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Photo: Mural painting in Trastevere, Rome. I still remember how it was before.
Photo: Billy Ehn.

Contents

Editorial

By Lars-Eric Jönsson

In late April we received the news that professor emeritus Nils-Arvid Bringéus had passed away. He was 97 years old. He was born in Malmö but grew up in the small town of Örkelljunga in the south of Sweden. He defended his PhD thesis *Klockringningsseden i Sverige* ("The Bell Ringing Custom in Sweden") in 1958 and was appointed professor of ethnology at Lund University in 1967.

He retired 1991 but remained thereafter a very active scholar. His bibliography is longer than most. It includes books such as *Människan som kulturvarelse* ("Man as a Cultural Being", 1976), *Livets högtider* ("Festivals of the Life Cycle", 1987), and *Bildlore* (1981). There is of course a lot more to be said about the work and contribution of Bringéus (see the obituary by Gösta Arvastson, Jonas Frykman, and Orvar Löfgren in this volume).

To me, an ethnologist whose main interest is in historical studies, Bringéus was of particular importance. I met him the first time when he was president of the now dissolved Swedish Society of Cultural History, the publisher of *Rig*, the Swedish journal of cultural history. I was then about to succeed Birgitta Svensson as editor in chief. Since I was a newcomer in Lund I must have appeared like a loose cannon to Nils-Arvid. Nevertheless, I passed the test and had the fortune to edit a few texts from his pen.

Bringéus' general importance is of course also related to the fact that he started *Ethnologia Scandinavica* in 1971. Furthermore, he was its first editor in chief. As such and as initiator of the journal he had a major influence on the development of the discipline on a Nordic basis, an aspect of our discipline that not only concerns our empirical interests but also has collaboratory aspects. Today more than ever, Nordic scholars in ethnology benefit from such collaboration.

I prefer to see *Ethnologia Scandinavica* as one of the important institutions in this collaboration. The journal is an arena for the presentation of our investigations and the dialogue between writers, reviewers, and critics. This is one reason why we keep an extensive review section. However, the article section is also, of course, of fundamental importance to us. This year we start with the timely piece from Elias Mellander on the theme of "preppers" and prepping cultures. More specifically, this is studied through the lens of fear and similar emotions. It is situated in a time when the belief in the welfare state is partly abandoned in favour of self-reliance, where the responsibility for one's own welfare is placed on the individual rather than society. However, Mellander also shows how prepper cultures is a sign of caring and collective responsibility.

From prepping we move to the related practices of reduction of food waste, investigated as a form of everyday resistance against consumerism. Liia-Maria Raippalinna shows how this resistance is grounded in cultural positions as consumers, but also as citizens, professionals, and activists. We are given several examples of everyday practices that go beyond political programmes, and ideals. The food theme is further developed by Maria Vanha-Similä and Kaisa Vehkalahti, who take autobiographical writings by rural Finnish women born in the 1950s as both a starting point and a main source. They show how food and food production appears as a central topic in these writings. Memories of be-

longing, not least during times of social change, may have been relevant for how these memories were brought to the fore during the pandemic, with questions on prepping and storage of food.

This is followed by Birgitte Romme Larsen's article, which brings the reader to a small Danish town where a state institution was relocated 2019. The state institution moved into the local town hall, which had until recently been the municipal centre but had now lost that function. This does not mean that it had lost its meanings. The tension between national cohesion and the local history of a sovereign past was materialized in the town hall itself. Local municipal identity was still strongly connected to the building and its furniture, that is, its materiality and its preservation.

Evelina Liliequist takes her starting point in experiences of queer parenthood and the sharing of photographs from parenthood in social media. She takes the reader through a visual landscape of same-sex nuclear families. The stories told are about openness and visibility and not primarily about making statements. Instead, Liljequist finds claims of ordinariness, claims that at the same time recognize differences. Displaying ordinariness is, as Liliequist concludes, a way of widening the frames of normality.

Line Steen Bygballe and Astrid Pernille Jespersen follow with an investigation of the changing modes of volunteer work, not least its increasing role in supporting welfare systems. The authors show how tacit knowledge, socio-material objects, and habits are central parts of volunteer work and experiences.

Maja Povrzanović Frykman, Eleonora Narvselius, and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa take on a problem that many departments, not least in the humanities, are dealing with right now: language. They show how social status in academia is decoupled from linguistic integration, at least if we understand status in terms of academic titles. Feelings of insufficiency and incompleteness are, however, prevalent, even among those whose Swedish proficiency is objectively very high. The authors underline the value of language, how competence in English, Swedish, and other languages is crucial for academics' possibilities to work and build careers.

This article section in this volume is wrapped up with Barbro Blehr's methodological reflection on participant observation. Via articles and reviews in *Ethnologia Scandinavica* she tracks the meaning, frequency, and implications of the method during a period that witnessed increased interest in and legal regulation of investigations involving humans. Blehr concludes that participant observation has gained its place in ethnology in a rather tacit way. From a few critical comments in the 1970s and 1980s, it soon became a normalized and common method in the ethnologist's toolbox.

Dread Expectations?

Prepping, Culture, and Fear in Late Modernity
By Elias Mellander

The interest in prepping – i.e., the practice of preparing oneself and one's household for future crises – has been on the rise in Sweden since the 2010s, made visible through numerous blogs, handbooks, podcasts, social media forums, and specialty stores. This interest reached new heights during the Covid-19 pandemic and once again peaked during the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine,[1] as people looked for strategies to handle a sense of growing uncertainty. With its cultural roots in North America, prepping culture has spread globally (Barker 2020:486) and today exists as an intersection of subcultural community, hobby activity, and civil defence – often focusing on the development of skills and material preparations for situations where the proverbial "shit hits the fan".

The emergence of the Swedish prepping culture coincided with a period when civil and military preparedness has been the object of scrutiny and debate. From a global perspective, the spread of prepping is closely connected to the proliferation of nebulous existential threats to individuals and society in late modernity, such as terrorism, climate change, or economic instability. In turn, prepping has often been explained as a strategy for maintaining control and staving off anxiety and fears in an increasingly uncertain world (Bounds 2021:31; Fetterman et al. 2019:508; Sims & Grigsby 2019:115; Smith & Jenkins 2021:2). With some frequency medialized depictions of prepping have framed it as a deviant, paranoid, or even pathological disposition, where distrust of others and overreliance on material possessions become symbols of a delusional aspiration to master the uncontrollable (Barker 2020; cf. Foster 2014).

With an understanding of feelings and emotions as historically and socially situated forms of embodied experience, the aim of this article is to explore how cultural fears and anxieties in late modernity are negotiated within Swedish prepping.[2] Of particular interest here is the processes whereby collective fears are articulated and how these in turn relate to prevailing societal moods and imaginaries, as well as to governmental discourse and national policy. This posits fear as an analytical tool to map how understandings of risk, danger, virtue and moral action intermingle in contemporary culture.

The Study

The term prepping encompasses numerous strategies for bolstering self-sufficiency and dealing with short- or long-term disruptions in consumer markets and societal infrastructures (Barker 2020; Garrett 2020a; Kabel & Chmidling 2014; Mills 2019). In practice, it manifests as a cultural repertoire of materialities (water filters, canned foods, breathing masks, etc.), skills (first aid, growing vegetables, making fire, etc.), personal capacities (in terms of physical, mental, and cognitive resilience), and social networks – ranging from getting to know one's neighbours, to establishing strategic prepper communities (Mellander 2021:2; Sims & Grigsby 2019:96). Furthermore, what separates prepping from e.g. bushcrafts, wilderness survival, or farm- or homesteading in a more general sense, is its anticipatory disposition and orientation towards the future as a field of risk (cf. Barker 2020:487). A motto used among English-speaking as well as Swedish preppers is that one needs to think of potential crises or disasters as a question of *when*, not *if*.

This article is primarily based on in-depth interviews, conducted between 2020 and 2022, with individuals[3] who already were actively engaged in prepping at the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of the interviewees were contacted through open calls in Swedish social media groups for prepping and crisis preparedness. The call asked for participants who possessed "long-term crisis preparations", i.e. planning beyond the one-week preparations recommended by the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency. It also made clear that the participants did not need to identify as preppers, as early fieldwork as well as the research on European preppers by Campbell, Sinclair & Browne (2019) suggested that this is a contended identity category.

As it turned out, some of the participants happily identified as preppers, while others expressly resisted the epithet, due to the perceived association with "gun-crazy Americans" and doomsday romanticism (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:817). Yet, others had a more pragmatic view of the prepper label, simply stating that they prepped and that that technically made them preppers. Regardless, all took part in prepper discourse through social media, and they were united through prepping practices, having stocked supplies to last from a couple of weeks up to several months. Among the twenty participants were twelve men and eight women, in the age range from the early thirties to the late sixties, with a majority being born in the 1970s and 1980s. Geographically, they were located throughout Sweden and evenly distributed between cities, smaller municipalities, and rural areas. In terms of socioeconomic status, the participants can with a few exceptions be situated within the middle class, holding professional titles such as teacher, engineer, or programmer.

The study encompasses two primary temporal dimensions: the future imaginaries of situations the participants feel they need to prepare for, and the actual preparations that they engage with in the here and now. Interviews are suitable for examining the former, as they can capture intangible aspects of everyday life, such as past experiences and expectations of the future (Davies 1999:95; Gray 2003:71). Because of the limits placed on the fieldwork due to the ongoing pandemic, the latter had to be explored through the participant documentation, which resulted in a variety of materials, ranging from guided video walkthroughs and photographs, to extensive Excel sheets listing supplies – sometimes down to the last calorie. Besides providing insight into the quantities and qualities of the preparations, the documentation also served as a reflexive instance where the ideals, emotions, practices, and materials of prepping could be discussed in concert (Heidenstrøm 2020:386; cf. Czarniawska 2007; Fletcher & Klepp 2017). The interviews generally followed a thematic structure, inquiring into the participants' personal biography, household economy, entry into and views on prepper culture, actual crisis preparedness, media usage, interpersonal and societal trust, as well as views on the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic[4] and of the future in general.

The futurity of prepping practices means that that-which-may-be extends into the present life world, being experienced through the intermingling of materialities, affects, and imagination (cf. Beckert 2016:51; Merleau-Ponty 2002:159). In

moving forward through the socio-material landscape of everyday life, objects in the surroundings draw attention and intention, serving as guideposts that help in establishing a sense of one's place in the world – of having a sense of direction and being oriented. Whether they serve as goals to aspire to or as taboos to be avoided, these objects, which may take the form of material things as well as more intangible entities such as dreams or emotions, give the movement meaning (Ahmed 2006:27; Frykman & Gilje 2003:42; cf. Frykman 2012:20). As these orientations are learned and shared, they become cemented as lines in the cultural landscape, manifesting as collective norms and expectations.

Orientations can be traced in the expression and description of feelings, as experienced enthusiasm or antipathy shape patterns of proximity and distance (Flatley 2008:25f; Svensson 2011). Here, feelings as a concept encompass the emotional as well as the sensory; responses to external stimuli as well as tactile examination of one's surroundings (Edwards 2010:24; Frykman & Löfgren 2004:9). Since the aim here is not to determine their nature, but to examine how they set things in motion (Ahmed 2004:4; Svensson 2011:68), the use of feelings provides circumnavigation of the theoretical divide between affects and emotions, where the former typically is defined as pre-discursive and the latter as imbued with cultural meaning (cf. Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016:13f). As orientations are understood to be shared and collective, so are feelings – never existing in isolation from previous experience, nor the surrounding life world. In turn, the expression of feelings is a social act, performed within a cultural logic

that affords it meaning and that influences how bodily experiences manifest (Stattin 2006:9f; cf. Anderson 2014; Hörnfeldt 2018:155).

Of particular interest here is fear along with its affinitive emotions, such as apprehension or anxiety. These feelings demarcate danger and therefore push towards action in order to preserve that which is under threat (Stattin 2006:267). Typically, fear is characterized as being directed towards an object, and the fear intensifies as it approaches or is approached (Ahmed 2004:63ff; Gilje 2016:32f; Stattin 2006:93). The circumstances of any such approach shape the embodied experience, turning fear into a situational and shifting category. In turn, this gives pedagogic as well as moral dimensions to fear, as fearful objects are socially marked, creating collective orientations around them (Hörnfeldt 2018:153; 157; cf. Stattin 2006:22f). This means that one can hold certain objects as *fearful* while not necessarily feeling *afraid*. In contrast, anxiety lacks a definite object and manifests as a mood (Gilje 2016:34) or as a reflective process, producing as a state of unease experienced in the body and mind as one is mulling over dangers that may or may not materialize (Paulsen 2020:55f).

The Dread of Late Modernity
Numerous scholars have described a fearful mood or mode as defining culture in late modernity – particularly in the post-9/11 era – which is expressed in everything from policy to popular culture (see e.g. Bauman 2006; Beck 2012; Brown 2010; Ferguson 2021; Furedi 2006; Määttä 2015). This atmosphere of risk and insecurity is regularly employed as an explanation for

the concurrent spread of prepping culture. This may seem paradoxical since the people of late modernity are better informed than ever about the dangers they face and how to address them (Paulsen 2020:277). But, by knowing, one learns of all the unknowns that still lie out of reach (Garrett 2020a:88; cf. Bauman 2006:130). In turn, the monetary, as well as attention-based economies of media infrastructures, help in proliferating awareness of known as well as unknown dangers at a historically unmatched pace (cf. Bounds 2021:25; Mills 2018:3; Stattin 2006:130). This turns the future in its entirety into an object for calculation and imaginaries, making it a vast canvas on which to project anxious "what-ifs" (Paulsen 2020:93f; cf. Beckert 2016; Brissman 2021).

Accordingly, rather than being fixated on any one specific object of fear, both Mills (2018:7) and Garrett (2020b:4) argue that prepping culture is driven by an "objectless anxiety", where the multiplicity of threats motivate the desire to prepare (see also Campbell Sinclair & Browne 2019:801). Garrett (2020a) articulates this as a sense of dread – a creeping, anticipatory feeling, differing from anxiety in that it is oriented towards the future rather than the here-and-now, and being distinct from fear in that it lacks a specific object. In the words of Kierkegaard, dread is a "sweet feeling of apprehension" (Kierkegaard 1968:38, quoted in Garrett 2020b:5), stemming from knowing the cost of the choices we face in life, as well as our freedom to make those choices. It is the feeling one gets from standing at a precipice, peering over the edge and being filled with repulsion at the prospect of falling, and at the same time knowing that jumping off is a constant possibility, only guarded by choice.

The kind of dread Garrett (2020a:167) describes originates from the proliferation of anthropogenic, existential threats, starting with the detonation of the first atom bombs during the Second World War and escalating further with the nuclear arms race of the Cold War (cf. Hörnfeldt 2018:157f). By unlocking the power of the atom, humanity reached for the universe's primordial powers, along with the capacity to destroy itself in totality (Brissman 2021:179). While there are many possible existentially challenging disasters in which we collectively or individually have little say – a pertinent example being an asteroid impact like the one that likely led to the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction event – the nuclear threat offers a special kind of dread, much like peering over the edge. Someone has a say in whether or not the proverbial button gets pushed; whether or not the choice is made. It is seemingly within our control as a collective, but decidedly out of reach for all but a few human individuals. With the end of the Cold War and the "end of history" (Fukuyama 1992), the threat of nuclear obliteration receded from its centre-stage position among anthropogenic threats. Although it is fair to say it has made something of a comeback to the collective consciousness due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, it has to some extent been supplanted by the climatological and environmental crisis (Garrett 2020b:3; Hörnfeldt 2018:165). Along with threats such as the spread of multi-resistant bacteria or zoonotic diseases like the Covid-19 pandemic, these threats transcend the nature/culture divide, making the very infrastructure of progress

and civilization the carrier of our potential undoing (Brissman 2021:202; cf. Anderson 2010:779).

Once again, these threats are actionable in theory, but close to impossible to address on an individual level, shaping a societal mood in the line of what Bauman (2006) has dubbed "liquid fear". This articulates the feeling of being beset by threats that "flow, seep, leak, ooze" (p. 105) and are at the same time everywhere and nowhere in particular, like terrorism, economic collapse or environmental disaster. These threats force us to face the limits of knowledge and of our capacity to fend off danger. According to Garrett (2020a:10), these worries are further compounded by a diminishing belief in the ability of the current political discourse to provide meaningful solutions, making individual preparation a sensible reaction.

Beginnings
The reasons that led the participants to invest (cf. Ahmed 2006:17ff) time, money, and themselves in preparations are numerous, but typically anchored in personal experience first and foremost. Stories of "the road to prepping" tend to fall into one of two categories, where the first frames the term prepping as something the participants have attached to a disposition that was already there. Often this is articulated as a form of heritage, handed down in a more or less conscious manner. A parent with experience from a medical profession or the military may have inspired certain forms of risk awareness, or the drive towards preparedness emerges from growing up in the countryside, where the occasional blackout was par for the course and a certain level of self-reliance a necessity.

In the other category are those who link their decision to prepare to a more clearly defined event – typically a situation where they experienced some form of vulnerability on a societal level. Pontus, who works in IT, links his professional experience with the decision to prep, as he knows "exactly how fragile all that crap that we develop is" and how that fragility is transferred to society "because infrastructure is software today, so if we shut it down, it's over. Then the entire logistics chain will stop, the supply of electricity and water and food and entirely everything." Jakob on the other hand draws on his experience from working in a non-profit organization in 2015, as large groups of Syrian refugees reached Sweden. The muddled response from Swedish authorities frustrated him, as much responsibility was left to volunteers in an initial phase. It also left him with the question of how equipped Swedish society was to handle a more immediate crisis, stating that "if the authorities haven't planned for it, things can become very jumbled in the beginning, and then the individual can get stuck in the middle". In both examples, it is not primarily an instance of personal vulnerability or fear that has spurred preparations, but rather precarity experienced in a more general sense (Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:804f; Mills 2019:2).

The participants view their prepping as a strategic response to external risks, although some frame it as in part motivated by more emotional needs. Freja describes it as to some extent being "therapeutic" and something that makes her "feel good". She contemplates whether it would be more rational for her to "fight harder against climate change or antibiotic-resistant bacteria, two things that are likely to cause a lot

of suffering and death", instead of buying "a water filter with a lifetime warranty". She continues:

So why do I do that… the answer is probably that it feels great to have one… it's nice to have a hobby and do something that feels positive for yourself and for others. And it lowers anxiety. It creates a sense of control in a pretty uncertain world. And it is probably that, the feeling that you can do something concrete. Because the other things are so damn big. Climate change and antibiotic resistance – they're huge. But these little things I can control. I can make sure that I and those close to me can get food and water and salt. And that… that is wonderful.

Facing the arbitrary and uncertain aspects of the world can be an invitation to feelings of anxiety or disorientation (cf. Svensson 2011:72). However, unlike the incalculable risks surrounding global, societal threats, prepping practices are here and now, surveyable and navigable, creating a sense of direction beginning literally in the palm of Freja's hand (cf. Ahmed 2006:13). She acknowledges that her preparations might prove not to be the right ones if – or *when* – disaster strikes, but that by "having these things, [she gets] the sense that there is something [she] can control and that is very comforting". This aspirational disposition is here interpreted in terms of *directedness* in a phenomenological sense. Rather than manifesting as any definite sense of control, this establishes what objects to move towards or away from, while in the process attaining agency (Flatley 2008:25f; Svensson 2011:80) and illustrating a tacit assumption attached to prepping practices; doing *something* is always preferable to doing *nothing* (cf. Kabel & Chmidling 2014:259; Garrett 2020a:15).

When it comes to prepping, the objects that draw attention are often material ones – water filters, canned foods, first aid kits, fire extinguishers, gas masks, space blankets. These things share an antithetical relationship with yet-to-be-realized threats like dehydrating, starving, bleeding, burning, suffocating, freezing. As such, they both manifest and make these dangers manageable, if not outright controllable (Anderson 2010:792f; cf. Aldousari 2014). The things won't prevent bad things from happening, but when disaster strikes, the preparations are expected to function as an open-ended and flexible material repertoire that allows the body to extend into action (Barker 2020:488; cf. Ahmed 2006:134).

While preparations require some extent of premeditation and contemplation of "what ifs" (cf. Anderson 2010:783; Mitchell 2002:214), numerous participants question the efficacy of planning for specific scenarios. "Perhaps you prepare for the zombie apocalypse, but forget to go to the doctor for a medical check-up," Jakob jokes. A better way to prep, he argues, is to start with the basics one needs to survive – shelter, heat, light, water, food – and prepare different ways to keep these needs fulfilled, no matter what happens. Seemingly, this also removes any defined objects of fear from the equation.

In the same vein, outright apocalyptic visions play a marginal role in the participants' imaginaries, in contrast to how preppers often have been characterized in media representations (cf. Barker 2020:492; Rahm 2013:75; Kabel & Chmidling 2014:258; Kelly 2016). Talk about "the collapse" is not absent from prepper forums or from the participants' stories, but it seems to serve as a self-referential, ironic, and

playful rhetoric for highlighting or exploring the extremes of prepping – much like Jakob's reference to the zombie apocalypse above (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:806; Huddleston 2017:242; Mitchell 2002:214f). There is however no doubt that the participants tend towards a pessimistic, glass-half-full-about-to-be-empty disposition. To some extent, this pessimism is tempered by what Mitchell (2002:22f) calls a "delicate optimism", expressed through the conviction that life and some form of normalcy can be maintained if one is sufficiently prepared (cf. Garrett 2020a:170; Mellander 2021:7). When looking out into the world and towards the future, however, the only certainty is uncertainty.

Complexities

As Mills (2018:10) points out, framing prepping as a response to any singular fear would lead to oversimplification, failing to capture the multi-dimensional understanding of risk permeating prepper culture. When shifting the analytical gaze from concrete threats articulated among the participants, to the discourse of danger on an aggregate level, certain outlines emerge around what appear to be shared, fearful objects. For reasons which will be discussed below, the term fear is used sparingly among the participants, but they do nonetheless draw attention to these objects by recurringly marking them out in our conversations, either as direct threats or more indirectly, through similar patterns of avoidance (cf. Ahmed 2006:27). Chief among these is complexity on a societal and systematic level.

In a general sense, complexity denotes circumstances that are not easily mapped out, as things relate to each other outside of linear temporality or three-dimensional space (Mol & Law 2002). More than merely being complicated, complex systems are defined by emergent properties and they can't be surveyed or fully understood simply by being dismantled into their component parts (Dahlberg 2015:546). With the globalization of economics, logistics, and digital infrastructure, everyday life is in a palpable way becoming increasingly entangled in complex relations, reaching out far beyond the individual's experiential horizon (cf. Hörnfeldt 2018:155). The interdependencies of these systems allow for local disasters to have far-reaching consequences, as ripple effects cascade through them in unpredictable and non-linear ways (Anderson 2010:781; Garrett 2020b:5). When discussing the motivation for preparing, Georg dwells on our dependency on electricity in particular:

Georg: […] then there's a solar storm every 500 years or something like that, that messes things up and we don't know what the consequences will be when one of those strikes again […] Then perhaps, there will be a long-term catastrophe. Because when the sun causes problems, there's nothing we can do. We have no control over that kind of power.
   Elias: No, and that would affect electronics and things like that?
   Georg: Yes, electronics and the electrical system as well… the supply of electricity is what I see as the largest problem. […] Fifteen to twenty terrorists that strike at four or five places, that would cause enormous damage and take months to repair… and we know that there are evil people in the world, with bad intentions. Perhaps not directed at us, right here right now, but they exist and you never know what will happen. So, I think that is one of our… we are so incredibly reliant upon electricity. Without it… it's over. And relatively quickly.

Georg speaks of the concrete threats posed by the electromagnetism of solar

storms and by "evil people", but they are not primarily articulated as dangers to his personal health. What worries him – the object that holds his attention – is how dependence on electricity produces vulnerability. Prepping is needed in order to provide a "shadow infrastructure" (Barker 2020:489) when the interconnectedness of late modernity can no longer be maintained. Exploring, discussing, and mapping out these complex dependencies is a common form of sensemaking among preppers – a process that Campbell, Sinclair, and Browne (2019) have dubbed "unblackboxing". Discussions along these lines are common in online prepper forums, where the unravelling of interdependencies appears as a form of collective, analytical game along the lines of if-then-else, which can go something like this: Someone asks how people will pay for food in the event of a long-term blackout when credit cards won't work; they receive the answer that any good prepper has cash at home for that kind of situation; a third person retorts that the stores won't even take cash if the checkout system is down; discussant number four reasons that the freezers in stores won't stay cold for long and that the store owners probably will trade food for cash anyway, rather than letting it spoil. In parallel, someone pitches in that you're better off in the countryside in any case, especially on a farm where you can keep animals for eggs, meat, and dairy; this is in turn is answered with a snarky "well I hope you know how to milk a cow by hand" from someone pointing out that the way that most animals are kept is highly dependent on electricity and societal infrastructure. The Covid-19 pandemic provided ample opportunity to turn this form of critical gaze away from the speculative future and onto the real now, as the movement of global supply chains ground to a halt. The vulnerabilities of just-in-time deliveries that preppers had warned against became palpable as people stockpiled goods faster than the stores could replenish them, leaving shelves empty (see Roos, Floden & Woxenius 2020). Since the participants were already prepared, they were not directly affected by this, and most were more concerned about the lack of societal preparedness, in terms of e.g. medical supplies. All condemn the political decision to dismantle Sweden's emergency stockpiles, in favour of just-in-time management (Mellander 2021). Additionally, the participants expressed limited worry about becoming sick themselves, once again focusing more on the systematic ripple effects that the pandemic might send through the economy due to shutdowns and disruptions to global logistics. As Peter points out, the pandemic served to make visible many of the risks he and other preppers had warned about:

Peter: We have just-in-time deliveries for everything and we need chemicals to clean our water and they're perhaps not produced in Sweden. So of course, a blockade between two countries or something like that may affect us – that's a given. Those are the kinds of things I try to identify or scrutinize and actually understand […] to me, prepping is a question of not relying upon the just-in-time society. To question it and see its faults is better for us in the long run. We had the toilet paper crisis last year – which wasn't a real crisis – but it demonstrated how vulnerable we are when communications or deliveries are cut off, even only for a day, and then the stores are empty. And I'm not really comfortable with that [laugh], so that's what I think.

In addition to providing the participants with grounds to express some variation of

"we told you so!", the pandemic became a part of an experiential repertoire, serving as proof of the need to prepare. This positions the pandemic in relation to other events that have left them with a sense of societal vulnerability, like the storm Gudrun of 2005 (which left hundreds of thousands of Swedish homes without electricity, from a couple of days up to several weeks) or the financial crisis of 2008. Situations like these serve as narrative "hooks" on which the logic of prepping is suspended (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:805). Simultaneously, the recounting of these experiences comes with a clear moral about the risks of contemporary life. Thus, through the process of "unblackboxing", prepping becomes a kind of critique, questioning imaginaries of sustainable and perpetual growth as well as the stability of late modern societies (cf. Mitchell 2002:214; Rahm 2013:76).

Examining system complexities as a fearful object once again frames prepping as a way to achieve a sense of direction, as self-sufficiency is given primacy in relation to reliance on external forces (Sims & Grigsby 2019:9). Preparation is a necessity because control over the means for one's survival is not a given. Often they are quite literally out of reach due to their distribution on a societal if not global level. Naturally, this may spark worry in the most immediate sense, due to the risk of not being able to obtain the bare necessities of survival, but it does also have the potential to conjure up a sense of dread stemming from feelings of insignificance in relation to the inscrutable and incalculable networks one is dependent upon (cf. Garrett 2020a:154). The infrastructure of contemporary society also turns things that

would otherwise not be existential threats in and of themselves into tangible risks (cf. Dahlberg 2015:554; Garrett 2020a:42). A solar storm would have limited impact in a pre-modern society, but its electromagnetic pulse could potentially wreak havoc on the electricity grid and everything connected to it. Similarly, a zoonotic virus can quickly travel to all corners of the earth along the flight paths of travel and trade. Much like the anthropogenic dread discussed earlier, there is a certain trepidation arising from the sense that the very systems that promised to make life safer and more comfortable simultaneously expose it to new risks.

Because of this, it is hardly surprising that a retrotopic (cf. Bauman 2017) streak and a longing for a less complex life is expressed among the participants, as well as among preppers in general. Modernity has come with a loss of skills and dispositions needed for self-reliance – to farm, to hunt, to craft – and has, in turn, left us alienated from nature. On a personal level, this can be alleviated through the training of skills and by material prepping, where things are within reach and view, ready-to-hand (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:812; Frykman & Povrzanović Frykman 2016:22).

On a societal level, these relations are harder to untangle. While the reliance on electricity is the most common system dependency that the participants point out (see Mellander 2021), debt is a close second. It too makes one vulnerable to the shockwaves sent through the financial system in times of crisis. Anders muses that contemporary consumer culture is based on people doing things that they can't afford and thus accumulating debt. Student loans, consumer loans, and mortgages, with accompany-

ing interest discounts, all encourage people to live beyond their means, which by extension makes them vulnerable. That is why he and his wife sold their house in the city and moved to the countryside, to a house that they could pay for in cash. There, they intend to become more independent, to "not participate in that system, to the extent that it's possible" and to live the kind of life that "nurtures, rather than consumes". It is not possible for them to separate entirely from the monetary system, but by growing crops and keeping animals, they live a less vulnerable life that he thinks "many want to live […] Many want to look out over a meadow and just enjoy – that's my everyday life now. It's not work, it's life." While it's a life that in many ways is more complicated, it is less open to systematic complexities and unpredictability. With a pessimistic eye on the financial and technological interdependencies of late modernity, the typical prepper response is that one is better off going with safe bets, turning the challenges of systematic vulnerability into a question of individual morals and responsibility.

Responsibilization

Instead of being directed towards external threats, responsibility orients one towards the self and one's place in society. This is a recurring theme in the interviews, which links the individual preparations to the collective good. Conversely, the irresponsible citizen emerges as a fearful figure to be avoided, as when Ian explains the feeling that prepping gives him.

Ian: That is my… my attitude towards life. And it's also that I… I love the feeling of knowing that I'm prepared and that if anything should happen, I won't have to regret not having prepared for it.

That is very much part of my motivation, that I know that when shit goes down, I can feel proud, and of course that my family will feel happy and content because of me. But above all, I will feel proud of not being caught with my trousers down. That's a big motivation for me.

On the one hand, preparation promises pride, contentment, and even happiness. On the other hand, there is the threat of being caught off guard, not only risking the very real consequences that this may implicate, but also the shame associated with finding oneself with one's trousers down. This is a question of how Ian will be viewed, in terms of reliability, accountability, and of being a dependable family father (cf. Sims & Grigsby 2019:114). Simultaneously, this is an internal process, driven by what he does not want to be: unprepared, irresponsible, remorseful. The motivation is a form of premeditated regret, a fear of the future self judging him in hindsight.

Being the dependent rather than the dependable is a recurring motif in stories of contemporary fears (Stattin 2006:148). This goes double in prepping culture, and perhaps even further among Swedish preppers. In the participants' stories, an oft-repeated understanding of Swedish society is that it is particularly vulnerable, due to its long history of peace and a strong welfare state. According to Gunnar, one doesn't have to go far to find different attitudes to preparedness:

Gunnar: […] many of our neighbours have been unfortunate to experience war and the problems that come with that, you know… Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. Russian occupation and so on. There, they have an entirely different understanding of individual responsibility and the capacity to take care of yourself.

Swedes are from time to time described as being a bit spoiled, naïve, and reliant on societal safety nets. Such claims tend to be qualified with reassurances, like Lars who is careful to point out that he wouldn't like to live anywhere else, but that the welfare state has nevertheless caused damage. People rely on "pappa Staten" – "the nanny state" – to take care of everything, making them loath to make decisions and take action. By shouldering responsibility, those who prep break out of such conditioning, claiming the moral high ground while in the process articulating a zero-sum rationale, where peace and prosperity don't come without a price.

While the belief in the virtues of personal responsibility is something that unites the participants, they are by no means a politically homogeneous group. In a North American context, prepping has traditionally been associated with right-wing individualism or libertarianism (see Bounds 2021). Among the participants, there are those who mainly frame their prepping in a similar, individualist manner, finding people around them more concerned about their rights than their responsibilities and that the state cannot adequately protect its citizens. However, most invest their preparations in a collectivist logic, where the emphasis is placed on the individual's prepping as part of the overarching, societal preparedness. Those who have the means to prepare should do so, so that in the event of an emergency, societal resources can be allocated to those more needing or deserving. Personal preparations are thus not juxtaposed with preparedness on a societal level, but are understood as an essential part of it. That it is hard to be generous and helpful if one hasn't prepared is the prevailing common-sense wisdom or, as Jakob expresses it: "You need to put your own oxygen mask on before you can help the other passengers on the aeroplane."

When viewing prepping as a part of the political landscape, there are historical parallels to be drawn. According to Garrett (2020a:57;66f), the first seeds of what was later to become prepper culture were planted in the US during the early days of the Cold War as the existential threat of nuclear weapons led to a commercial "doom boom". Unlike many European countries – including Sweden – the US government did not provide its citizens with bomb shelters. Garrett claims that this led to the emergence of a new economic sector, as companies started to market bunker solutions to consumers. Consequently, this also laid the foundation of contemporary prepper culture, where the individual shoulders the responsibility for their own security, either due to a sense of duty or distrust towards the government. While the emergence of Swedish prepping likely can be attributed to a number of factors, such as the spread of social media and the changing landscapes of fear, it also coincides with the downsizing of Swedish emergency stocks as well as of the military and civil defence (see Sandstig 2019). This allows prepping to be framed as private security initiatives set in motion by a sense of governmental neglect, if not necessarily distrust.

One political question that unites the participants is the need for strengthened societal emergency preparedness and a move away from reliance on just-in-time management of critical infrastructures. On a collective level, however, there is little in the way of political organization or activism on the participants' part, other than

their framing of their own prepping as a contribution to societal resilience. In this manner, they align with Campbell, Sinclair, and Browne's (2019:816) description of preppers as a kind of "non-communitarian community", as they work towards similar goals in parallel rather than together (see Rahm 2013:76f). Somewhat ironically, this also places them very much in line with the prevailing, neoliberal management strategies that have shaped Swedish crisis preparedness policy since the 2000s (Kvarnlöf 2020).

Neoliberalism can be traced in ideology as well as in policy, but is best understood as a form of economizing rationality that pushes societal relations and interactions towards forms that can be measured in monetary terms. This becomes particularly noticeable when institutions in the public sector are managed in accordance with the needs of market forces, rather than operating as a counterbalance to them (Brown 2015:9f; 63). Freedom of choice is one of the main virtues within neoliberal rationality, but is typically contingent upon an expectation on actors to make the "right" and rational choice in terms of economic optimization (Bajde & Rojas-Gaviria 2021:493; Fahlgren, Mulinari & Sjöstedt Landén 2016:9). In terms of emergency preparedness, this translates into shifting responsibilities onto individuals as a means to save resources (Ray 2021:182; cf. Garrett 2020a:16; Huddleston 2017). Emergency stocks are passive capital, awaiting a situation that may not come to pass. From an immediate economic perspective, those resources' potential for growth can be better realized elsewhere.

According to the Swedish sociologist Linda Kvarnlöf (2020) the governmental campaigns promoting emergency preparedness during the 2000s have been permeated by the message that societal resources are limited in the event of a crisis and that the Swedes need to take responsibility and prepare themselves. Typically, these campaigns don't take an authoritative stance, but encourage the recipients to choose to increase their level of preparedness by framing it as a contribution to the collective good (Kvarnlöf 2020:10f). A prime example of this came in the spring of 2018, when the Swedish Civil Contingency Agency sent out the folder *If Crisis or War Comes* to millions of Swedish households. The campaign was the first of its kind since the end of the Cold War and its aim was to raise the public's knowledge of the need for preparedness in case of "serious accidents, extreme weather and IT attacks, to military conflicts" (MSB 2018:3; cf. Hörnfeldt 2018:160; Marshall 2021:15). The authors of the folder have taken care not to be alarmist, emphasizing that Sweden is a safe country, but that there is always the possibility of unforeseen events. Checklists for emergency supplies and information about warning systems and shelters share the pages with descriptions of the individual's duties, which are qualified with a familiar adage: "The better prepared you are, the greater the opportunity you will also have to help others who do not have the same ability to cope" (MSB 2018:5). As Kvarnlöf (2020:10f) points out, this an appeal to responsibility through solidarity, targeting emotion and reason in equal measure (cf. Bajde & Rojas-Gaviria 2021:496).

Generally, the participants do not claim to have been greatly influenced by the campaign, as most were already prepping when

it launched. Some feel that the relatively simple approach to crisis preparedness may lower the bar for engaging with preparedness. Others express that the campaign is too restrained and that a more severe message might be necessary to make people "wake up" and take preparedness seriously. At all events, the similarity between the campaign's message and the collectivist logic employed among the participants is clear. By shouldering responsibility, the participants invest in the form of neoliberal security subjectivity articulated through contemporary preparedness policy (cf. Berlant 2011:171; Dahlberg 2015:548). While preppers have often been framed as societal deviants (Barker 2020:485f), their practices increasingly align with imaginaries of a virtuous citizen who makes something "productive" out of their anxieties through internalizing discipline, preparing not to be caught "with their trousers down". According to Stattin (2006:92), this form of internalized fears is typical of modernity, as apprehensions in premodern societies tended to be more concrete and external to the individual or group. This also illustrates how Swedish prepping exists at a contradictory intersection of resistance and governmentality, at once opposing many of the late modern systematic expressions of neoliberal globalization while at the same time being very much in line with its ideal subject positions.

Fear Itself

When I ask Jakob if all the effort and resources that he and others who prep couldn't be put to better use in some other way, for example by raising preparedness on a societal level, he shrugs. Even if the government had sufficient emergency stores, there would still be need for prepping on an individual level. In a crisis, it is likely that infrastructure and logistics would falter and there's no certainty that the help will reach those who need it in time. Individual prepping is just a way of decentralizing collective preparedness, he reasons. It makes the local community less susceptible to systematic vulnerabilities. It's just common sense.

While there is some variation among the participants, a recurring motif is that prepping is an expression of sense, rather than sensibility. Fittingly, a recurring adage among Swedish preppers as well as in preparedness policy discourse is "var förberedd, inte rädd" ("be prepared, not afraid" – although there is a play on words that gets lost in translation). Gunnar is one of the participants who insists that his prepping isn't driven by fear, but that it's merely a precaution akin to getting insurance for your house or car. Practicality and mundanity are also at the forefront when Elisabeth talks about her preparations, as she exclaims that there is no direct link between her gloomy outlook on the future and the supplies she has in her cellar. The supplies "will always be there, because they have always been there. It has nothing to do with anxiety, but rather the opposite. They're there because they make life easy and practical" she explains and then continues:

Elisabeth: So, it's not a question of… fear or the outside world doesn't have a lot to do with my prepping – not that they make me want to be less prepared. […] I don't prep because I'm afraid, no. And I never have. I prep because I know things can get messy from time to time. I don't know what to compare it to... Like, it's good to have an extra pair of shoes because you know that sometimes shoes get worn out. It's like that.

Elias: You have a change of clothes with you when you're out with the kids because…

Elisabeth: Yes, exactly. Wet wipes, a banana [laughs] absolutely!

Emphasis is placed on the practical, and the rational. "Common sensing", as Campbell, Sinclair, and Browne (2019:806) describe it, is commonplace in online prepper forums and a central component in delineating prepper identity. This is visible among the participants as well, especially in mundanifying similes like the comparison to insurance made by Gunnar, the previously mentioned moral of putting on your own oxygen mask first, or the recurring metaphor of the seatbelt: Just because you put it on doesn't mean that you will crash, but you'll be sorry you didn't if something happens! This situates prepping practices in the safety of everyday life, far away from imaginaries of the zombie apocalypse.

Despite the dominance of rationalistic rhetoric, there are openings where fear can seep in. Veronica, like Jakob, gives further perspective to the reluctance to discuss particular scenarios, as they emphasize how specific imaginaries can be an entryway for more dystopian thought spirals, leading towards despair. It is better to focus on one's needs, keeping your mind on what can be done rather than what can't be controlled. Lina in turn describes this as a balancing act. Being prepared means that she doesn't hold the naïve belief that nothing could ever happen, but her mental health demands that she does not linger on all the potential disasters the future might hold: "So, you need to somewhat restrict those thoughts so that they don't become too exaggerated."

Even though the participants don't typically identify as being afraid and many of them claim to have become less anxious since they started prepping, it is by no means a given that efforts to increase security lead to a reduction of negative emotions. Along with becoming more informed and better prepared comes an increased awareness of all the lurking dangers that still need to be addressed (Bauman 2006:130). This leaves feelings of fear and anxiety as insistent neighbours that one has to be careful not to invite. I would also argue that this posits the feeling of fear as a fearful object in itself, which affects how intention and effort are directed within prepper culture (cf. Ahmed 2006:2f; Frykman 2012:20). Primarily, it is fear as a psychological state that needs to be kept in check, in much the same way as Veronica, Jakob, and Lina describe how thoughts need to be managed, lest they become pathways for dark imaginaries. By extension, this presents a threat to any sense of control established through prepping, as anyone whose actions are dictated by unpredictable emotions won't be able to make the rational, "right" choices. Thus, fear represents danger in the immediate sense, but it also constitutes a threat against the formation of a rationalist identity. Fear is an object of consternation when it comes to how one is viewed from the outside. Projecting fear or having it projected onto oneself by others spells trouble, as this might destabilize the common-sense rationale and its derivate production of meaning. For example, Freja becomes noticeably annoyed when she describes how people in her immediate surroundings have responded to her preparations, both before and during the pandemic:

Freja: There are always people who tell you that you shouldn't be afraid.

Elias: Yes.

Freja: Or if you behave in a risk-aware manner because of Covid, and they talk to you like you're acting that way because of emotions. "Oh, you have this emotion, fear, and you need to get rid of it because it's a bad feeling." I'd like to say that… Well, I can have that emotion, or not have it. It doesn't matter. This is a rational decision, considering what information we have. […] It would be great if people got this, that being risk-aware doesn't mean that you're afraid […] They're completely different things.

Fear is framed as the opposite of rationality, while being placed adjacent to paranoia and delusion. Losing the claim to common sense is a loss of legitimacy and normalcy (Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019:805ff). In this example, the participants seemingly align with the real or imagined others that ascribe fear to them, as both separate common sense from feeling. While Freja touches on an idea that is tellingly absent from most participants' rhetoric – that fear might sometimes be a rational response – she ultimately creates a clear divide: being risk-aware and being afraid are "completely different things".

Concluding Remarks

In this article I have explored contemporary Swedish prepping culture through the analytical perspective of feelings, more specifically in terms of fear. In line with previous research on prepper culture (Garrett 2020a; Mills 2018), the participants did to a large extent resist naming specific objects of fear as a motivator for engaging in prepping practices. I would however argue that the participants' stories find resonance in the "second-degree fear" that Bauman (2006:3f) describes, which is not directed at any immediate threat, but rather cultur-

ally sedimented through experience and social action. It is felt as a sense of susceptibility, vulnerability, and insecurity – an internalized state of threat that does not directly relate to any exterior forces, but that may still motivate response and propel action as if it did. Furthermore, when turning to recurring themes in the material, certain fearful objects emerge. Here, these have been articulated as *complex system dependencies*, *the irresponsible citizen*, and *fear itself*. These objects do in different ways challenge a sense of control, or rather directedness and agency, in relation to a world that can at times appear arbitrary and chaotic. In turn, they can also be said to darkly mirror virtues within prepping culture that all manifest aspects of knowing one's place and orientation; *self-sufficiency, responsibility*, and *rationality* (cf. Campbell, Sinclair & Browne 2019).

