs.
- About **17:30** Departure for Berlin.
- About **22:00** Arrival in Berlin.

Personally I found it inspiring and meaningful to see the connection between theory and practice. We had the chance to ask



Participants of the 2nd CBSS Summer University discussing with practitioners of Baltic-Sea cooperation in the Town Hall of Hamburg.



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 Sootla from Tallinn University explained to us, proves 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 2nd CBSS Summer University

“The meetings with practitioners were also a very valuable experience as we observed the passion of the people working in this area.”

Coordinator, Krister Hanne from Humboldt-Universität, once said, “There are more things that connect people than things that divide them” – and fortunately this optimistic approach proved to be very true.

I only hope for more such opportunities for meetings and projects together; in my opinion the bonds that we create are not just an investment in the future, but also an insurance for difficult times in Europe, when negative emotions and aggressive rhetoric are on the rise. ✕

piotr brejza

Master student in law at Gdansk University.



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 15–23 at Södertörn University. Södertörn's partners in this project, besides CBSS, are the University of Gdansk, the University of Greifswald, the University of Lund, Saint Petersburg University of 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



For the third time, after similar events in 2009 and 2011, a floating seminar was arranged in cooperation between the Aleksanteri Institute in Helsinki and the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies and held on October 7–9, 2015. The title “floating seminar” means that a large part of the time is spent on a ferry on the Baltic Sea, cruising from one university to the other.

The seminars bring together doctoral students with a focus on the Baltic Sea area and Eastern Europe from Aleksanteri and BEEGS at Södertörn University. Kristy Beers Fägersten, Director of Studies, Baltic and East European Graduate School (BEEGS), sees many advantages in the format:

“It’s a way of sharing the honor of hosting and running an activity which is a true collaboration. It’s also a way of bridging both the physical and the intellectual space between the two institutions.”

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 Kungaspuro 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

If not in Berlin, it may be on a boat trip. Join us!

reforms in Russia today, relating them to globalization.

After the second session we needed to wrap up quickly to get back to the boat – this time together with our new friends and colleagues, the Finnish participants. On board we had a quick introduction by Kristy Beers Fägersten, and her co-organizer Ira Jänis-Isokangas, Head of Research Training at Aleksanteri Institute. Then all participants went directly to the seminar sessions. No time to rest!

Three parallel workshop seminars were held with two senior researchers as chairs in each, in keeping with common academic procedures. Vasileios Kitsos, a doctoral student at BEEGS, was satisfied, finding that the discussions provided a “good first feedback 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 more beneficial to get reflections from an “external” viewpoint than from like-minded researchers.

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. Rebecka Lettevall, the director of CBEEES, welcomed us all. Professor Irina Sandomirskaja addressed a critical theory of cultural



Gathered outside Aleksanteri Institute in Helsinki.

heritage 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. ✕

sophie landwehr sydow

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 fantastic 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
KITSOS, 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 to 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 leaders, project researchers, professors, and emeritus professors – 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 (2000–2011), 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: multidisciplinary and multicultural, 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 entity

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.

September 2000. On the homepage one could read that BEEGS had been created with the aim of abolishing a mutual ignorance between the two sides of the Baltic Sea. The studies, it said, were aimed at reintegrating experiences in regions that had been separated during large parts of the 20th century, above all during the Cold War.

FOUR ACADEMIC subjects initially formed the backbone of BEEGS: Political Science, Business Administration, Ethnology, and History. Two to 18 students per year were accepted in the first four years. This was a big commitment; these years were filled with an optimistic pioneer spirit but also a certain degree of anxiety. BEEGS went through occasional infantile disorders. The admission process was not perfect in the early years: although we did recruit some very good students, a certain number disappeared from the system without taking their exam. However, the number of applications rose constantly and the admission process became better organized, being run by the academic disciplines and BEEGS together – although not always without friction; I do remember some pretty tense negotiations on whether to admit certain candidates. The rate of doctors graduating in relation to students admitted improved considerably over the years. Today 74 dissertations have been produced in 15 subjects by students admitted from 2000 to 2011. Soon several BEEGS dissertations are to come in six new subjects, all connected to environmental studies.

BEEGS alumni of 15 years:

- Represent 21 different academic subjects.
- Come from 19 different countries.
- Have produced 74 dissertations.

the years from 25 to 40 percent. The gender proportions have been fairly even over time.

It is a well-known truth that multidisciplinary has its specific challenges. The wider the common object of research, the trickier it can be to find ways towards a focused multidisciplinary cooperation. At BEEGS, the common object is a geographic region that the PhD students approach in quite different ways. When I worked with BEEGS I realized the difficulty of planning for a giv-



All 74 dissertation on one shelf.

“BEEGS has always been a multicultural environment with students from many countries besides Sweden.”

