

### New Dissertations

#### **A Multifaceted Analysis of Urban Consumption**

*Devrim Umut Aslan*, Praxitopia. How Shopping Makes a Street Vibrant. Faculty of Social Sciences, Lund University 2021. 297 pp. Ill. Diss. ISBN 978-91-7895-821-4.

■ Historically, urban life has been associated with consumption and commerce of various kinds. Even after general stores became permitted in the countryside in the Nordic countries, with the liberalization of trade in the nineteenth century, much of the latest fashion and the newest goods could only be obtained in the towns. That was also where the department stores were located, becoming important places for consumption and experiences in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The cities and towns also offered several forms of everyday consumption. Townspeople with small homes and limited cold storage facilities took to the streets almost daily to buy groceries well into the twentieth century. In addition to the permanent shops there was trade in foodstuffs and other goods in market squares and in other, more informal, trading places. In recent decades alarmed voices have been heard claiming that urban trade is changing. Today the shops are increasingly being placed in large complexes on the outskirts of cities, which has reduced the supply in the city centre and left a great many empty retail premises. The death of shops, as it is called, has been a subject of discussion among politicians, urban planners and not least the customers whose everyday lives have been affected by the change.

Formal and informal places of consumption are at the centre of Devrim Umut Aslan's dissertation entitled *Praxitopia: How Shopping Makes a Street Vibrant*. As the title indicates, the focus of the study is on the shopping street and its function. Umut Aslan takes the death of the store as his starting point and examines the link between consumption and its surroundings. The place chosen for the study is Helsingborg,

where the Söder district and especially the central street Södergatan have been viewed as a warning example of this development. In addition, Umut Aslan investigates the question of what the streets mean for people's purchases. The subtitle, *How Shopping Makes a Street Vibrant*, points to the crucial factor in the context. The streets are what make the city come alive, and trade is essential for the hustle and bustle in the area. The interdisciplinary approach of the dissertation is interesting and the theme is highly topical, making this a welcome contribution to research on consumer culture in general. Although the studied area is in Helsingborg, the dissertation also says something about any small town in Scandinavia, especially about the streets in them that are not so fancy and not always so busy.

Devrim Umut Aslan approaches the question of how trade is visible in the cityscape from an interdisciplinary and socio-cultural perspective. By filming, observing, and interviewing a group of people who have gone out to shop, he examines their shopping habits and thoughts about consumption. The combination of video ethnography and mental maps yields a picture of how today's consumers think, perform, and organize their purchases in Södergatan. The starting point is a broad definition of consumption; the dissertation not only covers purchases but is also a study of goods, walking, socializing, and transport. These pieces are put together to create a picture of how the Söder district and Södergatan are perceived by the people who move in the area. The study is divided into three parts and comprises eleven chapters. The dissertation may at first feel like heavy going, but at the same time the introductory survey of previous research, different theoretical approaches, and methodology provides a good context for the study as a whole. The dissertation combines a range of perspectives: practices, shopping as a social activity, and the link between consumption and place. Devrim Umut Aslan also launches his own concept, "praxitopia" with which he tries to explain the significance of how different forms of purchasing are connected with the surrounding environment.

The district of Söder in Helsingborg came into existence in the first half of the nineteenth century as an industrial and working-class neighbourhood in the southern part of the city. The city grew rapidly and soon Söder was home to about half of its inhabitants. During the 1960s, Söder developed into an important trading place for the whole of Helsingborg, but after the 1980s the centre of gravity of trade increasingly shifted to a shopping mall some way outside the city. Today, Södergatan is lined with a mix of restaurants, fashion boutiques, hairdressers, and other shops, but also a high proportion of empty premises awaiting new owners. As a historian of consumption, I found the sections dealing with the change over time particularly thought-provoking. Having studied consumption during the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries both in towns and in the countryside, I found that several themes and questions here were familiar. Although the dissertation deals mainly with the present, it offers a great deal to readers with an interest in history. By showing the different ways in which purchases can be made in Södergatan and the practices surrounding this activity, the dissertation provides insight into the breadth and function of consumption for the people who move around in Söder today.

In his dissertation, Umut Aslan seeks answers to three questions: How does shopping take place in Södergatan? What is the meaning of the shopping practices? What is the connection between shopping and the street? The analysis of the activity in Södergatan today creates a multifaceted picture of everyday consumption in the area. The study of the interaction between customers and the shop staff, or between the customers, shows how consumption can be understood as a social phenomenon. Furthermore, the study of how purchases are made both purposefully and alongside other activities demonstrates the many different functions that commerce can have and the many different ways in which consumption can be understood and performed. An interesting theme of the dissertation is budget buying. The hunt for low prices means that many customers find their way to Södergatan, a street with many opportunities to

find bargains. Yet budget shopping brings not only cheaper goods, but also joy, pride, and satisfaction to some of the customers.

The people that Umut Aslan has filmed, interviewed, and observed for his study are brought to life through quotations and photographs. In general terms too, the dissertation contains a great many pictures, mainly as a complement to what is described in the text. The good thing about Umut Aslan's study is that it opens our eyes to something that is commonplace for all of us, that is, going shopping. By placing shopping in its context and closely examining everyday trading practices, the study shows that commerce can make a place come alive. The dissertation also shows that the discussion about the death of shops seems to be somewhat exaggerated, at least when it comes to Södergatan in Helsingborg. I hope the study will inspire similar investigations in other Nordic countries.

*Anna Sundelin, Åbo (Turku)*

### **Culture Planning and Inclusion**

*Pia Hovi, Kyl maar tääl kaikenlaista kulttuuria on! Kulttuurisuunnittelu kokonaisvaltaisena kulttuuri- ja taidelähtöisenä yhteiskehittämisen menetelmänä.* (For sure we have all kinds of culture! Culture planning as a comprehensive culture and arts-based co-planning method.) University of Turku 2021. 211 pp. Ill. Diss. ISBN 978-951-29-9605-7.

■ Pia Hovi defended her doctoral thesis in Landscape Research at the University of Turku in November 2021. Hovi's research focuses on the models of bottom-up and top-down in city development work. In particular, Hovi studied the roles of artists and art in cultural planning. Furthermore, Hovi's doctoral thesis highlights the best ways of presenting and reporting the collected data to utilize it in city development.