This points to aspects of Swedish prepping culture that warrant further examination, such as its material premeditations and composition of future imaginaries (cf. Anderson 2010), as well as the gendering dimensions of prepping, which here has been shown to be aligned with a "masculine" logic of independence and rationalism (cf. Kelly 2016:100; Kvarnlöf 2020). An additional area of investigation is the correlation between the rise of prepping culture and more mundane threats that increase everyday insecurity, such as precarious work and the dismantling of welfare support (cf. Barker 2020).

Approaching prepper culture by means of fear has allowed collective anxieties and cultural borders to be mapped out (cf. Stattin 2006:21). It appears that the form of prepping that the participants espouse is not clearly delineated against a cultural

mainstream, nor do the fearful objects described here appear exotic or strange when viewed in relation to late modern society (cf. Mills 2019). Instead, they exist in a dialogical relationship with contemporary preparedness policies and discourse, composing neoliberal security subjectivities (cf. Ray 2021). How the logic of prepping aligns with and diverges from dominant, governmental, and societal rhetoric on responsibilization deserves further theoretical attention, but it seems clear that prepping can be understood as a cultural repertoire for addressing historically and socially situated apprehensions, in a period marked by doubt and insecurity (cf. Paulsen 2020). Even if prepping might dispel such worries on an individual level, as several participants claim, it is far from certain that cultural preoccupation with attaining a sense of security reduces societal fears – there are reasons to believe that the opposite is true (Garrett 2020a:78; Paulsen 2020:21ff). However, the participants' stories clearly show that fear, dread, and anxiety are far from the only feelings permeating prepping culture. A sense of care for others, the joy of learning new skills, or the satisfaction of having one's house in order are all present feelings, far closer to the everyday experience than the nebulous sense of dread, which in turn allows for optimistic orientations within pessimist dispositions.

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Notes

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2   It should be noted that the English word prepping and its derivative terms are used untranslated in Swedish, often in parallel or contrast to the Swedish word "beredskap" (meaning preparedness). These terms are sometimes used interchangeably, but prepping tends to be more descriptive of the individual's preparedness while "beredskap" denotes crisis contingencies on a societal level. Another distinction is the historical association and context of the two words. "Beredskap" carries a connotation of Swedish preparations for the threat of invasion during the Second World War and the Cold War, whereas prepping was introduced in the Swedish vocabulary in the 2010s, post 9/11 and the financial crisis of 2008, with the climate crisis as a backdrop (Mellander 2021:3). In a North American context, prepping is often described as a less radical and more mainstream offshoot of the survivalist movement, where preparedness traditionally has been merged with political conservatism, anti-government sentiments, and paramilitary tendencies (see Garrett 2020a:68f; Huddleston 2017:241; Mitchell 2002). The term survivalism has been used in a Swedish context as well, but seems to have been more or less supplanted by the term prepping.

3   All participants quoted in this paper have been given a pseudonym in order to prevent identification. All quotations have been translated from Swedish to English by the author.

4   For a more in-depth perspective on the participants' reactions to the Covid-19 pandemic, see Mellander 2021; 2022.

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Food Waste Reduction

Political Consumerism and Tactics of Resisting Consumerist Overflow
By Liia-Maria Raippalinna

In affluent countries, most people live in and with a (material) overflow (Czarniawska & Löfgren 2012; Löfgren 2019). Waste is material in movement, and we cannot help producing it, any more than we can avoid facing material flows when engaging with daily activities, such as shopping, eating, and cooking (Sjöstrand 2018:213). Every day, however, we face numerous expectations on how to deal with and manage the material flow: keep order, sort out, dispose, restrict, recycle etc. (Löfgren 2019). At the beginning of the twenty-first century an alarming new aspect of overflow was raised globally in public debate: according to estimates, one third of food produced globally ends up lost or wasted (Gustavsson et al. 2011). In affluent societies households constitute the major single source of food waste (Katajajuuri et al. 2014).

In Finland, the mobilization of consumers to reduce food waste started at the beginning of the 2010s (Raippalinna 2020). The past decade witnessed a growing fight against food waste throughout Finnish society and in all parts of food supply chain. Furthermore, consumer education took various forms in conventional and social media as well as in schools, catering, and marketing. On a grass-root level, the issue gained popularity among individuals and civil society actors initiating and participating in various campaigns and projects. A nationwide *Food Waste Awareness Week* called Hävikkiviikko ("Wastage Week") has been organized annually since 2013. The campaign weeks organized by Consumers' Union of Finland, an organization aiming to promote the interests and rights of Finnish consumers, draw togeth-

1. Diners at the Food Waste Festival. Copyright Author.

er different actors, providing them with information and campaign materials and a joint platform for consumer education. In September 2017, the campaign week climaxed with a one-day consumer education event, *The Food Waste Festival* (Hävikkifestarit), funded by the Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry. The festival took place in Teurastamo, Helsinki, a former slaughterhouse area recently renovated into a scene for urban food culture and happenings.

This article is based on eight open-ended thematic interviews conducted with people attending the Food Waste Festival. Informants were highly educated, middle-class Finnish men and women living in the urban metropolitan area of Helsinki during the festival. Two of them participated as presenters, six as ordinary visitors. Their age varied from the early twenties to the early sixties, most were in working life. They were concerned about food waste, aware of related discussions and sought to avoid food waste in their everyday life. Some of them had previous experiences in food waste related projects. In the interviews I asked them about food waste reduction in their everyday life and as a societal question, focusing on their own views and experiences.

I investigate how individual agency and responsibility are constructed in everyday food waste avoidance and reduction practices. Approaching the question through the concepts of political consumerism (e.g. Klintman & Boström 2006) and everyday tactics (de Certeau 1984) I particularly ask how the practice of food waste reduction enacts resistance towards consumerist overflow. Focusing on everyday tactics, as relatively invisible individual, and collec-

tive actions (of resistance) that are played out in the micro-level of everyday life, gives insights into how and why individuals take responsibility on food waste reduction and puts the spotlight on the everyday situations and personal projects (Ortner 2006) in which the political project of food waste reduction is enacted and made meaningful. In this approach, consumers are not seen as disempowered puppets of markets or social practices, nor is the active political character of consumers and consumption overemphasized (see Evans et al. 2017:1400; Stigzelius 2018:476).

The idea of focusing on consumerist overflow and resistance evolved when I read the interview transcripts. However, the cultural tendency of resisting consumerist overflow was not necessarily explicitly stated in the research material. As an analysis method I used resisting reading (Fetterley 1978; Lakomäki, Latvala & Lauren 2011), a method for identifying signs of cultural beliefs and practices that are not obviously present in the research material. This meant investigating cultural dynamics that were not in the focus of the interviews and overcoming my own initial assumptions as an interviewer; when conducting the interviews I was interested in the way interviewees adopted framings from public and media discourse, and neither consumerism nor resistance had occurred to me as relevant. In addition, resisting reading meant searching for signs of cultural ideas and practices that frame interviewees' thinking and action without *necessarily* being acknowledged. For instance, my interviewees would not necessarily identify themselves as political consumers nor consider themselves as resisting consumerism when avoiding and

reducing food waste. Some might, but this was impossible to tell based on the data.

The article proceeds as follows. First, I introduce the political project of food waste reduction, situate my research in the broader field of political consumerism, and present my theoretical conceptualization of everyday tactics of resistance. Then I present the Food Waste Festival as the context of my study. In the analysis I show how food waste reduction is positioned against consumerist overflow, present the everyday tactics of resisting it, and discuss individual agency and the transformative potential of everyday tactics in relation to the "big wheel" of consumerist society. I conclude by stressing the importance of understanding the resistant character of responsibility and the cultural power invested in resisting consumerist overflow.

Food Waste Reduction as Political Consumerism

Food waste typically refers to wastage of food and drink in retail and consumption, whereas losses occurring in early stages of the food supply chain are referred to as food loss (see Parfit et al. 2010). In Finnish, both are indicated by the term *ruokahävikki* (literally "food loss"). A remarkable reduction of food waste and food loss is needed to sustainably feed the growing global population, for environmental impacts of food production already exceed planetary boundaries (Willet et al. 2019). This is also singled out as a target in UN sustainability goal 12, sustainable consumption. Because the majority of wastage in European societies takes place during consumption (Katajajuuri et al. 2014), raising consumer responsibility by education has been prioritized as part of the EU food

waste policies. Thus, food waste reduction joins other sustainability discourses in producing responsible consumers (Evans et al. 2017) and a preferred subject position (Hall 1997:56) of the responsible consumer-citizen. In educational events like the Food Waste Festival the position of the responsible consumer can be promoted, negotiated, and adopted.

Consumer is a historically shifting category and identity created in the nineteenth century (Evans et al. 2017; Trentmann 2005). Consumerism is the fundamental ideology of global capitalism (Schmitt 2022:76). *Political consumerism* seeks impact through consumption. It has been emphasized as part of neoliberal governmentality, where responsibility for e.g. the environmental effects of consumption is put on individual consumers (see e.g. Evans et al. 2017; Istenič 2018; Sandberg 2014). The focus on consumer responsibility has been criticized for masking the need for structural transformation and hiding the role of social practices that organize our everyday life and consumption (see Gille 2012; Evans et al. 2017; Welch et al. 2018: 6; Niva et al. 2019). Correspondingly, the transformative potential of political consumerism has been questioned since it seeks change through means determined by consumption capitalism – expecting consumption to fix problems caused by consumption (see Evans et al. 2017:1398). On the other hand, (political) consumption provides new resources for citizenship and political identification and mobilization (Trentmann, 2007:148–149).

Finnish media discourse and consumer education has emphasized individual consumers' responsibility for their own food waste (Raippalinna 2020). However, citi-

zen-consumers have multiple roles in food waste reduction; in addition to polishing individual conduct, they may act as agents of change-seeking cultural transformation (Närvänen et al. 2018b). Like other sustainable consumption, food waste avoidance and reduction can be seen as *political consumption* as it involves deliberate action and goals that go beyond the immediate self-interest of their practitioners, such as reducing food waste and increasing the sustainability of the food system (see Klintman & Boström 2006:401; Närvänen et al. 2018b). Political consumption may seek to influence other actors, such as other consumers, retailers, producers, or policy makers (Niva et al. 2019:188) and not only by means of direct consumption. In food waste reduction, public and visible forms of sustainable/political consumerism, such as seeking change through social media campaigns (see Närvänen et al. 2018a), merge with private and invisible forms that take place in routinized everyday actions. The latter can be called *everyday political consumption* (Niva et al. 2019).

Macro-level political goals and pursuits are translated into meaningful and doable practices in real-life situations on a local level (Cherrier 2006; Klintman & Boström 2006); like other cultural processes, they are enacted (or not) in the seemingly "trivial practices of everyday life" (see Jönsson 2019:19). In everyday food activities, environmental and societal consequences emphasized in public discourse often connect with private virtues (Niva et al. 2019). This is particularly true of food waste reduction. Binning food contradicts our cultural norms and ideals (e.g. Evans 2014; Lehtokunnas 2020; Raippalinna 2022). Waste avoidance and recycling are the most popular sus-

tainability actions among Finns (see Niva et al. 2018), and a vast majority of Finns find food waste reduction important or extremely important (Silvennoinen et al. 2013:40). Also in Finnish media discourse on food waste, environmental and sustainability aims merge with cultural ideologies of thrift and frugality, traditionally encouraged as part of good citizenship in home economics education (Raippalinna 2020). Against this background, food waste reduction appears as a bundle of everyday practices (Marshall 2016:50–51) with different roots, aims, and rationales being combined and developed as a common political project.

Everyday Tactics of Resistance

In this article I show how the cultural project of food waste reduction, and the various actions people take to avoid and reduce food waste, derive power from a cultural tendency to resist the material overflow in consumerist societies. To analyse the resistant character of food waste reduction, I employ Michel de Certeau's (1984) concepts *another production*, *strategies*, and *tactics*. By another production, de Certeau means production by masses who in the capitalist economic system have been marginalized from dominant cultural production. The concept puts the spotlight on minor everyday actions, by which marginalized masses use and take over products of consumer society, pointing out the creative and resistant everyday procedures of groups and individuals acting within the consumerist system of production and consumption (de Certeau 1984: xii–xvii).

To describe the relation of production and another production, de Certeau invokes the conceptual pair of strategies and

tactics. *Strategies*[1] refer to calculations of power relationships that take place when a subject (a business, a government) can be isolated from its exterior and postulates a place of its own, from which it can manage external targets and threats, such as consumers or competitors (Buchanan 2000:87; de Certeau 1984:xx, 34–39). *Tactics*, in contrast, do not have a place of their own but take place in a space occupied by others (strategies). Tactics come in when navigating the unpredictable flow of everyday life: taking a chance on what happens, utilizing external forces for one's own purposes. Many everyday practices are tactical. For example, shopping and cooking require creative combining of available elements at the right moment: "In the supermarket, the housewife confronts heterogeneous and mobile data – what she has in the refrigerator, the tastes, appetites, and moods of her guests, the best buys and their possible combinations with what she already has on hand at home etc." (de Certeau 1984:xix).

De Certeau's concept of tactics is often understood as celebrating consumers' possibilities to resist and to take over products of consumer society (e.g. Paterson 2006:153–159). Ian Buchanan (2000), however, suggests that rather than being liberating or revolutionary, what is called "tactics" merely produces utopian belief in the possibility of transformation. In my analysis I combine these two readings to uncover different aspects of resisting tactics in my data and to open insights on the intertwined dynamics of utopian resistance and transformative agency in everyday political consumption. A similar approach regarding agency, stability, and transformation can be found in another practice theorists, the anthropologist Sherry Ortner (2006:129):

Culture (in a very broad sense) constructs people as particular kinds of social actors, but social actors, through their living, on-the-ground, variable practices, reproduce or transform – and usually some of each – the culture that made them. […] [From this perspective] social life is seen as something that is actively played, oriented towards culturally constituted goals and projects, and involving both routine practices and intentional action.

Ortner situates individual agency, in relation to cultural practices, in the pursuit of goals and enactment of culturally constituted personal projects – "serious games" (2006:129–153). The agency of a cultural project means playing and trying to play one's own serious games, defined by one's own values and ideals, within the dominating situation. She states that to understand agency, we need to understand what these cultural games are, what their ideological underpinnings are, and how playing the game reproduces or transforms these underpinnings (ibid.:152). Here I situate everyday tactics of resisting the consumerist overflow as part of individual enactment(s) of the culturally constituted project(s) of food waste reduction, the (more or less) serious games attuned to creative use of possibilities in reaching one's goals within the dominance of consumer society. People assume the political goal (food waste reduction) and the subject position provided (responsible consumer) because it fits and serves their own serious games. They take on individual responsibility to have agency: to play the game.

At The Food Waste Festival
I start my analysis from the Food Waste Festival, where the interviewees were recruited, because it characterizes the situational context of my research (see

Raippalinna 2022). At the main doors of the festival building, good-humoured visitors were welcomed by friendly organizers. From the entrance, one could see the middle hall with long tables filled with diners enjoying a three-course meal made of donated retail surplus. A transparent plastic cube was placed on the welcome desk, to collect voluntary payments for lunch; the money would be donated to protect the Baltic Sea. Posters for *Hävikkiviikko* (Wastage Week) were hanging on the walls, and a special thematic issue of *Kuluttajalehti,* the magazine of the Finnish Consumer Union, was displayed on a magazine rack. Inside the building visitors could meet dozens of presenters: for instance the Rural Women's Advisory Organization (Maa- ja koti-

talousnaiset) had composed a pile of food items demonstrating the average amount of food wasted annually by Finnish households; home economics students gave instruction in the optimal way of measuring temperature and situating food items in a fridge; the Helsinki Region Environmental Services (HSY) provided an educational game on recycling; and several companies and social enterprises working with surplus redistribution presented themselves and their services and products. In a fancy show-kitchen, we got to follow cooking demonstrations where food bloggers shared their tips on how to make use of surplus and leftover foods that often remain unused at home.

The interviews took place in spring 2019, more than a year after the festival. They were conducted at the interviewees' homes or in a café, according to their choice, and lasted from one to two and half hours.[2] The food waste festival was brought up in the interview situation as I opened each interview by asking for the interviewee's reason for attending it. The positions my interviewees took when replying to the question – as visiting consumers, as presenters, or as interested professionals – remained dominant through the interviews and characterized their relation to food waste reduction and education. Two interviewees, Karina and Markus, participated in the festival as presenters. Markus (30 years old) represented a company involved in surplus business and mainly spoke from this professional position. Karina (45) was there because of her studies, presenting at a display stand that promoted household skills. She represented herself primarily as a concerned citizen-consumer with a routinized enactment of food waste avoidance in her

2. Entrance to the Food Waste Festival. Copyright Author.

everyday life, but she also had professional interest in food and food education.

The other six interviewees participated in the festival as visitors, but as it turned out, most of them had some previous experiences of food waste reduction. Ulla (40) was professionally engaged in food and sustainability issues and teaching and voluntarily involved in a food waste reduction project that engaged her several days a week. She had come to the festival to see how cooking demonstrations were conducted and to develop her own know-how on similar projects. Tuukka (35) had encountered the issue of food waste earlier in his business studies and attended the festival to find out about new developments in the field. He was eager to adapt the available information for "questioning" the choices he made in his own life and those made in his environment. Tanja (55) positioned herself as an urban dweller and an eager consumer of urban culture and food happenings. She had previously worked in a food culture development project in the city and continued following the field. For her, the food waste festival – eating out, enjoying the happening, and satisfying her curiosity – compared with other urban events.

Jani, Anna, and Elsa represented themselves above all as regular consumers – albeit far more concerned than average. Food waste reduction was an integral part of their daily conduct. Anna (30) and Jani (20) looked for potential tips and advice on how to avoid and reduce food waste even more efficiently. Anna particularly wondered how she would cope with the food overflow as her then small baby grew older. Elsa (65), a recently retired single dweller, was the only one who had

not come to the festival for knowledge and education. She was there to meet a friend and enjoy a lunch. She took a complete outsider position in relation to the festival, stating that she never wastes food. While thinking she would not make use of any tips or advice provided at the festival, she was familiar with the food waste problem, appreciated consumer education, and was curious about the event: "[I was surprised] that they really put on a festival for that!"

The Food Waste Festival demonstrates how food waste reduction takes place at the intersection of public policies and individual agency (see Cherrier 2006); it constitutes a site for enacting the image of the responsible, active, political consumer on real people (see Stigzelius 2006). For organizers this meant educating visitors about food waste, providing them with motivation and models for action, and serving them tips and ideas on food waste avoidance and reduction. For visitors, this meant deliberate choices to be educated: selective looking for knowledge and ideas to apply in personal and civic life. On both sides, the preferred subject position of active consumer-citizen is produced, negotiated, and enacted. Participating in the festival as part of their personal projects, interviewees construct their own agency as consumers but also as professionals and active citizens. Simultaneously, the festival serves as a site for tuning and passing on everyday tactics of food waste avoidance and reduction. In the following, I move on to discuss these tactics and how they enact resistance to consumerism.

Resisting the Consumerist Overflow

When talking about food waste, interviewees positioned themselves in relation to

consumerism, consumer society and consumer culture.[3] Jani represented himself as extremely thrifty and generally unwilling to buy anything new as long the old things "somehow work". He took clothing as an example, stating that a couple of outfits is all he really needs. He explained his reluctance to consume with his antagonism towards mass culture as a teenager:

Jani: I've never been like that kind of mass teenager who gets obsessed with clothes […] I didn't want to buy them for I didn't want to be part of that group.

The confrontation with consumerism was most evident when discussing reasons for food waste on a general level: suggested reasons mostly related to culture of consumption. As Elsa states, "it has turned into… this thing with consumption." The interviewees made meaning of food waste reduction through various discourses (Raippalinna 2022), but the discourses came together in opposing wastefulness and excessive consumption as unwanted symptoms of consumerism. For Elsa, the meaning and rationale of food waste reduction was related to the cultural virtue of frugality (see Raippalinna 2022). Referring to media discourse, she disapproved of the fact that even unopened sausage packs are found in trash bins: "What was the person thinking who threw it [away]?" The thrown-away sausages symbolized the wasteful consumerist attitudes she persistently refused to accept.

In public discourse on food waste, western consumers' attitudes and requirements are often represented as resulting in wastage. My interviewees also pointed to consumers' demands for "straight cucumbers" and "a million flavours of yoghourt" as reasons for wastage. However, in addition to individual attitudes, consumerism was attributed to products, marketing ideologies, and retail practices that make people buy more than they consume. "Supermarkets" and "24/7" stood out as symbols of consumer culture, where too many goods are too easily available. Markus describes the root causes of food waste problem as an "Amazon Prime problem":

Markus: As I see it, the biggest problem is a kind of selfishness of human, humankind, "I want it all now" attitude. And that it is possible to buy as much as you want, whatever you want, whenever you want, wherever you want. It is like a basic Amazon Prime problem: if it is possible to get anything on your door in 24 hours, you start buying it. […] Like, consumption is being made too easy, you don't individually have to face the bad consequences. You buy twenty-eight different packs of fresh pasta, use one and bin the twenty-seven remaining ones. You bought it all because you didn't have to choose among the twenty-eight alternatives. Why not take them all? […] Of course, it makes no sense, but no one will come and tell you it was you who destroyed the world. It's like easy to [say]: Hey, I am only one small human being. You know, it's too easy to destroy the world, it's too much fun.

Markus's example is exaggerated but it describes the way interviewees positioned themselves and other consumers within the economic system that drives and encourages excessive consumption. In many interviews, individualistic consumer culture was represented as alienation from food and food production caused by the capitalist economy. Karina explained that if food is just a package bought from the supermarket, the labour of food production becomes invisible. As a possible solution to the food

waste problem, she suggested changing the production system from multinational, industrial processes to shorter food chains, local food, and alternative production methods, such as cooperatives. This would increase people's possibilities to participate in and understand food production: "it is more difficult to throw away food when you see where it comes from, and how [...] you do get a different kind of, respect for it". Ulla likewise brought up the problem of invisible food chains. Reflecting on reasons for wastage, she connected the capitalist economic system with individualistic and consumerist western culture:

Ulla: [the food waste problem relates to] probably many things, well, for certain our capitalist economic system, somehow […] Western culture emphasizes individualism […] Like we're no longer attached to communities and life gets hard […] We no longer can build a nourishing relation to food, it's just energy to fill in […] We are so far from communality, sharing things […] The beginning of the food chain has become invisible. When it is invisible, you no longer respect the labour that must be done to produce good-quality food, then you don't want to pay for it. Then it doesn't matter much if you throw it away. It is not personally meaningful to you, so you don't appreciate it.

In de Certeau's terms, consumerism appears as a *strategy* as it defines and frames our social life with its rhythms and rules. Most people have little choice but to buy their foods and goods from markets and adopt the provided position of consumer (Schmitt et al. 2022:75–76). As consumers, people can use their freedom of choice for (everyday) political ends, but the available choices are framed by capitalist logics, that also produce overconsumption and wastage. Taking responsibility by enacting

everyday political consumerism in a supermarket appears as resistance to this logic within this limited space. While some interviewees thought that a more respectful relationship to food could be built in alternative food chains, this would take much more effort: Karina had thought of joining a food circle but explained with frustration: "It is so much easier to drive a car to a supermarket and buy it all at once, and cheaper too."

In the interviews, consumerism was represented as an inescapable social reality, the hegemonic state of the world. Situated everywhere, and nowhere in particular, it is "a powerful and evocative symbol" (Nava 1996) of predominant capitalist realities and environmental destruction. In this context, consuming responsibly and participating in food waste reduction offers an available way to resist wasteful consumer culture and enact non-consumeristic values, identities, and ideologies – whether based on traditional ideologies of thrift and frugality or on current sustainability concerns.

Everyday Tactics of Food Waste Avoidance

Living with perishable matter requires continuous work (Watson & Meah 2012; Evans 2014; Lehtokunnas et al. 2020): planning what to eat, where and when; monitoring processes in food items; moving, storing, sorting out, and cleansing food items; keeping order in the refrigerator and remembering what there is; composing meals; handling over unneeded stuff; throwing spoiled stuff in biowaste; adapting to various schedules and activities; improvising in unexpected situations, etc. Both food waste and food waste avoidance are products of situated negotiations, where food waste avoidance is consolidated with

other aims and values, such as health, safety, caring, hospitality, preferences, taste, and pleasant family meals (Watson & Meah 2012; Evans 2014; Lehtokunnas et al. 2020). Moreover, these negotiations take place in relation to materials (such as foodstuffs, kitchen equipment, storage space) and competences (purchase, evaluation, cooking) in the context of social practices (retail, cooking dinner, work) and the spatiotemporal organization of everyday life (see Marshall 2016:222–223).

Interviewees had developed different tactics to cope with the everyday overflow. They would not throw away food items unless they were spoiled, and preventing foodstuffs from spoiling required a combination of tactics from planning and purchasing to composing meals and evaluating he edibility of leftovers. Overprovisioning results in food waste, and hence doing groceries in a supermarket was regarded as a risky practice. Karina trusted in combining good planning with creativity. Her weekly shopping lists included the basic stuff for preparing varied, tasty, healthy, and environmentally friendly meals for four: one or two meat dishes, some fish and vegetarian options and enough supplements. She was a trained cook and regarded herself as handier than average at improvising, seasoning, and making use of whatever she could find in the fridge. Jani mostly cooked just for himself and saved most of the planning for the supermarket. The way he described his groceries shows how tactics mean navigating different aims, fears, and possibilities related to health, price, taste, sustainability, and a wide variety of available products:

Jani: When I go to a food store and see a product with a red [discount] label on it, I try to think what [food items] I have at home. [Thinking] this will suffice for four days if there is like 400 grams of meat or something. Then I buy other foods trying to keep in mind what I have already picked. You can't then take other products like that. And I check best-before dates, I can cook it a couple of days after, but I don't go further. I try to keep eating different things for lunch and dinner, like for change. Then if you buy that pack of minced meat and make dinner from it for days, then you take something else for lunch, like packed meals, like if you find them at a 30 per cent discount [because the best-by date is near], you can take them. Or if you have like a can of pea soup at home…

Tactics take place in space defined by consumerism – the dominant strategy they seek to resist. To resist the consumerist overflow, people make use of services (discount products, surplus food markets, buffet restaurants, online groceries selling surplus food) and products (kitchen equipment, meals made of leftover items) provided by consumer society itself. As Markus notes, "this crazy consumer society makes it possible to live from hand to mouth, you don't need to plan now that you can get food 24/7." His tactic was to keep the fridge as empty as possible. He and his partner used to decide after work if they wanted to cook or if (and most often) they felt more like eating out or having a takeaway for dinner.

Current urban environments provide new elements to the tactics of resistance, offering products and services marketed as food waste reduction. After having encountered the mobile application ResQ Club at the Food Waste Festival, Tuukka and his partner used it regularly to find a cheap takeaway dinner after workdays. Tanja, living in a small apartment with limited space for cooking and preservation,

had also made consuming surplus a daily practice. She bought a surplus lunch sold at three euros at a diner at her workplace and enjoyed it at the office next day. She had even managed to engage some of her workmates, and together they formed "a small group of food waste fighters" who visited the diner regularly at closing time.

Resisting the overflow requires work with the self (see Lehtokunnas et al. 2020). Also resisting tactics are not only directed outside to wasteful society, but towards oneself and one's own habituation. Anna and Jani attended the festival hoping to get ideas on how to avoid food waste even more efficiently than they already did – and thus to resist the overflow even better. Anna described how she and her partner had disputed about outdated food items found in the back of the kitchen drawer. In the light of the information provided at the festival, she now thought that her partner had done the right thing using cocoa powder several years after its best-by date. After the festival Jani had gained more confidence in trusting his own senses. He described unlearning from following the best-by dates as a continuous learning process where he had to overcome his own fears, affects and habituation.

Particularly for Elsa, tactics of food waste avoidance were effortless, routinized, and habitual. Extremely confident as she was with her routines and skills, even the wide variety of choice in the supermarket provided her with possibilities rather than risks. Through her embodied practice of resistance, she used the available products (frozen vegetables, salad buffet, warm dishes) for her own purposes, immersing them into her overwhelming practice of frugality. Her tactics seemed so routinized

that their resistance becomes visible only through her deep and obvious disapproval of wasting food, for instance as reported in the media.

Utopian Belief and Transforming Agency

When I asked if Elsa had tried to influence food waste reduction by any other means than through her own food-related practices, she thought for a while and answered, "No, I have not gone to educate my neighbours." Everyday resistance to consumerist overflow is primarily enacted quietly in daily life, embedded in everyday practices, such as shopping, cooking, and dining. In de Certeau's terms, practices of food waste reduction/avoidance can be seen as another production, where the use of consumer spaces, goods, and services is turned into a meaningful activity. Through consumption as another production, the material targets of resistance (foodstuffs) are turned into means of enacting the personal projects of resistance.

Instead of making its own products, another production leaves its traces on practices, ways of using and doing (de Certeau 1984:xiii, 31–32) – the tactics themselves. These tactics are passed on in communities, bringing continuity and permanence in cultures (de Certeau 1984:xix). For example, learning to evaluate and use outdated food items produces confidence and habituation that can be passed on horizontally across generations or vertically from one consumer to another. They are also passed on as mentalities and practices, inherited from previous generations, such as leftover recipes (see Raippalinna 2022). Even consumer education campaigns on food waste (see e.g. Närvänen et al. 2018a) pass on

tactics, as they both derive from and feed the everyday tactics of resistance. More generally, everyday resistance to consumerist overflow is encouraged in discourses that seek to make active citizen-consumers: traditional home economics discourse, encouraging thrift and frugality and seeking to protect households and nations from poverty, has recently merged with sustainability discourse pushing consumers to fight issues in the system of production and consumption (Raippalinna 2022).

In everyday practices, tactics of food waste reduction and avoidance materialize into concrete outcomes, such as salvaged food, reduced food waste, and their assumed environmental impact. Environmental effects of salvaging different food items from wastage can be measured and calculated, as demonstrated in consumer education slogans, such as "Finnish household food waste corresponds to annual greenhouse emissions of 139,000 cars" (STT 2022). In tactics, the minor everyday actions with their concrete and calculable impacts combine with a utopian vision (Buchanan 2000) of a non-wasteful, more sustainable, and less consumerist society. The utopian character of tactics relates to scaling, that is, the meaning of tactics and their outcomes in the bigger picture. Food waste avoidance tactics are not enough to transform the food system (see Willet et al. 2019) and solve the "the giant question we need to solve, as humankind" (Ulla), but they keep up the utopian belief that "there should be something left of the world for the children" (Anna). As stated by Buchanan (2000), tactics do, but do no more than, "disrupt the fatality of the established order", they are not liberatory or transformative on any great scale. Yet they

remind us of the possibility of change and create a hopeful space within the inescapable consumer society and its wasteful and destructive practices. The combination of hopefulness and hopelessness is visible in the way Anna explained her own agency:

Anna: Of course people can think that finishing a plate won't help anything… How does it help anyone in Africa, or anyone at all now that we're running out of food? But that is the kind of question that all you can do is your own part. If you don't waste food, you can at least think that… [at least] you can play your own part.

While some tactics rather safeguard their practitioners from (participating in) the consumerist overflow, others aim to develop more sustainable processes and practices (on different framings of political consumerism, see Klintman 2006:430–431). For example, Anna and Markus saw consumers salvaging restaurant surplus as part of a wider change. From their point of view, innovative services that made surplus food available to consumers offered an easy way of acting responsibly, normalized the consumption of surplus, and changed our cultural conceptions. From this perspective, fetching surplus food using a mobile application imposes cultural transformation – and provides an example of food waste reduction as *everyday political consumption*.

In most interviews, daily social situations were mentioned as possibilities to seek impact by discussing, setting an example, or proposing alternatives. This is "some kind of activism", Jani concluded when describing a potluck dinner party, where he had tried to ensure that everything was eaten up. Ulla was explicit about the

activist character of her involvement in a voluntary food waste reduction project that took her several days a week. However, she made a clear distinction from political "frontline" activism:

Ulla: I am the kind of person who easily takes responsibility, wants to make something concrete. But then again, I am not the kind, being in the frontline, like activists. This is kind of like everyday activism, what I practise.

In the voluntary project, Ulla was herself involved in establishing new, less wasteful practices by which she sought concrete material impacts and cultural transformations. She described her action as "everyday activism", meaning concrete action and taking responsibility within the system she wanted to change. While she had also been involved in more marginal practices such as dumpster diving for food, she was determined to position herself in the mainstream, in the consumer society.[4] The interviewees wanted to represent themselves as ordinary people trying to avoid wasting food, consume reasonably, and do their bit in the pursuit of sustainability. Referring to common sense and good life, ordinariness bears moral and symbolic significance in our culture (Hellesund et al. 2018:95–97). While underlining that they produced less food waste than average consumers, they emphasised not being (at least trying not to be) "straitlaced" [*tiukkapoinen*] "fanatical" [*fanaattinen*], or "crazy acknowledging" [*hullun tiedostava*]. Markus described this by saying: "I don't wake up in the night and think about world being destroyed, and I don't expect that from anybody. However, occasionally, you think about the things you maybe shouldn't do."

Nevertheless, most interviewees felt anxious facing the current "state of the world" and, as expressed by Jani, carried the sorrows of the world on their shoulders. While eco-anxiety often appears as shame, depression, ignorance, or powerlessness, it may also lead to problem-solving, practical action, and rethinking behaviour and lifestyles, both individually and collectively (Pihkala 2021). For some of my interviewees, food waste avoidance and reduction seemed to provide a channel for turning anxiety into action. Ulla explained what makes people volunteer in their food waste reduction project:

Ulla: For many people, for me too, the reason for getting involved in the project is the possibility to do something concrete. It diminishes the general anxiety in the face of this gigantic [environmental] question we need to solve, as humankind. No matter how small our impact is, it is good if we can channel somehow, to problem-solving, together with other people. That is good.

Taking responsibility for food waste enables agency, a sense of doing something. Most interviewees positioned themselves in relation to the big wheel powered by the consumer society whose wastefulness they tried to resist. Tuukka was particularly clear on this, as he politely questioned my assumed focus on consumer food waste reduction: "Not that food waste is meaningless, but it is more important that the big wheel will turn around". He meant the connectivity of food waste reduction to other environmental and sustainability issues and to the societal and political context of solving the sustainability issues and sharing responsibility between different actors (producers, retailers, consumers,

public policies). For most interviewees, food waste reduction was comparable and closely linked to other fields of sustainable consumption, like diets and transportation. While they were critical of their own possibilities to impact the bigger picture, they still wanted to take agency. Markus, working in commercial surplus redistribution, explained his professional position in the bigger picture as follows.

Markus: For me it is enough that I know that I can really do something about food waste reduction. It is closer to where I stand. I can like help in diminishing the proportion [of food wasted]. Like there is not much I can do about, like what kind of climate political decisions are made in big industries. It is more important for me that I can understand the concrete means that individuals can take [to reduce food waste]. Therefore, it is like the right place for me, what I am doing right now.

Food waste reduction enables individual agency in the context of consumer society. Resistance enacted in food waste reduction takes place in relation to (at least) two hegemonic discourses, one producing responsible consumers, the other economic growth and consumption. Both relate to consumerist ideology. Whereas structures of consumer society frame the way people live their lives, consumer education on sustainability increasingly requires them to take responsibility for the environmental and ethical burden of their consumption, including food waste. While people may be critical of putting the responsibility on consumers, assuming the preferred subject position of responsible consumer provides an available means to resist the consumerist overflow. In food waste reduction, private tactics of practical-utopian resistance merge into political consumption with

more clearly stated goals: to educate and engage other people; to provide trajectories for surplus food; to encourage retailers and producers to reduce their food waste; to transform diets and food culture.

Conclusions

In this article I have shown how the cultural project of food waste reduction draws together quiet and routinized forms of resisting consumerist overflow, turning them into more organized action and agency: (everyday) political consumption. The research was based on interviews with people participating in a consumer education event, the Food Waste Festival. I approached consumer responsibility on food waste (reduction) through the concepts of political consumption and everyday tactics (of resistance). I used these concepts to investigate the personal and cultural project(s) of food waste reduction represented in the interviews and to increase understanding of the cultural dynamics at work in food waste reduction. Discussing food waste reduction in terms of intertwined dynamics of utopian resistance and empowering political consumption, I opened new insights into how and why people take agency with food waste and adopt the position of responsible consumer-citizen. The interviewees positioned food waste reduction in opposition to the material overflow in consumerist societies. From this perspective, consumerism stands out as a symbol for the current unsustainable way of life and the hegemonic realities beyond individual reach and control. Tactics of food waste avoidance and reduction – making a shopping list, cleansing vegetables, purchasing outdating products – serve to resist the consumerist overflow and provide some control over

one's own actions in everyday environments framed by consumerism. Through everyday tactics of food waste avoidance and reduction, people make their own spaces within the system. As part of the recent political and cultural sustainability projects, private tactics of resistance merge into political consumption with more clearly stated goals. People engage in everyday political consumption in multiple positions, not only as consumers, but also as citizens, professionals and activists who encourage active citizenship by enacting political consumerism on other people. The interviewees' projects around food waste reduction are both personal (not doing like the rest) and political (engaging other people to take on the project and play the game).

My analysis shows that in real-life consumption practices, empowering and utopian dimensions of everyday tactics are often intertwined. Tactics of food waste reduction are both empowering and transformative *and* utopian and non-transformative. They are utopian because they do not disturb the hegemonic order; while keeping up belief in a better future and a more equal and sustainable world, tactics are not powerful enough to change the way things are: right here and now people (practically) do not have any other option but to live in the capitalist consumerist system that causes the overflow and to resist it from within by the means it allows. Yet, tactics make space for individual agency. Tactics empower people to act and employ their own projects (whatever they are) while expecting more profound measures from more powerful actors, such as businesses and policies.

The interviewees do adopt the provided subject position of responsible consumer,

but they also use it as a resource to "take over" and "make their own" products, services, and practices provided by the powers of consumer society. Taking responsibility may not provide a way out of wasteful consumerism – indeed putting responsibility on the individual is a strategy of market liberalism (Sandberg 2014:7–8) – but enacting responsibility enables developing and passing on tactics of resistance and opens possibilities for enacting resistance in daily life. In the meanwhile, the notion of responsibility turns the numerous private gestures of resisting consumerism into presentable mainstream activity.

Whereas the assumption of consumerism as the root cause of food waste is often reproduced in public and scholarly discussion, the cultural energy of resisting consumerist overflow has not been fully recognized. Taking seriously both the resistant character of responsibility and the fundamental role of resisting consumerist overflow deepens our understandings of food waste reduction and individual participation. Overall, approaching consumption through everyday tactics situated in personal projects opens new insights into political consumption. Particularly the intertwined dynamics between culturally constituted everyday tactics of resistance and the making of political consumers (e.g. in various cultural and political projects) appears as a fertile area of future research, in ethnology and beyond.

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Notes

1   For a more profound discussion of strategies, see Andres et al. 2020.
2   The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The participants signed a consent form. In the article, interviewees' personal data are either changed or removed. Interviewees do not appear in the illustrations. Quotations have been translated from Finnish semi-verbatim.
3   In common language, consumerism is often related to consumer culture and consumer society. I use these terms interchangeably to refer to culture, society, or ideology framed by the capitalist economic system.
4   On voluntary dumpster diving as a "critical practice" see Lehtonen & Pyyhtinen 2021.

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Food Memories
Connecting to Rural Roots through Food in Life Writings by Finnish Women Born in the 1950s
By Maria Vanha-Similä & Kaisa Vehkalahti

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Finland witnessed an unexpected interest in the countryside; social media were filled with pictures of idyllic countryside landscapes, summer cottages, and berry picking. The significant increase in distance working brought new opportunities to rural areas. For the first time in decades, internal migration to the capital city of Helsinki slowed, and migration to more sparsely populated parts of Finland increased (Lehtonen & Kotavaara 2021:48, 55). This renewed interest in the countryside reminded the society of the short history of urbanization in Finland. Large-scale migration from countryside to cities occurred particularly from the late 1960s, so Finland became urbanized relatively late in comparison to other European countries. It was not until the early 1970s that the urban population exceeded the rural population (Haapala 2004:235; Sarantola-Weiss 2008:9). Even today, Finland is one of the most rural of the OECD countries (Copus (ed.) 2011; OECD 2008). The countryside continues to be important for many urban dwellers as a second-home residence or holiday destination, and because they have family roots in the countryside. Many people have experienced living in the countryside (Hämeenaho 2018:170).[1]

In this article, we analyse autobiographical writings depicting rural life in Finland, collected during the Covid-19 pandemic (2020–2021). The writings were collected in collaboration with the Finnish Museum of Agriculture Sarka and the Finnish Literature Society Archives through a nationwide thematic campaign entitled "My Countryside". The aim of the call was to encourage participants of different ages to recollect and tell their personal memories

of Finnish countryside, and to ponder on what the countryside meant for them in the present day. In this article we focus on women who were born in the 1950s and witnessed the drastic transition from agricultural to industrialized society during their youth and young adulthood.

Although the call did not especially suggest food as a topic of writing, food nevertheless emerged as a central theme in the life writings submitted in response to the call. Particularly older participants included vivid childhood memories of dishes and food production, as well as stories about how they had carried practices and habits from their childhood to the present day. In other words, food production was strongly associated with the rural way of life in their narratives. In this article we seek to trace the different meanings that food is given in these life narratives. How are relationships to the countryside constructed through food?

Theoretical Framework and State of the Art
In terms of theory, this article represents ethnographic research informed by interdisciplinary studies of life writing and oral history (e.g. Smith & Watson 1998; Chansky 2016) and draws on the concept of belonging (e.g. May 2017; Harris et al. 2021; Habib & Ward 2020). In the following, we first present the theoretical background, data, and methods of the study, followed by the analysis of the food-related narratives by female authors. We argue that, in the life narratives of Finnish women born in the 1950s, food – here understood as referring to both memories and everyday practices related to food and food production – offers an important way of

connecting to their rural roots, and to the rural way of living.

The article combines two strands of research: ethnographic research on food, and interdisciplinary theories of belonging, in order to explore the meanings given for food-related narratives in the life writings depicting rural life in Finland.

Traditional food and cooking have long been part of ethnological research. Food and eating are not just individual choices, but many everyday practices and routines are based on collective patterns rather than on individual habits (Ehn & Löfgren 2010:120). In society, values and attitudes change over time, and people often adopt and adapt new ideas and habits. Accordingly, the relationship to food is a reflection of the transformation of society. Eating and cooking practices have changed over time, as pointed out in food-history studies (e.g. Kylli 2021:365–366, 416). Everyday meals are influenced by a range of contextual factors. For example, the impact of parents, family traditions, and life history is evident in our food-related practices (Haulund Otto 2016:88, see also Short 2006; Ehn, Löfgren & Wilk 2015).