BEEGS has always been a multicultural environment with students from many countries besides Sweden, mostly but not only from the Baltic Sea region, Eastern and Central Europe, and Russia. The proportion of non-Swedish students has varied over

en result of the multidisciplinary education. Instead we used to talk about doctoral students who married. But we weren't thinking of those among the BEEGS students who actually started families: we were referring to those who married “scientifically”, and not necessarily in couples, but often in polyamorous constellations – metaphorically speaking of course. These were students who really benefited from being confronted with the way other disciplines framed a certain question.

FROM THE VERY BEGINNING

BEEGS was regarded as the engine that would start the machinery of doctoral studies at Södertörn. The work was finally crowned in 2010 when Södertörn was conferred the right to examine its own doctoral students.

I haven't been following the activities of BEEGS that closely myself for the last three to four years, but I sense that some of the focus points that united quite a few students in the early years, illustrated by buzz words such as “transition” and “West looking at East” – here we discussed implications of postcolonialism, Orientalist views of “the Other” – that these discussions have partly been replaced by other concerns: environmental and ecological

issues regarding the Baltic Sea are dealt with by both life science and political science PhD students; BEEGS students focusing on Ukraine from various disciplines take into account the new geopolitical configurations and agendas created by Russia; and various studies are concerned with memory and the public use of history.

In this respect, I would say that BEEGS is a living organism reflecting what is going on in the surrounding world.” ✕

helene carlbäck

Associate professor in History and project researcher at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, CBEES, and the School of Social Sciences, participating in a research project called What does it mean to be a father in Russia? State, civil society and citizen discourses about fatherhood in Russia.



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.sh.se/beegs>.

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, analyses and discourses in the field have blossomed into schools, and numerous interdisciplinary research projects have been conducted with funding from a wide range of 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 was then 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



Marianne Yagoubi.

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, criticism, 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 ventures 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 Kulawik, 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 diversity.

A New Region of the World? Toward a Poetics of Situatedness

Charlotte Bydler, Art History

DEPARTING FROM empirical cases in urban, rural, global, local, inland and coastal areas, the project identifies new images of and for the present world in which cultural heritage can be an ecosystem service. This is to respond with care to the present situation, with a poetics of situatedness that is resilient and inventive. One baseline of this project is the onset of a new era, termed the Anthropocene, “the age of man”.

East Meets West: Charismatic Christianity and Western Mission in Soviet Union, Russia, and Ukraine

Gunilla Gunner, Study of Religions

THE AIM OF THIS PROJECT is to study relations and encounters between Protestant missionaries from Sweden and indigenous Protestant churches in the Soviet Union, Russia, and Ukraine from the perspective, of both the sending and receiving institutions.

The Foundation for Baltic and East European Studies has dual goals.



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 (\$ 20 million, or €15 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. ✕

ninna mörner

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



Divers on the sunken battlefield of 1564.

PHOTO: THOMASZ STACHURA/OCEAN DISCOVERY

SHIPS AT WAR

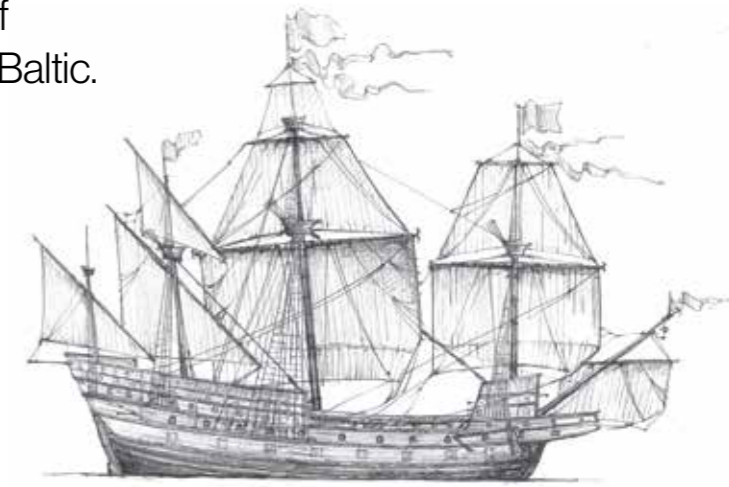
An Archaeological and Historical Study of Early Modern Maritime Battlefields in the Baltic.

Project leader: Johan Rönnby, *Marin Archeology*

In the summer of 2011, two spectacular new shipwrecks were found in the central Baltic Sea. After years of searching, the well-preserved remains of the *Mars* (1564) and *Svärdet* (1676) were found. Both were large royal naval ships which sank after lengthy battles.