Hovi's landscape research combines research on community, place and place attachment with critical heritage studies, art-based research, and critical pedagogy. In addition, she considers futures research. At the core of the study is citizens'

participation, inclusion, and local empowerment in a sustainable way. The theoretical framework of Hovi's study is based on the concepts of co-creation, cultural planning, cultural mapping, and cultural heritage. The methodology of the study is mixed methods research. The research material consists of interviews, workshops, questionnaires, image material from the art competition, and documents. Hovi has analysed the research material using action research, document analysis, qualitative content analysis, and visual analysis.

The dissertation is based on four published articles. Three of them are in Finnish. The one in English is titled "The Role of the Museum in an Aging Society". The title refers to Hovi's interest in resilient society, equality, good living environment, and inclusion, all of which are included in social sustainability. Other articles reflect heritage work from a voluntary perspective, community art projects with workshops in suburbs, and public art and the planning process, to be more specific: the housing fair's art competition, aiming for cooperation between planners of public spaces and artists.

The work provides a critical perspective on present-day urban development processes. Hovi has a strong voice of her own in the dissertation. She stresses that museum institutions need to take an active role in society and cooperate closely with other sectors to situate themselves at the heart of the community.

The main research question in Hovi's work is: do culture- and arts-based participatory methods increase residents' inclusion and participation in co-creative processes? Hovi emphasizes the inclusion of the residents. This should be done collaboratively by recognizing and defining the cultural resources. It consists of tangible and intangible elements, such as places, including museums, sites and locations, practices, associations, events, local products e.g. craft and arts, nature, as well as values and beliefs, language and dialects, history, memories, narratives, sense of place and identity. These elements are not separate but in dialogue. Hovi stresses that culture is constantly changing, which means that cultural resources are not im-

mutable. Furthermore, each area has its own way to defend its cultural resources.

The definition above is supported by Raymond Williams's anthropological view (based on Edward Tylor) of culture as a way of life and art as a part of society. It helps to understand culture as a dynamic process. Accordingly, cultural mapping is regarded as top-down activity, but it involves various stakeholders, communities, and residents of the area and therefore the everyday experiences and perceptions of people.

Both approaches (bottom-up and top-down) are examined by case studies situated in the town of Pori, Satakunta region in Finland. The bottom-up ("down-up" in Hovi's dissertation) case study represents a cultural mapping with the participation of an artist association. There are three top-down case studies. They include a local museum's cultural heritage work based on collaboration with senior citizens, and the museum's audience programme and city planning public art competition.

The co-creative methods used have been cultural mapping, cultural planning, and community art. Engagement in community art makes the aims quite similar to those of cultural planning, which includes dialogical processes. As Hovi herself is not an artist, she situates her arts-based research in the continuum of art and science on the science side. However, Hovi has worked at the art museum and has conducted some of the projects that are presented in the study. Hovi has carefully reflected on her own role and ethical questions in the study.

Based upon her findings, Hovi emphasizes the need for open and inclusive city development processes that empower and give voice to residents. The process of defining concepts such as culture is important, as officials and residents may disagree on it. The more open and participatory the city development process is, the more it supports their own residential area and well-being. The co-creation events and knowledge co-produced in them are unique in each case, as may be the changing experiences and contexts of everyday life of which people tell in workshops.

Community and place are the key concepts in the study. They are multi-dimensional terms that are understood in many ways, depending on the time and academic field. Hovi's research involves an interesting discussion especially with previous research in landscape studies and urban humanities. Hovi states that processes of cultural mapping may find it difficult to be open enough to recognize various interpretations of places that may be hybrid: physical and digital etc. There are as many interpretations of places as there are residents. In addition, people outside the residential area may take part in cultural mapping in these times of digitalization. Hovi abandons idea of "placemaking" as it has no real communal viewpoint. Placemaking may aim at financial profit, not creativity.

There is a minor discrepancy in the study. Emphasizing the voice of residents is important in the study, but in the text their voices could and should have been more visible for readers, too. Examples from the interview materials could have been analysed more thoroughly. Researchers often add reports of their participant observation in the field when presenting their studies. It would have been interesting to read that here, too.

The strength of the dissertation is the courageous effort to unfold the problems and challenges in city development processes. As a result, Hovi presents an innovative and operative "creative co-creation action model" (pp. 122ff) which helps to make a change in practices. The model consists of three themes: mapping of cultural resources, cultural planning, and community art. At the heart of the model is the need to recognize that the top-down model provides a limited perspective on the residential area and its development. The model stresses the collaboration between officials/researchers and artists or artist communities who are willing to implement the art project with the residents. The knowledge provided by the creative co-creation action model may be included as a part of the strategies.

This book will undeniably appeal to city officials, the museum sector, various stakeholders, scholars in art and landscape studies, as well as

urban researchers representing multidisciplinary approaches. In addition, it may empower residents to engage with city development processes and participatory budgeting in order to suggest how to promote the well-being of the area.

*Pauliina Latvala-Harvilahti, Turku/Helsinki*

### **A French School in Finland**

*Eeva Salo-Tammivuori*, Discipline and order. The French school as a field of intangible cultural heritage. Faculty of Humanities, School of History, Culture and Arts Studies, Cultural Heritage Studies, University of Turku 2021. 277 pp., 2 appendix pages. Diss. ISBN 978-951-29-8646-0.

■ Eeva Salo-Tammivuori's doctoral research takes the reader to the French school world, which is portrayed as a unifying and distinguishing field of intangible cultural heritage, built of its own history and further maintained and also shaped through different customs, daily routines and cultures. These elements of the intangible culture go back several generations, and include good manners, strict discipline and persistent working. They have been chosen to be preserved in the cultural heritage process of the French school in Rauma, Finland, established in 2005, which serves as the case study of Salo-Tammivuori's work.

In her research, Salo-Tammivuori discusses how cultural heritage is communicated both inside and outside the school, and compares the culture of French schools with the Finnish schools. The French school in Rauma operates according to the French curriculum and all the pupils and full-time teachers of the school are French. Salo-Tammivuori has worked as a class teacher and assistant at the school since 2006 and began her research in 2012. The author has also visited schools in France. Salo-Tammivuori has thus become thoroughly acquainted with the daily life of the French school and its operating cultures through her work, positions of trust and research.