Recent studies have increasingly focused attention on food and eating habits, on gendered practices related to food, on spatial and new-materialist approaches, as well as on experiences, emotions, and memories related to food (e.g. Holtzman 2006; Knuuttila 2006; Lindqvist 2009; Bardone & Kannike 2017; Jönsson 2019). David Sutton, an anthropologist specializing in the study of food and memory, points out how cooking is not just about food, but much more about social, material, and symbolic issues in the surrounding society (Sutton 2016:366). Matilda Marshall

and Jón Þór Pétursson (2022) have further analysed connections between food, personal memory, and emotions. By exploring embodied memories related to past food storage, they illustrate how longing for "old-fashioned" cellars and well-equipped pantries often reflects a nostalgic perception of an idealized past. Hence, it is not the history as it once was, but rather reinterpretation of past emotional experiences in the present that plays out in this nostalgic longing.

In this article we pay attention particularly to the role of food in mediating memories and creating a sense of belonging. Following the influential work of Nira Yuval-Davis (e.g. 2006; 2011), the concept of belonging has been used across disciplinary boundaries during the last decade. It has been applied to address the "fluid, unfixed, and processual nature" of diverse social and spatial attachments – in particular when doing research with people perceived as vulnerable or disadvantaged, such as ethnic minorities or young people (for the history of the concept, see Lähdesmäki et al. 2016:234; Harris et al. 2021:45–69).

Our analysis builds on the growing literature about belonging as a theoretical concept for multidisciplinary youth studies (e.g. Harris et al. 2021; Curvo & Wyn 2017; Habib & Ward 2019), and life writing/autobiographical research (e.g. May 2017). We understand belonging as a concept referring to a sense of connection, membership, attachment, and security, infused with individual and collective histories and shaped by mundane everyday practices that people experience daily (Habib & Ward 2019). As Floya Anthias has put it, "to belong is to be accepted as part of a community, to feel safe within it and to

have a stake in the future of such a community" (2006:21). However, this sense of belonging is not something fixed, but rather a result of continuous re-creation: repeated everyday practices build the layers of an affective experience of place and community over time (Wyn & Cuervo 2017).

Finally, we wish to underline that belonging is also constructed by history: connectedness to the local history, culture, and traditions, which is vividly present in the life narratives discussed in this article. Vanessa May (2017) has used the inspiring concept of "belonging from afar" in the context of life writings by elderly citizens, to underline that belonging may not always be anchored in the present time. May analysed life writings by elderly participants in the British *Mass Observation Project*,[2] pointing out that many of them expressed profound temporal displacement in present-day society, but felt strongly connected to past memories that still provided a sense of comfort and belonging for them. Indeed, the notion of temporalities is very relevant in the analysis of life writings by the Finnish women born in the 1950s. In their narratives, they discuss belonging both in the temporal context of their childhood and youth, and in the temporal context of the time of writing, as will be discussed in the following.

Thematic Life Writings as Research Material

This article is based on life writings collected in collaboration with the Finnish Museum of Agriculture Sarka and the Finnish Literature Society Archives through a thematic writing campaign entitled "My Countryside". The collection of written memory-based research materials

on the past builds on longstanding traditions of ethnographic surveys and oral history traditions. The Finnish Literature Society (SKS) has collected written ethnographic descriptions, surveys, personal memories, and testimonies since the early twentieth century (Kivilaakso, Pesonen & Taavetti 2022:96–99).

The Finnish tradition is often defined as part of the Nordic-Baltic oral history tradition, which is characterized by a strong emphasis on academic theorization and written sources, as well as application of oral history approaches to written sources (Heimo 2016:40–41). While the collection of oral histories is community driven in many countries, in Finland the collection of memory-based materials is primarily driven by archives and academic research. Thematic writing collection campaigns are widely used by researchers from different academic fields who seek to reach wide audiences. The Finnish Literature Society arranges dozens of campaigns yearly, and written reminiscences are also collected by other archives and museums (see also Savolainen & Taavetti 2022; Jouhki & Vehkalahti 2020; Laurén & Malinen 2021).

In different studies, various terms have been used to describe written memories (see Kivilaakso, Pesonen & Taavetti 2022:98–100; Savolainen 2017). In this article, we use the term *thematic life writing* in order to emphasize the literary form of the material on the one hand, and the thematic scope (rurality) on the other. Life writing is a flexible term that is used to refer to a wide range of texts and forms of writing with an autobiographical intention, not only autobiographies as such (e.g. Chansky 2016:xxi). Texts submitted to "My Countryside" vary greatly; there are short,

one-page entries, and long, comprehensive life stories that follow autobiographical conventions. Texts approaching literary genres such as poems were also submitted. The aim of the campaign was to inspire people of all ages and backgrounds to provide their memories: "How do you remember the countryside of your childhood and youth? What does countryside mean to you in the present day? Tell your own story!" (the subtitle for the call for submissions). Rather than aiming at "authentic documentation" of past life, the campaign emphasized personal perspectives, opinions, and interpretations by underlining that anyone was welcome, and all stories would be valuable. The term "stories" was deliberately used in order to lower the threshold for participation, and to allow the participants to narrate their stories as freely as possible.

The call was open at the museum website from December 2020 to December 2021. It is important to note that this partnership has probably encouraged those interested in and following rural issues to participate. Although the call was advertised in several magazines, newspapers, and social media channels, it is likely that many participants were attracted especially because they wanted to share their memories with the Museum of Agriculture. Calls can be framed in particular ways to guide the respondents, but the respondents often surprise the researchers by answering in unexpected ways (Mikkola, Olsson & Stark 2019). This is also very fruitful. Unlike in face-to-face interviews or with questionnaires, respondents can take their time to think about the call and focus on the themes that they think are important, which opens new doors to research options (see e.g. Helsti 2005:151; Leimu 2005:77;

Latvala 2005:27). The call provided a range of possible themes and questions to spark writing (including questions related to childhood memories, hobbies, gender, opinions about rural development, and agricultural work). However, the writing instructions were fairly informal, deliberately giving the writers the freedom to write about things that were important and meaningful to them. Food clearly seemed to be that for the women.

In total 121 authors sent their responses (175 stories). In addition, 75 photographs were submitted and 96 people volunteered for oral history interviews. As could be predicted on the basis of similar earlier collections, the call attracted especially women (70% of all participants) and authors over 60 years of age (75% of all participants). Women born in the 1940s (28 participants) and 1950s (26 participants) were most active. Finnish life writing calls are known for their wide scope and participation, and people of all ages, sexes, and varying social backgrounds do participate. However, it has been noted that participation requires motivation and resources, such as time for writing, as well as some literary skills and interest (Makkonen 1993; Vehkalahti & Suurpää 2014). Indeed, the life writings submitted by older participants testify to their strong motivation to document past life in the countryside, including old farming practices, harsh living conditions, or ways of living that they felt were already lost and needed to be documented.

Food-related topics (especially childhood memories of food) can be found in the life writings of some male authors, too. However, since the topic was particularly prevalent in women's narratives, we focus on the writings of women born in the 1950s

(26 responses). While childhood memories from the 1940s are strongly marked by the war and reconstruction era efforts, narratives by women born in the 1950s capture a slightly different picture. The women were born during the last years of traditional agriculture, guided by the principle of self-sufficiency, and they witnessed the rapid mechanization of agriculture and other social changes in their childhood and youth. In the 1950s the countryside was still full of life, but the following two decades saw a major wave of out-migration (e.g. Niemelä 2008). In the narratives selected for this analysis, the effects of war are in the background, and the primary focus is on the 1950s–1970s; on experiences, feelings, and events of their childhood, youth, and early adulthood. Geographically, the narratives depict rural life in different parts of Finland.[3]

Methods: Content Analysis and Close Reading

In our analysis we have applied qualitative content analysis and close reading. Content analysis was chosen due to the literary nature of the life writings, as it is suitable for analysing various unstructured written materials (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2018). We read the narratives through the theoretical lens of belonging introduced above, and by paying attention to their nature as life writings. This means focusing on features such as multi-layered temporalities embedded in the texts. We have sought to bring out the authors' personal experiences and meanings given to food, and to contextualize these findings in their cultural and historical context.

First, we collected the writings of women born in the 1950s. Scrutinizing themes embedded in the life writings again and again, we found that food, cooking, and food production were so important to women who took part in the campaign that they wrote about these issues even though the instructions did not mention food as a specific topic. This observation prompted us to collect all the food-related memories from the materials. Next, we further divided the food memories according to different themes. In addition, we scrutinized the texts from two temporary perspectives: by paying attention to authors' childhood memories and their later experiences and interpretations.

The call for life writings had urged people to reflect on their opinions about countryside in the past and in the present day. In several texts, at least at the end, the author describes her current feelings. This was encouraged not only by the campaign instructions but also by the circumstances in the surrounding society, such as the effects of the Covid-19 restrictions (cf. Olsson 2016:161–162). In general, life writings are typically embedded with multiple layers of time: the past times depicted in the narratives (here, e.g. childhood in the 1950s), the time of writing (e.g. the pandemic 2020–2021), and future orientations (e g. worries about the future of the Finnish countryside and food production). The authors oscillate back and forth to the time remembered and to the moment of writing. Analysing the texts also requires the researcher to travel between different time levels (cf. Vehkalahti & Suurpää 2014; Hytönen 2016:331).

The authors recall experiences from 50–70 years ago and share their thoughts on the 2020s. They commented on the past experiences through their later knowledge; for ex-

ample, by pointing out practices that would not be recognized by children of today, or voicing criticism that was not possible at the time things had happened. In producing the texts, the authors evoke, select, organize, and explain their memories (Abrams 2010:78–79). It is also important to note that interpretations of life course events may change over time, and people may tell about their lives in different words to different audiences (Linde 1993:31; Åström 2007:39–40). Here, the authors knew that their texts would be read by researchers interested in rural history and used in a museum context. They may have composed their texts according to what they anticipated the researchers to value in their texts.

In addition, we have used close reading as a method of analysis. In close reading, exact reading of the texts several times opens new perspectives on the life writings. In this study research materials are limited, which made it possible to read the texts systematically numerous times. From an early point, we also wrote down observations of the texts. This processual approach has been essential in analysing the materials (Pöysä 2010:338–341; Pöysä 2015:31–32; Brummett 2019).

In the following, were analyse food-related memories from the viewpoint of rural belonging through three main themes. The first theme arising from our content analysis is *self-production and preparedness*, which were strongly underlined by women who expressed their connectedness to the countryside through food-related memories. Secondly, we focus on the *expressions of non-belonging in food-related memories*. It is also important to note that food-related memories are not always positive. Negative childhood experienc-

es – especially memories related to hard work in food production – were associated rather with alienation from rural life and values than with belonging. The third main theme arising from our content analysis is the theme of *transgenerational transfer through food.*

Principles of Self-production and Preparedness at the Heart of Rural Belonging

According to the ethnologist Pilvi Hämeenaho, the possibility of self-sufficiency is often perceived as an important principle in the rural lifestyle (Hämeenaho 2018:170). Growing up in the countryside in the 1950s gave women an understanding of how food is produced, and abilities to produce food on their own. This was perceived as a valuable skill by the majority of the authors participating in the "My Countryside" campaign. Women appreciated that they had learned many skills that had been useful for them later in life. They also felt that rural childhood and youth had given them the ability to take action, as there was always something to do in the countryside. If you didn't know how to do something, you learnt by doing.

Growing vegetables, planting and harvesting potatoes, fishing, collecting berries and mushroom were mentioned as skills that women have learned and used as adults. They had carried on these skills throughout their lives. Even if there had been times when, for example, keeping a vegetable garden had not been possible, women nevertheless felt that, if necessary, they could put in a vegetable garden. Even women who had never utilized these skills later in life, considered the skills and potential capability important.

Planting potatoes, growing potatoes, and bringing new potatoes from the field directly to the table is an experience that will be passed on to every generation as a wonder and gift of nature. Berry forests, a piece of land and a small vegetable garden have enabled me to understand the cycle of nature, to be self-sufficient and to enjoy recreation in nature. (089_N_1954)

Picking blueberries, lingonberries and mushrooms is still a pleasure, it is always relaxing and good to be in the forest. (057_N_1955)

In Finland, summer cottages are a widely shared tradition that is practised throughout the country and by people of different social standing (for Finnish summer cottage traditions, see e.g. Alasuutari & Alasuutari 2010; Valkonen 2022). The number of summer cottages increased especially from the 1970s onwards, when living standards rose and leisure time grew. This increase followed the years of the so-called Great Migration, when members of the Finnish baby-boomer generation reached the age of establishing their own families. The majority of them had roots in the countryside (Official Statistics of Finland). For many Finns, retreating to the peace and quiet of nature is still important. People want to enjoy nature, picking berries and mushrooms. The people over 45 years of age in particular have holiday homes. For many, it is important that the summer cottage is close to ancestral lands. The place may have been bought, inherited, or received from siblings (Adamiak et al. 2015:35–36; Kaartinen 2016:315, 318; Löfgren 1999:112).

Summer cottages were often described in terms of security and belonging: "Every time we drive there, it feels like going home", as one of the authors put it (043_N_1956). At the cottage the authors could repeat rural everyday tasks that were familiar to them from their childhood. In these descriptions, narratives of belonging, feeling at home, and feeling a sense of security are intertwined with concrete descriptions of being close to the land and being able to produce your own food:

The holiday home in the countryside is a place to spend time all year round, a strong base for us. In the country house, we have the garden as a hobby and nature as our source of inspiration. (038_N_1950)

For many women, the production of their own food, such as vegetables and berries, was particularly important in summer cottages. It could be that some of these women had even bought the cottage with this purpose in mind. The summerhouse garden made it possible to grow food if there was no possibility to do so in the city. Some authors describe how they had visited their childhood homes regularly to help with food production in their early adulthood. Gradually, the focus had shifted to their own homes or summer cottages. Some women did not need a cottage but were content with a piece of forest from which they gathered berries, mushrooms, and firewood.

Authors also described how growing up in the countryside in the 1950s–1970s taught them to prepare for exceptional circumstances – like the Covid-19 pandemic. Women had learned how to cook and preserve food. Shops were far away, and usually only food items that could not be produced or made at home were bought. Coffee, salt, and sugar were bought from a small village shop or later from a mobile shop, sometimes things such as sausage, lemonade, sweets, ice-cream, etc.

1. Harvesting carrots at my grandmother's home in the countryside in the early 1980s. My aunts are in the picture. (104_N_1956) Photo: "My Countryside" collection. Finnish Museum of Agriculture Sarka.

And if there was no flour to bake with, you had to wait days to go to the village shop. Preparedness is one lesson I have learned at home without being taught. (089_N_1954)

Preparing food requires planning, creativity, and ingenuity (Knuuttila 2006:23). Women born in rural areas in the 1950s wrote about how they had always lived as if prepared for exceptional circumstances. It had been an everyday part of life and not much of a big deal, as they described it in their narratives.

The "My Countryside" campaign took place during Covid-19 restrictions. The Finnish Government, in collaboration with the President of the Republic, declared that Finland was in a state of emergency due to Covid-19 in March 2020 (Valtioneuvosto 16.3.2020). This was exceptional, and constantly changing restrictions characterized the whole period during which our thematic writing campaign took place. At the same time the Finnish society also witnessed a new debate about the security of supply, domestic food, and people's preparedness – things that had hardly surfaced in the media over the last few decades. This was reflected in some of the life writings by women, who reflected on the current debates in relation to their own lifestyles and values inherited from their childhood:

Rural areas are our security and our future in the sense that we have to be self-sufficient in case of possible crises… this has also been observed recently… thankfully. (104_N_1956)

It is important to note that the pandemic period encouraged the women to write about preparedness more actively than they might otherwise would have done. The instructions for life writings did not directly ask about preparedness or the impact of Covid-19. However, these issues were so prominent in the surrounding society that many women addressed the topic in one way or another. Otherwise, women might not have written about how they had learned to prepare for unexpected everyday situations. At the time of unexpected changes, however, their rural background emerged as a new kind of asset, a source of strength. They related to problems of mobility, illness, or power cuts, which had taught them skills that were important when facing the pandemic, too. These women had always had food, medicine, toilet paper, emergency power, etc. at home. Planning for the future was essential; what to produce yourself, what to buy in the shops, how to store food. The ability to cook and do small repairs at home was perceived as important. According to Flora Mary Bartlett, a full and functioning freezer in particular creates a sense of security for people living in rural areas. A freezer can be a central part of preparing for everyday situations, but also for extraordinary circumstances (Bartlett 2023). By taking part in the call for life writings the women may also have been motivated to document exceptional times. (For more on the motives for writing, see Clark & Ivanič 1997; Salonen 2022.)

In Finnish society, the traditional norm of not wasting food has been replaced by new arguments combining discourses of environmental protection, sustainability, and circular economy features (Raippalinna 2022:18). In the present society, increased environmental awareness has underlined the problem of food waste and how to reduce it. However, the generation of authors discussed in this article is less often recognized as environmentally aware consumers and they do not necessarily present their lifestyle as environmentally friendly, even if it is (cf. Nyrhinen & Wilska 2012; The Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra 2019; Kestävät kaupunkiympäristöt 2018).

Life writing offered women with rural roots a chance to express their own values and consumption habits freely. Women reported how they used all their food and there was only a little food waste in their households. For the women that participated in the "My Countryside" campaign, thriftiness had been part of everyday life all their lives, part of their rural belonging. In the following quotation, however, the author makes the connection, pointing out that understanding food production also helps to change lifestyles to be more environmentally friendly.

Having lived in the countryside, I know that you can't just throw food away, you buy it or get it when you need it and compost the rest. In the country, we were casual about these things before. Once you become aware of the impact on nature, it is easier to change your ways of doing things when you have a link to food production. (089_N_1954)

Food-related Memories of Non-belonging

Most participants in the "My Countryside" appreciated rural food, food production, and the values and things they had learned in the countryside. However, not all food-related memories and stories submitted to the campaign are positive in their tone. Some of the authors found rural child-

hood very difficult. In these narratives the authors describe work that was too hard for their tender age. Women described various tasks related to dairy and farming as well as cooking. Caring for oversized vegetable gardens and endless fields of potatoes had caused anxiety, physical and mental issues, and nightmares.

In these narratives difficult childhood experiences were also described as having had a major impact on the authors' later lives. In fact, harsh childhood experiences – especially memories of hard work in the food production chain – played a key role in pushing some of the authors away from the countryside. They had not wanted to follow in the footsteps of their parents' physically draining agricultural work. In the present day, when reflecting on their life, these women expressed relief at escaping these jobs, for example, through education.

In these narratives food-related memories constituted an equally central part of their relationship to countryside as in the narratives of authors discussed earlier, but in a different way. For them, food-related memories were intertwined with emotions such as anxiety, stress, helplessness and frustration in a way that had contributed to their detachment from countryside and rural life. These memories had led some of the women to avoid childhood work like cooking and food production as adults. For example, the vegetable garden reminded some women of so many unpleasant memories that they did not even consider having their own garden. They wrote about how they appreciated home-produced food, but they did not want to produce it themselves at all. They preferred buying everything ready from the shop. Some of the women

felt the need to explain why they no longer produced any food themselves, like the following author:

I have no interest in living or spending time in the countryside; I don't even own a summer cottage. Sometimes in the summer we rent a cottage for a week in the countryside. I live in a house in the city and could have fruit trees and a vegetable garden in the yard, but I don't, as I have no interest in cultivation. I've had enough of farming. Since I was a little girl, I had to work in the fields all summer long, from dawn to dusk, making hay, making silage (AIV feed), weeding a field of swedes, picking potatoes in the rain from the clayey soil, etc. Those jobs are still coming out of my ears, even though I haven't done them for 35 years. Fortunately, I had the intelligence and tenacity to get a university degree and I got into the clean indoor jobs, even though they are sometimes really hard. But you have evenings, weekends, and annual holidays off, which you hardly ever had in the countryside when you had to go to school in the winter and help with various farm jobs at weekends. (028_N_1959_B)

The quotation is emblematic of the connections between food and rural belonging. Between the lines the author notes that tasks like gardening and cultivation are important for many of her age with rural roots – even something that is expected from them. She seems to assume that it is exceptional that one doesn't even wish to have a summer cottage. For those women who wrote about self-preparedness, tasks like growing vegetables and preparing food from home-grown supplies were important everyday performances (cf. Cuervo & Wyn 2017) that reinforced their sense of belonging in the countryside over again. However, for this author the very same traditions were a constant reminder of negative life experiences, a source of non-belonging.

If we had to name one narrative that dominates among all the life writings submitted by "My Countryside" participants over 60 years of age, that would be the narrative of hard work. "You had to be unseen and grateful for everything and work hard to earn your own food", as expressed by a woman born in 1951 (035_N_1951_B). This is hardly surprising, as the emphasis on hard manual work has been found to characterize several other life writing collections (e.g. Vehkalahti 2014; Laurén & Malinen 2021), as well as Finnish autobiographical and fiction writing in general (e.g. Stark 2011; Kortteinen 1992).

It is also important to contextualize the life narratives of women born in the 1950s in the Finnish Post-war development. Reasons for the hard work required of children varied, but after the Second World War, living standards were generally low and work was valued, and everyone had to work hard to put food on the plates. This concerned especially small rural holdings that had been established during the post-war resettlement programme, which offered veterans of war possibilities to become independent farmers. Some parents also had unrealistic expectations of their children's work. Especially in families with many children, the value of children could be defined by their ability to participate in work. Children also worked hard to gain respect and parental approval. Shame and other negative feedback were common methods of education in many homes. Blaming children for laziness made them feel guilty (see e.g. Laurén & Malinen 2021:209–210, 214–215).

To write about your life and memories for the archive and for research purposes is different from telling about your life to friends and family members. Some authors find the anonymity of writing important, and feel that they can write about memories that have been too difficult or painful to share with their own families, for example with their own children or grandchildren. On the other hand, as the folklorist Carola Ekrem points out, in today's culture of sharing personal stories and honestly expressed opinions, people may be freer to describe their own past than in earlier times (Vehkalahti 2014; Ekrem 2016:94).

Personal, free-form sources such as life writings offer an intriguing avenue to the richness of everyday experiences in rural Finland, as there are both striking similarities and huge variation among the narratives written by people with different backgrounds. For some, manual work in food production was hard, but at the same time joyful. For others, it was an extremely exhausting struggle. Some emphasized how they now – at the time of writing – valued the lessons they learnt and understood their parents better, while for other writers the memories remained sore and unreconciled.

In the following quotation, a woman born in the late 1950s returns to her vivid memories of a vegetable garden she had to look after as a child. She compares her nightmares to those of her war veteran father. Men screaming in their sleep at night were common nocturnal memories in many families in Finland in the post-war era. The nightmares caused veterans to suffer from sleeplessness and anxiety, which they sometimes relieved with alcohol (Kivimäki 2021:306). The author felt that the endless nightmares she had must have been similar to those of her father.

Carrots, beetroots, and onions wandered in my nightmares. The weeds must have roared in my dreams the way armies did in my father's dreams. Deeply ingrained in my mind was the necessity of maintaining a vast vegetable garden well into adulthood. But the time came when I no longer waited for spring and summer to put my hands in the soil, as many of my city-dwelling friends did. (096_N_1957)

The narrative is a telling example of the rural legacy inherited by women born in the 1950s. The necessity of a vegetable garden was deeply ingrained in the mind of the author. Even though it was laborious to keep the garden that was a constant source of anxiety, and a permanent reminder of the bodily emotions she had lived through in her childhood, she nevertheless felt obliged to go on for years. The narrative closes with reconciliation and relief, when she realizes that she can let it go and stop keeping the vegetable garden. Yet there is also some wistfulness involved in the description of how she no longer waited for the spring to put her hands in the soil.

Transgenerational Transfer through Food

The knowledge, skills, and attitudes passed on in rural families are at the centre of many of the "My Countryside" writings. Several authors returned to affective and bodily memories of childhood tastes associated with safety and security – and with a sense of belonging in a transgenerational chain. In the following, the author remembers her parents through memories of food and food-related family traditions:

In the winter, when I was still under school age, I went to take afternoon coffee to my father in the forest, where he was working with his horse. I have a memory of a nice moment sitting on the side of the sleigh with my father in the winter forest, drinking coffee. We children were allowed to drink coffee if we wanted to – I did. In the first grade at school, the worst thing was when the school didn't give us our afternoon coffee. So, my mother, who was waiting at home, always had coffee ready for me when I came home from school. (089_N_1954)

From the perspective of belonging, these bodily memories connected to coffee are intriguing. By drinking coffee and being trusted with coffee-related tasks the child was included in the family as an equal member on a par with the adult members of the family. Secondly, vivid memories of sitting in her father's lap in the forest, sipping coffee, or enjoying coffee after school are associated with security and parental care in the memories of the grown-up author. Coffee links her to a chain of rural generations and reinforces her membership in the rural community (cf. Anthias 2006; Habib & Ward 2019).

As the oral historians and indigenous scholars Sara Wood and Malinda Maynor Lowery have pointed out, food and traditions related to food play a central, albeit often implicit and unrecognized role in constituting a sense of community. Preparation of food and following of traditions passed on by previous generations is a way of recreating bonds of community (Wood & Lowery 2015). On a more general level, positive childhood food experiences have been found constitutive for a sense of security later in life. Memories of food and meals can provide a secure foundation from which young adults can build their own lives. Good food memories have been associated with a sense of coping and resilience (von Essen & Mårtensson 2017:216).

Transgenerational bonds are an important dimension of rural belonging (Vehkalahti & Ristaniemi 2022). For women who wrote about food and food-related practices, belonging was not only about connecting with the past, but also about passing their rural values down to future generations. They wrote about the skills they themselves had taught their children and grandchildren; how they passed on an appreciation of nature, cooking, preparedness, and self-production. They described how they had taught their children and grandchildren to grow potatoes and other vegetables, pick berries and mushrooms, and reminded them to always keep food at home.

For them – now already adults – the farm has probably given a sense of responsibility, of how food is produced, how nature is cared for and how to live in winter when there are no streets, shops are far away, it's a long way to the slopes and the beach, etc. (089_N_1954)

The memories of older people can be influenced by the views on life of children and young people today. "My Countryside" participants were happy if their family members appreciated their efforts. In their narratives women born in the 1950s marvel at the urbanized youth of their families. On the one hand, they are amused, but at the same time sad. Younger generations did not always understand the importance of their rural lessons. For some of these authors it was hard to understand how far their families' daily lives have departed from the traditional farming life. They were the last of their families to have any experience of living in the countryside, and rural life was strange for younger family members.

For some of these women, the summer cottage had become a site of transgenerational transfer: a place where they especially tried to pass on to younger generations principles like preparedness, the rural way of life, and the skills they themselves had learned in their own childhood countryside. As the ethnologist Yrsa Lindqvist reminds us, Finland's Everyman's Rights allow also urban residents to pick berries and mushrooms, so you don't necessarily have to own a summer cottage, for example, to pass on these skills to the next generation (Lindqvist 2009:103).

If younger generations understood the value and importance of the countryside and preparedness, women felt they had succeeded in their parenting. In the following, one of these grandmothers describes her joy when watching the younger generations navigate the challenges posed by present-day changes in the Finnish countryside. She recognizes how life has inevitably changed in the countryside, but the all-important sense of belonging is still there:

My own attitude to the countryside is encouraging. I've watched young people be brave and enterprising. They work together as a family and one of the family can work outside the farm, as well as from home. It's so important for them to raise their children in the countryside, through which freedom and closeness to nature is strongly instilled, at least in the young people in my family. (013_N_1949–1951)

Discussion

In this article we have analysed life writings depicting the Finnish countryside by women born in the 1950s. Participation in the call for life writings gave the recipients freedom to write in their own way and according to their own wishes. This is a key feature of life writings, which has

clearly emerged also in this study (e.g. Latvala 2016). The time of writing during the Covid-19 restrictions has had an impact on the texts. The pandemic may have created a need to evaluate the meanings of the countryside from a new angle. It may also have led women to reflect on the skills and attitudes of younger generations. In their life writings they present their own perspectives and voices stemming from their experiences in relation to current issues. The pandemic period seemed to give significance to some of the everyday values and encouraged women to write about these topics.

Food was discussed in a myriad of ways in the texts, but close reading of the life writings against theories of belonging highlighted something that linked most of them: when writing about food, the women were writing about their connectedness with the countryside and rural life. While connections between food, memory, and emotions have been addressed in recent ethnological studies (e.g. Sutton 2017; Marshall & Pétursson 2022), food and food-related practices have not been recognized in the same way in existing literature on belonging. We suggest that food and food-related practices can be viewed as one of those mundane, often indiscernible everyday performances, which co-constitute a sense of belonging when repeated over and over again (cf. Cuervo & Wyn 2017; Harris et al. 2021). Based on our material, food memories and repeated practices associated with food were in the very heart of the authors' identification with rural life; affective memories of childhood tastes associated with safety and security, bodily memories of working in the fields and cowsheds for food, and finally

descriptions of how the authors sought to maintain their belonging through repetition of food-related traditions in their present life. For many, food-related memories of childhood and youth had been a lifetime resource.

Three major narratives of belonging emerged from our analysis. First, narratives that underlined the *importance of self-production and preparedness* as the core of rural identity. In these narratives women described how tasks like collecting berries, following the harvest season and growing your own vegetables in the garden connected them to the rural life and childhood memories and created a strong sense of belonging. Exceptional circumstances like the Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the value of preparedness.

Secondly, there were narratives where expressions of *non-belonging* in the countryside were grounded in food-related memories. Here too, food and food production were recognized as an integral element of rural life, but from the standpoint of belonging, the impact was the opposite of the first category of narratives. In the narratives including vivid descriptions of negative food-related memories these memories were linked with gradual detachment from belonging in the rural milieu. Contradictory feelings of both belonging and non-belonging characterize some of these accounts, as the same authors may not wish to continue the traditional practices, but they may nevertheless have felt obliged to do so. This reminds us of the partly unvoluntary and inexplicit nature of belonging: rural roots are something that the people themselves have not deliberately chosen, but rurality follows them nevertheless.

The third main theme arising from our analysis is the theme of *transgenerational transfer through food.* On one hand the authors emphasized food-related practices inherited from their parents and grandparents as a central element constituting a sense of belonging. On the other hand, food had an important role in passing care and affection on for their own children and grandchildren. In particular summer cottages served as a site of belonging, not only for the women themselves, who could connect to their rural roots there, but also as a site for passing this legacy – knowledge about food and rural skills – on to future generations.

Our analysis gives support to studies that have underlined the fluid, processual nature of belonging (e.g. Harris et al. 2021). We see belonging as a process, which requires active confirmation and reworking, and is shaped by the cultural and historical context. In the life narratives of women born in the 1950s personal life histories intersect with wider historical developments (such as post-war agricultural policies and modernization). Food and food-related memories stand at the intersection of these processes: food reflects changes in society, but it also offers possibilities to experience continuity and tradition. Some of the female authors had witnessed a considerable social change in their lives, but food and certain food-related practices connected them with the past, creating a sense of security. Hence, it could be concluded that in this respect food may offer for some of the authors a mode of belonging that Vanessa May (2017) has described in terms of belonging from afar: belonging to the past in the present day.

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Notes

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2   The Mass Observation Project (MOP) is a documentation project of everyday life in Britain launched in 1981. The project involves a panel of volunteer writers responding regularly to given topics. MOP is often referred to as a parallel example to the Finnish practices of thematic writing campaigns, e.g. Kivilaakso, Pesonen & Taavetti 2022.

3   To avoid identification, we refer to the respondents with numerical codes. The first part of the series of numbers tells the participant's serial number, N refers to the author's self-defined gender (female) and the last number tells the participant's year of birth. All participants were Finnish-speaking and lived in Finland. Texts were originally written in Finnish, extracts have been translated into English for this article. Most respondents had grown up in the countryside, some were city-dwellers who wrote about summers spent in the countryside, either at summer cottages or at their relatives. The majority of participants had out-migrated to urban settings later in their lives.

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The "My Countryside" collection is to be preserved in the archives of the Finnish Literature Society at the end of the research project.

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Taking up Residence in a Historic Town Hall Building
The Relocation of a State Institution from Copenhagen to a Small Town in Rural Denmark
By Birgitte Romme Larsen

"We are carrying out the largest redistribution of state jobs in recent history – moving state jobs to those parts of the country that badly need more growth and more opportunities. Denmark must not be split between development and dismantlement." On 17 January 2018, these were the words of the then Danish Prime Minister, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, at a major press conference held at Christiansborg, the seat of the Danish Parliament (Statsministeriet 2018, my translation). Here he presented the second and final round of a comprehensive national policy initiative to redistribute state jobs from the capital of Copenhagen to the Danish provinces: *Better Balance – government workplaces closer to citizens and enterprises*. This initiative was launched in 2015 by the centre-right government in the wake of a decade characterised by increasing centralisation of the Danish public sector, causing a significant reduction in the number of state institutions and public sector workplaces located outside the country's larger cities. This development can at least partially be attributed to a major structural reform in 2007 (Dybvad 2015), which merged Denmark's previous 271 local municipalities into 98 larger municipal entities.

While Danish attempts to redistribute state jobs from centre to periphery had been sporadic and on a limited scale prior to the *Better Balance* initiative, this is not the case in the rest of Scandinavia. From the 1950s to the present day, the relocation of government workplaces has been a more regular and widespread practice to support national cohesion between urban and rural districts in Norway and Sweden (see, e.g., Nilsson 1992; Trondal & Kiland 2010). Meanwhile, the recent *Better Balance* in-

itiative constitutes the most comprehensive ever geographical redistribution of government institutions in Denmark: during 2016–19, a total of 7,927 state jobs (equivalent to about one-fifth of total state jobs in the Capital Region of Denmark in 2015), spread across 89 state institutions, were relocated to 51 smaller towns across the country (Finansministeriet 2018). In this article, I invite readers to journey to one such small Danish town, where a state institution was relocated in 2019, casting light on this local migratory encounter as seen from an everyday, ethnographic perspective.

Previous studies and evaluation reports on the outcomes of the above-mentioned decentralisation initiative primarily address questions such as: "How much did the relocations cost?"; "How did they affect productivity?"; "How much did absence due to illness increase?"; and "How many employees moved with the workplace, how many commute and how many resigned?" (e.g., Christensen 2020; Djøf 2016; Finansministeriet 2018, 2019; Rambøll 2017). In addition to their focus on quantifiable outcomes, what all these questions have in common is that they focus on the *internal* relationship, so to speak, between the relocated government workplaces and the state itself – as opposed to the more *external* relationship between the workplaces and the various towns and areas to which they are relocated. Put differently, the existing questions on the matter form a sort of enclosed knowledge circuit, asking how the relocation has impacted the various state institutions – and thus, ultimately, the state itself.

Although the purpose of the *Better Balance* initiative was precisely to "con-

tribute to creating activity and stimulating development in *the surrounding area*" (Finansministeriet 2018: 3, my translation and italicisation), few studies and reports currently exist that focus on the relationship between relocated state institutions and their new surroundings. These comprise quantitative macroeconomic studies and impact analyses of the effects on local labour markets and employment rates (Balance Danmark 2020; Christensen 2020; Javakhishvili-Larsen et al. 2018). Examining existing studies on the redistribution of state jobs in a wider Scandinavian and European context, such as Sweden, England or Spain, overall, they are likewise characterised by a quantitative and macroeconomic approach to the relationship between relocated state institutions and their new surroundings (e.g., Andersson 2005; Faggio & Overman 2014; Jofre-Monseny et al. 2020). In other words, reviewing the current literature in Denmark and beyond reveals a knowledge gap in terms of qualitative and microsociological studies of the everyday encounters between relocated government workplaces and their new local social and cultural environments. This article contributes to an incipient closing of this knowledge gap.

Applying an anthropological and cultural-analytical approach to the topic of redistribution of state jobs, the analysis presented in this article forms part of a broader ethnographic case study following the relocation of the government workplace *Nota* to the rural Danish island of Lolland. Housing 80 state jobs, Nota – *the Danish Library and Expertise Center for People with Print Disabilities* – is a knowledge centre and library under the Danish Ministry of Culture that produces audiobooks, e-books and braille books for those who have difficulty reading ordinary printed text, such as those with dyslexia or visual impairments. In October 2019, Nota moved to the small town of Nakskov (12,500 inhabitants) in western Lolland, where the workplace took up residence in a large building from 1876 located in the central town square, which Lolland Municipality sold to the state in conjunction with Nota's relocation. In Nakskov and beyond, the building in question is considered of special local historic interest, having served for 130 years as *Nakskov Town Hall*. With the aforementioned Danish municipal reform in 2007, this function and 140 years of municipal sovereignty in Nakskov came to an end as seven municipalities on the island of Lolland, including the historic Nakskov Municipality, were merged into one: Lolland Municipality.

The case study of Nota's relocation to Nakskov, which this article forms part of, is based on ethnographic fieldwork spanning 2019–20. As already touched upon, the overriding purpose of the study was to create a base of socio-cultural knowledge about some of the many complex but previously unexamined local outcomes of the recent Danish policy initiative relocating state institutions from urban to rural areas – seen in an everyday perspective. Hence, the overall research question addressed by the case study was: how is the relocated government workplace Nota received at the level of everyday local life, and how does the arrival of the workplace affect local social and cultural environments in its new surroundings?

To include the perspectives of both the relocated state institution and existing local residents, during my ethnographic field

visits in Nakskov, I divided my time equally between Nota's new domicile in the former town hall building and the surrounding town community. During the time I spent inside the historic building, I wanted to examine – from a workplace perspective – how day-to-day life at Nota played out and took shape within its new local environment. Here, the primary methods of data collection were ethnographic participant observation and "deep hanging out" (Geertz 1998); semi-structured qualitative interviews and informal conversations with employees; and various forms of document analysis (e.g., the guest book, a guided tour manual, job adverts, internal evaluations). During the time spent in the town of Nakskov, I wanted to examine – from a local community perspective – how the emergent neighbourly relationship between Nakskov and Nota took form and was institutionalised. Here again, the primary methods of data collection were ethnographic participant observation and "deep hanging out" in local public spaces and the immediate surroundings; informal conversations and semi-structured qualitative interviews with local townspeople, including key local figures and representatives of relevant associations; various forms of document analysis (e.g., letters from local associations, minutes from public meetings); and webnography (e.g., local debates about Nota's arrival on the town's Facebook page). Furthermore, the comprehensive national, regional and local media coverage (newspapers/radio/television) that has surrounded Nota's move to Nakskov forms an important part of the overall data material. I conducted a total of 25 semi-structured qualitative interviews, each lasting 1–3 hours, with a cross-sec-

tion of Nota employees, local residents and other relevant key persons, subsequently transcribing the audio recordings in full. In addition, I produced about 300 computer-written pages of ethnographic fieldnotes based on my detailed recollections of recent informal conversations and participant observations. This assembled body of ethnographic data was subsequently analysed through inductive coding and the identification of recurrent cross-cutting themes and patterns within the material.

In this article, I focus in particular on one such recurrent theme, identified through inductive examination of the data material. This concerns the ways in which Nota taking up residence specifically in the former Nakskov town hall building proves paramount in shaping the local encounter with the workplace – and hence also in shaping Nota's everyday workplace arrangements inside their new domicile. Applying the perspectives of both the relocated state institution and existing local residents, in my analysis of this prominent theme in the ethnographic material I especially draw on theories of materiality and time and how these dimensions intersect in social life (e.g., Bille & Sørensen 2012; Miller 2010; Sjørslev 2013; Sørensen 2016). With Nota's physical occupation of the historic Nakskov Town Hall, the building is given a new function and thus a new beginning. However, as we will see, this beginning is not simply a linear addition to the building's past and cultural history – it also reawakens and reactualises this past, both directly and indirectly. As mentioned, this revitalisation of local cultural history in itself proves to have a crucial impact on Nota's day-to-day workplace arrangements, both materially and socially.

With respect to the historic town hall, I first unpack how, in practice, a dual ownership is established between the state and local townspeople. It is within this dually owned space of their new domicile that Nota must operate and manoeuvre as a workplace. Next, I argue that, at the same time, the fact that it was precisely the former town hall building – regarded locally as Nakskov's cultural-historical "inner sanctum" – in which Nota took up residence interacts with a regional and national historical context that extends beyond the building itself. This context concerns the Danish municipal mergers in 2007 that, as mentioned previously, brought to an end Nakskov's 140-year status as an independent municipality. I show how this specific historical event, with delayed effect and renewed vigour, became of central importance in shaping both local expectations and social relations with regard to Nota's reception in Nakskov.

Hence, while the reasoning behind the initial decision to relocate Nota from Copenhagen was to promote national cohesion, conversely, the article fleshes out how Nota is compelled to tread carefully to be accepted locally, acknowledging Nakskov's cultural history and "social memory" (Connerton 1989) of its sovereign past. The article hereby brings cultural history – and cultural-historical materialities – alive as something that not just "is", but that is constantly interpreted, told, used and remembered in service of various contemporary purposes and, as such, comes to take up the role of a living actor within a given present (Damsholt & Mellemgaard 2017). Likewise, cultural-historical events are both shaped by and play an active part in shaping the present.

1. Map of Denmark, highlighting Lolland Municipality. Illustration: Wikipedia (released into the public domain by the copyright holder).

Fighting for State Jobs and Fighting for the Old Town Hall

Lolland Municipality is located on the western part of the Danish island of Lolland, in the southern area of Region Zealand, and covers an area of 886 square kilometres. The municipality has two larger town centres: Nakskov (12,500 inhabitants) to the west and Maribo (5,500 inhabitants) to the east. The latter has served as the seat of local government since the establishment of Lolland Municipality on 1 January 2007 – the day when seven smaller municipalities on the island (including Nakskov Municipality and Maribo Municipality) were merged into one.

In 2007, Lolland Municipality had 48,642 inhabitants, falling to 40,103 in 2022, making it one of the municipalities in Denmark with the steepest decline in population in recent decades (Lolland Kommune 2019). In

part, this is due to the high ratio of elderly citizens in the municipality, which leads to an excess of deaths over births (ibid.) and to the municipality having the country's smallest workforce as a share of population (Lolland Kommune 2017). In addition, there is significant out-migration among the municipality's younger inhabitants, who often move to Denmark's larger towns and cities to get an education. Moreover, a significant part of the in-migration to Lolland Municipality is associated with an expense, as – in line with other Danish rural and peripheral municipalities – more people receiving public benefits have moved *to* the municipality than *from* the municipality. Today, Lolland Municipality has the country's largest share of new residents receiving long-term public benefits (ibid.). Together, the increase in the number of older people, the out-migration among young people, and the ongoing in-migration of citizens receiving public benefits contribute to a pronounced structural imbalance in the municipality's economy – with an expenditure on public benefits more than 50 per cent higher than the national average (Jensen, Jakobsen & Bolvig 2019). Overall, this has meant that, today, Lolland, and especially Nakskov, is widely seen and used in Danish national media and popular culture as a clear example of the increased geographical imbalance between centre and periphery in post-industrial Denmark (Ledstrup 2021). In fact, in contemporary Danish popular culture Lolland and Nakskov are frequently assigned the role as peripheral Denmark's (*Udkantsdanmarks*) "locus classicus" (Sørensen 2016).

Meanwhile, Lolland Municipality has a vision for 2030 of "a new Lolland" in the form of "a self-sustaining Lolland that has found a new balance" (Lolland Kommune 2016, my translation). This vision rests partly on hopes that the Fehmarnbelt Tunnel under construction between Lolland and Germany will create local jobs, growth and an influx of new residents, and partly on the municipality's endeavours to attract state jobs from the capital area. Since 2007, among Denmark's sixteen peripheral municipalities,[1] Lolland Municipality has lost by far the highest number of state jobs (Balance Danmark 2020). This represents an underlying problem in relation to the municipality's pronounced structural imbalance, which the elected mayor of Lolland Municipality described as follows during a debate on Danish national radio: "When [as a result of centralisation] you remove those jobs from an area, then also you remove well-educated and well-off people, leaving behind empty houses that fall in price and thus become attractive to other sections of the population – then you really start to shift around the national population" (DR 2020, my translation). There was therefore no hiding the joy at the mayor's office when it was announced at the aforementioned national press conference launching the final stage of the *Better Balance* initiative in January 2018 that Lolland Municipality was to receive 111 government jobs – 80 of them through Nota's relocation to Nakskov.