The new finds, along with previously known wrecks in the Baltic Sea, *Kraveln* (1525), *Vasa* (1628) and *Kronan* (1676), provide an opportunity for new insights into the formative period of Sweden's history as a strong state and a Baltic empire. The struggle for military and economic control of the Baltic Sea and the surrounding areas play an important part in this history. The shipwrecks also shed further light on the way this process played out, revealing that ships were not only a principal tool of European state building, but were more generally both a manifestation and an agent of social change.

ONGOING DOCUMENTATION of the two newly found wrecks also emphasizes the violence and the chaos of the onboard environment during battles. The sites, with all their guns and the ships themselves, are well preserved examples of maritime battlefields. This brings up issues related to practical solutions in naval battles, but also the symbolic, mental, and psychological aspects of warfare in general and human behavior in these situations and environments. Our aim is to address general questions about war and the sociology and psychology linked to the battlefield.



What the *Mars* may have looked like. ILLUSTRATION: NIKLAS ERIKSSON/MARIS

The archaeological survey of the shipwrecks involves several different institutions and companies, with MARIS at Södertörn University as coordinator. These organizations are the Swedish National Defence College, the Maritime Museum, Southampton University, Deep Sea Production, Ocean Discovery, and Marin Mätteknik. The project is to be an academic platform for fieldwork, exhibitions and international television productions.

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 is to expand the project and involve other researchers and institutions. ✕

Effects of SSRI Exposures Early in Life on Juvenile and Adult Behavior in Three-spine Stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*) and Possible Effects in the Baltic Sea

Håkan Olsén, *Zoology*

SWEDISH STUDIES have demonstrated a wide spectrum of drugs with relative occurrence that to a high degree reflects their amounts of use in medical care. As pharmaceutical drugs 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 exposures of three-spine sticklebacks early in life results in behavior effects when they are older. Our hypothesis is that brief exposure to citalopram during early development affects stressrelated behaviors in adults.



The Phenomenology of Suffering in Medicine: Explorations in the Baltic Sea Region

Fredrik Svenaeus, *Philosophy*

WE WILL ATTEMPT to build bridges between this philosophical analysis and the real life situation of suffering in medicine by exploring examples of how suffering is approached in medical ethics teaching at five medical schools in Sweden, Finland, Lithuania, Germany, and Denmark.

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

Eva Swartz, *Philosophy*

THIS PROJECT INVESTIGATES how participants in contemporary preschool education – teachers and children – are formed by and are able to form their educational processes. We are combining a phenomenological-philosophical perspective on the concept of "Bildung" with empirical studies in Stockholm, Södertälje, and Berlin.

Art, Culture, Conflict: Transformations of Museums and Memory Culture in the Baltic Sea Region after 1989

Dan Karlholm, *Art history*

THIS PROJECT IS AIMED at mapping, analyzing and interpreting transformations of exhibitions of culture and art at museum institutions, art spaces, and memorials around the Baltic Sea from 1989 to the present. Key questions include how discursive narrative structures about the nation and its culture, history, and identity were changed in regard to ideology communication, and mediation. The material derives from countries formerly in the Soviet Union (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania) and the Communist bloc (Poland), and two Western nations (Sweden and Finland).

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

Kjell Östberg, *History*

OUR PROJECT OPENS new perspectives on the emergence, development, and challenges of democratic decisionmaking in Sweden and Finland 1890–2020. We are striving to investigate how the political cultures in Sweden and Finland have been formed in interaction with international and transnational forces, which contributed significantly to how democratic decisionmaking has taken root and developed.

Firm Demography and Entrepreneurship in Eastern and Central Europe and in the Baltic Region

Karl Gratzner, *Business Administration*

THE PRESENT PROJECT proposal focuses on entrepreneurship and firm dynamics in the Nordic-, Central- and East European economies. Its focus is comparative and collaborative, and it takes a long-term perspective. The project focuses on variations in entrepreneurship and business activity across time and place.

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

Scholarly *Baltic Worlds*. A rich journal with an ambition

Baltic Worlds has been published by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies since 2008, when a first pilot issue appeared. Ninna Mörner, its present editor, has been following the journal's journey to become a scholarly ranked journal since 2009.

Tell me about the scholarly journal *Baltic Worlds*?

"It publishes peer-reviewed articles that present research results. The articles always deal with research related to our area, that is, the Baltic Sea region, Eastern Europe, Russia, the post-Soviet countries including, the Caucasus and the Balkans. A vast area. Of course, one might reflect on the boundaries, as discussed in this in-house edition.

"However, we publish research results in different disciplines as multidisciplinary is another of our characteristics. Mostly we cover the social sciences and humanities. Sometimes we have theme issues and I work together with guest editors. The first was in 2012 when Markus Huss of Södertörn University, Kaisa Kaakinen of Cornell University, and Jenny Willner of the University of Munich presented a theme issue on Dislocated Literature with shorter peer-reviewed articles from young researchers in different countries. This idea was born after a very lively and innovative workshop on the topic of writers in exile in the Baltic Sea region."