Eeva Salo-Tammivuori's doctoral thesis consists of six main chapters. In addition to the introduction, separate chapters are devoted to theory

and concepts as well as methodology. Chapters 4 and 5 form the chapters of analysis of the thesis and chapter 6 serves as a summary. The work is multidisciplinary, combining cultural heritage research and education, with a strong emphasis on the latter. This is particularly evident in the chapters concerning the theory, concepts and methodology. Thus, the disciplines complement each other in an exemplary manner. Therefore, the educational emphasis of the work is emphasized as an approach, which leaves the researcher's own specialty somewhat unclear. However, Salo-Tammivuori's research supplements the work done within the field of cultural heritage research and, more broadly, in the study of cultures, making a good contribution to the multi-voiced debate on cultural heritage and also on the school system and the institutions of society. Through her work, Eeva Salo-Tammivuori contributes to research in the field of cultural heritage studies and cultural studies, which deals not only with cultural heritage but also with institutions and everyday rhythms that are important for society and individuals. The school is one institution that firmly structures everyday life and obliges, nurtures and socializes us. When the subject of the research is a school, the subject of the research is also the stage and the multidimensional world of everyday life, which can be accessed through this dissertation.

The choice of research topic and research problem are interesting. The main question of the thesis is: What is the operating culture and communication of a French school like as an intangible cultural heritage and as a cultural heritage process? With regard to this, Salo-Tammivuori also asks: What reasons have led to the breakdown of the cultural heritage community of the French school in Rauma, i.e., the transfer of children to a Finnish school? What kind of experiences have French pupils and their parents had in the daily life of a Finnish school? The research questions are interesting and challenging, but when you read the work, a question inevitably arises: Does Salo-Tammivuori also study herself as part of the French school, and not only the French school from her experiences and from the experiences

of her interviewees? This question arises from the fact that Salo-Tammivuori's study has a strong reflexive and autoethnographic grip. The researcher's own experiences and the material formed on the basis of them and the interpretations arising from the material are thus prominently present in the work.

One of the key concepts of Salo-Tammivuori's thesis is the *heritage community*. This community is formed by the pupils, teachers, parents, and school inspectors as well as the school administration that decides about the curriculum. In the dissertation Salo-Tammivuori approaches the French school with the help of theoretical aspects presented by Geert Hofstede and Michel Foucault, bringing into focus questions of power, distance, avoidance of uncertainty and discipline.

In addition to cultural heritage and the concepts derived from it, the author has chosen a wide range of umbrella concepts for her work, such as interculturality, communication and the dimensions of culture. Schools build identities – national, collective and individual. Through identities, cultural heritage is also defined and renewed, and because of their power to define, schools also have a major responsibility for nurturing and renewing cultural heritage. Nor is cultural heritage permanent and static, but a process that involves different values and meanings at different times and their transmission. Indeed, cultural heritage always represents conscious choices: remembering or forgetting things, including them or excluding them.

The material consists of 22 interviews, including interviews with French pupils and their mothers who have chosen to enter the Finnish school system, and with mothers whose children have stayed in the French school in Rauma. In addition to these, the material consists of Salo-Tammivuori's own observations and research diaries from 2006 to 2021 and additionally, of research diaries from field trips to France in 2012–2013. In addition, texts written by French students as well as French and Finnish teachers and school assistants are used as material in the study.

The richness of the ethnographic material and the researcher's personal experiences bring narrative depth and personal tone to the work, which is characteristic in cultural studies. Ethnographic methods and ethnographic material have made it possible to delve into the cultural structures of the French school and also of the Finnish school compared with it. With the help of the methods and material, Salo-Tammivuori has come very close to the people who participated in the research, which is one of the great merits of the work. The author also describes in detail the data collection, the conduct of the research, and the associated challenges. The reflections related to the material have been done carefully and convey the researcher's familiarity with the diversity of ethnographic work and the research processes.

Thus, in Salo-Tammivuori's research, reflexivity forms both a tool and an empirical material through which the author arrives at insights, interpretations and analyses of the meaning of structures, customs and everyday routines in French schools. They also highlight symbolic, traditional and value-based perceptions and attitudes with regard to the French school. The author's reflexive approach and openness in doing research, and the challenges this brings, show the author's maturity in looking at herself as a researcher as well. With reflexivity, the researcher places both her feelings and thoughts under a magnifying glass. Salo-Tammivuori's personal experiences often bring interesting and added value to the interpretation, but also contribute to the tension between the French and Finnish schools.

The emic and etic aspects can be considered as merits but also as challenges of the work. Perspectives have led the author away from the inside to also explore things from an outsider's point of view. On the other hand, it has been possible to delve deeper into the things that can be observed from the outside through Salo-Tammivuori's personal and research experiences. There is a lot to learn about the different ways in which schools operate, how they manage their cultures and ideologies. In her work, Salo-Tammivuori brings to the discussion the customs and daily routines of

the French school as well as its characteristics and anomalies.

The material used in the study is sensitive, not least because children are also the subject of her interviews. Salo-Tammivuori discusses the ethical aspects of her research material especially with regard to children, showing her familiarity with research ethics in general. The tradition of discipline and punishment is an essential part of the French school and it is put into practice both at home and at school. In comparison, however, the problems and challenges of the French school are emphasized, even overemphasized, compared to the Finnish school. As a result, the French school is often presented in a rather negative light. A confrontation is formed between a French school that adheres to strict discipline and order and a completely different Finnish school that does not flatter the French school and places the Finnish school even superior to the French one. From the perspective of the research as a whole, the subjects and the research ethics, this is problematic, as the negative image is formed not only through the material but also through the author's own views. The image of a French school is thus normative and distinctive, and the author's views often have an attitudinal and questionable tone. Critical examination of the research subject is, of course, permitted, and there is no intention to do so-called convenience science in the study of cultures. Instead of attitudinal views, it would have been good to give more space to interpretations and reflections in the work, so that the cultural heritage communicated by the French school could also have become more diverse.

Salo-Tammivuori excluded the French school as a tangible heritage and instead, only focuses on it as an intangible heritage. As a reader, I wish that the tangible aspects of the French school could also have been considered in this study, since materiality (such as learning materials, different facilities and artefacts of the school, the food served at the school, etc.) are often discussed in the study. Therefore, a contextualization and problematization of the material aspects of the cultural heritage could also have been expected. As the French



school and school culture are presented as controversial in Salo-Tammivuori's work, a discussion relating to controversial and unpleasant cultural heritage, such as former industrial estates, prisons and mental hospitals would have been fruitful. In addition, the mentally and physically demanding environment of the French school connects the study to both bodily experiences and affectivity, to which Salo-Tammivuori's personal experiences and those of her interviewees are also closely connected.