While there was great joy at the mayor's office in Maribo over the planned relocation of Nota, there were more mixed feelings among Nakskov's inhabitants once it became known that, in order to make room for Nota, Lolland Municipality would sell the former Nakskov Town Hall to the state. As mentioned previously, this building had been the administrative centre of the now

2. The historic Nakskov Town Hall, sold to the state by Lolland Municipality in 2018. Photo: Birgitte Romme Larsen (2020).

defunct Nakskov Municipality for 130 years, ending with the Danish municipal mergers in 2007. Hereafter, the building housed shifting municipal administrations under the new Lolland Municipality, including the Administration for Children and Youth, which resided in the building right up until its purchase by the state in 2018 and has since relocated within Nakskov.

The sale of the old Nakskov Town Hall generated strong emotions among the local townspeople, with news articles and editorials regularly appearing in the local newspaper with headlines such as: "Should we let changing times erase all traces of our history: the town hall and its old coun-

cil chamber are part of the town's DNA" (*Folketidende* 2018a, my translation), and "An emotional sale: the town hall means something for Nakskov townspeople's sense of identity" (*Folketidende* 2018b, my translation). Feelings did not only run high on the pages of local newspapers, but also on the town's Facebook page, in the form of statements such as: "Selling Nakskov's former town hall to the state to make room for Nota is selling the town's soul", and "If we continue to sell off the family silver, we will have no history left" (my translations). Indeed, as the above reactions show, many Nakskov residents still feel a close connection with the former town hall building and its old council chamber.

Meanwhile, 170 kilometres away in Copenhagen, Nota's employees followed the local debate in Nakskov. Prior to moving, this led Nota's manager to comment in the local newspaper: "I have been following the debate, and people from Nakskov have also rung me up. I truly understand that people want the town hall to be preserved – and we will do everything we can to take these feelings into account. For it really *is* an absolutely spectacular town hall, which we will do all we can to preserve. However, we must also have room for our employees" (*Folketidende* 2018c, my translation). As the manager's words suggest, as a cultural-historical material space, the former Nakskov Town Hall and its council chamber now need to accommodate both Nota's employees *and* the townspeople's enduring feelings of attachment. In the following analysis, I flesh out how this *dual ownership* of the historic town hall comes to impact not only how Nota is received locally, but also how Nota must organise everyday working life inside the building.

"Never Before Have I Seen More People Queueing for a Guided Tour than for a Free Beer"

In October 2019, a year and a half after the state's purchase of the former Nakskov Town Hall, Nota moved in – following a period of state-funded renovation. Whereas the arrival of a large state institution as a neighbour in the middle of town was something that the people of Nakskov were not used to, it was equally unfamiliar territory for Nota to suddenly find itself in the role of "a neighbour" – whose local presence and existence was noticed and responded to by the local surroundings (see also

Larsen 2022). Or, as one Nota employee explained to me:[2]

Whereas in a big city you can be very anonymous, that is more difficult in Nakskov. And we have never had such a visible role before – in Copenhagen, in an old brick building in a somewhat forgotten industrial district on the outskirts of the city. I mean, I don't think *any* of our neighbours there had any idea who we were. Here, it's a bit like being the new kid on the block: how should you behave? It may well be that we are a government workplace, but we really *are* neighbours with the entire town now, and that places an obligation on us. On top of that, because we now live in this historic building – an iconic building to many in Nakskov – we cannot just ensconce ourselves behind the thick walls of the state. We *have* to get involved in town life.

Consequently, the staff at Nota wanted to celebrate moving in by inviting the townspeople to an opening reception – an event that would be "completely down to earth", they underlined, with live jazz and free hot dogs and draft beer in the town square. As one Nota employee later pointed out: "It *had* to have popular appeal [*være folkeligt*]. Because there were lots of rumours about Nota by that point – 'maybe we were in fact part of NATO' [the vowels O and A exchanged], some claimed". Despite a steady downpour all day, 1,700 people attended the event. Nota's employees took turns tending a number of information stalls set up for the occasion in the town square, ready to talk to interested guests about the work Nota performs. Meanwhile, guided tours took place inside the newly renovated former town hall building. The information stalls and the stall with free hot dogs and draft beer were well visited, but the longest queue was for the guided tours, the day's most popular activity. A local radio

station had a four-hour live broadcast from the event, with the journalist telling a Nota employee at the end of the day: "Never before have I seen more people queueing for a guided tour than for a free beer."

When I placed myself in the line for guided tours, I overheard several conversations among the waiting townspeople about "what might have been done to the inside of the town hall and its council chamber", whereas few seemed to wonder what sort of work Nota was going to be carrying out inside. Several people in the line spontaneously began to share with one another their memories of getting married inside the council chamber, or of when they, or their children, attended the annual ceremony in the chamber marking their graduation from Nakskov High School. Conducting both civil marriage ceremonies and the graduation ceremony inside the former council chamber had remained local traditions right up until the state purchased the building in 2018, even though from 2007 onwards the building no longer served as Nakskov Town Hall but housed various municipal administrations under Lolland Municipality. Together, the many individual narratives shared in the queue formed a "social memory" (Connerton 1989), pointing *back in time* in relation to the old town hall building in front of us. Meanwhile, with the goal of introducing Nota as a new workplace in town, Nota's opening reception in itself could be said to point *towards the future*. As we shall see, this co-existence of disparate times – or this "plurality of unfinished durations" (Sørensen 2016) – was particularly apparent during the guided tours.

During the opening reception, I participated in three identical guided tours, care-

fully recorded in fieldnotes. Of the seven scheduled stops on the tour around the inside of the historic town hall – now Nota's new domicile – the longest was always in the former council chamber. Furthermore, on each tour there were impatient visitors who simply left their group and went ahead on their own to reach this stop more quickly. Similarly, after seeing the council chamber, some visitors did not participate in the rest of the tour through Nota's braille printing press, office areas, library space etc. Inside the old council chamber, the various Nota employees who served as guides all emphasised how the room had been carefully renovated in order to "preserve as much of the old chamber's expression and history as possible". Among other things, they pointed out the carefully renovated parquet floor; the preserved dark-stained panels extending halfway up the walls; the gently cleaned original curtains; and the decision to keep the room's antique cast-iron stoves, hatstand and chandeliers. As one guide explained to participants: "Although the room will now house our meetings at Nota, we have wanted to preserve as much of the council chamber's soul as possible." There was only one element of the chamber's original interior that Nota had chosen not to keep; namely the giant base-mounted, semicircular table in solid oak, which had been custom-built on site around 1920, with bulky matching armchairs. However, as the visitors surveyed the unfurnished room, they were reassured by the guides that Nota was awaiting the delivery of an order of Danish designer furniture, which had been carefully selected to fit the ambience of the beautiful old council chamber.

Meanwhile, it was not only the Nota-employed guides who focused heavily on

the old council chamber's history during the guided tours; this focus was even more apparent from the various questions posed by the visitors, the vast majority of whom were local townspeople. These questions consistently concerned *previous* local traditions inside the council chamber – as opposed to Nota's *future* activities, using the room as a workplace. The questions raised were particularly centred on two issues. *First*, whether Nota would be willing to make room for the annual graduation ceremony for students at Nakskov High School inside the old council chamber. *Second*, whether local residents would still be able to get married inside the chamber if they so desired. The Nota guides all responded that they would love to help keep the tradition of holding the graduate ceremony in the chamber alive, whereas they were more hesitant regarding marriage ceremonies, replying that, as a workplace, Nota had not yet reached a decision on this matter. A few months after the opening reception, one Nota employee addressed the topic, telling me: "Well, we really want to be accommodating and cooperative. But we also must not forget that this *is* a workplace – and that we must be able to function as such."

Overall, it was very clear during the opening reception how the old town hall and its council chamber formed a collective reference point among the townspeople of Nakskov. Indeed, Nota had taken up residence in what many in the town consider *the* most culturally and historically significant local building in Nakskov. As one local resident stated during an interview: "For many people in Nakskov, the old town hall is a sacred building, a sanctuary – and its council chamber constitutes the innermost sanctum!" It was equally diffi-

cult to overlook this cultural-historical role when stepping inside the building, with the old town hall functioning as a living actor in the present (Damsholt & Mellemgaard 2017). As one Nota employee explained: "It feels a bit like if you had bought an old country estate with a ghost in the basement – you always have to remember to feed the ghost as well".

As Daniel Miller (2010) has pointed out, the older a building is, the more likely there are to be ghosts – and in very old houses, he argues, at times it might even be the ghosts who are the real homeowners. Therefore, Miller describes how the owners of centuries-old houses typically develop various strategies for addressing their lengthy history, which, he writes, is especially apparent when it comes to furnishing (ibid.:95). For instance, should one decorate with period-appropriate antique furniture, should one buy modern and perhaps more practical furniture, or possibly something in between? This dilemma also proved central in the case of Nota, as illustrated by the following excerpt from an interview with an employee:

Out of respect for the ambience in the old council chamber, we at Nota wanted to pick new furniture that somewhat resembled the original furnishings. But in reality, Nota has made a mistake by insisting that we *had* to choose such bulky designer furniture [in line with the bulky aesthetics of the original furniture]. Because you can't move it around, and therefore not very many people can be seated in there. It would have been smart if, occasionally, we could instead set it up like a cinema layout. Because we would actually like to host, for instance, some author events in there, where maybe around 30 townspeople could come and join. But we can't do that because our furniture is simply *so* heavy – you can hardly move the chairs and tables. And the lighting is also cumbersome, as we only

have the old chandeliers in there. This must be how it feels living in a castle – it's not very practical.

It is clear that Nota would like to create a new, functional workplace, but at the same time, they feel obliged to take "the soul" of the old council chamber into consideration (as one Nota employee put it during one of the guided tours at the opening reception). As the above quotation illustrates, at times these dual considerations prevent Nota from using the space as they would like to (which, paradoxically, includes inviting the local population into the old council chamber that they hold so dear). Along similar lines, Inger Sjørslev has described how, when you take up residence in an existing building, you also move into a material framework that "already contains inbuilt thoughts and intentions – and which has a history and bears traces of its former residents" (2013:56, my translation). In this way, insofar as they are not newly built, all houses host past inhabitants and their daily routines, Sjørslev states (ibid.).

Hence, while a conveyance of property points towards new possible worlds, it simultaneously also points back in time to various past affairs beyond the control of the new owner. Sjørslev (2013) stresses that one of the main ways in which such past affairs may manifest their continued importance is with regard to precisely the question of ownership. I argue that Nota's opening reception, more than anything else, cemented this issue: *ownership* was something negotiated between Nota as a workplace and the local community in Nakskov. For instance, as mentioned, several visitors left their guided tour group, instead wandering around the building on their own. Some of these visitors further-

more ignored the barriers that Nota had put up to keep people away from corridors containing removal boxes, opening closed doors into offices "just to see what they looked like now". When caught red-handed by Nota staff, they justified their actions by stating that that specific office had once been *theirs*, back when they themselves had worked in the building.

In short, as Sjørslev (2013) also discusses, with respect to the conveyance of property, there are many things one can inherit, or that can be thrown in. In the case of Nota, as the above examples show, this includes inheriting other people's continued sense of ownership. The Nakskov townspeople's continued sense of ownership of the building is accompanied by a series of inherited obligations, with which Nota's employees find themselves duty-bound to engage. I have shown how this sometimes leads to staff feeling trammelled by their own material choices, for instance of workplace decor (such as when having chosen bulky, heavy furniture out of respect for an inherited perceived obligation to preserve the old council chamber's "soul"). In order to flesh out this recurrent theme of dual ownership in my ethnographic material, the analysis has thus far primarily zoomed in on Nota's *new* furnishings. I will now turn my attention to the historic council chamber's *original* furniture – and its analytical relevance for better understanding the "plurality of unfinished durations" (Sørensen 2016) that we see at play in the local community's encounter with Nota.

Storage of the Historic Council Chamber Furniture as an Anchor for Identity

When Nota moved into the former town

3. Nakskov Town Hall's council chamber, 1966. Photo: Nakskov Archives of Local History.

hall building, the local historical archives – *Nakskov Archives of Local History* – decided that the council chamber's original, custom-built furniture should be preserved for posterity. As no other obvious places were found to install the furniture in Nakskov, the local historical archives thus rented a large, climate-controlled furniture storeroom to accommodate the chamber's giant base-mounted, semicircular table in solid oak and its bulky matching armchairs, paid for by Lolland Municipality. Removing the furniture from the town hall building prior to Nota's arrival was no simple matter. The huge table had to be sawn in half and a crane used to lower it from the building's first floor through the council chamber's large windows. The removal of the furniture received a lot of attention in Nakskov and, once again, emotions ran high in the local newspapers, where one could find news articles and editorials with headlines such as: "Clearing of the council chamber in Nakskov Town Hall: Sad day for the town's pride and joy" (*Folketidende* 2018d, my translation). In the town's Facebook community, public

feeling was wistful, as illustrated, for instance, by the following short, candid remark: "It's so sad, the heart is ripped out [cracked-heart-emoji]". The heart here, I suggest, is to be understood partly as the commentator's own heart, partly as the old town hall and council chamber constituting the very heart of the town. For, as one local resident wrote in Nota's guestbook during the opening reception: "Dear Nota, I wish you a wonderful journey into the heart of Nakskov" (my translation).

Two years after the clearing of the old council chamber, while I was visiting the Nakskov Archives of Local History, a local resident and member of staff told me: "It was sad to watch the furniture being removed, yes. But the rest of the council chamber is preserved, only the furniture is missing – and now that it is being stored, the council chamber can actually be re-established at *any time*!" As social and cultural beings, we humans often surround ourselves with various objects of sentimental value – things that we do not really have a need for in our daily lives, but that we cannot say goodbye to either, and which we therefore typically end up storing in attics or basements (Sjørslev 2013). As Sjørslev stresses, this becomes apparent when clearing the estates of the deceased, where the next of kin can often choose to store inherited items for a number of years, after which it becomes easier to either throw them away or let them find their place in a new context. Sjørslev defines this procedure as the things being given "an intervening period" [*en mellemtid*] (ibid.).

Meanwhile, as expressed by the employee at the local archives, the decision to keep the old council chamber furniture in storage did not seem to be centred on in-

tentions of integrating it in a *new* context at some point in the future. Rather, the "intervening period" in the storeroom seemed intended to enable the furniture's re-integration in its *original* context – a full re-establishment of the council chamber as was. Hence, as shown, whereas the negotiations of ownership, as manifested during Nota's opening reception, revolved around *dual* ownership of the historic town hall and its council chamber, the local imaginary of returning the old council chamber furniture to its original setting instead speaks to a return to *full* ownership. Yet, during my visit to the local historical archives, everyone I spoke to agreed that "this will probably never happen", but "now the opportunity is always there, at least" (should Lolland Municipality one day buy the town hall building back from the state).

As such, the storage of the furniture points back towards an ongoing past, meaning a past that is being continuously (re-)constructed, addressing what contemporary archaeology has termed "the relation between material traces and that which has been lost", or "the tension between the absent and the present" (Sørensen 2016, my translations). At the same time, the furniture storage also points forward towards an unknown future (one which, ideally, will undo past losses). In this way, I argue that the preservation and storage of the cultural-historical furniture comes to play the role of "an anchor for identity" (Bille & Sørensen 2012). More specifically, I will now show how this relates to the specific town identity attached to the historic Nakskov Municipality, dissolved by the Danish municipal mergers in 2007. This is a sensitive local-historical topic that Nota unwittingly rekindled with renewed vig-

our when taking over the former Nakskov Town Hall.

The Reawakening of a Loss of Municipal Identity

When we as humans attach special significance and status to objects as worthy of preservation for anything other than practical reasons, such as in the case of the original council chamber furniture, this care for the objects often supports the formation or maintenance of various social, ethnic or national identities (Bille & Sørensen 2012) – or, I would add, *municipal* identities. Bille & Sørensen write: "The preservation of an object is thus not only a matter of ensuring its continued existence, but also of securing an anchor for identities, feelings and ideologies" (ibid.:136, my translation). In this way, the preservation of cultural-historical objects represents a careful selection of a particular past that is believed to be of importance to the present. As such, these objects might come to serve as "sources of narratives about who a particular group is and about what happened in the past" (ibid.:149, my translation). In the case of the original council chamber furniture, I argue that its preservation as local cultural heritage becomes a source of the narrative about Nakskov as a long-standing sovereign town municipality – brought to an end after 140 years with the formation of Lolland Municipality in 2007. Many people in Nakskov have experienced this as a loss of sovereignty, feeling they are now governed by "the politicians in Maribo", the site of the new municipality's administrative centre.

Emotional attachment to regional administrative entities such as counties or municipalities (and dissolutions and merg-
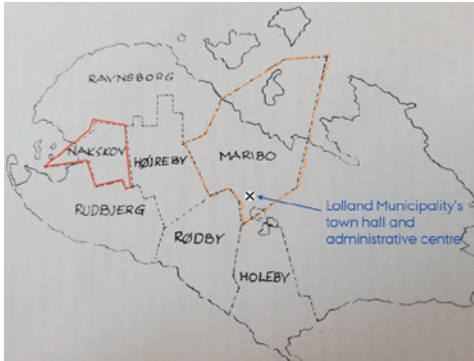
4. The seven local municipalities, including those of Nakskov and Maribo, which in 2007 were merged into Lolland Municipality, highlighting the placement of the new municipality's town hall and administrative centre. Drawing: Ole Benny Helvig (Det Gamle Trykkeri 2006), graphics inserted by Birgitte Romme Larsen.

ers of such entities) is not a topic that has received much attention in social and political science (Frisvoll 2016; Zimmerbauer & Paasi 2013). Nonetheless, municipalities do not exist in a vacuum, but are intricately entwined with local and regional identities (Frisvoll 2016). Thus, while municipalities can be dissolved administratively, they often continue to play a central role in local and regional consciousness long after this dissolution. As such, municipal mergers do not only involve economic and political processes, but also cultural and identity processes (Frisvoll 2016; Zimmerbauer & Paasi 2013). Consequently, administratively dissolved municipalities often retain a presence in local cultural and social life, as expressed through "a need *to perform* the identity of the region even after its deinstitutionalization" (Zimmerbauer & Paasi 2013:38, my italicisation).

In the case of Nakskov, I suggest that continuing to hold marriage ceremonies

and graduation ceremonies in the old town hall's council chamber following the municipality's dissolution in 2007 has played a pivotal role in precisely such social and cultural *performance* of a historic municipal identity. With Lolland Municipality's sale of the building to the state in 2018, I thus argue that many people in Nakskov felt that this opportunity for continued performance of the identity attached to the historic Nakskov Municipality was being taken away from them. To counter this, they proposed to Nota that marriage ceremonies and graduation ceremonies still be held inside its new domicile. I likewise argue that the storage and preservation of the original council chamber furniture functions as another way of trying to cling on to the opportunity to continue performing this municipal identity (if not now, then perhaps in the future – "should Lolland Municipality one day buy the building back from the state").

Hence, municipal identity is more than instrumental and, as Zimmerbauer and Paasi underline: "Regardless of the decision-making where administrative borders or regional names are decided and removed, the established regional 'us' and 'them' may remain strong" (2013:38). The municipal identity that remains attached to the historic Nakskov Municipality implies precisely such a profound "us and them" distinction. In this respect, for the residents of Nakskov, the neighbouring town of Maribo represents the municipal "other", who it is assumed wants to marginalise Nakskov and is therefore perceived as a "threat". Immediately prior to the formation of Lolland Municipality in 2007, this perception was evident in Nakskov; for instance, in how local resistance to the

administrative merger was not so much directed at the state itself and its centralising municipal reforms, but at the neighbouring Maribo Municipality (for identical findings in Norwegian and Finnish contexts, see, Frisvoll 2016; Zimmerbauer & Paasi 2013).

When "the politicians in Maribo" sold the historic Nakskov Town Hall to the state in 2018, this added fuel to local perceptions of Maribo, the administrative centre of Lolland Municipality, as the threatening municipal "other". During my fieldwork in Nakskov, it was difficult to overlook how, subtly but unmistakably, conversations with townspeople on the topic of *Nota's taking over of the old town hall* constantly and on their own initiative switched to the topic of *Nakskov's loss of municipal identity* (and the role played by Maribo in this regard). This is illustrated by a local resident's prompt reply when asked a general question about Nota's relocation:

One has to understand the backdrop for Nota moving into the town hall. And that backdrop is the Danish municipal reform in 2007. When, to our great frustration, we learned that we had to share a municipality with Maribo, here in Nakskov, we felt that we were somehow being attacked, you know. And then, on top of that, when the new municipality's town hall was located in Maribo, even though Nakskov is twice the size, it *really* led to a negative atmosphere here in Nakskov – it *really* did. The loss of the seat of local government, *that* function being taken away from our town hall building… oh, that was a *huge* smack in the face for people in Nakskov. It was like "what the devil, now Maribo is running away with our municipality". And myself was deeply shaken by it. I felt a loss of identity – the fact that now we did not have our *own* municipality any longer. It took years for the town to recover! And for some, it isn't over yet… And with Nota coming, all of this is now being rekin-

dled. Because now, Lolland Municipality has decided to *fully* dispose of Nakskov's old town hall – they [the politicians in Maribo] have now sold the actual *physical* remnants of the centre of power in Nakskov [the town hall building], from back when such a thing actually existed in Nakskov. Thus, with Nota moving in, all sorts of emotions are in play – because they have moved *right* into the middle of this whole backdrop.

The above account, I argue, illustrates how the rivalry between Nakskov and Maribo is specifically focused on the right and power to define the *centre* and the *hinterland* within a new and larger municipal structure. With the dissolution of Nakskov Municipality in 2007 and the town of Nakskov not being assigned the role as the administrative centre of the new Lolland Municipality, it went from being *a municipal centre with its own hinterland* to suddenly finding itself forming *the hinterland of another municipal centre*, namely, that of Maribo. The residents of Nakskov hereby experienced what might be termed a loss of alignment between town and municipal identity. It is precisely the loss of this composite identity that has been reactualised and rekindled by Nota's occupancy of the former town hall. Since the deinstitutionalisation of Nakskov Municipality in 2007, this building has served as a symbolic "anchor" (Bille & Sørensen 2012) for the aforementioned composite town and municipal identity – an anchor that has inevitably been disturbed by Nota's arrival and takeover of the building.

Conclusions

In Denmark, a major national policy initiative was implemented in 2016–19, redistributing almost 8,000 state jobs from the capital of Copenhagen to the Danish

provinces: *Better Balance – government workplaces closer to citizens and enterprises*. Applying an anthropological and cultural-analytical approach to this topic, in this article I have taken the reader to the town of Nakskov (12,500 inhabitants) on the Danish island of Lolland, where the government workplace Nota, with 80 employees, was relocated in October 2019. Based on a broader ethnographic case study of Nota's relocation to Nakskov, in this article I have particularly focused on how it has impacted the local encounter with Nota that the workplace has taken up residence in precisely Nakskov's former town hall. Applying the perspectives of both the relocated state institution and existing local residents, I have drawn on theories of materiality and time and how these dimensions intersect in social life (Bille and Sørensen 2012; Miller 2010; Sjørslev 2013; Sørensen 2016).

The article has shown how Nota's occupation of the historic Nakskov Town Hall has given the building a new beginning. However, it is not simply a linear addition to the building's past and local cultural history; it also – both directly and indirectly – reawakens and reactualises this past. This reactualisation and revitalisation of local cultural history in itself proves to have a crucial impact on the shaping of Nota's everyday workplace arrangements inside their new domicile. First, the analysis showed how, in practice, a dual ownership of the historic town hall and its council chamber was established between the state and local townspeople. It is within the scope of this dually owned space that Nota must now manoeuvre and function as a workplace. Second, the analysis unpacked how Nota's taking over of the old town hall – regard-

ed locally as Nakskov's cultural-historical "inner sanctum" – furthermore interacts with a regional and national historical context that extends beyond the building itself. This context concerns the Danish national municipal mergers in 2007, resulting in Nakskov's loss of its composite town and municipal identity after 140 years as an independent town municipality. With delayed effect and renewed vigour, this specific local cultural-historical event proves of central importance in shaping local expectations and social relations with regard to Nota's settlement in Nakskov.

As discussed in the article, collective memory is often accentuated and maintained through materialisations (Sjørslev 2013). In this respect, the local "social memory" (Connerton 1989) of Nakskov's previous municipal sovereignty can be said to have materialised in the town hall building itself, not least its historic council chamber. Nota taking up residence within precisely this material framework therefore inevitably reactualises and rekindles the historical event that deprived the town of this sovereignty: the formation of the new and larger Lolland Municipality in 2007 and the location of its administrative centre and town hall in the neighbouring town of Maribo, rather than Nakskov. In other words: when Nota moves into the historic Nakskov Town Hall, it finds itself right in the middle of a local field of tension. The roots of this tension are entirely unrelated to Nota – or to the national policy of redistributing state jobs for that matter. Instead, the tension is rooted in Nakskov's loss of alignment between town and municipal identity, caused by the dissolution of Nakskov Municipality in 2007. Ever since, the former town hall building has served

as "an anchor" (Bille & Sørensen 2012) for this now historic, composite town and municipal identity among the people of Nakskov. As one local resident put it, Nota has moved *right* into the middle of this whole backdrop. The analysis has revealed how this complex situation gives rise to a "plurality of unfinished durations" (Sørensen 2016) within the scope of which Nota must manoeuvre and function as a workplace inside the historic town hall. With respect to the larger national *Better Balance* policy initiative, aimed at counteracting state centralisation, the plurality of durations intrinsic to Nota's relocation to Nakskov is thought-provoking for at least five reasons, which I will conclude this article by pinpointing.

First, while the Danish *Better Balance* policy was launched in 2015 to correct the national structural imbalance between centre and periphery through the redistribution of state jobs, Lolland has its own internal dynamic forces between centre and periphery – not least between the towns of Nakskov and Maribo. When Nota takes over the former Nakskov Town Hall, it breathes new life into and adds new dimensions to this local tension between centre and periphery. This adds to and complicates the far broader national issues of structural imbalance that *originally* drove the decision to relocate Nota.

Second, while the reasoning behind the initial decision to relocate Nota from Copenhagen was to promote future national cohesion, conversely, the article has fleshed out how Nota is compelled to carefully acknowledge and navigate Nakskov's cultural history and "social memory" (Connerton 1989) of its sovereign past to be accepted locally.

Third, this means that, whereas the national redistribution of state jobs was intended to compensate rural districts for the centralisation caused by the Danish municipal reform in 2007, relocating Nota to Nakskov seems to have done little to heal these wounds. Instead, it has reawakened and amplified this very same reform – by disrupting the physical and symbolic core of an enduring local municipal identity.

Fourth, I hence propose that, fundamentally, the local encounter between Nota and Nakskov did not *begin* with the actual arrival of the relocated workplace – and its occupation of the very "inner sanctum" of the town of Nakskov. Instead, I argue that this encounter's specific layers of meanings and terms of interaction were *already* entrenched in local collective memories and regional imaginaries concerning past centres and peripheries, embedded in historical events both inside and outside what was once Nakskov Town Hall – and now the domicile of a relocated Danish state institution.

Fifth, and finally, this means that if we as researchers are to generate a more fully fledged body of literature on the various outcomes of state decentralisation initiatives than is the case today, future studies should not one-sidedly pertain to the national relocation of state institutions as first and foremost pointing towards new *future* balances between centre and periphery, starting from the time of the actual relocation. The placement of government workplaces seems equally to point back towards the vast impact of all the local cultural-historical structures *already* in place – including the many enduring power balances in local and regional histories relating to precisely the matter of being at the centre or on the periphery.

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Notes

1 Since 2007, Denmark's 98 municipalities have been divided into four types: "Urban municipalities" (*Bykommuner*) (35), "Intermediate municipalities" (*Mellemkommuner*) (18), "Rural municipalities" (*Landkommuner*) (29), and "Peripheral municipalities" (*Yderkommuner*) (16, including Lolland Municipality).

2 Throughout the article, statements quoted from interviews and informal conversations with Nota employees and local townspeople in Nakskov have been translated from Danish to English by the author.

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Proud Pictures
Negotiating Family through Same-Sex Couples' Sharenting
By Evelina Liliequist

Today an ever-increasing number of family photographs are taken and shared on social media. Although debated, the parental digital sharing practice *sharenting* – sharing + parenting – has in Western societies "become a social norm" (Brosch 2016:226). Social media afford new practices and ways of being a family through digital technology and have contributed to social expectation and the normalization of digitally sharing family photographs (Leaver et al. 2020:174). For parents in a digital age, family life is often encouraged and expected to be shared online (Blum-Ross & Livingstone 2017:111). On Instagram an increased visibility of Swedish-based same-sex families can be noted.

In the last few decades great advances have been made for queer sociolegal rights in Sweden, of which many have clustered around partnership, marriage, and parenthood (Dahl & Gabb 2020:210; Rydström 2011). However, Dahl (2022:162; see also Rydström 2011) argues that the inclusion of same-sex families in family law was more about solving a practical problem; many LGBTQ people already had children. Thus, a revision of the family law in 2005 was intended to "better regulate and secure new family forms conceived outside the nation and the law". Differently put, the acknowledgement of LGBTQ parents and same-sex families may have been more about society accepting a compliance with heterosexual norms rather than of non-heterosexual orientations per se (ibid.). After the Second World War, the nuclear family – a (hetero)normative institution consisting of father, mother, and child – became idealized and was regarded as central and instrumental in the establishment of the Swedish welfare state (Frykman &

Löfgren 2022:11–12). In recent decades, the hegemony of the heteronormative nuclear family has been challenged as new family forms and ways of parenthood have been made possible. Moreover, reproductive technologies and reproductive medicine have also led to a decoupling between sex and reproduction (Gunnarsson Payne 2015; Braidotti 2011:181), which further adds to the complexity of how family and kinship can be defined. Even though same-sex families, as well as other forms and concepts of queer kinships, existed long before the revisions of Swedish family law (Dahl 2022), the implementation of the right to insemination for same-sex female couples within Swedish county councils in 2005 was significant. Also, there has been an increase in adoption and conceiving through surrogacy among gay men in relation to a growing global fertility market (Dahl 2022:162). As Dahl and Andreassen (2021:80) point out: "Scandinavia has witnessed a veritable queer baby boom."[1]

Drawing on interviews with five same-sex couples and a selection of their publicly shared family photographs, as well as observations of the hashtag "#regnbågsfamilj" on Instagram, this article focuses on experiences from a queer generation, where parenthood is often expected to be included in the queer life trajectory (cf. Dahl & Andreassen 2021; Dahl 2022), and whose parenthood and family life are lived in a digital age. In a seemingly open and progressive time, the aim is to examine how heteronormative notions of family are negotiated, challenged, and/or reproduced through same-sex families' sharenting. How do same-sex parents position themselves in relation to heteronormative notions of family, and making mean-

ing around their sharenting practices and shared content on Instagram?

Sharenting

Research on sharenting opens for qualitative ethnographic knowledge production about the social, cultural, and political aspects of everyday life, as well as about parenting and family life in a digital age. The article is a contribution to a long-standing ethnological interest in family (e.g., Lundgren et al. 1999; Gunnarsson Payne 2015; Frykman & Löfgren 2022), and also contributes to queer kinship studies in Scandinavia (e.g., Malmquist 2015; Gunnarsson Payne 2015; Andreassen 2017; Nebeling Petersen 2018; Dahl 2018; 2022). Most of the current research on sharenting focuses on family influencers (e.g., Abidin 2017), sharenting in relation to gender aspects, mainly focusing on performances of motherhood within heterosexual coupling (e.g., Lazard et al. 2019; Pedersen & Lupton 2018), and children's online privacy in technology-integrated societies (e.g., Fox & Hoy 2019; Blum-Ross & Livingstone 2017), as children increasingly are "being born into the internet" (Brosch 2016; Leaver et al. 2020:175). The latter has been debated more frequently in recent years, and in some cases has been legally regulated (e.g., a French law passed in 2020 about the earnings of online child influencers). Concerns for children's safety and well-being have also been raised about digitally shared images and videos as they may expose children to sexual abusers (Brosch 2016:231). Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2017) state that risks of data mining, marketing, and facial recognition are also growing concerns in relation to integrity around sharenting prac-

tices. Sharenting has also been regarded as narcissistic and naïve (Webb 2013), and Lazard and colleagues (2019:2–3) mention "humblebragging" and oversharing as two other maligned behaviours of sharenting.

Although it is debated and critiqued, sharenting has also been described as empowering. For example, Lazard and colleagues (2019) present sharenting as a way for mothers to perform good motherhood by communicating pride in their children. Historically, mothers have been scrutinized for their lifestyle, choices, and practices, and have been denied active participation in forming their own narratives. Similarly, LGBTQ people have often been objects for others' opinions, besides state control of sexuality, reproduction, and bodies. In connection with motherhood, Blum-Ross and Livingstone (2017:120) state that digital spaces "may overcome historical silences". This suggests a potential subversiveness connected to sharenting as a practice (cf. Lopez 2009; Pearl 2016) which could apply to same-sex sharenting as well as in relation to queer visibility. In this article I will explore this further and discuss how shared content as well as same-sex parents' reasoning around their sharenting practices is used to negotiate heteronormativity in relation to family and parenthood.

Method and Material

The fieldwork began in January 2021 with orienting observations on Instagram to gain an overview of relevant hashtag flows, recurring image genres, and general patterns regarding what kind of family constellations were visible in popular global LGBTQ family-themed hashtag flows. I then narrowed the focus to observe what

was at the time the most popular LGBTQ family-themed hashtag flow in Sweden: #regnbågsfamilj. The hashtag was observed every other week for four months with a focus on the content and kind of families that were visible in the hashtag flow. Before the start of the fieldwork, the study design was reviewed and approved by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (Dnr 2020-06056). Besides this standard practice, ethical and reflexive considerations have been treated as an ongoing process from planning to execution of the study and the dissemination of results (franzke et al. 2020). All content observed during the time of my fieldwork was shared from public Instagram accounts. This means that the users have chosen to make their shared content publicly accessible and visible to all Instagram users. The observed images can thus be assumed to have been shared with the intention of being made publicly visible. To access and be present at the field site(s) I set up an Instagram user. However, as an ethical approach, I chose not to interact by posting content myself, nor to comment on or like images uploaded by others during my fieldwork. In that sense, I was not part of, nor did I participate in, the study field except by approaching potential participants through direct messages on Instagram.

To recruit interviewees, I initially approached a selection of Sweden-based Instagram users who frequently posted images tagged with the observed hashtag, inviting them to participate in interviews together with their partners. Not included for recruitment were influencers, politicians, or celebrities who use sharenting for financial gain and/or as part of their personal branding. Six users with an interest in participating responded, but three of these decided to withdraw before the interview.[2] In addition to the participating couples remaining, another couple answered an open call that I had posted in a group on Facebook for rainbow families, and one couple was recruited from my personal network. Three female same-sex couples and two male same-sex couples were interviewed. The five participating couples live in different areas of Sweden but consist of a homogeneous group in terms of age (majority 30–40 years old), sexuality (homo- or bisexual) and family formation (couples living together in a monogamy, but with variation in family size), and to a large extent also in terms of race (majority white). The recruited participant group is representative of the most frequent userbase visible in the hashtag flow #regnbågsfamilj at the time of the observations, with the exception that a majority of the userbase were perceived as female same-sex couples. All couples were interviewed together regardless of whether they shared images from separate accounts or if it was only one of them who shared family photos from a public account. Four interviews were conducted and transcribed in Swedish, and one (with Jin and Peter) in English. Quotations from the Swedish interviews were then translated into English by the author. Due to restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic I conducted the interviews digitally.

The interviews were semi-structured and contained open-ended questions about the participants' use of social media, with the focus on Instagram, their sharenting in general and motivations for sharing family photographs, and how they reasoned around private and public. Participants were also asked about interaction and re-

sponses to their images and whether, how and why they used hashtags. Before the interviews each couple provided a selection of five images from their publicly shared family photographs. Inspired by photo-elicitation interviewing (Harper 2002), I asked the participants about their images and what they wanted to show with them. This method made it possible to understand the couples' own meaning-making around their images, and "how an image works in relation to broader systems of meaning" (Rose 2016:106). Furthermore, I also used these images as empirical material with an understanding of family photographs as having agency (Rose 2016). This includes the potential of becoming political objects, both in the way they are made and shared, and as they are perceived by different audiences. As such, I take the images to construct accounts of the social world and to have the potential to confirm or challenge normative notions of family. In this, I am informed by representation theory (Hall 1997) to explore specifically how norms and values are communicated in photographs and captions. Following this, I understand the shared family photos framed (or not) with a certain caption, emojis and hashtags as meaningful in relation to the viewers' experiences as well as by norms and family and kinship discourses within both LGBTQ and heterosexual communities.

Theoretical Perspectives

My overall theoretical understanding proceeds from queer theoretical perspectives (e.g., Butler 1990) with a focus on the social constructions of heterosexuality as normal and desirable in opposition to other sexual orientations. In relation to heter-

onormative discourses, I analytically use the concepts of queer visibility and happiness to explore how these come to matter in same-sex parents' sharenting. In this article I use the term "queer" as an umbrella term for non-heterosexual and non-heteronormative identities and family formations with an understanding that such identities and orientations are inevitably defined in relation to normative power structures such as heteronormativity. In my analysis I am also influenced by Stuart Hall's theorizing about different approaches and positions in relation to meaning conveyed in dominant discourses (1980). Hall argues for three different positions: the dominant-hegemonic position (to agree), the negotiating position (agree with the overall message but locally re-negotiate the message), and the oppositional position (position against) (Hall 1980:136–138). Applied to my material, Hall's ideas make visible how the participants, both through their shared content and in their reasoning about their sharenting, take different positions in relation to normative ideas and representations of family, and how heteronormative notions are negotiated from these positions.

Queer Visibility

Visibility has long been a central political strategy applied within the LGBTQ community in the Western world (Barnhurst 2007:2). Visibility in terms of openness has also been a central strategy for LGBTQ activism, with Pride festivals as one example, "coming out" as another, including more radical examples like "outing" as a strategic activism in the 1990s (Watney 1994). Despite more extensive family rights legislations and state-subsidized reproductive technology during the two last decades in

Sweden, research studies show that queer life to some extent continues to be surrounded by discrimination and invisibility (e.g., Malmquist et al. 2019; Malmquist & Wurm 2018; Malmquist 2016, 2015). For example, LGBTQ people often experience minority stress in contacts with health care during pregnancy and in connection with childbirth (Malmquist et al. 2019; Malmquist 2016). It may also be a matter of having to deal with prejudices and being questioned as a parent, which can include having to explain family relationships, answer questions about methods of reproduction, and so on. Queer parenting and queer family formation have also historically been, and to some extent continue to be, the subject of negotiations. So-called rainbow families have been pitted against the heteronormative nuclear family as an ideal, with reference to the children's best interests (Malmquist & Wurm 2018:5). Against this background, it can be assumed that there is a stronger need to make one's family visible to the world among same-sex parents.

Visibility is also relevant in relation to social media. A notable change in the visibility of family and children is that family photographs have moved from being stored and kept in physical albums in private domestic settings, visible only to a few chosen people, to become widely accessible by a public on social media (cf. Larsen & Sandbye 2014). Optional use of hashtags also contributes to the dissemination of individually shared content, as searchable user-generated thematic flows are created (Zappavigna 2015). This enables Instagram users to form a community of known and unknown audiences within such thematic hashtag flows. The affordance of visibili-

ty through social media is also significant for an increased digital queer visibility, as families of all sorts can upload images on the platform and thus make their families part of the visible representations of family and family formations (cf. Blum-Ross & Livingstone 2017). By sharenting, same-sex parents and families are able to own their narrative when telling the (visual) story of their family to a wider public.[3]

Happiness

Previous research shows that the concept of happiness is central to family photographs as a genre of photography and what they are likely to show. In her book on family photographs (pre-social media), Gillian Rose (2010:11, 13) states that family photographs tend to be on the idyllic side, leaving out the everyday hardships such as housework, sick children, or teen tantrums. Besides being a recurring theme, not least in the visual empirical material, I also use happiness as an analytical tool to discuss how "emotions shape what bodies do in the present, or how they are moved by the objects they approach" (Ahmed 2006:2). Sara Ahmed points out that above all happiness is described as "what gives purpose, meaning and order to human life" (2010:1). Differently put, feelings like happiness are intentional, affective, and as such, *orienting* (Ahmed 2006) towards certain objects and paths in life where such feelings are expected to be reached (Ahmed 2010:90). Queer lives have historically been excluded from imaginaries of happy endings, for example displaying unhappy representations of LGBTQ people in popular culture to promote queer lives as a path to unhappiness – at the end of the story "lesbians and gays must turn straight,

die, or go mad" (Ahmed 2010:91). Also in real life, being queer has been associated with being on the route to unhappiness, as a family, and in particular children are portrayed as "happy objects", or the crown of creation in a (hetero)normative life path (Ahmed 2006:17; 2010:94). As the promise of happiness through marriage and children has long been exclusive to heterosexual couples, and queer sociolegal advances have been a fairly recent achievement, it is relevant to explore the potential subversiveness that happiness can hold in visual displays of same-sex families.

In the next section I will discuss the participants' thoughts and approaches to visibility. In the subsequent sections I will account for different strategies applied by the participants and discuss how they position themselves (cf. Hall 1980) and make meaning around their sharenting practices in relation to normative notions of family.

Being Visible

Visibility in terms of easy accessibility to their images was mostly constructed as something positive by the couples. This way, the participant argued, they could first and foremost stay in touch, and thus maintain a togetherness, with relatives and friends (cf. Rose 2014:76). This was said to be especially useful during the ongoing pandemic when the participants had limited possibilities to meet their friends and relatives. Images became a way to "invite people to our home", as one of the participants said.

Notably, none of the couples reported feeling much fear of homophobic reactions to their online content. In the rare case where there had been a negative comment on one of Anna and Lisen's images showing a rainbow flag, they commented that a much greater number of people had showed support. They also felt confident that, if needed again, people would have their backs. Visibility and being seen by others were thus perceived and constructed as a security rather than a risk. Overall, the participants had a rather unproblematic approach to sharing images publicly. Regarding sharing images of their family and in particular their children, the participants' concerns were mostly about what type of images they felt was okay to share publicly (no nudes or ridiculing images), rather than the practice of sharing itself.