What other themes have you had?

"Well, let's see; the most recent was Economic Development in Russia with the guest editor Ilja Viktorov, which presented findings on the macroeconomic and company levels and was very contem-

porary. Before that, we had other themes related to Russia: Post-Soviet Gender Discourses was a rich theme covering post-colonial discourses, ideal images of masculinity, and imported equality agendas. The guest editors were Ljudmila Voronova, Ekaterina Kalinina and Ulrika Dahl, all at Södertörn University. It was the outcome of a workshop financed by the Nordic network (CERES), coordinated by the Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki. Aleksanteri Institute also later co-financed a theme issue: Modernization in Russia. Guest editor was Sanna Turoma. Right now I am putting together a theme issue with Dominika Polanska, Södertörn University, and Miguel A. Martinez, City University of Hong Kong, on Squatting in the East.

"If you like to check out other themes, we have all scholarly *Baltic Worlds* published open access on the web www.balticworlds.com! Free of charge to both authors and readers."

But it is a print journal, isn't it?

"We print the scholarly journal. And it is designed and illustrated. We like the idea that readers browse through the journal and also find themselves reading and taking an interest in findings they may not have been aware of before. This means we create new liaisons and open up new perspectives. It is a fundamental reason why we like to print it and distribute it – to create this kind of bridge and place for the exchange of ideas. The print journal is distributed in 50 countries.

"We delight in reaching out, in every sense of the word, I would say. That is one of the things that makes it so joyful to work with this type of publishing. We also publish other genres



besides peer-reviewed articles: interviews with scholars, commentary with new, sometimes challenging perspectives, and reviews and conference reports. All of it can also be found online."

And what about the election coverage?

"Yes, on the web site we ran election coverage of all elections 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 scholarly *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 process of 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 bibliometric register (DHB). The chair of the council is Thomas Lundén, professor emeritus in human geography at CBEEES, who certainly is a central figure for *Baltic Worlds*! The

publisher is Joakim Ekman, also very engaged in the journal. "The council meet regularly to discuss how to further reinforce the journal's scholarly profile while still maintaining its broad appeal."

How do the authors approach *Baltic Worlds*?

"I receive manuscripts spontaneously by e-mail, or people contact me directly to discuss ideas and abstracts.

"I am always aiming at having a good mixture of authors from different countries – we don't like to end up having researcher located in the "West" studying and publishing articles on the "East". Also we like to promote good research by women and younger researchers. I am trying, along with my colleagues at the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies and of course all the members of the Scholarly Editorial Council, to find new *Baltic Worlds* topics! We tend to receive manuscripts – and we get very many – that take up topics dealt with in previous issue. That's all right of course, but we like to add new angles on the way."

What kind of topics do you come back to, then?

"The investigation of the 'other', postcolonialism, the Holocaust, Gulag, EU enlargement, identity and nation-building, space and borders, citizenship, the body and gender. Also the far-right and populism, minorities, exile and cosmopolitanism. Russia and the Soviet Union, corruption, legacies, democratization and the role of the civil society are other topics we constantly come back to. And then occasionally we talk about environmental challenges and region-building, and other times, about literature and poetry. It is indeed a rich field we cover!" ✖

Baltic Worlds' Scholarly Editorial Council

Baltic Worlds is published by the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies (CBEEES) at Södertörn University. CBEEES 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 Autio-Sarasmo**, senior researcher, Economic History, Aleksanteri Institute, Helsinki University; **Sofie Bedford**, PhD, Political Science, post-doctoral researcher, Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Uppsala University; **Michael Gentile**, professor, Urban Geography, Department of Geosciences and Geography, University of Helsinki; **Monica Hammer**, associate professor, Environmental Science, Södertörn University; **Markus Huss**, PhD, Literature, senior researcher, School of Culture and Education, Södertörn University; **Katarina Leppänen**, senior lecturer, History of Ideas and Science, Gothenburg University; **Thomas Lundén**, Chair, professor emeritus, Human Geography, CBEEES, Södertörn University; **Kazimierz Musiał**, associate professor, Scandinavian Studies Department, University of Gdansk and research leader, CBEEES,

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**, director of CBEEES and associate professor, History of Ideas and Science; **Joakim Ekman**, publisher of *Baltic Worlds* and professor, Political Science, CBEEES, Södertörn University.

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



All members at the meeting in May 2015.

Södertörn University 20th Anniversary 2016!

THIS WE CELEBRATE 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 any of our numerous events in 2016 and beyond. You find all the details in English at www.sh.se.



CONDUCTING AREA STUDIES WITH A WIDE OPEN MIND

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.

“The concept of Europe changes through globalization in a very concrete way and will most likely continue to do so.”

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 a 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’”.