The author's enthusiasm for the research she does takes the research in many different directions, which is reflected in the conceptual multiplicity of the work and the textbook-like presentation of concepts. In addition to a rich narrative, the research findings would have reached a deeper analytical level through a dialogue of concepts, theories, and empirical evidence. Despite the criticism, the empirical material of the analysis with interesting quotations is also relevant to the study.

As a whole, Eeva Salo-Tammivuori's research forms an interesting entity. The processes of research and the results of her study are reported clearly and consistently. The language of the work is impeccable and the text is written in a captivating way. Salo-Tammivuori's research provides new and interesting research information on the operating cultures of schools and the role and significance of the school, its staff and pupils as guardians and modifiers of cultural heritage. This dissertation therefore provides an interesting and important statement on the diversity and challenges of school culture, teacher culture and educational culture. Children's right to a good school experience and memories is also an important message to convey from this work. Eeva Salo-Tammivuori's work is also a fine addition to the dissertation research conducted at the University of Turku's cultural heritage research. The research contribution is therefore also socially relevant and adds to the interaction between academic research and the educational institution that plays a significant role in our society. The significance of the work thus extends beyond the university, offering valuable perspectives on an institution that

is perceived as important and valued in society, and whose development is influenced by the past, present and future prospects, as well as wider social and global influences. As a result, each school is also special in its own way – just like a thesis completed at the end of a long research period.

*Sanna Lillbroända-Annala, Åbo (Turku)*

### **Life-modes and Sovereignty Processes in Greenland**

*Gry Søbye, Suverænitetsens umulighed og det glemte folk i Grønland. En livsformsanalyse af selvstyreprocessen med udgangspunkt i fangst- og fiskerisektoren. The Impossibility of Sovereignty and the Forgotten People in Greenland. A life-mode analysis of the transition process from home rule to self-government focusing on the fisheries sector. University of Copenhagen 2021. 369 pp. Diss.*

■ In her dissertation *The Impossibility of Sovereignty and the Forgotten People in Greenland*, Gry Søbye studies the connections and conflicts that unfolded between the sovereignty processes and the plurality of life forms, modes of production, as well as different strategies for gaining recognition as a sovereign people in Greenland (2009–2013). In terms of theory, the dissertation draws on the Danish ethnologist Thomas Højrup's state- and life-mode theory, combined with arctic studies (primarily Inuit studies). Empirically the dissertation is based on ethnographic fieldwork among actors within the fishery and catching sector in Greenland (in the period 2011–2013) combined with document and image analysis, including historical documents.

The aim of the dissertation is to provide an insight into what the transition to self-government means for the lived life in Greenland. The dissertation takes a capitalism-critical look at Greenland's economy, politics, and planning, which according to Søbye does not consider different conflicting life-modes, forms of production, and cultural differences.

In the introductory part of the dissertation, Søbye creates a periodization of recent Greenlan-

dic history focusing on the fisheries sector and the fishing and hunting form of production. The periodization is: the colonial time, followed by the welfare state formation, the time of home rule and the new era of self-government. For the colonial period which lasted from the seventeenth century until the Second World War, Søbeye describes a society in which the traditional catch was of great importance and where the colonial authorities built up the monopoly trade in cod liver oil and other products in demand. In the following welfare state period, a key process, according to Søbeye, was the effort to socially equate Greenlanders with Danes, a process which at the same time was based on the expansion of state-owned enterprises and institutions. The subsequent period is defined by Søbeye as the period from 1979 to 2009 under home rule, which transferred part of the political and economic responsibility to the Greenlanders, and which was characterized by subsidies for the fisheries sector. The final period is the time since 2009, when Greenland, through the Act on Greenland Self-Government, became independent. It is during this period that Søbeye's central research interest applies. According to Søbeye, the transition to self-government is characterized by an increased political attention to raw material production, a liberalization of the fisheries sector and the way in which the conditions for catch production are made more difficult.

In the first empirical case we follow the dinghy fisherman Elias, who earns his living as both a fisherman and a hunter – a classic structure with reference to EVP and a practice that, according to Søbeye, rests on the various and preliminary battles between the Danish state apparatus, government agencies and the Greenlandic fishermen and hunters. During her conversations with Elias about fishing, the political development, the course of the year, family and nature, it becomes evident to Søbeye what a struggle it is for Elias to maintain his way of life, but their talks also reveal the ideals and practices supporting his way of life. From an outside, political perspective, Elias is perceived as an ineffective fisherman and a prisoner held in poverty. At the same time, Elias is

singled out by the board manager as an example of a well-functioning fisherman, in the sense of an experienced and careful fisherman. This contrast between being designated by the political discourse as inefficient, but by colleagues in the profession as skilled and reliable shows one version of the opposing ideals that characterize fishing in Greenland. In the following case Søbeye discusses the special Greenlandic institution of “the board”, markets where fishermen and hunters sell their products locally. The case takes its point of departure in the contrast and conflict between the old board and the new one, which was established in Nuuk in 2011. Søbeye shows how the two “boards” represent two different practices: different sellers (from the fishermen themselves or family members, to employed sellers), different ways of presenting the goods and the different ways the board is used as a social gathering place etc., and thus how the two boards represent two different worlds and ideologies.