Furthermore, most of the participants said that they were more likely to stop sharing images as the children grew older, and/or that when their children became older, they would be asked for their consent. In Mia's family, this was already the norm for their teenagers. This relatively unproblematized approach to sharing family photos, and photos of their children, points towards the social acceptance that sharenting has gained in a short time. This should also be understood in the context of increasing expectations from other relatives and friends towards parents to share family photos, especially of their children (cf. Leaver et al. 2020:174; Blum-Ross & Livingstone 2017:111). Moreover, having a public account was not something all the couples actively thought about. The participants' reasoning about their sharenting practices can therefore also point towards how public digital spaces can be perceived and experienced as more private than they are (cf. Markham & Buchannan 2012). A publicly shared image can be public in that it is available to virtually anyone on a platform but was meant to be private (with

followers/friends as the primary intended audience). It is thus possible to interpret the participants' thoughts about their sharenting practices as experiencing "privacy" in the specific context of their Instagram accounts.[4]

At the same time, a certain awareness about being public was also expressed. Some of the participants said that, besides friends and family, they also welcomed being accessible to other LGBTQ people and heterosexuals with relatable experiences of using reproduction technologies. Being public and visible thus helped to get connected with others, and by extension to create a community around their images, and in turn also to connect themselves to desired online communities. Visibility was also made important by the couples when they talked about becoming, and to some extent positioning themselves as role models for others. Both Anna and Lisen, and Simon and Daniel, described how they had lacked role models themselves when it came to starting a family as a same-sex couple. Anna explained that they had to search for information on the Internet, since they had no one to ask. Lacking role models was described by these two couples as a motivating factor to become role models themselves, by publicly sharing images of their family and identities, and their process of starting a family. This was also expressed by Jin. Although he said that he didn't want to be a role model per se, in the capacity of living openly as a gay dad, giving hope to especially young LGBTQ people in Japan, where he had grown up, was described as a strong motivation for him to publicly share his family story. The possibility to reach a wide audience via social media was in these examples constructed

as central to making the couples visible to both known and unknown audiences, and hence becoming potential role models for others.

For Simon and Daniel, however, positioning themselves as role models was not exclusively directed towards other LGBTQ people, but included anyone, regardless of sexuality and gender, who planned on using surrogacy. By connecting their posts not only to hashtag flows such as #rainbowfamily but also to #surrogacy, they were able to reach others in the same position, directing the content to an audience with such presumably relatable experiences (cf. Zappavigna 2015). In this sense, the method for starting a family seemed to be a major reason for forming a community with others through their account, equally important as being a same-sex couple.

Making a Statement

All the interviewed couples said that they thought Swedish society nowadays is very open and accepting of LGBTQ people and families, and they expressed no tension in living openly as lesbian, bisexual, or homosexual. Still, some of the couples referred to same-sex families being considered norm-breaking in relation to heteronormative nuclear families, thus making it necessary to post "statements". Furthermore, the couples also expressed an awareness that the LGBTQ-positive climate in society they now experienced had not been won without activism and struggles fought in the past. This knowledge was repeatedly used to embed their own sharenting practices in a discourse of LGBTQ activism. Further, sharenting in relation to being same-sex families was made significant in terms of politics and a need for contin-

ued representation. Hence, their personal online visibility was closely paired with the political importance of being open and proud.

Mia: For me, there has never been any obstacle to show who I am. Because I'm not ashamed of who I am, and I'm not ashamed of who my family are. And I think that is very important, because if we are ashamed, it would be like taking a step backwards. What we want is to move forward, we want it to be even more accepted than it has been before.

Jin and Peter also mentioned the importance of being public and open, and Jin added:

I thought that I would never be able to come out of the closet because of the lack of social acceptance in Japan [where he grew up]. So, I had been hiding myself for almost thirty years. And now, after that […] showing my face and telling my story honestly, that is totally related to my pride.

In the excerpt above, being open and showing his face becomes a way for Jin to express pride, but as he also mentioned during the interview, to regain self-esteem. In that sense displaying openness and pride in his images, besides being representations that show potential life directions, it also orients Jin towards happiness, a path he previously believed to be excluded from (cf. Ahmed 2010).

    In these statements, openness and visibility were recurringly constructed as necessities to maintain the present status and rights for LGBTQ people, but also to make society even more inclusive of norm-breaking sexualities, identities, and lives. Both in the interviews and through their shared images, the participants oriented themselves towards a politicized idea of

visibility. In the interview with Anna and Lisen, Anna emphasized the importance of visibility in relation to context, drawing on her experiences of previously having lived in Dubai, in a big city in Sweden, and now in a Swedish rural village:

Anna: I strongly believe in being even more open, especially in places and contexts where I think it's needed. […] I feel that I have a need to share such posts.
Lisen: Yes, you more often share images as statements.
Anna: Yeah, I know I can reach a lot of people and… there are many idiots in this country. Even in this country.

Through these examples visibility is seen as having a political function. Anna, whose account has a lot of followers, also recognizes the specific impact her sharing might have in contexts that she feels need it.

    While all the couples declared that making statements was not their main reasons for sharing family images on Instagram, they occasionally made outspoken statements. For example, in the captions in one of Emma and Julia's images they discussed prejudges against lesbian families, like getting questions about "where is the dad?!", or "who is the real mom??". In the caption the couple pointed out that this kind of questioning was never posed towards heterosexual families. Another example is a "groupfie"[5] uploaded by Anna, showing the couple standing close to each other, and Lisen, the non-biological mother, is wearing a t-shirt with the text "100% mommy". This message functions as a statement in response to heteronormative discourses about motherhood as reserved only for the carrying mother. The message is reinforced by Lisen also holding the baby, as if to say,

"I carry too." Anna, who uploaded the image, also salutes her wife in the caption and acknowledges her equal role as a mother. Previous studies have shown that, in connection with parenthood, heteronormative structures are often brought to the fore, frequently resulting in the non-biological parent not being understood as a parent (cf. Malmquist & Wurm 2018; Malmquist 2016, 2015). These two images can thus be understood as examples of statements in relation to heteronormative notions of family where queer visibility matters. Anna's image was posted during the International Family Equality Day, an official day for celebrating and making visual LGBTQ families. She tagged the image with the hashtag #rainbowfamilyday to mark and connect her image the event, also connecting it to this certain hashtag flow (cf. Zappavigna 2015). In many of Anna's images she applied LGBTQ-themed hashtags, and by doing so positioning these images as non-heteronormative visual representations. The interpretation of the images is thereby guided towards being a political statement (Hall 1997:167). This way Anna contributes to a global oppositional discourse through which the opportunity arises to redefine the notion and representation of family (cf. Hall 1980). Through the use of these specific hashtags, the image is also connected to a wider global campaign for queer social legal rights, visibility, and recognition, thus further bringing out the subversiveness of what otherwise looks like a mundane family groupfie of two parents and their baby.

"How Lucky We Are"

One of Anna and Lisen's images is their wedding photo. The image shows the couple in their white wedding dresses kissing each other. They are standing in a field in the countryside with the soft light of an ongoing sunset. Overall, the image denotes a dreamy fantasy, in the composition, in the setting of the scene, and in the couple's dresses and hairstyles. The dreaminess of the image also relates to a trend in wedding pictures – the happy couple living happily ever after (cf. Knuts 2006:129–131). In this image the (queer) wedding couple is thus recognizable as a normative representation of a couple on their wedding day. However, instead of the normative fairytales main characters – the prince and the princess – the image shows two princesses. This queer distinction, strengthened by Anna's use of the hashtags #lesbianvisibilityweek and #lesbianvisibilityday, is underlined in the caption:

A week, a day, like any other in our life. We have been fortunate to grow up in a country, in a time, where all people are treated equally. Where we all have the same rights and obligations, whoever we are.
Where we can walk safely together, hand in hand on the street, without the fear of being abused or insulted.
Where we get to love like everyone else.
How lucky we are. ♥
//Mrs&Mrs

There is a political significance in such distinction and visual representation, visible in the written statement as it alludes to a relatable fairy tale historically featuring and reserved for heterosexual couples. The princess saga the couple performs in the image was made possible by LGBTQ activism in the past. A recognition of the couple's possibilities to position themselves as fairytale princesses as a gift, and yet not

to be taken for granted, is also something that is underlined in the caption quoted above. Happiness is another key strategy in pair with visibility to be noted in Anna and Lisen's wedding photo. As Ahmed says about happiness: "Heterosexual love becomes about the possibility of a happy ending" (2010:90), the love and happiness expressed in the couple's image is a same-sex representation of such a happy ending. They represent something to wish for – to live happily ever after with the woman of your dreams – and thus provides queer directions to the route of happiness.[6] However, the queer arrival at happiness can also be a compelling force that makes other queer orientations invisible, as there are nowadays strong expectations for queers to orient along heteronormative routes (cf. Dahl 2022; Dahl & Gabb 2020).

Dreamy, wish-for-happiness is also present in one Emma and Julia's images. The image shows a close-up of Emma kissing Julia's baby belly. This kind of image is an almost iconic image among digitally shared family photos, the kissing of the belly to display the expecting parents' happiness and excitement, as well as inclusion of the baby in the belly in the couple's family. The expression of happiness and the display of their happy family also align with the visual narrative mostly found on Instagram in general, and in family photographs as genre (Rose 2010). In that sense, the image is not remarkable, rather expected. However, the happiness displayed in Emma and Julia's image is another example of where happiness can be understood as subversive in relation to older imaginaries of queer unhappiness in a society where happiness and success have often been associated with family life and chil-

dren, something which has previously only been possible along a heteronormative line (cf. Ahmed 2010:94, 2006:17). Yet, this direct political statement is not found in the image itself, nor in its caption of the belly kissing close-up, to which Julia wrote:

Arrgh, she won't stop talking to the little bean inside of me and kissing my belly! 🥰🥰 But, on the other hand it's quite sweet and cute! 🥰🥰🥰

While describing what she wanted to show by sharing this image, Julia said that it was to show an expression of how suitable Emma was as a partner, and as a mother to be. Furthermore, Julia compared her former heterosexual male partners, with whom she also has children, to Emma, the latter described as already being a better parent. Here Julia referenced back to the image as a demonstration of Emma as such a loving and caring person. In the interview, Julia also described Emma as more engaged in their relationship, and once the baby was born this also included the caretaking of the baby, including Emma being very attentive to the baby's emotional needs. In her description of the image, Julia not only described Emma as a good parent, but also characterized her girlfriend as "a much *better* mom and co-parent than my ex-boyfriends". In Julia's description of the image and what she said she wanted to show with it, the same-sex family formation becomes significant as the happiness displayed in the image becomes a way to talk back against discourses of the "child's best interest" that have often been evoked to disparage same-sex parenting (cf. Malmquist & Wurm 2018:5). In that sense, their happiness and the display of cute cuddling in the image, is used as a statement to

say that we are not only good enough – we are better parents.

Subversive Ordinariness

Most of the visual material consists of prosaic and mundane images, such as snapshots of the five different families in moments where they are gathered in the sofa, eating a pizza at a local restaurant, or documentations of the family on holiday, or engaged in some outdoor activity. In these images, sexuality is absent in that no touching or expressions of intimacy between the adults are depicted. Furthermore, there are rarely any visible rainbow symbols or other signs in the images that direct the viewers' interpretation of the images towards queerness being meaningful in the context (cf. Hall 1997). In most of the pictures its either only the children who are present in the image, or the whole family smiling at the camera. Looking at these images without the context of #rainbowfamily or knowledge of the family, they could pass as heteronormative families. Such acts of passing, and downplaying any difference from heterosexual nuclear families, were described as intended in some of the interviews.

Mia: I've never felt like I've had to flag that we're two women and that we live in a rainbow family and… it's like, well, a straight couple doesn't have to do that. So, I'm like orienting myself in the world like in a hetero body and I think just like all hetero couples do, that it's completely normal! I mean for me there is nothing else. You don't question a hetero couple about things, and for me this is *my* everyday life and it's very standard.

In the above quotation Mia talks about orienting in the world as straight bodies would do. The position of being an ordi-nary family is here made desirable and associated with freedom, as it allows her to extend into space without hesitance or fear of being stopped (cf. Ahmed 2006). Being ordinary is also described to enable being visible, and hence to become invisible from the (potentially judgemental) eye of society and other people. However, to orient in the world without hindrance was something Mia talked about as a privileged she had not always experienced:

When I came out, my mother said, "Please, you don't have to go around and hold her hand in public." But why not? I mean my sister gets to hold hands with her boyfriend, but I can't because I have a girlfriend?! So, for me, submitting to such pleas would mean that we accept being invisible and not show who we really are.

Here Mia equates the possibility, and right, to hold her girlfriend's hand in public with being considered normative and as being regarded normal as a lesbian. Her mother's plea for her not to hold hands in public is an example of how queer bodies often are subjected to others' opinions and subjected to control. Mia's refusal of narratives about being different from the norm becomes a way of escaping, and to challenge, such attempted control of one's actions. Positioning as ordinary thus becomes an act of resistance. Paradoxically, few of Mia's images show queer intimacy and the right to "orient in the world like in a hetero body" in terms of making visible any signs of her sexual orientation, and romantic or sexual desires are not exercised. Doing ordinariness could thus been understood as downplaying being a lesbian and (just) being a same-sex parent.

"We Don't Do Strange Stuff"

Downplaying also seemed to be a strategy very much about avoiding undesirable associations:

Mia: There is nothing strange about it. But I know that not everyone thinks so. I know there are those who think differently. But that's what we must work on and what still needs to get better. We need to get them to stop, but I don't think we need to get them to change their minds by making statements on Insta. Because I don't think you win from that either, but more just show that we exist like everyone else.

Tess: We can exist and have family lives like any other family.

Mia: There is nothing strange about us, we don't do strange stuff, or whatever people think.

Avoiding being associated with strangeness was also something Anna and Lisen picked up on in relation to whether they should share family photographs online:

Anna: It was probably never really a discussion about us being two women. I think it is important that, well for me it's nothing strange, and for Lisen it's nothing strange. And it's important that we show that it's not strange. For others to understand that it is not something strange. Like, wow, he's got arms and two legs like any other child [laughs] That's sooo strange [laughs] […] I'm not taking a photograph to show that the three of us can go swimming together. So [laughs], so nothing like that. Not all my uploads are about statements… But on the other hand, I try in like a casual way to show others that [a same-sex family] is completely normal.

Most of the couples kept coming back to the importance of showing and positioning themselves in their images as a same-sex family, as "normal" and "ordinary" families (cf. Eggebø et al. 2019). This use of a homonormative rhetoric can be seen as a strategy for avoiding the historical perceptions of queerness as the deviant "Other", and strangeness as an attribute historically stuck to LGBTQ bodies, lives, and families (cf. Ahmed 2004:35). In relation to Ahmed's thoughts that some paths lead to happiness and others to its opposite, the couples' pursuit of ordinariness can be understood as a means to avoid embarking on a path towards a perceived predestined queer misfortune (cf. Ahmed 2010:96) and as a simultaneous effort to produce happiness as connected to love rather than heterosexuality.

Claims of ordinariness can also be seen as a strategy to enforce and advocate for LGBTQ rights. In that sense positioning as ordinary is a strategy that becomes necessary in relation to heteronormativity. Although this strategy can be said to have political intentions, Mia considered it a better strategy to show that "we exist like everyone else", rather than making outspoken statements. Anna also pointed out that her images are not always meant as statements, but still stressed the importance of visibility to gain social recognition. Just like Mia, Anna believed it is better to represent ordinariness as a same-sex family than to make statements about being different. Such strategy advocates for inclusion of same-sex families as the norm, hence the act of passing becomes an attempt to widen what constitutes the norm. In this endeavour queerness is downplayed and disidentified (cf. Muñoz 1999) in terms of expressions of sexuality, activism, and an aspiration to question the normative notions of families. One way of this downplaying was brought up by Mia. Avoiding certain hashtags seemed part of her strategy for passing:

Mia: I don't use hashtags very often, but maybe more in connection with Pride. […] I don't do it in general, I think. I mean this thing about tagging us as a rainbow family. More often we call ourselves "Family Eight", and these photos are just family photos. It's not so much about saying that we are a rainbow family.

Here the labelling made through hashtags matters in relation to Mia's self-presenting practice. Although sometimes using LGBTQ-themed hashtags during Pride, by more often referring to the family as "Family Eight" instead of a "rainbow family" she avoids associations with deviance as a same-sex parent. Rather, the difference from the norm she wants to be associated with is being part of a large family, her family of eight.

Such a strategy of passing can further be understood to rely on visual self-presentations of a same-sex family as respectable and good representatives of a family, where queerness and the queer as a contester of normative ideals in opposition becomes constructed as undesirable. As Sacks (1984) argues, "do being ordinary" is reserved for a position where such doing is possible (cf. Hellesund et al. 2019). The ordinary, de-politized queer subject, in this context represented by relatable and happy families as depicted in the images, become a means for expressing and achieving respectability through opposition against and disidentification with the construction of queers/queerness as something strange and largely oppositional. On the other hand, the couples' sense of awareness of historical, and to some extent ongoing, discourses of LGBTQ as "strange" and/or "different", and their displaying of the "ordinary" as a response, can be understood as a subversive strategy to escape being stuck in such

discourses. It can also be understood as an exercise of the privilege of being regarded as normal, which has been a central political struggle fought by the LGBT(Q) movement. Or as Tess said: "We can exist and have family lives like any other family."

Proud Pictures

In this article I have explored same-sex parents' sharenting with a focus on how normative notions of family are negotiated, challenged, and/or reproduced. In the interviews the couples stated that the heteronormative nuclear family was generally considered as the hegemonic normative family structure in society – Instagram included. In relation to this, all the interviewed couples in some way negotiated between positioning as ordinary, yet different, as being same-sex families (cf. Eggebø et al. 2019), and thus alternated between taking a negotiating position and an oppositional position (Hall 1980) that explicitly challenged the hegemonic concept of family. As shown in the empirical examples, both these positions – emphasizing ordinariness, or difference, in relation to heteronormative nuclear families – can be regarded as approaches with subversive and political potential, but they are based on different political views, approaches, and goals. Regardless of agenda, affordances of social media were instrumental as they enabled the couples to reach out and form communities with known and unknown people through their accounts and in themed hashtag flows.

Although none of the participants primarily defined their sharenting as solely motivated by being a political practice, different political strategies were still present in the couples' meaning making around their sharenting. For some, being a same-

sex family was also expressed as motivational for publicly sharing family photos, and some images were used as a means for civil rights advocacy. This message was often further strengthened in the captions, in which the couples addressed norms and/or prejudice. Here the couples positioned themselves and emphasized being different from heteronormative nuclear families.

Highlighting themselves as same-sex parents became relevant in this endeavour, queer visibility and displaying happiness were the two main strategies applied by the couples to challenge norms from the position as same-sex parents. The participating couples live in a context with legal and technological possibilities to start a family, and thus have been able to choose a normative life path. Their visually displayed happiness can partly be interpreted as a strategy for talking back to older imaginaries of queer unhappiness (cf. Ahmed 2010). Further, queer visibility, especially representations of happy queer people, can be argued to (still) hold a politic significance. On the other hand, displaying happiness may also be the only possible way to represent your family in relation to historical imaginaries of queer unhappiness. In that case displaying happiness could also be understood as a form of passing at the mercy of heteronormativity.

During my fieldwork on LGBTQ family-themed hashtags on Instagram, an overwhelming majority of the publicly shared images were representations of same-sex nuclear family constellations displaying a (queer) life where any difference from heteronormative notions of family was absent and downplayed. The critical question "What is *queer* in non-heterosexual kinship these days?", originally formulated by

Dahl and Gabb (2020:213), becomes relevant to ask in such contexts. The couples participating in this study represent a queer generation living their life and experiencing their parenthood in a time and context (Sweden) when family making is both possible and indeed increasingly expected. The legislation in place today has led to an increased acceptance of LGBTQ people in Swedish society. Due to such legal advances, the homosexual subject has become respectable in the national sphere, but this is also conditional and often requires assimilation. In that sense the images of same-sex families on Instagram can to some extent also be understood as representations of de-politized homonormative identities (cf. Duggan 2002) that reproduce the idea of the heterosexual nuclear family as an ideal (cf. Frykman & Löfgren 2022). However, being "ordinary" was constructed by some of the couples as desirable, as it allowed for exercising a freedom they otherwise associated with heterosexuality. By positioning and presenting themselves as ordinary families it then becomes a subversive act of resisting other people's potentially judgemental opinions. Displaying ordinariness also becomes a strategy to widen the frames of normality and advocate for same-sex family constellations as possible within the framework of the constructed normal. In conclusion, there are many layers to same-sex parents' proud pictures.

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Notes

1   For a deeper discussion and examples of research about family and kinship in relation to queer perspectives see also *lambda nordica* 24(2—3), 2019: Queer Kinship Revisited.

2   Two of the initially interested Instagram users chose not to return after the study information and consent form were sent out. A third initially interested parent was refused participation by their ex-partner and co-parent, and my ethical review requires all legal guardians' consent for participation.

3   Although not the central focus of the article, children's online privacy remains a relevant discussion concerning parenting in the digital age in general, not least in relation to an increased social expectation and encouragement to share family life online (Blum-Ross & Livingstone 2017:111). Blum-Ross & Livingstone (2017:112) show that parents are often faced with a "digital" dilemma: "to represent one's own identity *as a parent* means making public aspects of a (potentially vulnerable) child's life, and *yet because they are the parent*, they are precisely the person primarily responsible for protecting that child's privacy."

4   The issue of private/public has been widely discussed in Internet ethics literature and guidelines, mainly with the focus on how this may affect which data can be used for research purposes, and if so, how they can be used (see e.g., Markham & Buchanan 2012).

5   Slang word for a group photo in the style of a selfie.

6   It is worth pointing out that the freedom expressed in the excerpt is (still) a dream rather than a reality for many LGBTQ people in Sweden, both in terms of being able to form or be understood as a family (cf. Dahl 2022:176), and also in terms of being able to orient in the world without encountering (sometimes violent) resistance in the surrounding society.

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When Strangers Meet in a Volunteer Initiative
Understanding the Precariousness of Volunteering and the Organizational Infrastructure Supporting It
By Line Steen Bygballe & Astrid Pernille Jespersen

Denmark has a long tradition of volunteer work and engagement in civil society organizations. The number of people volunteering in Denmark has been stable at around 40 per cent in the last 10–15 years (Lindholm et al. 2021; Espersen et al. 2021). The welfare field, covering the social, humanitarian, and health areas, has the second largest number of volunteers, surpassed only by sport (Espersen et al. 2021; Hjære et al. 2018). The term volunteering, despite its ubiquitous presence in society, is difficult to define, as it refers to a diverse set of activities within many different fields and types of organizations (Musick & Wilson 2008; Hustinx, Musick & Handy 2010; Henriksen, Strømsnes & Svedberg 2019). At its core, volunteer work refers to all forms of activities that are freely chosen and unpaid. In an international context, volunteering is primarily connected to the altruistic idea of helping individuals or specific groups in society that are in need and where governmental welfare services are limited. In the Scandinavian countries, volunteering is, however, also connected to activities that are linked to leisure, hobby, and political activities and was formed in parallel with the growth and development of the welfare state (Henriksen, Strømsnes & Svedberg 2019:8). Eurostat, the European Union's statistical bureau, has documented that the rates of volunteering in Scandinavian countries are the highest in Europe (Eurostat 2016). This high prevalence of volunteering, it is argued, is linked to the development of the Scandinavian welfare model, which also formed what has been described as "the golden age of associations" from the late nineteenth century to the present (Habermann & Ibsen 2005; Balle-Petersen 1976; Henriksen, Strømsnes & Svedberg 2019; Klausen & Selle 1996).

In her work on the early development of civil society organizations and associations in the Danish welfare society, the Danish ethnologist Margaretha Balle-Petersen describes how the new associations developed in the welfare society differed from earlier associations by being formalized, typically with a written set of rules, and, in principle, by being open to everybody, and by having a democratic decision-making structure (Balle-Petersen 1976). The combination of formal structure and an openness to a broad and diverse set of volunteer roles and identities have been formative for the Scandinavian association, which has been highly successful in attracting a larger number of active and engaged volunteers compared to other European countries (Henriksen, Strømsnes & Svedberg 2019; Henriksen & Selle 1996).

In recent years, and with the increasing pressure on welfare services in Denmark, a renewed focus on rethinking collaborations between civil society actors, such as associations and non-governmental organizations, and Danish authorities has emerged. This tight collaboration between public authorities and civil society has spurred new developments among civil society actors. On the one hand, classic association-based volunteering is expanding in new directions, but on the other hand, the association has become susceptible to and replaced by ad-hoc, network-based and "less demanding" ways of being a volunteer, enabling even more people to become engaged in volunteering activities, for example, through new forms of match-making programmes (Lindholm et al. 2021; Lindholm & Hjære 2019; Espersen et al.

2021; Qvist et al. 2018). Match-making programmes are services where volunteers are either matched with other volunteers, with activities or with persons who need some form of support. Another tendency of these new forms of collaborations is that civil society and volunteer work increasingly become key providers of soft welfare tasks (Andersen 2018; La Cour & Højlund 2008; La Cour 2012).

One example of the tendency to involve civil society in providing soft welfare tasks is the role that volunteer plays in tackling loneliness in Denmark. In 2016, the Danish Health Authority reported that loneliness cost Danish society over 8.3 billion DKK a year, including the costs of treatment and care, as well as lost productivity (Eriksen et al. 2016). In 2022, 12.4 per cent of the Danish population showed signs of severe loneliness (Rosendahl Jensen et al. 2022). Several studies have shown that volunteering can improve mental well-being and prevent loneliness and depression (Stukas et al. 2016; Santini et al. 2019), and these documented health benefits have added to expanding volunteer work and developing volunteering schemes to encompass populations with a higher risk of loneliness and who are less prone to participate in volunteer work, for example, people with poor physical and mental health (Principi et al. 2012). The amplified focus on volunteering work and the increased role it plays in supporting the Danish welfare system necessitate an understanding of how new voluntary services are developed and their role in facilitating social inclusion and well-being. Understanding the workings of new voluntary services can also demonstrate how present attempts to use civil society actors to accommodate a diverse citizen

group are addressing and potentially contributing to mitigating the challenges of the welfare society.

Based on these new societal tendencies, this article will focus on a Danish social volunteer initiative called Elderlearn, and we ask: How can a volunteer initiative accommodate the current trends and changes in social volunteer work? To be able to answer this question we will analyse the volunteering act that is the meetings between the volunteers, and the organizational infrastructure behind it performed by the Elderlearn employees.

With Elderlearn as our case, we will open the act of volunteering by describing how habits, tacit knowledge, and socio-material objects are entangled in how we socialize and meet other people. We will show how vital the detailed planning and handling of social meetings is in ensuring a successful volunteer experience. This experience, which can turn out to be crucial for whether the participants will continue being engaged in the volunteer activity, is an essential success criterion for all civil society organizations involved in match-making programmes. As we will argue, knowledge about the socio-material fabric and work invested in social meetings are often black-boxed as "something we know how to do," and little attention has been paid to the study of the actual practices of "strangers meeting and doing stuff" within the volunteer activities.

This lack of knowledge is quite peculiar, considering that the success of so much volunteer work depends on the success of these meetings. Inspired by the Austrian-American sociologist Alfred Schutz's classic text *The Stranger* from 1944, we understand the volunteers as strangers and

explore how the volunteers in Elderlearn are faced with workings, challenges, expectations, and insecurities in the process of getting to know the person with whom they are matched. This will further form the background for analysing the organizational role of Elderlearn and how it facilitates and supports the meeting between the two strangers. The article is inspired by ethnological discussions of cultural encounters (Olsson & Lappi 2018), material objects as palpable connections to notions of identity and belonging (Frykman & Humbracht 2013), and cultural and social activities as forms of daily care work for well-being (Gustafsson 2017). However, we draw on concepts from Schutz, the Swedish ethnologist Orvar Löfgren, and the British-Australian philosopher Sara Ahmed, as we wish to highlight the amount of work, as well as the emotional and practical engagement, that volunteers invest in the acts of social bonding. We describe how a good and robust "voluntary relationship" is quite ephemeral and hard to define and manage but, nevertheless, is the key product or service provided by the organizations and requires detailed and ongoing support. Hence, in our analysis, we discuss the requirements, expectations, and socio-material work contained in the voluntary social meeting.

Grounding the analysis in the everyday undertaking of volunteer work, this article is an ethnological contribution to the ongoing discussion about the development of the field of volunteering in civil society and the role of the volunteer in Danish and Scandinavian contexts. The article offers a detailed close-up description of a social volunteer activity in a time when welfare tasks are outsourced, organized, and entangled with civil society in new ways (Henriksen et al. 2019; La Cour & Højlund 2008; La Cour 2012; Espersen et al. 2018; Ibsen 2020).

Elderlearn

The Elderlearn initiative matches older Danes and foreigners by creating and supporting robust social relationships and bonds between the two. By facilitating social meetings, Elderlearn is a type of organization that has traditionally been called visiting services (Bülow 2023; Habermann & Ibsen 1998). Visiting services have been part of the Danish volunteering field since the beginning of the twentieth century, providing services and initiatives in which people, who for different reasons need support or help, are matched with other, often more resourceful, people (Bülow 2023). Whether supporting everyday life activities, helping with letters or information received from public institutions, or simply acting as a social relation, the visiting service can take many forms. However, what makes Elderlearn quite unique as a visiting service is that the older Dane and the foreign language student ideally forms a reciprocal relationship where both parties give and receive, and, hence, form a relationship where there is no clear distinction between the giver and the recipient.

Elderlearn is registered as a socio-economic[1] organization and has facilitated meetings between foreigners who want to improve their Danish language skills and senior citizens since 2017. From 2017 to 2018, Elderlearn's work primarily targeted the Capital Region of Denmark, but from 2019 to 2022 Elderlearn expanded and is currently facilitating the matching of foreigners and senior citizens in more

than 70 municipalities across Denmark. Elderlearn's main objective is to "create meaningful volunteer communities between people across age, generations and culture" (Elderlearn website 2023), thereby promoting well-being for seniors and improving integration opportunities for foreigners. The work includes recruiting, registering, and matching the pairs, arranging their first few meetings, and supporting the – hopefully smooth – functioning of their relationships. Elderlearn is supported financially by grants and by selling its services to municipalities and governmental institutions, such as the Danish Health Authority. As a socio-economic organization, the staff providing the match-making service at Elderlearn are paid, which stands in contrast to many other more classical volunteer organizations, which primarily use volunteers in their match-making programmes.

Methods and Empirical Material

The article is based on ethnographic research carried out over six months in 2020/2021 as part of a collaborative project between Copenhagen Centre for Health Research in the Humanities at the University of Copenhagen (CoRe), Elderlearn, and the Association of Danish Seniors, with funding from the independent Danish philanthropic foundation Nordea-fonden. The purpose of the project was to give even more senior citizens the opportunity to participate in Elderlearn's volunteer work. As researchers, we have been following and collaborating with Elderlearn almost from the beginning of their activities until today.[2] The ongoing collaboration with Elderlearn can be described as a form of accompanying research,[3] which covers a type of applied project-specific research in which continuous feedback and advice are provided by the researchers to the partners/collaborators. Accompanying research ensures that, for example, a development project receives research-based and focused feedback that enables the adjustment of the project along the way. Our accompanying research concentrated on following the Elderlearn initiative as it broadened its activity range, including, and consequently, how it had to reorganize and adapt to a new form of working. In particular, we focused on how the upscaling affected the senior citizens and their engagement in Elderlearn and their ability to participate as volunteers.

Our empirical material comprises semi-structured interviews and participant observations among Elderlearn pairs, semi-structured interviews with employees at municipalities using the services from Elderlearn, and interviews and participant observations of employees at Elderlearn. In addition, we participated in meetings and workshops for developing tools, such as a language game. Our volunteer informants were recruited with the help of Elderlearn. When new participants signed up for Elderlearn, they were asked if they would like to participate in the research project. All informants signed a declaration of consent and were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time. We ended up having 21 Elderlearn pairs, that is, 42 individual informants, 21 volunteer senior citizens and 21 volunteer foreigners, representing 9 municipalities across Denmark.[4]

The fieldwork took place during the COVID-19 lockdown in Denmark, which affected how we could arrange our inter-

views, since our informant group included several vulnerable senior citizens. We carried out six double interviews, five of which were physical interviews (using face visor), and one was an online interview. We conducted 49 individual interviews: one in-person interview and 48 online or telephone interviews. We interviewed the informants twice, with the first round of interviews lasting 45–120 minutes and addressing questions concerning the registration process, experiences from the first meetings, the kind of activities they did, how the meetings were arranged, and whether they had any considerations or insecurities at the start. The second round of interviews lasted 20–45 minutes and addressed themes such as the development of the relationship, whether any problems had arisen, and, if so, how these were handled. We also carried out six participant observations during the meetings between Elderlearn pairs and conducted six expert interviews of 60–120 minutes with employees and managers from four different municipalities. The interviews were conducted in Danish or English by researchers from CoRe and were transcribed and encoded using NVivo. The interviews were analysed to locate themes and emerging patterns (Davies 2008:195–198). For this article, we focus especially on themes such as "why get involved in Elderlearn," "values of volunteering," "expectations," "preparing the first meeting," "materiality," and "infrastructure and support."

Theory

Ethnographically, we explored the concrete practices of volunteering between two strangers, for example, by listening to their accounts of preparing emotionally as well as practically for the meetings or sitting at their coffee tables. Overwhelmed by the effort they put into creating a friendly meeting ground, we realized how much work, emphasis, and expectations were comprised in the social meeting. To analytically grasp this convoluted microcosm of emotions, material stuff, cultural tropes, etc, we found inspiration in the work of Schutz, Löfgren, and Ahmed. All three scholars apply a perspective on society that emphasizes the importance of tacit knowledge of culture, routines, and everyday life. Schutz's classic text *The Stranger* from 1944 examines the hard work, problems of knowledge, and disconcerting identity issues entailed in being a stranger who approaches a resident group. The Stranger in Schutz's story essentially improvises when meeting the new group; she arrives in a new group alone, unprepared, and for the first time, and must make decisions based on limited knowledge and preliminary assumptions that may prove wrong. When the stranger approaches a new group, and before interacting with it, she therefore relies on her own thinking as usual; hence, the stage is set for possible misunderstandings. According to Schutz, the members of an in-group do not possess a complete knowledge of "the cultural pattern of group life" but rather a pragmatic system of knowledge, a set of trustworthy recipes, which for members of the in-group take on the "appearance of sufficient coherence, clarity, and consistency to give anybody a reasonable chance of understanding and of being understood" (Schutz 1944:501). The cultural patterns with which the stranger is trying to grasp and become familiar are often implicit, tacit, and non-verbalized. Further in the text, Schutz depicts the

events that unfold when the stranger begins to interact with the new group. Initially, there is a shock that her first observational knowledge of the new group is incorrect, and she realizes that she lacks trustworthy recipes. At some point in the interaction, the stranger might develop enough knowledge to translate certain matters from the new culture, but then she realizes that the ability to interpret is not the same as the ability to efficiently express knowledge (similar to passive and active language learning). In summary, the first phase of interaction launches the stranger into a rather blunt testing of assumptions and a demand to develop new knowledge and practices.

This socio-psychological and detailed description of the first meeting between a stranger and a resident group opens for an understanding of the challenges, hard work, anxieties, expectations, and curiosities involved in creating social relations. Social encounters are part and parcel of our everyday life, and we often take for granted and anticipate that we know how to go about it, but what Schultz's text reminds us of is that, first and foremost, this is not always the case, and second, that social meeting is an ongoing trial-and-error practice that requires emotional and practical investments.

Similar to Schultz's exploration of a seemingly well-known and somehow banal social practice, Löfgren is known for his zooming in on the banalities of everyday life. He emphasizes that as ethnologists "like to see ourselves as masters of the study of the everyday, but we still know surprisingly little about how this machinery works" (Löfgren 2014:81), arguing that it still too often remains a black box in our analysis. He addresses the black

box of everyday life by looking at its "material and affective dimensions" (ibid.:82). He argues that everyday life and social meetings are composite situations fraught with stuff, emotions, norms, and processes, and are tangible and visible, as well as implied, tacit, and ephemeral. Together with his Swedish colleague Billy Ehn, Löfgren recommends an experimental approach to understanding cultural phenomena and begins with "the mundane world of objects and routines that surround us" (Ehn & Löfgren 2010:7). Thus, we are also inspired to explore the diverse ways in which objects can be sensitive or responsive in social encounters (Povrzanović Frykman & Frykman 2016). Following Ehn and Löfgren's recommendation, in our analysis, we will pay attention to the socio-material and affective aspects involved, which will help us "unbox" the social meeting between volunteers.

Ahmed has also been concerned with the materiality of emotions from the perspective of her work in feminist cultural studies. Central to her theory is the idea that emotions exist in a material world (Ahmed 2004b). Ahmed views emotions as relational, and rather than situate them in either the subject or the object of a relationship or a situation, she locates emotions in the relational space between the actors and the material elements involved. Ahmed focuses on what emotions *do* instead of attempting to define what they *are* and concludes that they shape both individual and collective bodies "through the repetition of action over time". She explores how emotions move between bodies, both individual and collective, and suggests that emotions create "*the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and worlds*"

(Ahmed 2004a:117). As she argues in her discussions of racism, emotions such as fear, anger, and disgust, often associated with racism, can circulate between bodies, and thereby shape the boundaries or borders that are drawn between different groups of people (Ahmed 2004b:121).

Beyond moving between bodies and shaping boundaries, emotions can also be "sticky", that is, they align individuals with communities and bodily space with social space. Emotions, for Ahmed, thus work as a form of capital, as they can circulate and are distributed across social and psychic fields. This movement of emotion between objects and material signs allows them to accumulate "affective value" over time. By applying Ahmed's theories on emotions and materiality, we explore how the meeting between strangers is made up of and supported by a range of sticky objects.

In the following analysis, we draw on these three scholars as we zoom in on the socio-material-affective investments and strategies employed to form the social meeting between two strangers in Elderlearn.

Matching Two Strangers

As meeting people and socializing is so often viewed as a social practice we know by heart and have all the competencies to fulfil, it also risks being seen as uneventful and inconspicuous. In volunteer work, where the main purpose of the activity is to socialize and have a conversation, the act of socializing is precarious and must be handled carefully, as the success of the volunteer scheme depends on successful meetings. In what follows, we explore the meeting between strangers and view it as a pivotal point in the act of volunteering.

We start the analysis by focusing on the first meetings between an Elderlearn pair after they are matched. The pair is encouraged to find a date and time for their first meeting and to meet at the home of the volunteer senior. The reason behind encouraging the Elderlearn matches to meet in the home of the volunteer senior is to ensure that seniors with very diverse life circumstances can participate, including seniors with difficulties getting out of their homes due to physical or mental circumstances.

Although the home obviously makes it possible for more senior citizens to participate, choosing the home as the core space for the volunteer activity made us curious and prompted us to ask questions such as: How does the senior volunteer manage being the host? How does the volunteer foreigner handle their role as a guest? In what way do these prescribed roles help or hinder overcoming the already notable differences between the two of them, such as age, nationality, language, and culture? What activities and material objects were engaged and applied in the meeting between the two?

These questions and our theoretical choices synchronized and guided our analysis, and it became clear that one practice dominated our ethnographic material – the act of sitting around a table, drinking coffee, and having something to eat – a very unassuming and common act. Yet, this act, we argue, creates a sort of "safe situation" for the Elderlearn pairs by offering a known way of navigating the troubled waters of the first meeting.

In the first part of the analysis, we unfold this act in detail by looking at the setting and sitting at the table. For us, the table provides an entrance to open the act of

socializing as we zoom in on the everyday materialities, movements, and emotions involved and entangled in the activity (Ehn & Löfgren 2010). In the second part, we will focus on some of the backstage work that was undertaken at Elderlearn's office long before the Elderlearn pairs met for the first time and how Elderlearn actively supported social meetings through different organizational structures and tools.

Setting and Sitting at the Coffee Table: The Performance of a Volunteer Activity

75-year-old Ellen placed coffee cups, a milk jug, scones, and a lot of accompaniments on the long table in her living room when we met her for an interview. "I served the same thing one of the first times I met Sorina. A cup of coffee and something sweet to munch on always helps," she said, as she sat down. (Field notes)

Picture 1 shows the table in Ellen's living room, as described in the quotation. The field notes and the picture underline some of the socio-material preparation that comes before the actual meeting between the two volunteers, who at this point are strangers to one another.

Ellen was one of the many who described the act of drinking coffee and having something to eat as the go-to when meeting their Elderlearn match for the first time. As Ole, a 75-year-old man, said: "Well I always say, 'Let's talk over a cup of coffee,' so I just did the same when I met him."

Like Ellen and Ole, many of our informants shared that these first meetings took place around the table, accompanied by a cup of coffee and cakes. This was not an act required or even recommended by Elderlearn but what the volunteers felt was the right thing to do. The act of offering

something to drink and eat to visitors is a widespread, cross-cultural custom and is viewed as an expression of hospitality and friendliness. We posit that the volunteer seniors used this very common cultural practice as a way of curating the scene and creating a shared common ground, as several of the senior citizens expressed their doubts and uncertainty about the first meetings and the volunteer foreigner's intentions. This doubt was clearly expressed by 72-year-old Tine, who did not understand why her Elderlearn match wanted to meet with her:

It was so unclear what she actually wanted from me, I think. In fact, she is a sweet young woman with two children and a Danish husband, so I thought, why on earth would she spend time with me?

1. Ellen's living room. Photo: CoRe, Line Steen.

Mads, a 67-year-old man, also expressed this doubt and reflected on how he dealt with it when meeting his Elderlearn match:

Why have we even been matched? I thought a lot about it first. Although we don't have much in common, I can offer her a cup of coffee and an open door (Mads makes quotation marks with his hands) to some knowledge about Denmark and the Danish language. Well, either she likes the company or the coffee, because she has been here a couple of times now (he laughs).

For Tine, Mads, and several others, the friend/volunteer relationship was difficult to categorize. Setting the table with something to drink and/or eat seemed to give them a sense of control over how the meeting would take place.

In Picture 2, we witness another neatly decorated table in 82-year-old Hanne's living room, awaiting Hanne and Chiela to sit and have instant coffee with milk substitute, sugar, and vanilla pastries. The plates have napkins folded in triangles on them and are placed on placemats on top of a tablecloth. On the table, we also see a landline phone, an address book, a notebook, and a pen. In the corner of the table,

2. Hanne's coffee table. Photo: CoRe.

three different paper holders keep track of folders, letters, and other important papers, among other things, a city map of Roskilde in English. In the background of the picture, teddy bears and colourful cushions take up the entire space of the sofa as they are participating, or at least observing the meeting between the Elderlearn pair.

The picture of Ellen's and Hanne's tables shows how the meeting between strangers is prepared, supported, and cared for by all kinds of socio-material objects, which created a meeting where the volunteer seniors drew on the schemes from a known everyday activity as a way of ensuring a good setting for the meeting. Coffee, cakes, and many other non-human objects are, in this setting, applied with an expectation of their ability to create a shared positive experience based on their affective value.

In his text about the black box of everyday life from 2014, Löfgren addresses the materiality of everyday life and how non-human objects are entangled with forces and energies that shape their interactions with them (Löfgren 2014:79). By doing so, he draws on affective theory and asks, "Why is it that some things attract certain feelings and become a focus of irritation, happiness or sadness?" (ibid.:87). Following this line of thought, Löfgren draws on the work of Ahmed and her concept of *sticky objects*, arguing that certain objects can have a certain stickiness to them. In the case of the coffee table, objects such as coffee, pastries, and candlelight have the stickiness of hospitality and "hygge",[5] objects that, in Ahmed's words, can be labelled *happy objects* (Ahmed 2010:29). Ahmed argues that happiness should be understood as a happening involving affect: "to be happy is to be affected by something" (ibid.). She ex-

plores how happiness functions as a promise that directs us towards certain objects, which then circulate as social goods. Such objects accumulate positive affective value as they are passed around. This is based on her broader theoretical framework around "orientation," where she argues that objects have a social and cultural orientation – that is, they are imbued with values that shape how they are perceived, used, and understood in a particular context. Objects can be oriented towards certain emotions, identities, and ideologies, and this orientation influences how they are experienced and how they affect individuals and communities. Happy objects, as discussed by Ahmed, are objects that are oriented towards positive emotions and are culturally accepted as symbols of happiness. These objects can include items that are associated with normative ideals of happiness, such as wedding rings, baby clothes, or other objects that are considered markers of a happy life within a particular cultural or social context.