In another empirical case Søbeye follows Lars and his fishing cutter. According to Søbeye, Lars carries and navigates in several contrasting life-modes. These contrasts create confrontations between considering fishing as a “vocation” or as either an investment opportunity (investor way of life) or a wage job. In the analysis, Søbeye shows how these contrasts have been established and still deepened through political reforms, such as the abolition of the so-called ‘rubber boot clause’ in 2011. Both Elias and Lars point out in their conversations with Søbeye how freedom for them means living in harmony with nature. Søbeye explores this theme in a section on *Nature–culture*, where she zooms in on the difference between having nature or the state as the determining subject, and on the contrasts that exist between a politically initiated technical-scientific horizon and a “hunter” form of production. The section unfolds in particular as an analysis of the logics and effects a technical-scientific (biological) apparatus has on the fishery, including how the understanding of the sea's resources in quota terms creates new conditions for the fishery and thus also new strategic actions among the fishermen. In the fol-



lowing case Søbye's focus shifts to examine variants within the capitalist mode of production. In this section, it is thus Royal Greenland A/S and especially the company's ambivalent positioning in both coastal and offshore fishing, the national and the global, the private and the public, that are discussed. Royal Greenland is the country's largest company and is described as the most crucial distribution relationship in Greenland. After a brief historical introduction, the section focuses on the CEO and his way of life, which is determined to be the career life-mode. This analysis is followed by a case where Søbye follows the everyday life of the smaller company, Romark Seafood A/S. The case describes the challenges of being an entrepreneur in Greenland, where local and global market interests shape a narrative of the entrepreneurial life organized around a private capitalist mode of production, which according to Søbye contrasts with state capitalism and financial capitalism. Søbye ends her analytical part discussing the roles of the state, the civil society and family interests in the current transformation processes, and she describes how these processes are fraught with contrasting perceptions of "freedom", "time", "money", "sustainability", etc.

Against this background, Søbye concludes that, overall, the Act on Greenland Self-Government has facilitated a shift away from a cultural focus on the Greenlandic people as an indigenous people towards an increased economic recognition of the Greenlandic people as a pioneering people who can, and must, assert itself on global market conditions. Pursuing recognition through a specific international law strategy, according to Søbye, enables particular ways of living and vice versa. The Greenlandic people, who started the process of independence from Denmark, have during the process of de-colonization become another people with a different organized set of life-modes.

With her dissertation Søbye contributes to an elevated understanding of how the interplay and struggles between life-modes, and the ongoing sovereignty processes shapes the living cultural unity in Greenland.

*Astrid Jespersen, Copenhagen*

### **Abildgaard's Tableaux as a New View of History**

*Ina Louise Stovner*, Historiske tablåer. En fortellende billedserie i Riddersalen på Christiansborg slott 1778–1791. Institutt for kulturstudier og orientalske språk, Det humanistiske fakultet, Universitetet i Oslo, Novus forlag, Oslo 2021. 215 pp. Ill. Diss.

■ Ina Louise Stovner's dissertation, "Historical Tableaux: A Series of Narrative Pictures in the Great Hall of Christiansborg Palace 1778–1791", analyses the suite of paintings by the Danish artist Nicolai Abraham Abildgaard (1743–1809). The suite originally consisted of ten monumental paintings depicting Danish kings and their deeds, from Christian I (1426–1481) to Christian VII (1749–1808), accompanied by the same number of lunette-shaped grisaille paintings, placed above them, with related motifs. The Great Hall (*Riddersalen*, literally the Knights' Hall) was the largest and most prestigious room in the palace, completed in 1766. It was later adorned with Abildgaard's suite of paintings, which appears to have been commissioned in 1777, the same year he came home from Rome to become professor at the Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen. Stovner has also included in the analysis four overdoors in the Potentates' Hall – a gallery with portraits of contemporary European regents which was the antechamber to the Great Hall. A total suite of 24 paintings is thus analysed, but since Christiansborg Palace burned down in 1794, just three years after Abildgaard had completed the last painting, a large number of the paintings are missing. Of the main suite, three of the paintings are preserved, while all that remains of the others is the artist's oil sketches. Only a few sketches for the grisaille lunettes have been preserved, and of the four overdoors only one is preserved and three as sketches.

The purpose of the study is to investigate the view of history as expressed in Abildgaard's paintings, based on the discussion, introduced by Reinart Koselleck and others, of how ideas about history changed during the decades around 1800. Stovner's approach is to analyse each painting

thoroughly in order to understand the events and actors portrayed in the paintings and the ideals that they highlight, how these ideals are communicated, and finally what the Great Hall as a whole was intended to communicate. The focus is thus on the paintings themselves and the entire pictorial programme in the Great Hall and the Potentates' Hall.

The paintings, or in most cases the sketches, are examined first in a chapter about the overdoors in the Potentates' Hall, and then the ten paintings in the Great Hall, grouped in three chapters under the headings "Veneration and Presence" (*Christian I Raising Holstein to the State of a Duchy in 1474*, *Christian III Succouring Denmark*, *Frederik II Builds Kronborg Castle*, and *King Christian IV on the "Trinity" in the Battle of Colberger Heide in 1644*); "Absolutism and the Citizens" (*Absolute Monarchy Assigned to Frederik III in 1660*, *Christian V Presents Danish Law in 1683*, *Magnus Stenbock Surrenders the Fortress of Tønningen to Frederik IV in 1714*, and *The Construction of Copenhagen Dock in the Reign of Christian VI*); and "The Apotheosis of Absolutism and the Unitary State" (*Frederik V as Patron of Science and the Arts* and *Christian VII Uniting the Ducal with the Royal Part of Holstein in 1767*).

The analyses of the paintings are convincing and in several cases present a credible revision of perceptions in previous research as to how the paintings should be interpreted. In particular, the analysis of a painting that appears at first sight to be rather dry and almost trivial, *Frederik II Builds Kronborg Castle*, is examined in a way that reveals the great depth and many layers of meaning in the painting that, on the surface, shows the seated King Frederik II, surrounded by advisors, viewing the construction of Kronborg Castle in Helsingør. Here it becomes clear that Abildgaard occupies a place as one of the artists who renewed large-scale historical painting in the decades around 1800 and introduced national history as a theme just as worthy as ancient history.

In an interesting passage about the painting *Christian I Raising Holstein to the State of a Duchy in 1474*, Stovner discusses Abildgaard's

use of historical costume and props, and what one might possibly call a kind of proto-realism in the depiction, but she also points out that certain details have been deliberately made anachronistic. Here she cites research on the aesthetic discussions that were carried on in France in the 1770s and 1780s, about historical costume and the importance of historical correctness in art, and she relates this in an interesting way both to the paintings and to articles by Abildgaard in the journal *Minerva*.

Otherwise, unfortunately, there are not very many international sidelights in this study, whether about historical painting in the 1780s or today's international research situation. The suite of paintings is not compared to any other contemporary project, but neither is it clear whether the Danish suite is unique and therefore lacks comparative material. Similarly, there is a notable silence about the state of international research. In an active and enlightening way, Stovner relates to previous research on Abildgaard's paintings, but has few or no references to the broader research situation concerning, for example, historical painting or nationalism.