Picture 3 shows Hans and Junta. We are in Hans's living room, and the table, as in Ellen's and Hanne's case, is neatly decorated with tablecloth, napkins, cups, coffee, candy, biscuits, cake, sugar, sweet tablets, and much more. Hans has put quite an effort into creating and presenting a welcoming and homey atmosphere and situation. Yet, in this familiar and cosy atmosphere, two specific objects caught our attention: the electric candles and the bottle of port.

Candlelight has, for many years, been equivalent to "hygge" in Danish homes, and Denmark is famous for burning more candles than anywhere else in the world. The Danish anthropologist Mikkel Bille argues that light "plays a crucial role in orchestrating a sense of community, solitude and "secureness" at home and that the light atmosphere relies on cultural premises and notions of intimacy, informality, and relaxation, encompassed in the term 'hygge', or cosiness" (Bille 2015:56). In the last few years, however, there has been increased awareness of the health and safety issues linked to burning candles. Thus, especially in public institutions, such as nursing homes and homes for seniors, candles with open flames are no longer allowed. Consequently, electric candles have found their way into many Danish homes, including that of Hans, who is living in senior housing. The replacement of classic candles with electric candles underlines the affective attributes of candles and the role they play in creating cosy and welcoming Danish social situations. As Bille has shown in his study, candlelight comes with a culturally specific stickiness and is not necessarily a shared cultural repertoire that evokes the exact same feelings.

This underlines the affectiveness of the object, the role it plays in social situations, and how, with the electric candlelight, the affect "sticks, sustains or preserves the

3. Hans and Junta around the coffee table in Hans' living room. Photo: CoRe, Line Steen.

connection between ideas, values and objects" (Ahmed 2010:29). Setting the table is hence a notable example of how certain socio-material arrangements can establish an inclusive space.

However, as Löfgren argues, things and affects come together in many ways (2014), and material objects can also have embedded exclusion mechanisms. This points to the potential risk of people attaching different values and feelings to the same object – such as alcohol – which is the other object that caught our attention: the port, including the three small wine glasses. Whereas this situation ended with a "cheers", it could potentially have been an awkward and difficult situation with a clash between different cultural understandings of and approaches to alcohol. According to Ahmed, happiness is often aligned with particular social and cultural norms, expectations, and ideologies. Thus, happiness can be a powerful tool of social control, as it is often used to reinforce existing power structures, and individuals who deviate from normative notions of happiness may experience alienation or exclusion from affective communities. Affective community refers to social groups or communities that are bound together by shared emotions, values, or experiences, and Ahmed argues that the alignment of happiness can create or reinforce affective communities that are exclusionary or oppressive to those who do not conform to dominant norms (Ahmed 2004b). Hence, when strangers meet for the first time, they do not possess enough knowledge about each other's cultural repertoire to know potential points of conflict and often draw on their own affective community, such as Danish alcohol culture. So, how do the volunteers navigate in this situation?

As argued above, the act of setting the coffee table and the objects it includes plays an important role and seems to have a certain stickiness to it. However, regarding the interaction between the two volunteers, who meet each other for the first time as strangers, these objects do not necessarily have the same stickiness or evoke the same emotions for the two parties. Recalling the figure of the Stranger, we examine in the next example how two volunteers interact and navigate with and around the coffee table in an attempt to establish a good social relationship:

I did not want to put rolled sausage[6] on the table if she could not stand it, so I asked:

"What religion do you have? Are you Muslim[7] or what?" But she was not. When we were about to eat and have coffee, she asked if she could do this (she folds her hands). Then I said, "We don't say a prayer before a meal here in our home. We have never done that, but I don't mind if you do." But then I asked her what she was saying in the prayer and she had just said, "Thank you for great food." (Rigmor)

In the quotation, Rigmor, an 85-year-old woman, talks about one of the first times she met her Elderlearn match, Jirapinya. This quotation underlines how a social meeting between strangers can be a potential minefield filled with the expectations and prescribed imaginations of the other. At first glance, the quotation illuminates a traditional, conservative, outdated, and not politically correct expression about Jirapinya and her possible religiously conditioned precautions about certain types of food. However, we argue that another interpretation is as likely. The quotation also shows how Rigmor was very eager to be a good host, by serving good food and coffee, and by welcoming other cultural traditions

such as prayers at the table. Both Rigmor and Jirapinya were trying to establish a social bond by attuning to one another when, for instance, Jirapinya, with her body language, indirectly asked whether it was acceptable to say a prayer (Despret 2004). This underlines how the social meetings that form the base of volunteer activities in organizations such as Elderlearn are made up of stuff, affects, and mutual attunements that "are hard to notice, difficult to verbalize and operate like slow accumulations of change" (Löfgren 2014: 81).

To use the figure of the Stranger to understand the meetings does not, however, imply that the parties are strangers on equal terms. Rather, we acknowledge that they have different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds and very different stories regarding, for example, migration. Thus, the volunteer foreigner has been given the role of the stranger in many other arenas of her life as well. In this regard, it might be a new role for the volunteer senior to be a stranger. Ahmed argues that:

Strangers are not simply those who are not already known in this dwelling, but those who are, in their very proximity, already recognized as not belonging, as being out of place. Hence, we recognize such strangers, the ones who are distant, only when they are close by; the strangers come to be seen as figures (with linguistic and bodily integrity) when they have entered the spaces we call "home". (Ahmed 2000:49)

In the meetings between Elderlearn volunteers, the involved parties are equally engaged in getting to know each other and overcoming, through carefully planned socio-material arrangements, the strangeness that either posits. The meetings between the volunteers are ambivalent mixtures of cultural recipes and sticky objects that require translation efforts and hard work to ensure a welcoming atmosphere that both parties would wish to repeat.

Staying at the Coffee Table – the Support Infrastructure of Elderlearn

In the first part of our analysis, we focused on the actual meetings between the volunteers. In the following, we turn to the backstage work done by the employees at Elderlearn to facilitate the meetings. We focus on some of the changes that Elderlearn had to initiate due to the upscaling of its activities from 2019 onwards, as they illustrate the meticulous and ongoing work done by volunteer organizations to create a robust support infrastructure around the meetings. The backstage work done by the organizations, such as Elderlearn, mitigates some of the precariousness and uncertainties of the meetings, ensuring that the strangers/volunteers in the Elderlearn context are handed tools to help approach each other and are not left to improvise on their own (Schutz 1944).

In Elderlearn, before the organization began scaling up, an employee would participate in the first meeting between the volunteer senior citizen and the volunteer foreigner to create a protected environment. However, due to the upscaling, this was no longer possible. The potential fragility of leaving the sole responsibility for the first meeting to the strangers/volunteers became a key concern for Elderlearn and prompted it to design a new start-up phase that did not involve an Elderlearn employee. To keep in close contact with the volunteers in the initial phases of their relationship, Elderlearn has developed several points of contact. This starts in the registration process, in

which an Elderlearn employee asks what communication devices the volunteers feel comfortable using. Many senior volunteers do not use their e-mail that much, and some do not use text messages. In this case, both the Elderlearn employees and the volunteer foreigner will communicate with the volunteer senior through phone calls. Another point of contact comes after the volunteers confirm the date and time for the first meeting, and an Elderlearn employee calls both parties one day in advance. This call is to make sure that both are up for the meeting and that they feel ready and well-informed, for example, by preparing them with possible conversation topics. On the day of the meeting, they also receive a text message to ensure that they remember it. These choreographed points of contact are some of the many management practices installed to support the meetings and create a smooth match-making process, avoiding too many or unnecessary problems for the matched pairs.

Another tool designed to support the start-up phase was the language game "Ordet er dit," which literally translates to "The word is yours," and which is sent to the senior volunteer who will be hosting the first meeting.

In pictures 4 and 5, we see an example of the game and an Elderlearn pair playing it. In picture 4, the orange card presents a statement that the players are urged to complete. This orange card says: "Family makes me think of …," and the players then have a certain number of word-cards that they can choose from, such as *hygge* and *uldtæppe* (wool blanket), and they then have to explain which word completes the statement best for them. One of the volunteer seniors, 75-year-old Ellen, explained

why she liked the game and used it with her Elderlearn match:

Well, it can take some of the awkwardness out of the situation. It gives you some catchwords, so you have something you can say so that you don't sit there humming and hawing without knowing what to say.

Another volunteer senior, 79-year-old Jette, stated:

The game is such a good idea. Because a game immediately gives a different atmosphere – of having fun together! So, I can see why they introduced it. Just a shame that the words are so easy.

As our informants express in the quotations, the game is a helpful tool for the pairs to apply as a way to structure their first meetings together without too much awkwardness or silence, a concern that many of the volunteers expressed when signing up at Elderlearn. The way the lan-

4. The language game "Ordet er dit".
Photo: CoRe, Line Steen.

guage game is designed provides words and half-sentences with the abilities and expectations to create specific types of conversations, such as the participants' life stories, cultural preferences, and introduction to Denmark and Danish culture. The game thus helps the volunteers to perform a conversation that could otherwise be very difficult and fraught with questions of how to understand each other and navigate the intercultural encounter. Moreover, the game supports the conversation by offering words and sentences which are all closely connected to Danish cultural values and act as happy objects, oriented towards positive emotions and culturally accepted symbols of happiness (Ahmed 2010).

The analytical examples above illustrate parts of the careful infrastructure that Elderlearn has built as part of its organization. Our research showed that replacing Elderlearn participation at the first meeting with a choreographed line of commu-

nication through letters, mail, and phone calls resulted in greater independence and agency in the Elderlearn pairs. As Mikkel, a 69-year-old man stated, "We're adults and don't need a babysitter." The quotation derives from a reflection on his experience as a volunteer in Elderlearn. For him, it was important to feel a sense of autonomy and flexibility to do what he felt like when meeting up. Consequently, he also, somehow ironically, explained how he did not apply the language game because he found it too childish. The Elderlearn infrastructure is a balancing act, allowing for independent and self-sufficient interaction between volunteers while monitoring and ensuring that they are comfortable and well-prepared to meet one another.

The preparatory phone calls and the game are two examples of how Elderlearn coordinates and facilitates the volunteer activity, as well as how the upscaling of the organization partly forced it to devel-

5. Elderlearn pair playing the language game. Photo: Elderlearn.

op tools that care for the meetings at a distance, enabling it to develop and refine its support infrastructure. However, the key point in this discussion is not whether an organization has an infrastructure. Instead, we emphasize that, first, an organization such as Elderlearn is constantly forced to adjust its infrastructure to accommodate organizational changes and improve the quality of its services. Second, the infrastructure is not only a supportive instrument tuned in on the well-being of the volunteers but also a tool for monitoring and assessing Elderlearn's service. These two related points are described in the following quotation from one of Elderlearn's employees:

It takes time! Especially in the start-up phase. After all, we have long calls with both parties, which are almost a kind of interview. We write down notes along the way. There are many things in such a conversation that are unimportant, but you gradually become skilled at sensing what is important! But the work doesn't stop there – after being matched, they need quite a lot of support: in the form of reminder calls on the day they meet, subsequent calls to debrief, and then after three months, we have monthly status calls with them. We also have automated emails and text messages that are sent out where we ask how things are going. After three months, we do the first evaluation via a questionnaire. It is also at this point that an Elderlearn pair is registered as what you can call a successful match and gets included in the reporting to the municipality or client, which pays us to do the work.

The support infrastructure detailed in the quote makes visible the important role of the employees in the organization and the degree of professionalization needed to guarantee the success of the match-making programme. These support infrastructure

practices are needed to stabilize the organization as well as the relationships between volunteers, and, as we have shown, are key elements when upscaling a social volunteer activity (Ertner 2015; 2019). Although voluntary organizations are still widely recognized for their civic qualities and democratic education, the emerging tendency of a professionalization of the field opens for new hybrid actors to enter welfare services through new policies, infrastructure of support organizations, and legal frameworks (Grub & Henriksen 2019:70–71). Our case, Elderlearn, is an example of a hybrid actor and of how civil society has become more inclined to turn to the business world and borrow organizational models, mindsets, and dynamics from it. As a socio-economic organization involved in volunteering work, Elderlearn can be seen as one of these new actors coming out of new partnerships and collaborations across Danish society (La Cour & Højlund 2008).

Conclusion

In this article we have described how a social volunteer activity, such as Elderlearn, in which two strangers are matched to form a social bond, demands profound preparation and continuous work from both the volunteers and the organization behind it. In the first part of our analysis, we employed the notions of the Stranger, the black box, and stickiness of objects, which allowed us to understand the meeting between two volunteers in Elderlearn as hard work requiring emotional and practical investments from both parties. Consequently, this meeting is not the seemingly mundane act of easy socializing but instead an intense practice fraught with cultural recipes, material objects, and inclusion and exclu-

sion mechanisms. In the second part of the analysis, we described how Elderlearn establishes a support infrastructure to make the social activity work, to support the volunteers at a distance, and thereby to clear out as many potential problems as possible. The ongoing attunement between the different work practices performed by the volunteers and the employees at Elderlearn also made visible the emerging professionalization in the context of social volunteer work in Denmark.

Our article has provided a close-up description of two key sites where the otherwise often hidden requirements in volunteer work are performed: the meeting between the volunteers and the organizational infrastructure. This knowledge about the socio-material-affective investments involved in the activities and the strategies developed by the organizations is crucial in times when civil societies in Scandinavia are increasingly urged to take responsibility for softer welfare tasks and facilitate successful social activities for very diverse groups of citizens. The current developments and changes in civil society, and the impact these have on the field of social volunteering, open questions on how the future landscape of volunteer activities will be formed, which types of organizations will emerge, and what the roles of the volunteer will be. Our study of Elderlearn alluded to part of the answer; that the future of social volunteer work depends on the ability of organizations to build professionalized practices that can attune to the practices of their volunteers, and consequently facilitating and creating the infrastructure needed for a diverse group of people to engage, meet and socialize in volunteer match-making activities.

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Notes

1   A private enterprise that runs a business with the aim – through its operations and earnings – of promoting social and community-beneficial purposes: https://erhvervsstyrelsen.dk/vejledning-registrering-som-registreret-socioloekonomisk-virksomhed.

2   See the former research project on Elderlearn at the CoRe website: https://core.ku.dk/forskning/elderlearn---naar-svaekkede-aeldre-mennesker-bliver-frivillige/.

3   See more about our accompanying research: https://core.ku.dk/forskning/frivillighed-til-alle-aeldre/.

4   Among the senior citizens: seven men and fourteen women aged 65–88. Among the volunteer foreigners: nineteen women and two men aged 23–47.

5   *Hygge*: a particular Danish word for having a good, fun, pleasant, cosy time.

6   Traditional Danish cold cut.

7   She applied an old Danish derogatory word for Muslims that is no longer used.

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Postmigrant Talks

Experiences of Language Use in Swedish Academia
By Maja Povrzanović Frykman, Eleonora Narvselius
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Academic Migrants in Sweden

The following statements were uttered by university professors currently working in Sweden:

Everyone is Swedish at my department and regardless of the advertisements reading "international, globalization". All that is just a mask – no one wants to speak English.

I can pull it off at meetings. However, if there is something very important, I ask them to allow me to give that lecture in English and not in Swedish, discussion can be in both languages. If it is very important, I ask for English, but it is very rarely nowadays.

These statements scaffold a polyptych of experiences and positions pertaining to language use that emerged as important in the frames of the project in which we investigate academia as a professional field in Sweden where migrants and migrant descendants have been relatively well represented in positions of high scientific prestige (Göransson & Lidegran 2005:268).[1] Pursuing personal experiences of academics working in Sweden, this article explores language use as a catalyst of emotions and self-reflection (Mohammed 2023). Against the background of the ongoing internationalization of academia, it uses language as a lens through which the changes in this field can be understood in relation to migration.

Around 34 per cent of employees in the higher education sector in Sweden were born abroad or born in Sweden to two parents born abroad, which is more than their ratio in Sweden's employed population as a whole (31 per cent) (Hellerstedt 2022). However, Salö et al. (2022) pointed out that only 14 per cent of teachers and researchers at Swedish higher education institutions overall hold a PhD degree from another country, while this is the case for only 7 per cent in the humanities and in medicine. This means that national recruitment prevails and that many migrants employed in Swedish academia completed their PhD studies in Sweden, as is the case with our interviewees (see Table 1). Most academics born abroad hold non-permanent positions: 78 per cent of postdocs in Sweden were born abroad, 65 per cent of research fellows, and 53 precent of assistant professors. The non-permanent employment includes also the PhD students, of whom 47 per cent are foreign citizens (Myklebust 2022).[2] When it comes to the two categories that imply permanent employment, the figures are lower: 26 per cent of senior lecturers and 28 per cent of professors were born abroad (SHEA 2019).[3] The Swedish Higher Education Authority reported that the average share of permanently employed faculty members with citizenship other than Swedish is under 10 per cent (SHEA 2020).

Moreover, only 12 per cent of academics with the role of administrative leaders at Swedish universities are of non-Swedish background (which means that their representation in such positions is just over a third of that of their Swedish colleagues), with a quarter of them being from other Nordic countries (Hellerstedt 2022).[4] The ability to use Swedish (or other Nordic languages) has been perceived as a major reason for such disproportional inclusion (Ministry of Education and Research 2018). As recently pointed out by the representatives of the Swedish National Union of Doctoral Students' Committee, despite the increasing role of English in both academic teaching and research in Sweden,

"in the sphere of academic decision-making, most non-Swedish speaking academics still face insurmountable challenges. In many cases international academics are virtually barred from collegial processes" (Aguiar Penha et al. 2023). Indeed, Swedish academia today looks very different than at the time of publication of Ehn and Löfgren's (2004) book which pinpointed the "rules of the game" and power relations that are equally relevant today,[5] but never mentioned the (Swedish) language use.

The presentation of the theoretical framework in the next section is followed by a review of previous research on language equalization and contestation in academia. The presentation of our aim, questions and methodology is followed by empirical sections organized around the themes that emerged from the material. The concluding section summarizes the findings, answers the research questions, and suggests some lines of further research.

University as an Arena of Language Equalization and Contestation

Academia is widely regarded as an organizational environment that advocates the value of intellectual freedom and that has been able to incorporate and benefit from diversity. Nevertheless, as pointed out by analysts such as Bourdieu (1969, 1986, 1993), Kerr (1994), and Clark (2002, 2004), it is highly selective when it comes to nurturing some language practices and discouraging and rejecting others within its own environment. In his discussion of how institutional history affects issues to be dealt with by higher education in the twenty-first century, Kerr (1994:39) points out that the tangled systems of modern-day

universities are pillared by three sets of values, namely "heritage versus equality versus merit". These imperatives are by and large contradictory, and their concrete realization is context-dependent. Collegial equality presupposes certain common denominators, among them both institutionally sanctioned and consensually shared language practices. Drawing on Bourdieu's work (1969, 1986, 1991, 1993), we conceptualize language not only as a medium of institutional communication, but also as a power resource through which individuals pursue their own interests, display their practical competence, and build personal alliances.

One of the most outstanding features of universities as epistemic communities standing out due to their cross-border/transnational knowledge exchange has been the use of institutional lingua franca. In medieval universities its role was uncontestably played by Latin; later, it was taken over by the languages of imperial elites (English, German, French, Russian). The lingua franca of today's academia is English. However, depending on circumstances, English may emerge not only as a koine facilitating equality of communication among the colleagues, and not only as a shared tool of liberalized research (Strömberg Jämsvi 2019), but also as an instrument of power games and (selfish) accumulation of merit. Excellent command of English, especially native proficiency, is a highly valued but double-edged asset that may provoke negative reactions as a power factor infringing language practices of speakers of other national languages and changing power balance in their academic milieu (see Holmes 2020; Hohti & Truman 2021; Salö 2022). Also, in Swedish aca-

demia, this contradiction between equality and merit viewed through the lens of language practices may result in conflict situations and nurture unwelcome informal hierarchies.

Clark (2002, 2004) draws attention to differentiation and competition as foundations of university organization. Bourdieu (1988, 1996), in turn, brings to the fore the institutional nature of academia as a state-supported field of power. In the process of nation-state formation it played significant role in the language homogenization of entire societies whose national distinction was underpinned by the taken-for-granted supremacy of "correct" and "cultivated" language produced and consecrated by academia. Another seminal argument formulated by Bourdieu concerns the practical language competence of speakers, which goes hand in hand with other relational strategies of power activated by conversions of different types of capital. Depending on the circumstances and intentions of the speakers, language is a key cultural medium for converting cultural capital into social and symbolic capital; practical mastery of a certain language (or even its particular variant) can also give economic advantages.

Drawing on Bourdieu's ideas about heteronomous and autonomous principles of hierarchization in the fields of cultural production (Bourdieu 1993:41), Salö et al. (2022) distinguish the correlating notions of academic and scientific capital. They point out that "while indicators of *scientific* capital include distinguished publications, […] scientific awards and other signs of scientific prestige, the indicators of *academic* capital rather concern signifiers of academic power: managerial positions and directorships […] and the like" (ibid.:116; emphasis in the original). In theory skilful institutional players, both groups and individuals, may navigate between autonomous and heteronomous positions and accumulate both strictly scientific and academic-political credits at will. In practice, however, the limits of such manoeuvrings are set by institutional rules, organizational cultures and traditions, political impacts, stages of career development, time limitations, and a plethora of other factors. One of them is mastery of authoritative languages in Swedish academia. There, as in many other national contexts, English is construed as a language of scientific advancement, while the national language skills remain a taken-for-granted requirement in processes of acquiring academic capital and gaining access to positions of institutional decision-making (ibid.:124). Thus, as Salö et al. have observed, in modern-day academia "language skills may be a structuring feature in their own right, affecting administrative participation, employability, and social inclusion" (ibid.:115).[6]

Swedish is the national language, regarded as essential for political security and democratic reasons (Strömberg Jämsvi 2019). It is the official language of all authorities in Sweden. Consequently, the working language of university administration is Swedish, and the administrative personnel (especially of lower rank) may be less comfortable writing documents and speaking in English (see Holmes 2023). However, the relatively privileged status of Danish and Norwegian in Swedish academia should be mentioned. Traditionally, speakers of these languages enjoyed facilitated access to Sweden and were integrated into Swedish life quite easily. Ideas about

cultural solidarity, language proximity and the shared history of the Nordic countries make themselves continuously felt in various institutional and "banal" daily situations where communication among the native speakers of these languages appears relatively unrestricted. Also, at Swedish universities, students on courses taught in Swedish are allowed to submit and defend BA, MA and PhD theses in Danish and Norwegian and have the right to submit their answers in these languages during examinations.

Although Swedish and English do not have equal degrees of leverage in different institutional domains, they both remain uncontested as authoritative and officially sanctioned languages of Swedish academia. This is in stark contrast to minority languages and immigrant languages which, unlike Danish and Norwegian, remain beyond the institutional academic framework because of their linguistic peculiarity and lack of official acknowledgement. Even though the preferability of English, Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian is often negotiated in concrete circumstances, the spectrum of actual linguistic diversity is not taken into account. This might prompt the conclusion that, well in line with the academic value of heritage highlighted by Kerr (1994), Swedish academia's status as a "national heirloom" (Salö et al. 2022:124) remains uncontested. Nevertheless, it makes sense to look more closely at struggles around Swedish and English to get a more nuanced picture of the academic field as criss-crossed by multiple axes of power and to understand the changes these struggles (may) bring about.

The Theoretical Framework of Postmigration

We employ the theoretical framework of postmigration in the attempt to circumvent the common parameters of "research on migrants", which Regina Römhild (2017) has dubbed "migrantology". We endorse her claim that "what is lacking is not yet more research about migration, but a migration-based perspective to generate new insights into the contested arenas of "society" and "culture"" (ibid.:70). The prefix "post" in postmigration does not indicate stasis reached after migration to a country has ended; it "aspires to transcend "migration" as a disguised marker for racist exclusion, on the one hand, while embracing migration as social normality, on the other" (Foroutan 2019:150).[7] The notion of postmigration helps to identify the "constitutive and shaping role of migration within the society […] to counter the social obsession of defining migration as the "Other" and, by doing so, constantly excluding it from the society's own self-perception" (Römhild 2021:52).

The notions of "migrant" and "migrant descendant" are not problematic in themselves but become problematic when "mobilized as part of aggressive identity-ascriptions and processes of othering" (Petersen & Schramm 2017:6). Research has shown that inequalities may be affected both by actual and ascribed migrant background (Çağlar 2016; Foroutan et al. 2018; Kubota et al. 2021). By circumventing the analytical binaries of "native" and "migrant", the notion of postmigration serves the task of "de-essentializing so-called migrant coherences and homogeneities and breaking up ascribed identities" (Çağlar 2016:134).

In the field usually referred to as "migration research", this implies a significant shift from analytical binaries of native vs. migrant and majority vs. minority, towards the interest in transformations throughout the society that has been affected by migration. Postmigration is a framework for analysis of "conflicts, identity discourses and social and political transformations that occur after migration has taken place" (Foroutan 2019:150). We thus do not use postmigration as a normative, "positively utopian" notion, but as one that implies "negotiations and conflicts" (Tröger 2021:147), and "the struggle to be recognized by the ways you identify yourself rather than by identities ascribed to you" (Gebauer et al. 2019:137).

Much research employing the notion of postmigration addresses struggles about participation and representation (Schramm et al. 2019), as the presence of migrants and their descendants in leading positions does not develop at the same pace in all professional fields – neither in Sweden nor in other European countries (Gabelic & Nordin 2016; Neue Deutsche Medienmacher*innen 2020). Tensions, contestations, and conflicts may bring about changes and be productive of new relations and constellations of power that cannot be captured by old analytical binaries but can be understood as postmigrant negotiations. We are inspired by Roger Bromley's definition of the framework of postmigration as "epistemological in the sense that it raises the question of how, and at what point, someone ceases to be thought of as a "migrant" or in terms of their supposed ethnicity" (Bromley 2021:134). It serves to explore "postmigrant possibilities" (ibid.). These possibilities refer to the dissolution

of perception of "migrant" as "other", or of "immigrants" (of "first", "second", or any generation) as essentially different from the "majority" or "native" population, and therefore predestined for (exclusion from) certain positions. In the context of academia, these possibilities further refer to the ways of dealing creatively with challenges, "to develop an innovative social praxis" (Hill & Yildiz 2021:117).

The highly but unevenly internationalized Swedish academia is a field in which the presence of migrants is notable and in which ethnicity and race in principle should not (and legally must not) matter for academic professional trajectories based on merit. However, as indicated by the figures mentioned in the introduction, positions of power are uneven in terms of the stability of professional presence and institutional influence.

Gebauer et al. (2019) identify language and institutions as some of the main sites of postmigrant negotiations of presence, representation, power, and influence. Looking at practices of language use in this article, and at career trajectories and the support academics give to each other in our broader project, we are interested in what Gebauer et al. see as "the dissolution of old and the founding of new alliances, of misunderstanding and understanding" (ibid.:135). Instead of "researching migrants", we shift the attention to relationships emerging in their professional contexts. We contend that this is both scientifically and socially relevant, as academic institutions are "sites that urge us to invent new categories, tools and languages to communicate with and to describe the status quo, as well as who 'we' are and who 'we' want to be in the future" (ibid.).

Aim, Questions, Methods, and Material

The overall aim of this article is to contribute to the understanding of the struggles unfolding around migration and its aftermaths, by exploring language use among the academics in the context of the ongoing internationalization of Swedish academia.

We ask, what do the practices of daily language use among the academics working in Sweden look like and what emotions and reflections do they entice? How does academia as a professional setting that accommodates several authoritative languages customize and condition inclusion and exclusion with their help? What struggles become visible through the lens of language use?

Our material is based on 22 open-ended interviews (Rapley 2001) with university teachers and researchers conducted between summer 2021 and summer 2022 and characterized by explorative questions (Bogner & Menz 2009) about processes of professional embedding, establishment, and gaining positions of responsibility in academia.[8] The interviewees (presented in Table 1) gave elaborate answers which made us understand that they found language use a particularly important aspect of their academic trajectory and daily work.

Our empirical interest in the first project year was directed at the paths to recognition and professional influence of people who self-identify as migrants, so for migrants among the interviewees presented in Table 1 Swedish is a foreign language. These initial research participants were asked to identify their allies – people who have been particularly supportive and helpful for their professional development and establishment. They form the second,

equally important group of our research participants to whom we posed the same questions as to the migrants. The material includes a smaller number of interviews with allies as not all persons identified as allies have been available for interview.

All the interviewees presented in Table 1 (13 men [M] and 9 women [F]) are or (if retired) have been employed at the universities in Gothenburg, Lund, Norrköping, Stockholm, Umeå, Växjö, or Örebro. To ensure the interviewees' anonymity, we avoid specification of workplaces as well as of the year of birth and arrival in Sweden. As the article does not deal with professional trajectories that need to be closely contextualized, the complete anonymizing of the interviewees does not hinder the understanding of the issues at hand.

Out of those 22 interviewees, 17 are migrants: 4 migrated to Sweden from continents other than Europe and 10 came from South-Eastern and Eastern European countries. They were born between 1948 and 1975; 2 among them came to Sweden as young children and underwent their entire education there and 15 came to Sweden as adults at different stages of their career. None of them was headhunted as an established academic; all achieved the title of professor in Sweden. Moreover, all but 3 received their PhD titles from Swedish universities. The interviewees included 7 persons approached in the study as allies; 2 of them are themselves migrants and 5 are born in Sweden to Swedish parents. The allies were born between 1942 and 1948 and all received their PhD titles from Swedish universities.

The material used in this article stems primarily from the interviewees' answers to the questions: "Which language/s do

Table 1. Information about the interviewees.

Academic field	Academic title and country of PhD studies	Gender	Approached in the study as migrant or ally	Country of birth – region	Birth	Arrival in Sweden
Natural sciences	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	F	migrant	South America	Early 1960s	End of 1990s
	Professor (PhD in Great Britain)	M	migrant	Middle East	Early 1960s	End of 1990s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	migrant	Eastern Europe	Early 1950s	Mid 1970s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	F	migrant	Eastern Europe	Mid 1940s	Early 1970s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	migrant	Eastern Europe	Early 1950s	Mid 1970s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	ally	Sweden	Early 1940s	Born in Sweden
Technical sciences	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	F	migrant	Eastern Europe	Early 1970s	End of 1980s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	F	migrant	Eastern Europe	Mid 1970s	Early 2000s
Social sciences	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	F	migrant (arrived in early school age)	Nordic country	Early 1960s	Early 1970s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	ally	Sweden	Early 1940s	Born in Sweden
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	F	ally (herself also a migrant)	Eastern Europe	Mid 1940s	Mid 1960s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	F	migrant	Asia	Early 1950s	Early 1970s
	Professor (PhD in home country)	F	migrant	Eastern Europe	Late 1940s	Early 1980s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	ally	Sweden	Early 1940s	Born in Sweden
Humanities	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	migrant	North America	Early 1960s	Early 1980s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	ally	Sweden	Early 1940s	Born in Sweden
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	migrant	Eastern Europe	Mid 1950s	Early 1980s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	ally	Sweden	Early 1940s	Born in Sweden
	Associate Professor with a high administrative position (PhD in Sweden)	M	migrant (arrived as infant)	Eastern Europe	Early 1960s	Mid 1960s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	ally (himself also a migrant)	Nordic country	Late 1940s	1970s
	Professor (PhD in home country)	F	migrant	Eastern Europe	Late 1950s	1990s
	Professor (PhD in Sweden)	M	migrant	Eastern Europe	Late 1940s	Late 1960s

you use in your professional environment? Tell about your use of Swedish in your professional context (when; with whom; how do you feel about using it). If you use several languages, tell about the experience of shifting languages (when, where, why, with whom)."

In sum, our material consists of the interviewees' narrations of their subjective perceptions and experiences of work at Swedish universities that in their turn participate in the global trend of internation-alization of academia as a professional field. We employed thematic analysis of the material that looks for meaning in the interview transcriptions. We did an inductive analysis, looking at what may appear significant in the material. In this we followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) guideline "for identifying, analyzing and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (ibid.:79). This allowed us to preserve in the text the richness and complexity of the interview material.

The following sections empirically substantiate the main themes discerned in the material and paint a picture of what is going on in our research participants' professional environments: which languages are used, by whom and with whom, and how our interviewees feel about it. As this text focuses on language use among academic staff, the administrative positions mentioned in the quotations are occupied by academics, not by administrative personnel. Also, while exchanges with administrative personnel and students are mentioned, we explore formal and informal daily exchanges among the academics.

Swedish and English: An Unsettled Interplay

Considering the status of English explained in the section on the university as an arena of language contestation, it is hardly possible to write separately about the use of English and Swedish; most interviewees narrated about one in relation to the other. We therefore tease out the themes that address tensions between conflict and cooperation and the interweaving of linguistic alienation and accommodation.

The Power of Swedish

One of the professors we interviewed is a native speaker of English who made a great effort to learn Swedish in the course of his doctoral studies in Sweden:

I've always spoken Swedish in Swedish contexts, which makes me sound like a slightly confused five-year-old, but, you know, I accept that my emails were even worse because people don't… After a while I think, people get used to the accent and they understand what I'm saying, but you read my emails and you wonder – what is he doing? And that's hard in that sense.

To the question whether appearing "as a confused five-year-old" is a problem, he answered:

On daily basis, it doesn't matter, for 95 per cent of the stuff I do, you know, being a confused five-year-old is more than enough for, for the setting. When things get hot, when meetings have to be filed out precisely, when, you know, small nuances in words make a difference, it makes a huge difference not being able to master the language, a huge disadvantage. You say what you want – middle-class Swedes, they're not physically violent, but they are verbally abusive, extremely. I've seen colleagues riding people down, being able to choose the right words to use. I don't master that, I can't do that in that way, and that puts me at a disadvantage.

While the quotation above reveals the perception of language as an instrument of domination (and introduces the topic of class which we will explore in the project, but do not discuss in this text), a migrant professor whom we approached in the study as an ally pointed out the help she receives from her native-speaker students:

It's going better now, we help each other and then send the text to someone else. I have always asked doctoral students for support when it comes to Swedish. In the last 20 years of my work, doctoral students have been important, to check a little. They have a look and correct some details.

There is an indication of cooperation, unlike in the previous quotation that stressed the conflictual potential of language use. The doctoral students are positioned as valued allies for possessing the capital of native-level fluency. On the other hand, some interviewees pointed to the fact that the capital of native language fluency coupled with a good mastery of English grants younger Swedish colleagues an insur-

mountable advantage in the competition in a disciplinary field for which writing is crucial. They do not have to invest time in mastering Swedish, and time is a scarce resource at any stage of an academic career (see Hohti & Truman 2021). An interviewee highlighted this advantage by telling a story about her doctoral student, a native speaker of Swedish, who quickly became an academic "star".

We published so much internationally, 90 per cent internationally as that is a precondition for becoming a professor – to appear in international situations as a well-known person. […] Those who emerged as exceptionally important, like [name], my [former] doctoral student– he published a new book every year. These are quality books. And so, you become a star. And I, when I write in Swedish, I still feel insecure. So, I am constantly in the situation to think, do we need help?

All the interviewees agree that being able to understand and speak Swedish is of crucial importance for their career and well-being,[9] not least for the possibility of advancing in leadership/management positions: "To learn Swedish is important since it gives a totally different insight into how the university is governed and opens a possibility of affecting it." Indeed, some made a serious effort to learn Swedish. One of our interviewees who came to Sweden in the 1970s as a young researcher and was determined to work in Swedish academia told us that he started to learn Swedish immediately. He studied it very intensively at least six hours a day. One interviewee learned Swedish as a PhD student. She explained:

Of course, the seminars were in Swedish, so I used to sit with a dictionary and I would ask […] what

was that word? Then, slowly, I realized that no one wanted to sit next to me because I was disturbing them.

She also noted that she was "really privileged" as each seminar leader would spend some twenty minutes with her after the seminar, to summarize it in English, which was the language of her entire former education.

Insecurities, Ambiguities

Several interviewees bore witness to the constant sense of insecurity as Swedish is not their native language and not even their first foreign language:

My Swedish was relatively good when I started to study [for a doctoral degree] but in the beginning I could make it in the scientific environment first and foremost thanks to my good knowledge of English and German that I had from [the native country]. In [a Swedish university town] the colleagues wanted to talk English to me, at least in the beginning. For a long time, maybe always, I felt uncomfortable with teaching in Swedish. I therefore avoided the teaching and did administrative work rather than stand in the classroom. Until this day I prefer teaching in English, and as it is more and more accepted, I am doing it.

Also, a retired professor who did invest time and energy in learning Swedish, said:

I never felt comfortable at leadership meetings, very much because of my accent in Swedish, but I was also bad at interpreting the signals in the Swedish academic culture.

Fluency in a local language is not necessarily coupled with a fluency of "reading" socio-cultural codes in a particular professional setting; this migrant remains painstakingly uncertain about signals that

make the spoken language just one part of the ongoing communication, and as such insufficient for capturing its complexity.[10] This resonates with Olsson et al. (2018:199) who observe that not only the "right contacts" but also the ability to behave unhindered language- and style-wise, i.e. demonstrate social competence in the institutional context, are crucial for not being excluded from the institutional centre in the academia.

Frustration, Irritation, Conflict
An interviewee of migrant origin who occupies a high leadership position at his university objects to efforts by his migrant colleague to willy-nilly impose the authority language of global academia in the governance of the Swedish institution:

I have a professor [a native speaker of English] at my faculty whom I would like to send to SFI,[11] because I can't endure holding all meetings in English just for his sake. Swedish is the official language of the authority. It is one matter when we teach at master level or if we have doctoral students, and there we need the English language. But hell no, you can't sit there and hold a meeting without the official Swedish, because I feel like a 13-year-old! There are terms in English that I don't use. I can talk about my [academic] discipline in English, for I learned those terms – perhaps even before I learned them in Swedish. But now I sit there and lead, I have a formal role on a board or a body at [name] university, and I have to speak Swedish, otherwise I sound like an idiot! I suddenly interrupt and ask: "By the way, what is *nämnd* called in English? Is it committee or steering group?" Oh, language, language, language!

Most obviously, when analysing it through the lens of Bourdieu's theory of practice, this interview excerpt demonstrates a typical tension/slow-motion conflict under-

pinned by differential access to cultural (the native-speaking professor's English) and symbolic capital (the interviewee's position as executor of administrative authority, with high status in the administrative hierarchy) that are both institutionally recognized but abide by different "rules of engagement":

We have legally established Swedish as the official authority language in Sweden. Of course, it is excluding, and that is why the language is key: if I could not manage Swedish, I could never have become a head of department, a dean, a vice chancellor. I really believe that it is in a way easier to succeed with the academic than with the leadership parts. […] When it comes to the highest top, it is still very homogeneous.

The interviewee's interpretation of the situation as a breach of conventions distinguishing the quite homogeneous administrative "highest top" highlights the realization that switching to English changes the power balance between the two actors in the field, where the skilful use of bureaucratic style of language matters a lot. The quotations above can also be read as acknowledgement of internal tensions between cultural capital as an inherited property and an acquired resource (Bourdieu 1986:18). They reveal the mechanisms of *conditioned inclusion* into particular institutional communities that is impossible without time-consuming investment in Swedish language competence that helps to "open the doors" ("language is key"). The interviewee strongly questions his "free-riding" colleague who uses inherited language proficiency in English as an excuse to skip the time-consuming investment in learning Swedish, since he not only *de facto* gets around general institu-

tional conventions but also breaches the rules of inclusion into the "highest top" of leadership.

Another interviewee presented the use of Swedish at a humanities department as a power play and a kind of resistance to the internationalization of academia:

It can be nasty […], colleagues who see this as a power play, you know: I'm Swedish, I'm gonna speak Swedish, why do we have to give in to this international pressure, this neoliberal power play, yeah.

He told us about a doctoral student who attended a retreat meeting of the department his unit is a part of, where everyone spoke Swedish – a language she did not understand:

She ended up breaking down in tears after the second day, sitting around the table just watching people speak Swedish. The result was: a colleague of mine answered her in Swedish again, it's like … [laughing]. She left the room crying and I had to leave the meeting to go talk to her for a while, but, in that sense […] it's about power, you know, all of this it's about: I'm taking a power position, I'm going to speak Swedish. There are other colleagues [at the Faculty] who will send out emails in Swedish and if you want to read this in English, google translate it. You know, it's really a slap in the face, an active slap in the face if people aren't speaking Swedish.

He sees this tension as "a highly politicized question", which has been discussed openly at his department, resulting in both languages being allowed, but not in a fully balanced manner:

Last spring, we did meetings mixed, so you could speak English or Swedish, if you wanted to answer in Swedish, you do that. The decision now from the current head of department is that meetings will be held in Swedish but important points will be taken in English also. Who decides what the important point is? I can't do that, I have no idea.

While without Swedish a migrant does not feel fully at home at a workplace where Swedish is the dominant language, Swedish colleagues may not feel at home with a person who cannot understand their informal exchanges. "Learn Swedish properly if you want to stay in Sweden", was the advice shared by one of the retired professors we interviewed. However, another one questioned an easy definition of 'properly':

I can write [scientific] articles in Swedish. I have great ambitions when it comes to language. […] [when it comes to] the writing of other things, not only scientific – there I am terribly fearful, there I feel my limitations. And when I speak Swedish, people can still recognize me as a foreigner. I still have an accent, after all those years. […] It is a sense of second-ratedness with regard to the language, as we who succeeded [becoming professors in Sweden] are not some average, we are above that and have enormous demands on ourselves.

The feeling of insecurity and discomfort expressed by several interviewees is in many respects subjective. Several of them speak very good Swedish according to their allies, yet they are not pleased with their performance because the demands they impose on themself are high. As academics, they are competitive and would like to be able to play with all the language nuances on a par with their Swedish colleagues. And finally, they know from experience that their accents and linguistic mistakes will always give them away and may provoke the question "where are you from?"

that points to their not being at home. In a way, the quotation above provides a possible answer to our research question about the nature of struggles that become visible through the lens of language use in the Swedish academia. By and large, these are the struggles over the main thing at stake, which is the vision of academic excellence. The postmigrant context implies that the sharp contours of academic excellence a described by Bourdieu, i.e., flawless and speaking with the right accent (or "no accent"), are becoming blurred. In modern-day Swedish academia, the stigma of a wrong accent or imperfect mastery of authoritative language seems to be gradually diminishing.

Lingua Franca and Its Local Limits
Ideally, high achievement in academia is based a combination of talent, passion, and hard work. For some migrants among our interviewees, however, hard work included not only the effort to master Swedish but also English as a language of their research field:

I learned French and German in [the native country] and both English and Swedish I started to learn only now [after migrating to Sweden], while I was studying for the doctoral degree, was working extra, and also had three children in the same period.

The old professor […] was not encouraging. He used to say, "What shall we do with you, you speak neither Swedish nor English." I had no English with me from [the native country] so I had to study English at evening courses. But I was very good in the lab! […] [In the US, with a scholarship], there were fantastic working conditions and very nice colleagues. And my English finally become much better! I could go to conferences and hold presentations. That meant very much.

The quotations above point to the necessity of mastering English in academia but also the benefits of academic mobility to English-speaking environments. Some problems touched upon in this article are generational. The problem of mastering English is not as big today as it was with migrants coming in the 1960s–80s, but not all countries in the world have equally advanced teaching of English and academics coming from some countries may therefore be disadvantaged.

A retired Swedish-born professor, interviewed as an ally, said:

I think it's a blessing to be able to write tolerably and speak tolerably although my English is getting rusty by being retired. But the periods I spent in England and the US were so important.

Our older interviewees who mastered neither English nor Swedish at the start of their doctoral studies in Sweden worked in the fields of natural sciences where they at least for some time could compensate for their poor language competence with talent and excellent practical skills, which bought them time to learn both languages. This would not be possible in the humanities, social sciences or law; one would need English at least, in the past as well as today. Today, a person can start an academic career in most fields without any knowledge of Swedish, providing that their English is up to standard.

Our older interviewees also pointed to the fact that in some disciplines they had to publish in Swedish in order to be recognized as scholars, whereas today in most disciplines international peer-reviewed journals are prioritized. One can hardly qualify for a high-status academic

positions without being internationally published and connected, which requires English proficiency. However, proficiency in English is usually not enough if one is to develop a career in Sweden. As indicated above, the lack of ability to use Swedish can limit teaching opportunities, and by rule excludes a scholar from leadership/senior management posts.

Forced-Upon Language Use and the Strategy of Not Giving In

A professor who did her doctoral studies in Sweden and returned to the country after having worked elsewhere, had no choice but to use Swedish at her present department:

That is actually good because it made me learn. I also learned from my child, also on the go [without formal lessons]. […] Actually, there is support for learning Swedish for foreigners [SFI] only on the first level. That was only basic conversational Swedish; I passed that without a problem since I knew something from before. There was nothing else for foreigners. Of course, you had to do it all in your spare time. […] With my head of department, I speak only Swedish since she hates everything that is not the first village next to [the town in which the university is placed]. But I have a colleague who has recently retired, and we use to walk, and I like that he does not force me and does not insist, but somehow, he taught me Swedish. I learned a lot from those conversations.

The subjective feeling of insufficiency and incompleteness with regard to the mastery of Swedish has been prevalent among many of our interviewees, even those whose Swedish proficiency is objectively very high. Only a few felt very confident about their Swedish. Some interviewees said that they did not care – they consciously decided not to care – about the mistakes they make when speaking Swedish. We were not too surprised to observe this tendency towards perfectionism that can be interpreted as an effort to guard academic excellence. In that regard, a sense of "giving in" to one's own incapacity to speak Swedish "perfectly" is compensated by other aspects of the cultural and scientific capital they obviously possess as university professors.

It is notable that the interviewees whose mother tongue is English make an effort to use Swedish even in situations in which no one would mind them using English. When asked about the motivation for such a self-conscious behaviour, they skipped mentioning colonial histories or the insurmountable privilege of being a native speaker of English in today's globalized academia (see Hohti & Truman 2021). Instead, they maintained that avoidance of Swedish would be perceived as a weakness they do not want to admit to.

A professor from South-Eastern Europe whose English is far better than that of most of her colleagues said that is "proving her ability to speak Swedish", notwithstanding the many mistakes she is aware of making. Her co-ethnic, on the other hand, feels embarrassed about such mistakes and does not use Swedish in formal meetings while being able to understand Swedish and not forcing others to use English. However, her trick is to politely ask the Swedish speakers if it would be fine with them if she used English – a question that always gets a positive answer, as it slyly turns the table of skills and prestige. Such tactics may work in situations in which people have clearly defined roles, but they can rarely be used in informal situations.

Lunchroom as a Space of Postmigrant Possibilities?

Universities may have different language policies or guidelines, but English tends to be widely used not only in master's and doctoral level teaching but also in informal contexts in corridors and lunchrooms. The youngest among our interviewees told us about the department at a technical faculty at which she had her doctoral education:

Everyone was a foreigner there and everyone spoke English, at lunch and with the secretaries. Even if I wanted it, I could not make learning Swedish my priority. Simply, the doctoral thesis was too demanding for me to find time to study Swedish and there was really no need.

Another professor described the language use at her internationally oriented department as follows:

We never talk about cultural differences. People are very sensitive to language, so like, OK, like between Swedish and English, or if someone is in the room who is not fluent in Swedish, then everybody switches to English.

However, other interviewees testified to lunchroom talk creating a space of a go-ing-without-saying supremacy of Swedish as a language of informal communica-tion.[12] While this is hardly surprising, it means that language use becomes a tool – at the same time symbolic and practical – of place ownership and exclusion (see Salö 2022). One of the migrated professors we interviewed concluded:

Swedish is important!!! You come into the coffee room where everyone is Swedish, they talk to you in English for a half an hour or so, and then go back to Swedish. And you can't demand anything else! It would be like that in any country.

As public but informal sites of communica-tion between colleagues, lunchrooms often reinforce already established institution-ally accepted linguistic lines of division. As the previous quotation indicates, group dynamics define the choice of language in concrete situations, and the usual strategy is switching from Swedish to English and back or conversing in English while insert-ing Swedish words due to the difficulty of quickly finding English terms for the spe-cific Swedish phenomena.

Using Other Languages: (Un)Intended Visibility?

In this section we take up the use of other languages in daily exchanges in academic institutions that may not have a polarizing effect but emerged as an issue of concern for our interviewees. A Swedish-born ally expressed his pride at having some knowl-edge of languages other than English that are used in his scientific work but also in professional meetings. He described his mastery of German and French as "a bless-ing".

However, a migrant's use of one's own native language in academic environments (for example, when phoning in a public corridor) is not necessarily a "blessing" as it can imply their exposure as a "foreigner" using a language that other colleagues can-not understand.

Several interviewees who migrated to Sweden as adults also talked about a struggle with using their native language for academic purposes. For example, one professor over-prepared a public lecture to be given in her native country, only to dis-cover that such extensive preparation was not necessary. As a contrary example: a professor who came to Sweden as a young

university student talked about the difficulties in teaching in her mother tongue that she never used for academic purposes. In a summer school where she was obliged to teach in her native language, she had to rely on the *ad hoc* help provided by the students in the classroom.

Graber (2020) explains how the process of losing a language is suffused with personal sentiments and often with strong emotions of anger, sadness, and shame.[13] The story above was not about losing a language as such, but about not being able to use one's own native language for academic purposes. It was still framed as a story of shame and sadness, as the professor was not able to perform as a professional and share her knowledge with the students in a way that meets her own standards.

Sevinç and Backus' (2019) study of linguistic and socioemotional causes of what they call heritage (native) language anxiety and majority language anxiety among migrants and their descendants, suggests that there is a vicious circle that connects language knowledge, language use, and language anxiety. Our interviewees, however, are resolved to struggle on: even if they may feel homeless both in their native language and in Swedish (or any other languages they use), they may be able to embed their feeling of being at home in their scientific capital formally confirmed by their professorial title.

The use of languages of the Scandinavian neighbours creates another interesting line of inclusion/exclusion into the national community and into the official context of academia. Danes and Norwegians often maintain their linguistic privileges and use their native languages in daily communication in Swedish academia. However, some migrant interviewees mentioned that even if they can communicate in Swedish, it is still a challenge for them to understand Danish and Norwegian. This highlights their own "external", non-Nordic – "other" – position and exemplifies the complexity of language-based relations and their unstable, potentially conflictual character. The "unprovoking" use of these Scandinavian native tongues may provoke, complicate, and limit communication with non-Nordic migrants. The use of English could be an accommodating postmigrant answer here. Some interviewees mentioned the examples of Danish and Norwegian speakers switching to English for the sake of the non-Nordic colleagues. Such sensitivity, however, seems to be typical of academics who themselves have spent some time in workplaces abroad and have become aware of the shifting grounds of misunderstanding and understanding evoked by Gebauer et al. (2019:135).

Conclusion: Language as Capital in Postmigrant Academia – Symbolic Struggles and Shifting Positionings

The language negotiations discussed in this article reveal a yet unresolved conflict of values in Swedish society in general and in academia in particular between equality and inclusion on the one hand and the value of national language as a multifunctional tool of communication on the other. Frustration and complaints about the fact that at Swedish universities, "linguistic market conditions with conflicting (internationalising *and* nationalising) effects converge and intermingle" (Salö et al. 2022:127; emphasis in the original) is exactly what we have encountered in the

interview material. However, it is also instructive to observe how our interviewees have developed their reasoning about enabling qualities of language acquisition and use. At the end of the day, language is also a part of "collective magic" and "alchemy of consecration" (Bourdieu 1986:20, 22) that triggers cooperation, solidarity, and mutual acknowledgement of different personal trajectories and heritages. This article points to the "constitutive and shaping role of migration" (Römhild 2021:52) in Swedish academia, where a prominent postmigrant struggle concerns representation in decision-making bodies. The debate article by Aguiar Penha et al. (2023) resonates with the struggles for recognition and public representation on equal terms discussed in much of the literature referred to in the theoretical framing section above.

The empirical sections presented a plethora of experiences and perspectives that shed light on the ongoing practices and negotiations of power in the realm of language use that may affect collegial relationships and professional trajectories in Swedish academia. Building on Bourdieu's understanding of a field, the article has highlighted both competitive/differentiating and cooperative/solidarizing aspects of language practices detectable in our interview material. It has offered examples of Bourdieu's claim that language is par excellence a cultural capital which "takes time to accumulate and which, as potential capacity to produce profits and to reproduce itself in identical or expanded form, contains a tendency to persist in its being, is a force inscribed in the objectivity of things so that *everything is not equally possible or impossible*" (Bourdieu 1986:15; emphasis added).

However, our analysis aspires to update and "complicate" Bourdieu's conceptualizations, as his time-specific studies were centred in on (French) academia, where the language of power was only French, and provinciality and a local/class accent could not only result in falling from grace, but in dropping out of academia. Unless one did something spectacular with the lower positioned accent or dialect and transformed it into a "distinction", one remained an underdog. In the context of present-day Swedish academia, there is a nexus of legitimate languages and, generally, quite a permissive attitude to their imperfect command. Also, the structure of the academic field became more fragmented and multi-centred in the last two decades that saw the boom of academic mobility. However, enabling qualities of different languages used in Swedish academia are often counterbalanced by not always clearly expressed, but compelling demands on high (most preferably, native) proficiency and refinement. Thus, in different institutional contexts and in different periods of careers, language practices may either enable conversions of one's merits to prestige or set up obstacles to "intrinsic demands of his [the intellectual's] project" (Bourdieu 1969:91). Academic institutions are positioned as authorities advocating inclusive institutional values of equality and merit, but at the same time they carefully guard their "heritage", most obviously in the form of group boundaries. Consequently, collegial acknowledgement and inclusion presuppose "the reacknowledgement of a minimum of objective homogeneity" (ibid.:21). Language practices and the symbolic struggles and shifting positionings they entail are important components defining limits of such mutual (re)ac-

knowledgement, as they blueprint boundaries of inclusion and exclusion.

This is the issue at the core of the postmigrant debate. Our material indicates that, optimistically, in academia as a field ripe with postmigrant possibilities, boundaries of the academic/intellectual field can be loosened and made more penetrable with continuing investment of personal time and human capital. At the same time, personal efforts to acquire desirable language skills and convert them into a "voice being heard" as well as into positions of high prestige, do not guarantee a desired output ("everything is not equally possible"). Our results resonate with the research by Pudelko and Tenzer (2017), who argued that the impact of language on career advancement differs greatly depending on the English proficiency of local faculty and staff on the one hand, and on the international migrants' ability to work in the local language on the other. This suggests the need for relational, bi-directional linguistic accommodation. In translation to Bourdieu's research apparatus, such accommodation would contribute to the gradual formation of a "postmigrant habitus" – an embodied and tacit system of dispositions performed "without being the product of the organizing action of a conductor" (Bourdieu 1992:96) that makes a play of postmigrant possibilities realizable.

The framework of postmigration made us sensitive to the relevance of migration background for professional establishment and allowed us to capture the contradiction between equality and merit viewed through the lens of language practices. Our material revealed that positions of high status in academia need to be negotiated when it comes to everyday workplace communication. At the same time, not only institutional power hierarchies stand and fall with fluency – or the lack thereof – in a particular language, but also personal well-being and assessment of one's own academic excellence. Hence, a binary distinction between privilege and marginalization does not capture the complexity of the interviewees' experiences. Regardless of origins, ethnicity, and length of stay in Sweden, all our interviewees are equally firmly positioned in academic terms. However, they need to make different kinds of efforts in daily negotiations of inclusion and recognition. These negotiations, or even struggles, in their turn depend on the institutional context of faculties and departments, in intersection with the fields and sub-fields these academics work in.

We therefore see the need to refine the discussion of academia by empirically investigating the "postmigrant talks" at different departments and in different disciplines. We also see the need for a sustained investigation of the changes over time that would highlight the outcomes of the tensions for which language use is of paramount importance.

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Notes

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2 PhD students in Sweden are full-time employees at the university for four years.

3 In Sweden the title of professor can be earned on the basis of scholarly achievements (after an evaluation process involving external evaluators) or acquired in a competition for an advertised vacant professorship.

4 For example, Uppsala University's (2016) report showed that 85 per cent of staff in "administration" and "qualified administration" positions had a Swedish background, and for leadership positions the share was 94 per cent at that university.

5 See, e.g. Behtoui & Leivestad 2019 and Olsson et al. 2018.

6 For a research-based review of language matters in European higher education, see Apelgren et al. 2022. Critical race theory helped uncover "everyday experiences of racism by highlighting the intersectionality of race with other identity categories, among which language constitutes an important, yet underexplored, component" (Kubota et al. 2021:1; see also Pudelko and Tenzer 2019; Rita & Karides 2022; Sterzuk 2015).

7 See Gaonkar et al. 2021 for an extensive review of the conceptualizations of postmigration.

8 The interviews lasted for two hours on average and were conducted in Swedish, English, Polish, Croatian, and Russian. The transcripts were done in the original language and the non-English excerpts were translated into English by the authors.

9 Wolanik Boström & Öhlander (2018:166–167) observed that the capacity of communicating in Swedish plays an important role in the self-understanding and self-appreciation as professionals of medical doctors who migrated to Sweden.

10 See Bodycott and Walker 2000, Jnawali Pherali 2012, and Śliwa & Johansson 2015, for experiences of teachers in higher education working in countries culturally foreign to their own. Katarina Mozetič (2018: 121) has discussed the quest for cultural capital in terms of "good knowledge of Swedish and Swedish body language" in the medical profession and pertaining to issues of language and communication, and social and cultural distance.

11 SFI (Svenska för invandrare) stands for "Swedish for immigrants" courses that the municipalities offer to people who are registered as residents. Asylum seekers who have obtained a residence permit attend these courses as part of their two-year establishment plan, but knowledge of Swedish is not a criterion for obtaining citizenship. Nor are people who come to Sweden on employment contracts obliged to learn Swedish. Not all job contracts at Swedish universities include the obligation

to learn Swedish during the first two years of employment.

12 See Berbyuk Lindström 2018 for a discussion of the social pressure to participate in *fika* – coffee breaks in a hospital as a workplace. This author also points out the difficulties migrant doctors meet when trying to participate in informal conversations due to their limited linguistic and cultural competence, and their inability to make jokes.

13 See research on the nature of language and cultural transformation that emphasizes emotion as a key condition for constituting a new sense of self, highlighting the reflexivity of language (Sung-Yul Park 2019).

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Participant Observation
On the Past and Future of a Method
By Barbro Blehr

This article is an attempt to trace the history of participant observation in Nordic ethnology, as it appears in the journal *Ethnologica Scandinavica* from the 1970s onwards. My impetus is the impression that the method of participant observation has had its heyday, and that the reason for this is the combination of current rules and regulations of research ethics and the practical procedures for ethical vetting. At least, this is how it looks from a vantage point in Sweden.

Participant observation, then, refers to a method for studying culture and society which is performed by joining people in their everyday activities, following their interactions and practices in order to understand how they perceive and act upon the world, or some particular part of it. The method is inductive and research questions can be specified only step by step during the project, as the researcher's understanding of the field evolves. For that reason, research relying on participant observation cannot be pre-planned in detail. The word "participant" refers to the fact that researchers are present in the activities they follow (which, for that reason, must be contemporary with the researcher). Researchers may take a more or less active part in what is going on and be more or less marginal in the situations they attend. After the reflexive turn in the 1980s, they are expected to reflect thoroughly on how they contribute to the processes they study, and to integrate this awareness in their analysis. Prototypically, participant observation was used in the study of pre-industrial small-scale societies in the Third World and performed by anthropologists from the industrialised west. Over time, though, the method has been integrated in the toolkit of a wide range of qualitative branches of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and applied in the study of a variety of settings and societies.

As for research ethics, the immediate backdrop of the paper is the recent reinforcement of procedural ethics in the humanities and social sciences in Sweden – as a national instance of an international trend. Procedural ethics, then, refers to a model for action where a formal and/or juridical system is installed for identifying and handling ethical issues. This is often contrasted to "ethics in practice", referring to the continuous awareness of, and preparedness to handle, ethical issues in everyday professional life (Guillemin & Gillam 2004). Ideally, those two models might be seen as complementary. But scholarly debate testifies to a certain friction between them, and to a certain discomfort when qualitative research is confronted with the practical procedures of the procedural ethics.

In the Swedish context, the basic components of the procedural system are the Act on Ethical Review of Research Involving Humans (SFS 2003:460), the European General Data Protection Regulation, applying from May 2018, and the procedures of vetting as they are administered by the Swedish Ethical Review Authority (established in 2019, then replacing six former regional ethical review boards). The Act of 2003 is intended to protect the integrity, safety and health of human beings potentially being involved in research projects. Among other conditions, it states that participants in a research project should be informed about the objective, methods, potential consequences etc. of the project, that their consent must be documented, and

that they can terminate their participation at any stage in the process. GDPR, besides sharpening the general rules for handling information about identifiable living individuals, added the premise that some kinds of information should be handled with extra care: data revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, genetic and biometric data, and data on health, sex life or sexual orientation. According to Art. 9 GDPR, the processing of such information is prohibited, unless consent from the person involved can be documented. Projects handling sensitive personal data must be vetted in advance. That is where the Ethical Review Authority steps in, with the task of securing that the benefit of a planned project outweighs the potential risks for the persons whose data are collected and processed, and that the researchers have taken all necessary measures to protect the integrity of research participants.[1]

The Swedish Act of 2003 alone was not enough to make formal vetting imperative in the humanities and social sciences. Looking back, older researchers may recall the times when they thought vetting was required only for projects involving children, and for medical research. And if anecdotal evidence be allowed for a moment, later there were times when we contemplated the idea that if we were to take GDPR seriously, every ethnological project might need vetting, not only because "special" or sensitive data are often relevant to our projects, but also because they tend to crop up in our material even when they are not explicitly in focus. The prospect of having to apply for vetting of all projects was initially dismissed as unrealistic. But in the beginning of the 2020s, it has almost come true.

The infrastructure of procedural ethics varies between the Nordic countries. In Sweden, researchers in all fields are referred to one single procedure of vetting, basically designed for medical and/or experimental research, and vetting is performed by a state authority.[2] In Norway, there are different advisory ethical boards for different kinds of research, including one for the humanities and social sciences. It is mandatory to apply, from the administrative body Sikt, under the Ministry of Education and Research, for permission to handle personal data in a project.[3] The Danish system has no general requirement of applying for permission to perform research, and application is called for only in the context of medical or biological research; the same seems to be the case in Iceland.[4] Finland has separate ethical boards, and rules, for the humanities and social sciences, and vetting of projects in these areas is not mandatory.[5]

These differences notwithstanding, researchers in various Nordic countries share the experience that GDPR and/or the routines of vetting of qualitative research are hard to reconcile with the epistemological grounds and the methodological ideals of their own disciplines.[6] Norwegian anthropologists, well organised and deeply committed to participant observation, have addressed the issue repeatedly in the last few decades, at their own conferences as well as in print (Øye & Bjelland 2012; *Norsk Antropologisk Tidsskrift* 2020; Vike & L'orange Fürst 2020, 2021). They were quick to notice both that the standard vetting procedures cannot accommodate the open-endedness of participant observa-

tion, and that the formal documentation of consent to participate in a project does not fit well in many of the contexts they work with. Similar reactions have been reported from Denmark (accompanied by an accurate contrasting of formal ethical review processes and "in situ" ethics and substantiated by a description of the harm caused by a consent form in a study of a nursing home for elder people; Balkin et al. 2023). From his position as a Swedish sociologist working in the ethnographic tradition, Wästerfors (2019) has described the procedures of vetting as "insensitive" to ethnography, much for the same reasons as those highlighted by the Norwegian and Danish colleagues. Moreover, both the Norwegian anthropologists and Wästerfors remark that the focus of ethnographic research is not on human beings in their capacity of individuals, but on social phenomena; relationships, processes, behaviour, and practices (Vike & L'orange Fürst 2020:168). As Wästerfors puts it, ethnographic research is not about individuals with particular characteristics, but about social life (2019:184f); the aim of the research transcends, as it were, the persons involved. This takes us, no doubt, close to the core of the basic incompatibility of the formal system and the reality in which ethnographers/participant observers wish to operate; I will return to this aspect at the end of the paper.

In the winter of 2022, debate about procedural ethics in the humanities and social sciences spread from scholarly journals to daily newspapers in Sweden; for recent examples, see *Svenska Dagbladet*, November-December 2022 (specified in the list of references). And even more recently, in its assessment of the state of the art in the humanities and social sciences,

the Swedish Research Council voiced concerns about certain aspects of the procedural system, including the current understanding of the concept of "sensitive personal data" (2023:25). To put it briefly, the debate is expanding and advancing. But the basic incompatibility seems to be hard to address.

The sections above should give a glimpse of the situation that has inspired me to think about the history of participant observation in our discipline. Perhaps the metaphor of Minerva's owl can be invoked as a reason: we do not reflect on what we have until we are about to lose it. The question to be explored in the following, then, is What did we have? How has participant observation been used in our discipline, and to what extent? What has it yielded, how has it been evaluated, and how has it developed over time? If we must give it up, what are we going to lose?

My source for reflection will be fifty volumes of *Ethnologia Scandinavica*; a journal intended to represent a broad range of ethnological scholarship in the Nordic countries. Since these volumes cover the period from 1971 to the early 2020s, they should allow us to revisit something close to the method's pioneering phase in our discipline and follow it up to the present.[7] The outline, after a brief introduction to the material, will be chronological; three sections will take us through the fifty years, and the article will close with some reflections on the findings, and on the future.

Sources

As is already well-known to its regular readers, *Ethnologia Scandinavica* is published annually since 1971. The most prominent genres in the journal are articles and book reviews, occasionally supple-

mented with presentations of conferences and workshops. The journal invites authors and reviewers from all Nordic countries, and as underscored in editorials (e.g. Jönsson 2021:3), it should be well suited for assessing the character and the development of Nordic ethnology as a discipline.

In order to trace the trajectory of participant observation in this context I have searched for all kinds of texts in the journal where the method of participant (or, in recent years, "participatory") observation is mentioned. The first 39 volumes were scanned manually. From 2010 the journal was available in digital format and could be checked with the aid of automated search functions. Texts mentioning the concept were copied and entries noticed or checked were listed in a table. The table was helpful not least for providing a visual impression of when participant observation surfaced in the journal, and how frequently it appeared in a volume.

As I had some prior knowledge of monographs where participant observation was used to a considerable degree, I could notice that some of them were reviewed with no mention of the method. In many reviews, the method was mentioned but not further commented on. This is a reminder that the reviews are a filtered representation. They do not depict the actual frequency and use of the method, but the interest paid to it by the persons asked to write reviews, and their reactions to what they read.

The articles, in contrast, might be expected to give us more of a first-hand proof of how the method has been understood and utilised. In practice though, articles too differ as to their explicitness about the use of the method. Often, it is mentioned without being described or discussed.

The result of the search can be briefly summarised as follows. In the article section, the phrasing "participant observation" is virtually absent until 1999. At this time, the journal was still primarily devoted to the study of pre-industrial forms of life and, particularly, peasant culture. While articles on contemporary topics started appearing in the middle/end of the 1980s, the method of participant observation was not highlighted until the turn of the millennium, and it was not frequently mentioned in articles until later in the 2000s.

In the review section, on the contrary, the method is visible already in the first decade, and it is never completely out of sight during the years to come. As mentioned above, though, many reviews do little but mention that participant observation has been used. Apart from a handful of reviews in the first ten years, there is seldom any discussion of how it has been practised or what it has yielded.

A working hypothesis is that the more novel, and potentially controversial, the method has been to the author or reviewer, the greater the need or wish to comment on it. Inversely, merely mentioning the method might indicate that it passes as accepted, or at least has not provoked any reactions worth verbalising by a reviewer. My closer reading of the material has focused on the selection of texts where participant observation is more than merely mentioned, supplemented with a few texts where other words are used, but the method described is similar enough to participant observation to warrant inclusion.

Reviewers' Reactions; 1970s–1990s

Somewhat surprisingly, the first traces of participant observation are brief comments

on the absence of the method. In 1972 and 1974, respectively, reviewers Bringéus and Stoklund note that even though the studies under review are influenced by social anthropology, observation/participant observation has not been possible to carry out – either because the topic of study belongs to the past (Bringéus 1972:182), or because the method has not been sufficient for getting a grasp of the area of study, a modern suburb (Stoklund 1974:192f). The tone is neutral, and there are no evaluations. Perhaps this is so since the method has not been applied. For when, next year, a work dominated by participant observation (focused on immigrants to a small Swedish town) is reviewed, the criticism is harsh. The reviewer is Sven B. Ek. He compliments the work for being a convincing "document of cultural journalism" (1975:192) but finds it lamentable that it focuses on the immigrants only, not taking account of how the Swedish population perceived them. He remarks that the author's understanding of the term participant observation is too wide and that he has in fact not participated, since he has not taken part in the working life of the people he studies (ibid.). But the thrust of his criticism is that no evidence for the conclusions is presented (1975:193f). Quotations abound in the text, admittedly, but there are no maps and no pictures documenting objective evidence as to what kind of clothes, furniture, cars etc. various kinds of immigrants preferred in various stages of adaptation to their new place of living. As Ek puts it, "the reader has the right to demand a comprehensible account of the data on which the scholar builds his discussion" (1975:193); this would be easily accomplished "in the form of simple diagrams"

in an appendix to the text (ibid.). He adds that besides presenting the substantive evidence to the reader, such diagrams would help the researcher to control the accuracy of his/her own conclusions and prevent him/her from relying too heavily on singular impressions (1975:194). Summing up, his verdict is that the dissertation is highly readable but that it fails to meet the formal requirements of a scholarly work.[8]

Some years later, another monograph, dealing with a workers' community, is criticised on the basis that the author has used participant observation as the sole method, and not a broader set of different sources that could have been combined to increase the reliability of the study (Pedersen 1981:168f). According to the review there is also a lack of clarity when it comes to analysis; "we see only his findings" (1981:169). Likewise, the reviewer would have liked to see more of a contextualisation; there are no comparisons with previous research, neither has the author tried to locate his findings in a "typological, historical or social context" (ibid.).

Thus, in the first phase, from the 1970s to the early 1980s, the method of participant observation emerged as an innovation, and it was not welcomed. It was associated with delimiting the subject under study in a way that was perceived as far too narrow, and with a style of writing and presenting results that clashed with the reviewers' expectations of what a scholarly text should be like. The latter shortcomings were perceived as serious since they were related to the possibility of checking the accuracy of the author's conclusion. Therefore, however vivid and readable the texts could be, they did not qualify as science for their reviewers.

The combination of writing well but not presenting one's empirical evidence or making one's analytical operations inspectable was considered an anthropological practice, obviously because that was where the inspiration for participant observation came from. Likewise, but with no explicit connection to anthropology, the early examples of works based on participant observation were associated with an ambition to address social issues and produce research that was relevant to the wider society (Thorsen 1981:172; Hodne 1981:183). To this cluster of associations, we can add Jonas Frykman's reflections – published in a comment to a paper on the role of fieldwork in tradition research (Honko 1977) – that in the 1970s, fieldwork consisting of participant observation and unstructured interviews was also related to taking a keen interest in theory – and to being in opposition to the ethnological establishment (Frykman 1977:95). According to Frykman, fieldwork of this kind even became "a condensed symbol for the new ethnology" (ibid.).

Another potential issue, not prominent in the earliest reviews, is the risk of bias in observations. It was raised as a problem on one occasion, by Bjarne Hodne in his review of a dissertation about institutions for care of long-term old patients (1981). Hodne's criticism referred partly to the possibility that the author's "personal views and attitudes" (1981:186) (such as his apparently positive attitude to euthanasia) had affected the situations he observed, and partly to whether the participants in the study ran the risk of being identified by readers. The topic of this study appears to have been emotionally and existentially charged to an unusually high degree; Hodne was visibly affected in his report.

So, in the first decade, the method was discussed in the review section only, and predominantly as an innovation of a negative kind. In these texts, there was no focus on what participant observation might yield, with one possible exception, a review of a study of bingo-players. Albeit briefly, this reviewer underscored the importance of results obviously stemming from the researchers' participating in the game (Fjellheim 1978:182f).

After this initial outburst of negative reception, there is a relative silence on the topic of participant observation in the reviews, as if the method has been incorporated in the standard toolkit without requiring much attention or comment. This is so both when texts obviously based on participant observation are praised (e.g., Åström 1984) and when they are criticised. One example of the latter is Balle-Pedersen's review of a monograph on dockers. He notes that the study is built on "genuine participant observation" and assumes that interviews do not play a big role in the study "… because the author did not want to spoil the participant observation" (1987:171). Later in the review he regrets that the study is concentrated on the workplace only, and that the analysis does not pay any attention to the family life of the workers, or their leisure interests (1987:172f). It does not seem to occur to him that there could be a connection; privileging participant observation might have been instrumental in producing the focus on activities that the author could share with the collective of workers he had set out to study. In a similar vein but reversed as to the arenas covered/not covered, the reviewer commenting on a thesis about family life in a small Swedish town would have liked the study to also

include data on working life (Andreasen 1992:183), here too without relating that effect to the choice of methods.

Having entered the 1990s, the criticism of lack of source references is no longer prominent. It surfaces once more in Lena Marander-Eklund's review of a thesis heavily dependent on participant observation; her remarks concern the fact that no references are given to primary data in the field notes (1995:139f). Slightly connected to the use of participant observation might also be an occasional lament several years later that the need for anonymising the site of fieldwork has made it impossible to include pictures in the monograph (Andreasen 2001). Still, these objections seem mild, compared to how the method was rejected twenty years before.

In the 1990s, participant observation is increasingly related to the practice of drawing on researchers' own experiences. The experiences in question may consist of many years of pre-research involvement, private as well as professional, in activities similar or adjacent to what is being studied (Liliequist 1994:142; Schulman 1997:144). Schulman does not comment on this way of understanding the method. Liliequist comes closer to evaluating, when she writes that the author is aware that her proximity to the field of study can give rise to problems in the analysis, and comments that her "personal experience is near the surface, but it is still handled with analytical detachment" (ibid.).[9]

On quite another scale, the experiences drawn on can also consist of immediate personal reactions in a specific research setting. Bringéus, when reviewing a collection of papers on public events, pinpoints this and (a little surprisingly) seems to ac-

cept it with no further ado. He notices that one of the authors takes on a double role as a researcher and a participant in the event under study, and that she "*dares to* apply an emotional perspective" (1996:161, italics added). He remarks that this is a contrast to the time when feelings were banned from our trade; scholars "were allowed to listen and observe but not to feel. Now, however, it is all right to analyse emotions and experiences" (ibid.).

Summing up impressions from the first three decades, it seems fair to say that the initial harsh criticism of participant observation soon gave way to a more accepting attitude. And in the 1990s, the method is also becoming visible in another part of the journal.

At the Turn of the Millennium; Appearing in the Article Section

Somewhat echoing the initial phase in the reviews, participant observation makes its entrance in the article section by being mentioned but not discussed. In one case the method is simply presented as part of the author's toolkit (Blehr 1999:31); in another the author introduces himself as a participant observer (Christensen 1999:106), thereby making the method stand out as more prominent. Neither of the two are explicit about how they have practised the method or to what ends. These are the first articles in the journal where participant method is explicitly presented as a method used. It might be that it is in fact referred to already in the previous decade, when Gösta Arvastson discusses a project documenting working life in modern large-scale industries (1983). His description of the methods used runs as follows:

The study was structured around qualitative collection methods: informal conversations, observations and journal entries from work-places, together with regular taped interviews. To shed some light on the amounts of material gathered from the various work-places, exactly 1,000 pages of interviews and 826 pages of informal conversations and notes can be mentioned (1983:53).

Later, he stresses how the fact that researchers have been around at the places of work, "participating in the shared life there" (1983:55), was essential for their understanding. He underscores that observing, then, meant more than watching, and pictures their work as "a way of entering others' knowledge, and of wearing other people's hats in order to discover new cultural landscapes" (1983:55). However, he never uses the term "participant observation". And when a monograph obviously emanating from the same project is reviewed some years later, interviews are presented as the main source (Båsk 1991:190).

Shortly after the turn of the millennium, Maja Povrzanović Frykman extensively exposes and explicitly argues for a method called micro-ethnography (2001). The topic of her paper is transnationalism "from below" as experienced by "ordinary immigrants" (2001:47f), keeping up connections between a country of origin and a country of living. A significant portion of her text (2001:52–60, framing discussion included) consists of a description of travelling between Malmö and Zagreb by bus with her children. She is taking care to behave as a common traveller, she does not disclose her identity as a researcher and does not ask for personal information from her fellow travellers. And she pays particular attention to what it feels like, in physical terms, to be travelling in an inex-

pensive way; in a cramped space close to others, exposed to sensory impressions that are partly unpleasant. The importance of the bodily experiences, she notes, became salient for her "only after being involved" (2001:52). Her motive for documenting the trips (the description was based on two occasions of travelling) relates to the premise that "only fieldwork – necessarily multi-sited and preferably long-term – enables insight into non-homogenous practice within transnational groups" (2001:59); she also stresses that the ethnographic material is a valuable complement to interviews (ibid.). Furthermore, she remarks that the "field trip" described in the micro-ethnography should also be understood as a point of entry from which other strands of the topic studied can be explored, such as the personal histories of the travellers, the objects brought along etc. (ibid.).

Povrzanović Frykman's framing of her micro-ethnography is the most explicit presentation in my selection of texts on how participant observation can be carried out and what it can yield – but for the fact that the author does not label it participant observation. Her reasoning, though – that this way of generating evidence gives insight into practice, in contrast to interviews – is echoed in two later papers where authors briefly state the reasons for their use of participant observation; Schousboe's study of the making of Hessischer Handkäse (2014:39) and Kuoljok's article on tending reindeer with the technological aid of GPS (2019:24).[10]

Yet another reason to highlight Povrzanović Frykman's paper here, despite the fact that she does not identify it as participant observation, is that it is a harbinger of a steady flow of contribu-

tions to *Ethnologia Scandinavica* in the years to come: articles focusing on bodily practices and sensations, and interactions not only with human beings, but with material surroundings and objects as well. Overviewing the whole selection of texts, articles of this kind seem to represent the research where participant observation has been put most to use after the turn of the millennium.

A Standard Method at Work: 2000–2020s

From the beginning of the 2000s, participant observation appears to be truly established as one method among others in ethnology. Often it is merely mentioned in the texts. Sometimes it is not mentioned, even though it is clear from the text that participant (or participatory) observation has been an important method in the work presented or reviewed. It is not discussed in depth, neither is it subject to sharp criticism.

The use of the method in this period is particularly salient in institutional settings, such as schools, hospitals, or other situations where people are instructed, treated or taken care of (e.g. Tveit 2014; Ojanen 2015; Tiili 2017; Sløk-Andersen 2018; Silow Kallenberg 2019; and, for reviews: Suojanen 2000; Wikman 2002; Kayser Nielsen 2004; Gustafsson 2011; Nilsson 2020; Salomonsson 2020). These texts are far from dominant in a numerical sense. But they are numerous enough to produce the impression of a continuous flow in the journal, one where participant observation tends to be essential – albeit not as the single method used, and sometimes presented in other terms. For example, Suojanen's review of a monograph on caring for people close to death presents, in a positive vein, a

study where the author describes her active involvement in caregiving during fieldwork, and her efforts to learn how to act by observing rather than asking. The review makes it clear that the "fieldwork ethnography" adds to the study in a substantial way (2000:200).

The focus on limited contexts is not entirely new. After all, when reviewers in earlier decades complained about researchers having omitted from their analysis either family life or working conditions (Balle-Pedersen 1987; Andreasen 1992), what they commented on was the result of the researchers having participated in one kind of context only: either working life, or life outside of work. What is new in the studies after the turn of the millennium is that many of the settings under study are not only delimited, but confined; some persons must stay inside, others are there to work with or serve those who cannot leave. Analytically, many of these studies focus on vulnerability, dominance, and power.

Another strand in the studies presented or reviewed after the turn of the millennium is the interest in bodily/sensorial/non-verbal experience, people's interaction with material surroundings or objects, and/or emotions (Planke 2003; Tiili 2017; Sløk-Andersen 2018; Turpeinen 2019; for reviews, see e.g., Wikman 2002; Kayser Nielsen 2004; Damsholt 2011; Laukkanen 2011; Vakimo 2013; Salomonsson 2017; Stark 2017; Nilsson 2020). In some of these studies (not least those inspired by a neo-phenomenological tradition), researchers draw heavily on their own experiences and actions, or efforts to learn. Such a tendency is addressed as a potential problem in a couple of reviews; Byron (2004:178), Ristilammi (2004:141) and

Fjell (2013:174) raise the question whether, or to what degree, those experiences can be made relevant for understanding what other people feel or think. Similar reflections are verbalised in Terje Planke's article on ski wax (2003), based on a study where he alternated in the roles of "assistant, nuisance and test pilot" for ski waxers (2003:50).[11] The focus of Planke's study is on the relationship between "human, object and action" in what he terms a very narrow context: the shifting conditions of snow. Closing his article, he reflects on the difference between action and social action, and on what role the experience of a researcher can have when trying to comprehend other people, past or present (2003:59–60). Such reflections are however rare in the material.

Focusing on the last volumes of the journal, though, reviews more often testify to a successful integration of researchers' own perspectives in the analysis. One example is Stark's appreciative review of a study of a religious movement, which praises the author's ability to draw on her own experience to understand the universe she was exploring:

One of the great strengths of this study is the author's perceptive use of her own experience in participant observation, her recognition that when she saw research participants being moved by something, she was moved by it too, which aided her in understanding how bodily practice, social interaction, meaningful space, and feeling were all intertwined. Indeed, the author's systematic recording of her own emotions, sensations and impressions in the field is a methodologically innovative approach which represents the cutting edge of ethnological research (Stark 2017:196).

In a similar vein, several papers in recent years demonstrate how researchers can perform participant observation by means of active involvement in the processes under study, as in Sløk-Andersen's article on the making of good soldiers (2018); how the interaction this entails and the cumbersome situations it may give rise to can be subject to a reflexive analysis (Ojanen 2015), and, last but not least, how participatory observation contributes to a study by giving access to dimensions that are not graspable by other methods (Silow Kallenberg 2019:116). Obviously, whatever the method of being present, taking part and registering what happens is called, it is successfully at work in these projects. The term auto-ethnography enters the scene late. As used in recent reviews, it represents the hitherto newest term for a practice where a participant observer makes use of all her senses and capacities for self-reflexivity (Nilsson 2020; Åkesson 2021; Bäckman 2022; Fjell 2022).

Finally, participant observation also tends to activate questions about research ethics. This is indicated, as mentioned above, already at the beginning of the 1980s (Hodne 1981), and it surfaces somewhat enigmatically in a review of a handbook of fieldwork twenty years later, when the reviewer states (with no further comment) that "it is in the participation that the ethical problems arise" (Mandrup Rønn 2000:180). Comments on ethical aspects often refer to the careful hiding, or not so successful attempts to hide, the identity of the places, units etc. that are studied, or the individuals involved in the project (e.g., Karjalainen 1988:171; Klinkmann 2003:120f; Koskinen-Koivisto 2009:154). But the selection also contains a review where the author is praised for her honest reflections on shortcomings that other re-

searchers seldom or never discuss in print (Kverndokk 2010:113).

Reflections: Established, but Marginal?

My first impression after going through the collection of texts is that participant observation is ever present in the contributions to the journal, but rather tacitly. It is seldom foregrounded, and seldom singled out for discussion. In a paradoxical way, it appears to be deeply integrated in our toolkit and somewhat marginal at the same time. If this is the case, there may be several reasons for its marginality.

The first and most banal one to state is that ethnology was for a long time a historical discipline; to a certain extent it still is. In such a tradition, a method suitable for studying only contemporary life will necessarily be marginal. That said, the tolerance for contemporary topics has increased considerably during the journal's fifty years, demonstrated not least by the relative prominence of articles on contemporary themes after 2000.

Secondly, ethnologists are expected to make use of a variety of methods and material in their projects, and the scope of potential methods and kinds of sources seems to widen with each decade. The time when it was possible – if not necessarily applauded – to use the combination of only participant observation and semi-structured interviews is long gone. When there are many methods, they may converge in the production of material and results, with the effect that no single methodological resource stands out.

Thirdly, from the 1980s onward, there have been many analytical approaches in the discipline calling for other methods than participant observation. One example is the focus on identity and narrative in the 1990s (for reviews, see e.g., Liliequist 1994:142; Sjöholm 1996:119). Both topics are possible, in principle, to investigate by means of participant observation. But it is far more efficient to approach them through interviews, questionnaires, or written autobiographies. Likewise, when the interest in public discourse – initially understood as printed matter and opposed to everyday life – entered the scene in the 1990s, it called not only for new theories, but also for new kinds of evidence and new methods of documentation, sampling and analysis (see e.g., Hvidberg 1995; Magnússon 1997).[12]

Fourthly, one should ponder the possibility that marginality is contingent on the material explored. As mentioned above, *Ethnologia Scandinavica* initially privileged topics and research traditions where participant observation was bound to be marginal. This could contribute to explaining both that it took until the beginning of the twenty-first century before the method played an important role in the articles accepted, and that it was met with such vehement reactions in reviews thirty years before. Here, we might also keep in mind Frykman's remark that theoretically informed fieldwork consisting of participant observation and semi-structured interviews was once the hallmark of the new ethnology, intrinsically related to being in opposition to the establishment (1977:95). Seen against this backdrop, the most remarkable result of my reading is perhaps that the criticism in the first years faded away so fast.

Prospects

So, if participant observation is firmly es-

tablished as one method among many in our discipline, do we need to be concerned about its future? I will leave that for the reader to decide. But I will close the article by mentioning a couple of reasons for my own doubts. As briefly mentioned in the introduction, the backdrop is the formalisation of research ethics that has taken place in the last few decades, and the impression that current rules and regulations make participant observation harder to perform than before.

Two factors seem to produce this effect. The first is that the procedure of vetting (at least in Sweden; Norwegian rules seem laxer in this regard) requires researchers to specify in advance what kinds and amounts of data they need for their projects. This is hard to make compatible with the ideal that you should enter your field with an open mind and learn only as your work proceeds what settings and activities are most important to cover, and what persons (and how many) it would be wise to follow or talk to.