Another point of principle concerns the attention to correct detail and scholarly accuracy. In many cases there is a lack of information about the images in the book, both those that are analysed and those that serve as illustrations. Admittedly, Stovner's dissertation is not a dissertation in art history, but basic data such as measurements of the paintings, inventory numbers, and where the paintings can be found, as well as clear statements in the captions informing of which are sketches and which are finished paintings are basic elements in any scholarly account. The fact that some of the images indicate Wikipedia as the source in the list of illustrations is also remarkable. It does not take many minutes to discover that most of these images are in fact part of the collections of Frederiksborg Museum of National History. It is also remarkable that there is no detailed description or floor plan of the Great Hall and the Potentates' Hall, which ought to be an obvious part of an investigation of this kind. This

is particularly disturbing because the author on several occasions relates the different paintings to each other without it being clear to the reader how they were hung, and thus how they related to each other physically in the space.

Although the analyses of the individual works are thus competent and plausible, I have questions about the overall conclusion. In the final discussion, Stovner provides the answer to one of her initial questions. By claiming that all the paintings in Abildgaard's series show condensed moments composed using antiquarian details combined with a larger moral message and portrayed in the form of tableaux, she believes that the pictures in the Great Hall cannot be said to be an expression of a "new view of history" in the sense intended by Reinhart Koselleck and others. Instead, the suite should be regarded as a series of snapshots loaded with the past, present, and future, compressing the time-space of the images into a constructed moment where the didactic message takes precedence over any desire for realism.

Stovner's conclusion about the view of history conveyed by the suite of paintings is worth discussing, not just because it is difficult to see why a tableau composition should be at odds with a new view of history. On the contrary, the suite of paintings can be said to be precisely a manifestation of the new view of history that developed roughly during the period 1750–1850. When viewed together, Abildgaard's suite conveys a story about the nation of Denmark rather than about the great deeds of individual kings. One king's work built on what his predecessors had done. If Christian I had not elevated Holstein to a duchy – as depicted in the first painting of the suite – Christian VII would not have been able to unite Ducal Holstein with Royal Holstein as shown in the last painting. Similarly, Christian V's work with the Danish Law, which is the theme of one of the paintings, was only possible because his predecessor Frederik III had been granted absolute power, as depicted in the previous painting. There is thus a kind of evolution and causality in the history depicted in the suite, and it is not the kings themselves who are the subject but what they did,

their importance for Danish history. That this is the case is underlined by the grisaille lunettes belonging to the suite, the subjects of which are much more abstract in relation to the kings. These often concern purely civic virtues such as the national standardization of weights and measures in 1683 and the foundation of the Copenhagen fire insurance company in 1731.

All these are signs of a modern conception of history, in which national history is given an explanatory value and confers legitimacy in ways that had not occurred before, and where events are given a causal connection rather than just a chronological one. The fact that Abildgaard's paintings have national history as their motif, rather than the individual kings, should at least in my view be regarded as a manifestation of the new view of history, quite contrary to Stovner's interpretation.

*Per Widén, Stockholm/Uppsala*

### The Åland Islands

*Ida Hughes Tidlund, Autonomous Åland: A Hundred Years of Borderwork in the Baltic Sea.* Department of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies, Stockholm University 2021. 219 pp. Ill. Diss. ISBN 978-91-7911-586-9.

■ *Ida Tidlund's Autonomous Åland: A Hundred Years of Borderwork in the Baltic Sea* is an account of the establishment, maintenance and character of the Åland Autonomy – a Southern Baltic archipelago of mainly tiny islands, whose current 30,000 or so inhabitants comprise around 0.5% of the total Finnish population. Her work draws on a variety of documentary sources, archived interview material, and her own interviewing and participant observation, facilitated by existing knowledge of the islands through family connections. Sartre's concept of the "practico-inert" provides the author's main theoretical inspiration, enabling her to unpack the way in which borders, territorial and material but also judicial and cultural, are the products of human action, and then subsequently constrain and enable, but do not entirely determine it. It allows her to show how

circumstances at any given time affect the possibilities of defending or extending borders and that even the maintenance of any status quo tends to require continual effort. Åland provides a particularly interesting case through which to develop an understanding of such “borderwork” and to illustrate how “a border is both a source of actions and an object of actions”. It is the modern world’s first territorial autonomy and one sometimes held up as a model for peacefully accommodating a minority population within a larger national state.

Tidlund shows that Åland’s history is complicated. Holding the first session of its autonomous parliament in 1922 was a culmination of a chain of events beginning in 1809, when Sweden had to cede its Finnish territories, including the Åland islands, to the Russian Empire, moving them from “being in the centre of a Swedish realm”, to becoming a western outpost of the Russian one. Their status became problematic again when Finland declared its independence from Russia in 1917, following which the Swedish-speaking islanders petitioned the Swedish state and subsequently appealed to the post-war Paris Peace conference, to return them to rule from Sweden. However, in 1921, when Finland’s civil war had ended, the international powers, through the newly established League of Nations, decided, via the Åland Convention, to endorse Finnish claims to the territory. They simultaneously confirmed and internationally-guaranteed, the Finnish parliament’s 1920 Åland Autonomy Act, which the islanders had originally rejected. This gave the latter their own administration and protections for their Swedish language use, traditions, customs and landownership rights. The Åland Islands’ demilitarized and neutral status, initially established after the Crimean War, was also reaffirmed – as it was again (after infractions during World War II) in the Paris Peace Agreement of 1946, when tensions between the Eastern and Western blocs underlined their potential strategic significance.

Reasons for assigning the Ålanders to Finland against their will seem to have included rewarding the latter for its struggles against the Bolsheviks, and a fear of leaving the Swedish-speaking pop-

ulation on the Finnish mainland dangerously isolated if the islanders returned to Sweden. The international diplomats also felt that the most “natural” and defensible geographical break between Sweden and Finland ran, as had the nineteenth-century divide between the former and the Russian Empire, through the largely open water to the west of the Åland Islands. The rejected alternative, through the more complicated strait of Skiftet to the east of the islands, became instead the border between the new Åland Autonomy and the rest of Finland.

However, this was not the end of matter, the exact location of the Åland borders and of the demilitarized zone being finessed over the years for a variety of reasons. One was the problematic location of the lighthouse built by Russian-Finland in 1885 on Märket – a tiny outcrop of uninhabited land at the westernmost extremity of the Åland Autonomy and the only place where the Swedish/Finnish national border in the Baltic is land-based. Tidlund spends considerable time detailing how committees were set up in 1981 to resolve the anomaly of the Finnish-owned and maintained building being located on the Swedish side of the island’s border and describing how committee members, aided by homemade paper models, devised a new boundary line. Through a curious zigzag, this managed to put the lighthouse into Finnish territory without changing the proportion of the island owned by each country or the points at which the land boundary hit the sea on either side of the island. Emphasizing the material component of such borderwork, Tidlund then depicts how “after three years of work”, metal studs supplemented by painted markings physically “sculpt[ed]” a new border across the rock.

Other remedial work was required because of inadequacies in the maps on which the original borders were based. Somewhat simplifying Tidlund’s complicated and detailed account, we can say that lacunae were found in, and discrepancies between, depictions of boundaries of the demilitarized zone and of the Autonomy as they ran through Skiftet. Continuing post ice-age land rise posed another difficulty since this potentially

shifted the location of the maritime edges of the Autonomy's (territorial) borders defined in relation to their distance from shorelines. Things were further complicated in 2000 when the local geographer, Ekman, instrumental in raising the above difficulties, also pointed out that the original demarcators of the demilitarized zone had misunderstood the correct relationship between straight lines drawn on a 2D map and their corresponding location on the curved surface of the actual earth. More committee work was needed before boundaries were redrawn in 2005 and the decision was made to revise the borders in the light of further land level rises at 50-year intervals. The reader concludes that, symbolically at least, even small ambiguities and deviations in their territorial (if largely sea-based) borders are hard for Ålanders to tolerate – even if they may also choose to ignore or unofficially slip through them in certain circumstances.

Nation-states' territorial borders typically mark the divide between different legal regimes. Thus, to mention a distinction affecting the actions of many Ålanders (and smugglers), "oral tobacco"/*snus* can be legally sold in Sweden, but not in Finland, including the Autonomy, although its personal use is permitted in the latter. But as a Territorial Autonomy *within* Finland, the jurisdictional border between the spheres of island life over which the Autonomy's own parliament can legislate and those where powers are reserved to the Finnish national legislature are equally or more important. This is the boundary that determines the spheres in which the islanders have to obey the same laws as all other Finns and those (for example concerning Swedish language use and rights to property ownership and to engage in certain kinds of trading) where in Åland separate Åland law applies. As with its territorial borders, the precise limits of the Autonomy's legal authority were left rather vague in the original Åland settlement and have subsequently been subject to dispute and continuous clarification, with the first major revision (adding the new Right of Domicile and Right to Trade) coming into force in 1952 and a second in 1993. A third was still under negoti-

ation at Tidlund's time of writing. Some changes were also entailed by the Protocol signed in 2004 after Åland voted to follow Finland in joining the EU in 1995.

One particular mechanism for testing the boundary of the Ålanders' legislative powers (and for producing conflict) has been their parliament's right to propose new laws – and the reciprocal duty of the Finnish government to decide whether or not these fit within the Autonomy's sphere of authority. But Tidlund also suggests that changing circumstances typically tend to make the kind of division of powers initiated in the original Autonomy Act unstable. The original legislators, for example, could not anticipate that the arrival of television would raise questions about the division of responsibilities for broadcast regulation. But probably most significant has been the Ålanders' desire to extend the scope of their autonomy, particularly since the end of World War II, when renewed attempts to rejoin Sweden were thwarted. From this point onwards, they increasingly cultivated a sense of their own unique identity, which they felt required reducing the control of the Finnish national state over their lives.

With reference to, for example, Gellner and Smith, Tidlund suggests the relevance of the Åland case to deciding whether a people's belief in their shared characteristics typically precedes and contributes to, or derives from the consequences of, national bordering. In this instance it seems to me to be a bit of both. Prior to the establishment of the Autonomy, the islanders objectively shared many cultural characteristics with each other and also with the rest of the Swedish population which they wished to join as members of the Swedish state. Subjectively, however, they seem to have had little sense of a common identity as Ålanders, frequently pointing to differences between the inhabitants of the various Åland islands and often travelling more frequently to mainland Sweden or Finland than elsewhere in the archipelago, which, at this time, lacked a clear central location or major town. In the post-war years, however, this began to change, helped by the extensive nation-building efforts of "myth-mak-

er” Matts Dreijer, Chief Archaeologist, Director of the Åland Museum, Deputy Director of the main newspaper and much else. He designed a national flag, was instrumental in instituting an Åland National/Autonomy Day and in proposing Mariehamn as capital. He was also the driving force behind the programme of interviews with older inhabitants, whose archive provides one of Tidlund’s own data sources. Dreijer’s sometimes leading questions sought to evoke memories of respondents’ lives and traditional practices both to preserve them and show how they differed from those of mainland Finns. Given nation-builders’ typical concern to furnish their project with a distinguished past, it is unsurprising to find Dreijer also authoring a multi-volume history, stressing Åland’s distinctive character from at least the sixth century and its centrality to the Viking empire. Nor is it surprising to learn that Åland-specific school history texts were then produced to replace those previously brought in from Sweden or Swedish-speaking Finland. Children’s sense of belonging to, and place within, a distinctive bounded Åland was also to be fostered by new maps for schools, one of which, by attempting to allow pupils not only to grasp their homeland’s boundaries but also pinpoint their own place within them, became unmanageably large. Tidlund more generally notes the prevalence of Åland maps in public places, contributing to the Autonomy becoming imaginable as a distinct and identifiable community.

She also shows how “border pop-ups”, that is, the impingement of territorial and judicial boundaries on everyday life, contribute to contemporary Ålanders’ sense of living in a distinctive shared space. For example, the small size of the Autonomy means its inhabitants often travel beyond it, or obtain goods from elsewhere, meaning that they frequently have to deal with the consequences of its current position outside the EU tax territory (but within the EU customs border). Sending or receiving items by post across Åland’s border, including into or from mainland Finland, requires them declaring their value and possibly paying duty. Internet purchases may become impossible if firms outside the islands are unpre-

pared to deal with convoluted regulations, whilst bringing goods bought in Helsinki or Stockholm back to the islands in one’s own car involves deciding how scrupulous to be about mentioning this on return. “Pop-ups” can also occur without any physical border crossing, when decisions have to be made as to which set of laws are dominant in particular circumstances. Tidlund reports policemen on patrol complaining that they lack the time to laboriously check whose laws they should be applying in every case and being tempted to improvise their choices. Whilst Ålanders seem extremely sensitive about the formal content of regulations, they can also be pragmatic when deciding how or whether to apply them. Maybe this connects to their being well practised in what Tidlund calls “hodological navigation”, where people have to continually negotiate the range of sometimes conflicting factors they need to take into account in order to reach their primary goal. Borders and an island location often necessitate these kinds of calculation and a continual alertness to possibly changing circumstances. What route, for example should a fishing crew choose to get its catch to market in Stockholm quickly enough to keep it in prime condition, that will also allow a stop-off at Mariehamn for a customs check whilst avoiding stormy weather?

Tidlund’s analysis suggests that the other side of the Ålanders’ apparently increasing sense of common identity is decreasing knowledge about, and a growing feeling of difference from, the Finnish “Other”. Stronger internal integration and greater sense of external threat seem reciprocally inter-related. Today’s islanders are reported as showing little interest in mainstream Finnish politics, tending only to watch Swedish television or follow local newspapers and news channels, whilst simultaneously being perpetually alert for perceived disrespect or provocation from the Finnish national state. “Pretty much everything,” says Tidlund, “can activate an underlying friction” and sense of their autonomy being challenged. Unsurprisingly the Finnish government’s nationwide Covid rulings have not gone down well in Åland. As might also be expected, given



its cultural significance, language is a particularly potent source of tension. A television film subtitled in the “wrong” text or a sign in Finnish in a municipal office may be interpreted as at best uncaring, at worst a hostile act. Any communication from a Finnish authority not sent in Swedish, as legally required, is likely to cause anger (even though this failure may be due to the declining number of mainland Finns with Swedish language competence, rather than any deliberate desire to provoke). This all makes things particularly tricky for Finnish speakers in the Autonomy, (“a minority within the minority”) whose children (unlike Swedish-speaking youngsters on the mainland) are offered minimal opportunities for learning or using their home language in school. Respondents told Tidlund they need to self-censure use of their mother tongue at work and in other public places. She creates the impression that the islands are not a particularly relaxed place either for them or the majority population. Her methodological reflections note the great care she took to avoid offending or appearing partisan – one of the reasons for presenting her work in English. Ensuring absolute anonymity for her own interviewees and those in the archive was also imperative in a small interconnected world where individual and kinship reputation is important and respondents frequently asked about her own family background. Even I, as an outsider from Wales, have become anxious when writing this review, lest I accidentally mistake or misinterpret some piece of data about Åland and unintentionally cause offence!

However, though the research shows how tense and threatened Swedish-speaking Ålanders can *feel*, I’m less certain how far their way of life is *actually* in danger. Tidlund points to the functionality of expressing threat, to legitimate an Autonomy initially established to protect minority rights. But her understandable reluctance to embark on an extensive analysis of the Åland islands from the perspective of the Finnish state is one factor making evaluating the real degree of objective peril hard to judge. However, total hostility to Ålander interests doesn’t seem to be suggested by, for example, the Finnish government’s stance

in the negotiations for EU entry. Here it supported arrangements to ensure the Ålanders maintained their existing special rights (not least the right of domicile which contravened existing EU legislation). It also supported Åland being able to join the EU without becoming a member of its tax union. This allowed tax-free sales on the ferries linking it to Sweden and Finland to continue and Mariehamn to remain an attractive port of call for international cruise ships. Some estimate that the islands’ economy would have shrunk by about 50% had this particular arrangement not been made. (*Åland in the European Union* ET-100004-EN-v1582203622006.pdf (accentuate.io).)

What may actually be more troubling than Finnish governmental antagonism, and less easy for Ålanders to acknowledge, are potential contradictions between retaining cultural distinction and otherwise developing the economy. More detail would be interesting here, but Tidlund begins to suggest a growing difficulty in filling professional vacancies from within the Autonomy, with potential immigrants from the mainland deterred by the islands’ relentless monolingualism which affects both day-to-day interaction and their possibilities of gaining the right of domicile and also land ownership. (In 2006, 92% of the islanders had Swedish as their mother tongue, reduced slightly to 87% by 2018.) Further, whilst population isn’t overall declining, there seems to be some anxiety about young Ålanders leaving for higher education failing to return. (The Autonomy’s age structure is not discussed.) Tourism might also possibly be a two-edged sword, economically important but perhaps a little dangerous? The prohibitions on non-domiciles owning land/property presumably prevents the kind of cultural dilution by “outsider” second-home owners, which, for example, nationalists in Wales find so worrying. But what about holiday lets and all those bi- or multilingual tourist brochures I find on the web? Finally, I also wonder about internal divisions within the Swedish-speaking Åland population. Are there any? If so, do they tend to cross-cut or mutually reinforce each other and how far do they threaten stability? We learn nothing about differ-

ences in the policies of the Autonomy's political parties. Is there general consensus that "now we just need to protect the autonomies we have", or do some hope to move towards even greater separation from Finland (perhaps with some economic support from the European Union)?

Nonetheless, despite possible lacunae, this is a well written, often subtly argued book and a useful contribution to understanding micro-nationalisms and bordering, particularly in maritime contexts. Managing to travel through different time periods and navigate between the discussion of international and national political structures on the one hand and the character of day-to-day life and interpersonal relations on the other, it clearly shows the inter-connection of many types of "bordering". Its stress on the latter's complexity is particularly timely, when, as Tidlund herself points

out, assumptions about the inevitable decline of inter-state divisions in Western Europe now seem questionable. Her emphasis on the work that has to go into not just creating but maintaining boundaries seems apposite at a time when Brexiteers find their desire to "take back control" of Britain's borders less straightforward than expected, when barbed wire is erected to block the journeys of refugees and we daily observe new regulative attempts (and failures) to prevent viruses moving between states.

*Postscript:* This review was written before Russia's invasion of Ukraine raised new questions about the security of borders in the Baltic region, triggering Finnish and Swedish moves to join Nato and debates about changing Åland's demilitarized status.

*Hilary Stanworth, Swansea University*