The second is the application of GDPR in research. The intention of GDPR is to protect individual integrity by preventing authorities, companies, or individuals from handling information about living human beings without having their consent, and to be particularly careful with information of a sensitive character. Sensitive topics are not prohibited ground for a researcher. But the rules require us to deal with them with the utmost care, and refrain from touching on them in our projects, unless they are crucial for our research objectives. In practice, then, we are supposed to either decide that we are going to investigate something sensitive or stay away from it. This is basically at odds with the attitude traditionally recommended in participant observation:

follow people wherever they go, listen to whatever they let you hear, and decide as your project evolves whether it is relevant for your understanding or not. (Needless to say, there is also the paradox that sensitive topics are not always sensitive to the people we study; they may want to expose what the regulation urges us to protect. But that is a topic warranting its own discussion.)

In addition, though, there is the more fundamental stumbling block that GDPR, and the general climate of juridification of which it is a part, invite/require researchers to treat social data as if they were personal property, and personal property only. For the time being, this appears to me as the most ontologically troublesome part of the situation. This is so not because I cannot see the value of protecting people's integrity, but because the idea that human beings can own every piece of information emanating from, or traceable back to, themselves is hard (if not outright impossible) to make consonant with the character of ongoing interaction, and with the social and cultural reality that can be grasped through participant observation.[13] Because when people interact – in whatever setting or channel it may be – their actions and utterances are no longer theirs to control, once they are produced. When people react to what others say or do, their interpretations may be totally at odds with what their fellow human beings thought they said or meant to do. If somebody would like to erase something said or done, the process of attempted erasure is a new sequence of action, with its own unpredictable outcome. In short, contributions to interaction can never be reduced to one single person's intention or perception. For that reason, I

cannot see how individuals' rights to "their own data" can ever be secured in the process of studying what is going on between people. And participant observation is, or was, our prime method for finding out what is going on between people.

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Notes

1 For more information, see https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/svensk-forfattningssamling/lag-2003460-om-etikprovning-av-forskning-som_sfs-2003-460; https://gdpr-info.eu/art-9-gdpr/; https://etikprovningsmyndigheten.se.

2 An overview of the procedure of vetting and a glimpse of the dialogue between the Swedish Ethical Review Authority and researchers can be gained by browsing the list of frequently asked questions at the website of the authority: https://etikprovningsmyndigheten.se/vanliga-fragor.

3 https://www.forskningsetikk.no/om-oss/; https://sikt.no/fylle-ut-meldeskjema-per-sonopplysninger. Sikt (Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research), established in 2021, actually provides special instructions for researchers working with participant observation; such as explaining how data can by anonymised at the source and how third parties suddenly appearing in the field can be approached with requests for consent; https://sikt.no./deltakende-observasjon.

4 https://www.datatilsynet.dk/hvad-siger-reglerne/vejledning/forskning-og-statistik/generelt-om-forskning-og-statistik, and https://nationaltcenterforetik.dk/ansoegerguide/overblik/hvad-skal-jeg-anmelde, and, for Iceland:

https://vsn.is/um-visindasidanefnd/hlutverk/ and https://vsn.is/spurt-og-svarad/.

5 https://tenk.fi/sv/etikprovning/etikprovning-inom-humanvetenskaperna.

6 As one of the anonymous reviewers reminded me, trouble arises not only for studies relying on participant observation, but also for researchers using interviews, social media etc. That is certainly true (for a discussion of difficulties concerning oral history, see Thor Tureby 2019). But for reasons that will be spelled out at the end of the paper, I do believe that among the various methods and techniques for generating contemporary material for qualitative analysis, participant observation is the one that is hardest to reconcile with the current rules and systems.

7 Thanks to the editor of *Ethnologia Scandinavica*, Lars-Eric Jönsson, whose invitation to reflect on our disciplinary history through the journal (at the RE:22. Nordic Ethnology and Folklore Conference in Reykjavik) provided me with a case to work with.

8 Similar criteria for judgement are echoed in a review of a monograph on mumming in the same volume; here the author is praised for *not* ignoring "…the demands for verification like a number of social anthropologists have done" (Bringéus 1975:195).

9 The main criticism raised in this review is that the author focuses more on one of the two main categories in the community under study than the other, and that more attention is devoted to men than to women. Reading between the lines, one might get the impression that the positions that are closest to the author's own are under-analysed. But that is not commented on in the review.

10 In Arvastson's earlier article mentioned above, on the other hand, there is no similar contrasting of observing and interviewing. In that text, all the methods applied seem to converge towards the overarching goal to "penetrate into other people's views of their surroundings" (1983:55).

11 Like Povrzanović Frykman above, Planke does not use the term participant observation.

But the actions referred to and the reflections presented at the end of his article nevertheless make the text relevant for the discussion here.

12 To this might be added the hypothesis that theoretical reorientations could make participant observation obsolete, to the effect that it has in fact been replaced with quite different methods (a neighbouring thought would be that I have underestimated the importance of the variation of terminology in the set of texts). One remark in the selection of reviews articulates such a view: "This is a report based on what was formerly called participant observation but has now been developed via Guittari's 'rhizome perspective'" (Karlsson 2016:206, cf. Høyrup & Munk 2007:6f for a comment relating the concept of rhizome to ANT and to the practice of multi-sited fieldwork). At the same time, though, the concept of participant observation continues to be in use in other texts, and there are no general signs of its abandonment.

13 Here is the connection to the remarks made by the Norwegian anthropologists and Wästerfors, referred to in the introduction. While my reflections are hyper-micro and experience-near, and theirs focus on the outcome of research at an aggregate level, we all touch on the problem that the rules are made to protect individuals, while the research focusses on phenomena that are social (cf. Wästerfors' later clarification in a recorded seminar conversation; Edlund et al. 2021:462).

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Biographical Notes

Ebbe Schön 1929–2022
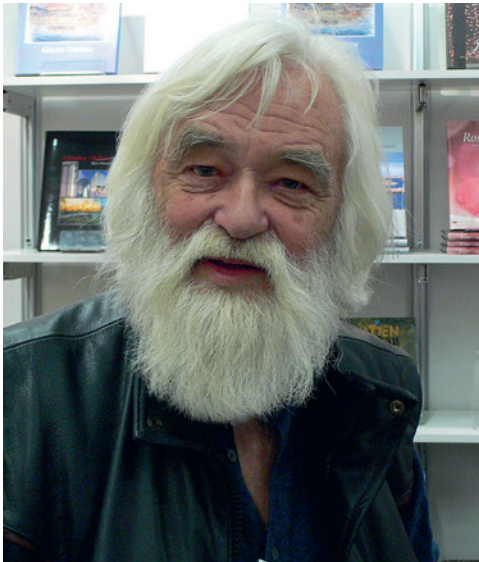
The folklorist and writer Ebbe Schön passed away on 4 August 2022, 92 years of age. When he died he was known throughout the country for his television appearances and his numerous books on Swedish folk beliefs. His path to this position was unusual. He has himself told about it in his autobiography *Fotspår på röd granit* ("Footprints on Red Granite", 2012).

He grew up in Brastad, Stångenäset, a stonemason district in the province of Bohuslän. His father was an unbelievably strong rock-blaster boss and a politically active social democrat. The family ran a small farm with two cows. Many of the elders in the district could tell about their own encounters with ghosts and revenants.

Ebbe had a gift for studies, but his parents could not afford to give him a higher education. He did his first daywork for a farmer at the age of twelve. When he was sixteen he enlisted in the coast artillery where he went through training as a radio operator. He spent the evenings in the library of the regiment, reading novels from world literature.

His superiors observed his unusual capacity for studies and encouraged him to apply for admission to the Military College in Uppsala. There he passed the examination and then also completed officer training, which promoted him to a position with the press service of the Navy. At the end of his military career he was a major, living in Stockholm and head of the Navy's production of educational films.

Beside his job as a press officer he studied Literature, Nordic languages and Russian at Stockholm University. In 1963 he gained his BA degree. Having taken the doctorate courses in Literature he obtained his PhD after defending a dissertation entitled *Jan Fridegård och forntiden* ("Jan Fridegård and Prehistoric Times"). However, the tutor who had greatest impact on his literature research was not one of his professors at Stockholm University but the professor at Uppsala University Lars Furuland, who had in 1965 founded the department of Sociology of Literature at his institution. He inspired Ebbe Schön to choose the Swedish proletarian writers as his scholarly speciality.

The reason Jan Fridegård became the topic of his dissertation no doubt had to do with the similarities in life experience and personal disposition between the two. They both grew up in a rural environment, they shared a strong historic interest, and they had both enlisted the military in order to be able, in the long run, to devote themselves to writing. As a matter of fact, they also looked alike. The acquaintance between them developed into friendship.

Ebbe Schön decided to deepen his knowledge of the farm workers' culture in which Jan Fridegård grew up, and he registered at the Institute of Folklife Research, situated opposite the Nordic Museum, Stockholm. The professor's chair there was divided between Stockholm University and the Nordic Museum, and the discipline had not yet received the name Ethnology but was called Nordic and Comparative Folklife Research. Here in the spring term of 1974 Ebbe Schön submitted his paper "Proletärdiktaren och folkkulturen: Fridegårdstudier 1" ("The Proletarian Writer and Folk Culture: Fridegård Studies 1") and in the autumn term the following year a sequel with the same title and the number 2. These papers became the basis of the book *Jan Fridegård: Proletärdiktaren och folkkulturen* ("Jan Fridegård: The Proletarian Writer and Folk Culture"), published in 1978. One year earlier he had been appointed *docent* (senior lecturer) in Literature at Stockholm University.

This investigation of how orally transmitted folk culture is manifested in Fridegård's author-

ship is Ebbe Schön's first book written from a folkloristic angle. He shows how oral storytelling influenced Fridegård's novels, and he pinpoints the connection between the writer's spiritualism and folk beliefs he had encountered in his childhood and adolescence. The combination of methods from literature and folklore scholarship reappeared in a volume of papers by Nordic folklorists, *Folklore och litteratur i Norden* ("Folklore and Literature in the Nordic Countries", 1987), edited by Ebbe Schön and containing his own paper on Vilhelm Moberg's novel *Rid i natt*. From the year 1980, however, Ebbe Schön's scholarly production is mostly folkloristic.

The background to this is that the professor at the Institute of Folklife Research, Mats Rehnberg, discovered Ebbe's pedagogical talents. He was employed as a non-permanent teacher and conducted fieldwork courses for several years in Bohuslän. When the post as head of the Folklore Collection at the Nordic Museum was advertised in 1980, it was filled by Ebbe Schön on the advice of Mats Rehnberg.

The Nordic Museum remained Ebbe Schön's place of work until his retirement. His assignments consisted, among other things, of answering questions from daily papers and broadcast companies about annual festivals and other traditions. His work situation also allowed him to write a lot of popular scholarship, resulting during his very first year at the museum in the book *Julen förr i tiden* ("Christmas in the Old Days", 1980, 2nd ed. 1993). One could say that he came to a table ready laid; over many years Carl-Herman Tillhagen, the head of the Folklore Collection until 1971, had created a gigantic collection of folklore excerpts which could be used for popular surveys.

Ebbe Schön was especially interested in beliefs in the old peasant society about supernatural creatures, revenants, witches, and magic. He had an innate narrative talent which together with his personal background made him a perfect popularizer of these topics. During the remainder of his life he published altogether more than fifteen highly readable books, all bearing witness to his familiarity with the source material. Not all of them will be listed here; it will suffice to mention *Älvor, vättar och andra väsen* ("Elves, Gnomes and Other Supernatural Creatures", 1986, 3rd ed. 1996), *Folktrons år* ("The Year in Folk Belief", 1989,

2nd ed. 1997), *Häxor och trolldom* ("Witches and Witchcraft", 1991), *Vår svenska tomte* ("Our Swedish House Spirit", 1996, 3rd ed. 2018), *De döda återvänder* ("Haunting Revenants", 2000), and *Åsa-Tors hammare* (Thor's Hammer", 2004). The latter book has much to offer readers interested in the history of religion as well as in folklore, and it was especially mentioned in the motion when Ebbe Schön was elected corresponding member of the Royal Gustavus Academy for Swedish Folk Culture in 2006.

The work of popular scholarship that I personally rank highest has the title *Kungar, krig och katastrofer* ("Kings, Wars and Catastrophes", 1993, 4th ed. 2011). The fluent, essayistic presentation does not reveal that this introduction to Swedish historic legend tradition is in many cases based on his own research. It is understandable that it has been published in more editions than any of his other books.

Another book worthy of being read by many is a collection of essays on culture history entitled *Sjöjungfrur, stenhuggare och gnistapor* ("Mermaids, Stonemasons and Spark-Monkeys" [nickname for radio operators], 1997). It contains some twenty short essays, many with autobiographical elements. Almost all had previously been printed in *STF:s årsskrift*, *Kulturens Värld* and other periodicals.

With his big white beard and his ingenuous manner, Ebbe Schön became a popular, often seen guest in television programmes. His work with broadcast media was generally perceived as uncontroversial. It therefore came as a surprise to many when the Christmas Calendar for 1985 (a programme for children) on the channel TV2, *Trolltider* ("Troll Times"), aroused a storm of protests from representatives of the Free Churches. The Christmas calendar was a repeat from 1979, but the images displayed when the calendar doors were opened were new. They had been selected by Ebbe Schön and showed examples of folk beliefs in farm spirits, witchcraft, and magic. TV2 was accused of having spread superstitions which could seduce children into satanism, accusations which were judged as unfounded moral panic and dismissed.

The previously mentioned autobiography *Fotspår på röd granit* is a book that lets the reader come close to Ebbe Schön. It was followed by

three books in which a farm spirit from the author's homestead in Bohuslän guides the reader through the centuries. It may be added that he has also left several books for children and adoles-cents. The story often takes place in a historical setting, as in *Karolinens pojke* ("The Carolean's Son").

Bengt af Klintberg, Lidingö

Professor Nils Eugen Storå 1933–2023

Nordic ethnology has lost a valued colleague. Nils Storå was professor of Nordic Ethnology at Åbo Akademi University from 1972 to 1997.

Nils Storå was born in Jakobstad, and after attending the city's Swedish grammar school he began his studies at Åbo Akademi University under Professor Helmer Tegengren. As a student Nils Storå focused on the maritime field, which eventually became his central research interest. His publications here include studies of the Åland fishery, *Fiskets Åland och fiskekultur* (2003) and *Havets silver: Det åländska trålfiskets uppgång och avveckling* (2012). Storå was also appreciated in his role as chairman of the board of the Maritime Museum (now the Maritime Institute at Åbo Akademi University).

Nils Storå followed in the footsteps of Professor Gabriel Nikander, the pioneer. The chair at Åbo was established in 1921 with the task of accumulating knowledge about the Swedish culture in Finland. Storå never lost sight of this original vision, but like his teacher Tegengren he expanded the subject to encompass other cultures and areas. His licentiate thesis, *Öst och väst i skoltlapskt gravskick* (1962), dealt with the burial customs of the small minority of Orthodox Sami who had been evacuated from the Soviet Union after World War II to live in a long, narrow area of land in Lapland called Sevettijärvi. His interest in other cultures

was further developed in his doctoral dissertation, *Massfångst av sjöfågel i Nordeurasien – en etnologisk analys av fångstmetoderna* (1968). Storå's interest in Swedish culture in Finland thus went hand in hand with the study of other cultures.

Like many other ethnologists, Storå viewed material culture and everyday practices as representations of cultural ideas and social structure. In this respect, too, he remained faithful to the original mission of the chair. He studied material culture in most of his works, and in *Trender i nordisk föremålsforskning* (1982) he made an early summary of research trends in the field. This also showed his special interest in the Nordic dimensions of ethnology. Ethnology at Åbo Akademi University has continued to build on this legacy.

In 1968 Storå was appointed docent in Nordic ethnology. The following year he took up a position as head of the Department of Cultural History. Despite the name, this was an archive established in 1953 by Professor Tegengren, inspired by the Folklife Archives in Lund. The archive still exists under the name Cultura. Its mission was to document folk traditions in both Swedish- and Finnish-speaking areas in Finland. The main method was questionnaires sent to a large network of informants. When Storå was appointed professor in 1972, he also became director of the archive. Under his leadership the work continued and he also initiated changes: the focus on the rural population was expanded to include crofters, mill workers, and urban groups. The changes reflected the reorientation of ethnology in the Nordic countries and Storå's visions. Due to shifts in the subject of ethnology, the title of the professorship, *Nordic Cultural History and Folklife Studies*, no longer accurately reflected the content. In 1974 Storå successfully applied to have it transformed into *Nordic Ethnology and Folklore*. In 1987 the subjects were divided and the professorship was given the title it still bears, *Nordic Ethnology*.

In his research, Storå was partly inspired by British anthropology. In this way he was able to introduce cultural ecology while simultaneously working to expand ethnology to include, for example, industrial culture, urban ways of life, and modernity. His interest in tradition *and* development also gave rise to insightful analyses of the history of the discipline, such as *Fem etnologier:*

Ethnologin i Finland i finlandssvenskt perspektiv. This was reprinted in the subject's anniversary volume *Nordisk etnologi 1921–2021: Ett ämne i rörelse* (Nilsson & Åström 2021).

During Storå's period as professor, ethnology developed at Åbo. In Sweden the subject moved towards social anthropology and an understanding of culture as a process. Studies of contemporary problems, marginalization, exclusion, and women's history aroused increasing interest. This reorientation also gained ground in Åbo, not least in the teaching, and it was reflected in Monica Nerdrum's doctoral dissertation on women in the archipelago, *Skärgårdskvinnor* (1998), and Solveig Sjöberg-Pietarinen's licentiate thesis, *Irja Sahlberg: Kvinna i museivärlden* (1997). Yet it

should be emphasized that ethnology still maintained a focus on material culture and cultural history, and the ties to the cultural heritage sector (museums) were important. With a firm grounding in agrarian and maritime culture, the traditions of earlier ethnology were also preserved.

Today's ethnologists at Åbo Akademi University are eternally grateful to Professor Nils Storå. During his time the subject was reformed without losing its traditions. As a bridge builder between traditional folklife studies and modern ethnology, his contribution was significant. Professor Storå will be remembered as an open-minded, good, and insightful teacher who nurtured Nordic contacts.

Fredrik Nilsson & Anna-Maria Åström, Åbo

Nils-Arvid Bringéus 1926–2023

There are easier and harder times to become a professor. The challenges were great when Nils-Arvid Bringéus took up that position in folk life studies at Lund University in 1967. It was a time when the entire Swedish university world was to be radically reformed. Departments were to change their teaching as well as their curricula and be synchronized in national cooperation. In 1967 it was also essential to give the subject a sharper profile. From being a small and obscure subject, students flocked to a discipline that was now renamed "European ethnology", and directed their gaze towards both history and the present.

Nils-Arvid took on the often thankless task of reconciling local profiles, as well as letting the discipline expand to new university locations. He had to chair many conferences to reform the national teaching structure and make sure that a wide range of new course literature was created. His combination of enthusiasm, impatience and incredible work capacity played a key role in building up the infrastructure that the discipline needed to grow: Shouldn't we have our own international journal, how do we broaden the cooperation with our colleagues in the Nordic countries and Europe, which research areas should be prioritized? He started *Ethnologia Scandinavica* in 1971 as a successor to the journal *Folk-Liv* and

made sure to keep in touch with ethnology on the continent. During a period when younger generations of researchers turned their gaze towards studies of local communities and national subcultures, he took the subject prefix "European" very seriously. An example of this is the food ethnology that he developed with the help of a series of conferences and edited volumes.

Nils-Arvid's scholarly career was based in Lund. It was there he began his studies in ethnology and theology and defended his dissertation in 1958 on the "The Bell-Ringing Custom in Sweden, an Innovation Study" by which he became an associate professor at the department. He was full professor between 1967 and 1991. He also had spells as guest professor in Berkeley, Bergen and Edinburgh.

He was constantly writing, even long after retirement. He belonged to the generation that often had a set of proofs in his pocket. It was pulled out during breakfast, travel and work breaks. When it was time to head to his beloved summer house in Kivik, the car was loaded with piles of books and bundles of excerpts. A computer cable was dangling out of the boot when the car started with a bang. Why lie on the beach when you can sit and write on the porch? Thus, the list of his publications came to comprise over four hundred titles on such diverse subjects as food and meals, traditions of the life cycle and material culture – all with the prefix "folk". In his research he was often inspired by neighbouring subjects such as church history, cultural geography and art history. With interdisciplinary zeal he wrote about new and old religious traditions, studied processes of innovation, and not least of all devoted a lot of work to folk art studies. He put great effort into mapping the discipline's roots in the fascination with peasant life during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and he wrote many monographs about ethnological scholars. He was quite rightly awarded four honorary doctorates, three in ethnology at the universities of Bergen, Turku and Münster and one in theology at Lund University.

Nils-Arvid was not always happy about the new paths taken by the discipline of ethnology, but he was supportive and took on the important task of creating continuity for a subject in rapid transformation. When the time comes to summarize a long life and an unusually long research

career, there is reason to ponder how a discipline and a university department would have looked without the passion for research, the energy and enthusiasm that was Nils-Arvid's hallmark.

Gösta Arvastson, Jonas Frykman &
Orvar Löfgren, Uppsala/Lund

Ane Ohrvik, Professor in Oslo

Ane Ohrvik was promoted to Professor of Cultural History in 2021. Ohrvik defended her PhD thesis at the University of Oslo in 2012 and holds a master's degree in Folklore. Having worked at several departments at the University of Oslo and the University of South-Eastern Norway, she re-joined the Cultural History section of the University of Oslo in 2015 as an Associate Professor for the history of knowledge.

Ane Ohrvik's historical home turf lies in the Norwegian Black Books (*svartebøker*): a large corpus of manuscripts, some consisting of just a few hastily written pages, while others are artfully crafted to resemble exquisite printed volumes. The allure of these "magical" manuscripts, filled with encrypted passages, charms, spells, and rituals, is legendary. According to tradition, they originated from age-old wisdom or the devil himself, and provide their owners with incredible powers that were hard to contain. When they became objects of folkloristic collection and scrutiny in the nineteenth century, their content seemed to allow the most detailed glimpse into the archaic, superstitious, and enchanted aspects of a mythical worldview. But who were the owners, who made these books, and why would you find instructions to tan leather or mix ink alongside prayers to the Virgin Mary and evocations of demons? Ohrvik's research locates the genre, and fundamentally,

popular magic, within the wider history of knowledge.

To gain a new perspective, it is often wise to take a step back and examine what is actually at hand. Ohrvik's PhD thesis, *Conceptualizing Knowledge in Early Modern Norway* (2012), was a first study of the paratext of the black books. The book as a material object – its make and size, its structure and layout – becomes the centre of an entangled history of daily life, knowledge transfers, religious encounters, and social dynamics. In her thesis and a series of articles, Ohrvik documents the local stakeholders and the European profile of protected knowledge, its trade, authentication and collection, and uncovers *The Secrets of Secrecy in Early Modern Manuscripts*. Her book *Medicine, Magic and Art in Early Modern Norway. Conceptualizing Knowledge* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) compiles her insights as well as her approach, concluding with Claude Lévi-Strauss' metaphor of "the raw and the cooked." While information is raw, knowledge is cooked: processed and manifest. For Ohrvik, it is the materialized, embodied, conserved, encoded, and presented information that constitutes a cultural history of knowledge.

Knowledge practices also serve as the lens of Ohrvik's subsequent explorations of early modern and modern interfaces of European academic, theological and popular cultures, for which the history of books, speech act theory, and Bakhtin's notion of dialogism provide access points and analytical frameworks. For example, she explored the dialogism between legends and manuscripts of magical knowledge and, in a series of articles, the mediations between different regimes of knowledge in historical medical practice – a topic now followed up on in the ReA:Life project. In a study of Peter Christen Asbjørnsen's knowledge network, she details how interests and topics at the heart of the folkloristic endeavor were not only expressed but also developed in pan-European correspondences. Currently, she is working on a new reading of Norwegian witch trials through the lens of theories of affect and emotion.

Characteristic of contemporary cultural history, Ohrvik's research is not limited to the past, making fieldwork as important as archival work. In ongoing research, connected to the EEA *Re-Storied Sites and Routes* project, she continues

her research on ritualisation with studies of contemporary pilgrims who perceive themselves as inheritors of an old tradition and *The Modern Treasure Hunt* undertaken by geocachers that explore largely forgotten St. Olav Wells spread across Norway. For Ohrvik, these practices exemplify the way in which the actualization of tradition through the lens of cultural heritage also actualizes physical topographies and mental maps.

Maybe stemming from a long preoccupation with manifestations of secret knowledge, Ohrvik demonstrates a keen engagement in conveying knowledge openly. She is a prominent ambassador of "cultural histories" in the media, covering topics ranging from the history of the witch-hunts to discussing re-storied places and mythical sites. From the perspective of the media, popular books such as her *Nisser* (2004), a history of the Norwegian pixies turned from guardian spirits to Christmas decoration, or her studies of Halloween as a new Norwegian ritual, also seem to imply a lasting obligation for an annual contextualization of ongoing holidays. Transparency and directness characterizes Ohrvik's teaching, where she is an innovative explorer of new teaching methods. Currently, she serves as the head of teaching for the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, plotting further projects to which we can look forward.

Dirk Johannsen, Oslo

Dirk Johannsen, Professor in Oslo

Dirk Johannsen was appointed Professor in the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages (*Institutt for kulturstudier og orientalske språk: IKOS*) at the University of Oslo in 2020. He was awarded a Dr. Phil. in the Study of Religions (*magna cum laude*) from the University of Bayreuth (2008), something which followed an MA in the same subject from the University of Hannover (2002). In addition to this, Johannsen has a Certificate of Advanced Studies in Teaching in Higher Education/ University Didactics from the University of Bern (Switzerland) (2008). He previously studied Indian Philosophy and Religion at the Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi (India) (2000), and after receiving his PhD went on to take up Post Doc research at the University of Fribourg (2007–2008) and the University of Basel (2010–2012). His academic career can be said to have begun in 2007 with work as a Postdoctoral Lecturer (*Oberassistent*) at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). After this, between the years 2008 and 2011, he served as Academic Coordinator of the Joint Doctoral Graduate School in Interactions of Religion with Politics and Economics in Respect to their Histories of Construction at the Universities of Basel, Zurich, Lucerne, and the Centre for Religion, Politics, and Economics (ZRWP). In 2012–2013, he was taken on as Academic Coordinator of the

Interuniversitary Doctoral Program in the Study of Religion at the Universities of Basel and Zurich, and between January and October 2013, served as Assistant Professor of Religious Studies in the Department of Religions and Theology in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, at Trinity College, Dublin. He was then awarded the position of Associate Professor in the Cultural History of Popular Religion in the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages at the University of Oslo. Since 2006, Dirk Johannsen has also served as a Salaried Visiting Lecturer at the Universities of Basel, Lucerne, Fribourg, Bern, and Bayreuth. In 2019 he served as Deputy Head of *Norsk Folkeminnelag*, and in 2018 joined the board of the Norwegian National Academic Council of Cultural Studies (*Nasjonalt Fagråd*).

In addition to writing *Das Numinose als kulturwissenschaftliche Kategorie. Norwegische Sagenwelt in religionswissenschaftlicher Deutung* (2008 based on his PhD thesis); and editing *"En vild endevending av al virkelighet": Norsk Folkeminnesamling i hundre år* (2014 with Line Esborg); *Narrative Cultures and the Æsthetics of Religion* (2020 with Anja Kirsch and Jens Kreinath); and *Fictional Practice: Magic Narration and the Power of Imagination* (2021 with Bernd-Christian Otto), Dirk Johannsen has written over 25 peer-reviewed articles and chapters, most of which have appeared in international scholarly books or journals and underline his continuous research activity ever since his graduation. His impressive range of research involves four main areas: popular religion; the conceptual transformations of religion in modernity; method and theory in the study of religion; and finally, didactics, research which takes a more directly pedagogical practical focus, analysing and developing new approaches to the study of religions in universities and schools. As will be seen below, key themes throughout this work are those relating to cognitive religion and the cognitive approach.

The range of Dirk Johannsen's work is particularly clear in his publications concerning to popular religion and popular narrative, which reach from studies of the beliefs, narratives and magical practitioners ("cunning men") of the rural community in 19th-century Norway, drawing on archival material drawn from the *Norsk*

Folkeminnesamling at the University of Oslo and other historical sources, to considerations of modern television series such as *Lost*. Studies of figures like Vis-Knut and Spå-Eilev consider, for example, how such men were able to rise through the ranks socially by means of their roles as men with extraordinary powers and representatives of common people vis-a-vis the religious and legal elites, while that dealing with *Lost* looks at how the narrative involved draws on, among other things, mythology and considerations of the history and nature of religion. In each case here (as in his thesis and in articles such as "No Time to Philosophize: Norwegian Oral Tradition and the Cognitive Economics of Belief" [2011] and "How to Sense a Ghost: On the Aesthetics of Legend Traditions" [2020] focusing on folk narratives from Telemark), Johannsen places particular emphasis on the cognitive, and not least considerations of how popular narratives (past and present) and the beliefs that lie behind them "work". As he underlines in this work, narratives of all kinds demand constant interaction between those passing on these beliefs and narratives and those listening and watching, audiences regularly being encouraged to draw on their background knowledge and understanding to predict and "fill in the blanks".

The interface between science and religion (a problematic subject audiences of *Lost* were faced with) is another regular theme in Johannsen's work, and a key feature of his considerations of late 19th-century Nordic literature, which consider how those works created both during and after the so-called "modern breakthrough" commonly focus on conflicts between free-thinkers and believers. Here, as Johannsen shows, individual religiosity and imaginative fiction replace institutionalised belief as part of a Brandesian rejection of religion, something which led to a new post-naturalist interest in the psychological, the mystical and various kinds of alternative reality, paving the way for greater interest in the fantastic and the symbolistic, and a new kind of "mythical mindset". Work of this kind demonstrates once again the way in which Johannsen regularly manages to combine approaches from several different fields (here literary analysis, book history, and study of religion). They also once again underline the deep interest Johannsen has in the role of the cognitive, and not least the valuable role it can play in considerations of cultural and literary history.

Indeed, considerations of the cognitive science of religion are also a central feature in Johannsen's work directly relating to the fields of method and theory, such as "Religion als Nebenprodukt der Evolution: Religionsgeschichte und die Modularität des Geistes" (2010) and "Narrative Strategies" (2019 with Anja Kirsch), the latter of which returns to the cognitive approach to narratives, once again demonstrating how this approach can be effectively applied to archival material, underlining its enduring value and usefulness as a social record even in an age in which emphasis is placed on living performance and performative context.

All in all, Dirk Johanneson's work demonstrates not only high scholarly competence and fine applied theory (especially that relating to the cognitive aspects of religion, belief and narrative), but also detailed archival research and a solid background knowledge of a wide range of fields (cultural history, folklore, religious history, literature, political history, considerations of performance, reception and semiotics and much more), all of which are regularly drawn on in wide range of interdisciplinary studies that shine light on the numerous innovative ways in which folkloric materials (past and present) can be considered.

Terry Adrian Gunnell, Reykjavík

Lena Marander-Eklund, Professor at Åbo Akademi University

Lena Marander-Eklund was appointed professor of Nordic folkloristics in the Department of Culture, History, and Philosophy at Åbo Akademi University in 2022. She gained her licentiate degree in 1994 with a thesis on home remedies against the common cold, *Från malörtsbrännvin till vitlökskapslar: Huskurer mot förkylning*, and in 2000 she defended her dissertation on women's narratives of childbirth, *Berättelser om barnafödande: Form, innehåll och betydelser i kvinnors muntliga skildring av födsel.* Marander-Eklund was appointed associate professor of Nordic folkloristics at Åbo Akademi University in 2002. She has also held several different positions in the subject at the university, as assistant, lecturer, researcher, and research leader, and she has been a special researcher at the Society of Swedish Literature in Finland (SLS).

In her research, Marander-Eklund has primarily been interested in people's everyday arenas and the stories they tell in relation to the surrounding society. In her doctoral dissertation on childbirth the focus is on narrative analysis of different versions of personal experience stories and how these reflect each other. Besides narratives, the dissertation addresses gender and body/physicality. Marander-Eklund's interest in narrative analysis led to the study of life stories and other biographical genres, which in turn brought her further into methodological issues linked to different genres, interviews, oral conversations, and questionnaires. Together with the Swedish ethnologist Charlotte Hagström, she has compiled a volume about questionnaires as source and method, *Frågelistan som källa och metod* (2005). She has subsequently combined narrative analysis with emotive analysis, the study of feelings. She asks how emotions are expressed in narrative through laughter, which is interpreted as a way to communicate joy, tenderness, pain, fear, anger, vulnerability, and embarrassment. The inspiration for emotive analysis comes from the American feminist Sara Ahmed and her theories about what emotions "do" and how they are created relationally.

Another prominent theme in Lena Marander-Eklund's research is gender history. The monograph *Att vara hemma och fru: En studie av kvinnligt liv i 1950-talets Finland* (2014) is a broadly based empirical study of housewives using both archival material and interviews. In its methodology it ties in with her previous studies of narrative and emotive analysis. It seeks to ascertain why so many educated women with good jobs chose to stay at home when they got married. Did they do so of "free will"? Marander-Eklund can point to other factors such as joint taxation of spouses, lack of childcare, and the positive image of "the happy housewife" at the time. The book is an important contribution to knowledge about women's lives and experiences in the second half of the twentieth century, and Marander-Eklund also pursues the matter up to the present day. The gender problem in combination with class is addressed in several later articles inspired by the sociologist Beverly Skegg's concept of respectability.

In addition to the themes mentioned above, Lena Marander-Eklund has devoted her research to medical anthropology (she is a trained pharmacist), weather folklore, and most recently to the summer cottage as a time capsule.

Inger Lövkrona, Lund

Mikkel Bille, Professor at the Saxo Institute, Copenhagen

In 2022, Mikkel Bille (b. 1977) was appointed new professor of European Ethnology at the University of Copenhagen, the Saxo Institute, coming from a position as associate professor at Roskilde University (RUC), Department of People and Technology. He was employed at RUC in 2014, and before that was assistant professor at the University of Copenhagen, 2010-14, at the Centre for Comparative Culture Studies. Bille's Ph.D. degree in Social Anthropology was obtained in 2009 from the Department of Anthropology, University College London, where he also took a double master in Social Anthropology as well as Material & Visual Culture. Additionally he has both an MA and a BA degree in Near Eastern Archaeology from the University of Copenhagen. With a background in such a wide spectrum of interdisciplinary sister programmes to Ethnology, we can look forward to an interesting and supplementary contribution to the field of European Ethnology as it is practiced in Copenhagen.

In 2020 Bille wrote (co-authored with Siri Schwabe) an introduction to the sociologist Émile Durkheim, "Émile Durkheim: Social sammenhæng og kollektiv opbrusen". The overall aim of Durkheim is described here as "to understand, through the application of a solid scientific methodological apparatus, how social cohesion is created and maintained". In fact, this also covers the

aim of Mikkel Bille's work. He is a researcher who indeed thinks with theory, at the same time as he is focused on analysing how objects and everyday phenomena are central to our understanding of being human. Bille's production covers an impressive range of theoretical inspirations, which he often weaves together in a very readable way, inspiring the reader – students included – to proceed with his approaches to culture as such. In his many monographs, edited volumes, journal articles, book chapters, as well as popular articles, Mikkel Bille covers a wide range of methods and theoretical approaches related to Social Anthropology as well as European Ethnology and even Archaeology. His works revolve around cultural heritage and light as atmosphere and material culture, with a main focus on the latter: a relatively new, rising field (light studies) to which Bille has contributed internationally with originality and depth.

In the monograph *Being Bedouin Around Petra: Life at a World Heritage Site in the Twenty-First Century* (2019) Bille proceeded from thorough fieldwork in Petra, Jordan, which became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1985. Petra is here seen as a prism to study how different heritage ideologies sometimes clash or are at least not universal. Bille demonstrates how "heritage" can be a vehicle for identity development in various formats (for instance depending on religion) as well as state formation and political issues; that material objects are focal in heritage debates; and how the present is negotiated through (often contentious and differing conceptions of) the past. He studies this heritage site from above, by reading various sorts of official documents, and also from below, through an informed close-reading of Bedouin everyday life in the present, including the tourist industry where many of the local Bedouins are employed today.

With a theoretical starting point in Böhme's notion of "atmosphere", the monograph *Living with Light: Homely Atmospheres and Lighting Technologies in Denmark* (2019) is a study of the role of light in our conception of what a home is. Here, Bille shows how light is pivotal when shaping the atmosphere of a place, in this case the home; how light is culturally informed and related to sociality, affect and emotions; and how light plays an active role in people's lives, although it is

most often not recognized. This book makes an important contribution to a seemingly immaterial part of material culture studies. It indicates how ideas of home and the good life are highly informed by and achieved through technologies, a fact that must also be taken into consideration when for instance policy makers want us to change to other kinds of light-bulbs for the sake of the climate.

A common trait in these two recently published books is Bille's ability to combine specific fieldwork with a thorough theoretical grounding and with more general perspectives on how material culture shapes our daily lives. This, in combination with his engaged way of writing, often based on his own experiences of daily situations, make his books accessible to a wide audience interested in studying material culture in contemporary society. He has also studied contemporary city planning and the use of lighting in cities, asking – critically – "What constitutes good lighting?" and demonstrating how light is never a neutral technology but gives identity to a place and is at the same time entangled in urban politics, economy, and safety concerns. Bille delivers a persuasive argument for a more thorough scrutiny of the uses, meanings and materialities of light in social sciences and in disciplines concerned with material objects such as archaeology. Sensory concepts such as atmosphere and affect are consistently used to think with throughout his research. He has obtained external funding for and led the collective research project "Living with Nordic Lighting", which is now coming to an end. At RUC he has co-directed the Urban Tech Lab where they use eye-tracking, Galvanic Skin Response and other technologies to investigate urban spaces in combination with qualitative methods, and it is thus as a natural continuation of this innovative work that Bille's future research will centre on how technologies have shaped and still shape the city and its citizens.

Mikkel Bille has also contributed to a (Danish) learning milieu, for instance through the textbook *Materialitet: En indføring i kultur, identitet og teknologi* (latest ed. 2019, co-authored with Tim Flohr Sørensen). It is a thorough, historically well-grounded and extremely well-informed introduction to material culture studies and "the material turn" in anthropology, archaeology and cultural studies in all its diversity.

Mikkel Bille has an extensive experience of teaching on all levels from BA to PhD and at several different universities with a particular focus on ethnographic interview methods, theory of science, and urban design-oriented courses in collaboration with many external partners. In his teaching, he underlines the importance of creating an active learning space, to integrate digital technologies, and to work with a problem-based learning context. This problem-based collective teaching model is characteristic of Roskilde University and it will be exciting to see how Bille can further develop these aspects in his new position at Copenhagen University.

Mikkel Bille is also a profile who contributes to the development of the field of humanities on a broader scale. From 2013 to 2018 he was a selected member of the prestigious Royal Academy of Sciences and Letters – The Young Academy and as such he co-edited the important *Verden ifølge Humaniora* (2019), explaining and thereby also defending the role of humanities in a modern, global, democratic world. In the next four years he will serve as a member of the Danish Research Council – Culture and Communication.

Mette Sandbye, Copenhagen

Tine Damsholt, Professor at the Saxo Institute, Copenhagen

Tine Damsholt was appointed professor of European Ethnology at The Saxo Institute, Copenhagen University, in 2022. Since 2014 Damsholt has been "professor with special obligations" (see ES 2015) the same place.

Damsholt's PhD dissertation was published as a monograph, *Fædrelandskærlighed og borgerdyd* (Etnologiske studier, Museum Tusculanum), in 2000. It concerns the decree abolishing adscription in 1788, one of the most frequently debated and described events in Danish history research, celebrated partly as a symbol of freedom from serfdom and partly as an agrarian reform.

Damsholt's approach is cultural-historical, aimed at analysing the patriotic discourse that generated ideas about the citizen's responsibility and willingness to die for the fatherland. Damsholt focuses on the patriotic ideological landscape surrounding the reform, emphasizing the development of a specific subjectivity, essential in the idea and feeling of patriotism. The freedom granted to the peasants was supposed to be used to make them into good citizens: free, but at the same time willing to submit to military discipline and fight for king and country. Inspired by Michel Foucault's discourse analysis, she examines the process whereby young peasants at the end of the eighteenth century learned to experience themselves as individuals or subjects.

Central topics in her dissertation are nationalism, patriotism, citizenship, emotions, and the sensibility of the late eighteenth century. These topics are investigated in various ways in Damsholt's later works, again with theoretical inspiration from Michel Foucault. Damsholt has also worked with new approaches to the study of materiality – or materialities – and recently investigated the consequences of the pandemic lockdown for people's experiences of temporality. She has also conducted investigations based on ethnographic fieldwork concerning experiences of and approaches to research-based education – a cornerstone in university education.

Damsholt is a productive researcher covering studies of cultural history as well as explorations of contemporary everyday life. Subjectification, the complexity of everyday life, political communities, nationalism, patriotism, emotions, materiality as process – all of which are central perspectives in modern ethnology – are discussed from various angles and contexts in a style that is both engaging and thorough, all based on interesting and relevant ethnography.

Tine Damsholt is much sought after as a lecturer and communicator of ethnological perspectives. She has given keynotes at various Nordic and international conferences, most recently the 35th Nordic Ethnological Conference in Reykjavik in June 2022.

With her research combining culture history with ethnographic perspectives and covering a time span from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to modern everyday life, Damsholt is a highly productive and active researcher, teacher and communicator within the broad field of European ethnology.

Torunn Selberg, Bergen

Astrid Pernille Jespersen, Professor at the Saxo Institute, Copenhagen

Astrid Jespersen was appointed professor of European Ethnology at The Saxo Institute, Copenhagen University, in 2022. Since 2011 Jespersen has been associate professor at the institute, and since 2013 the director of the Copenhagen Centre for Health Research in the Humanities (CoRe).

Jespersen is a well-merited ethnologist with a creative approach to medical humanities as well as cultural analysis, and furthermore Jespersen has an impressive track record of interdisciplinary collaboration. Her main research contribution is to be found at the intersection between ethnology and medical humanities. Jespersen's publications are excellent examples of solid ethnographic work and serve as a compelling validation of how ethnological perspectives on everyday life can deepen our understanding of health and ageing. Her contribution demonstrates the importance of "applied ethnology" and critical cultural-analytical perspectives on medical interventions. New ways of thinking are needed, Jespersen argues in *Careful Science? Bodywork and Care Practice in Randomised Clinical Trials* (2014, with Bønnelycke & Eriksen), by paying attention to social, material and physical dimensions in health prac-

tices. It is important, for instance, that caring, not only curing, is part of health promotion. In *Translation in the Making: How Older People Engaged in a Randomised Controlled Trial on Lifestyle Changes Apply Medical Knowledge in Their Everyday Lives* (2021, with Juul Lassen & Schjeldal) Jespersen highlight the complex mechanisms of knowledge translation.

Jespersen has also contributed innovative and interesting perspectives on ageing. In *Retirement Rhythms: Retirees' Management of Time and Activities in Denmark* (2020, with Juul Lassen, Mertz & Holm) Jespersen shows how "the busy ethics" is part of the everyday life of retirement and thus the prevalence of chrono-normativity. The publication demonstrates how a "rhythm-analytical" approach may be productive in an analysis of everyday life. *The Complex Figure of Ageing: How to Think Age, Body and Health from an Ethnological Perspective* (2018, with Juul Lassen) is a fascinating study of ageing, health and sickness as a complex cultural phenomenon. Besides discussing different ideas about age, the article show how ethnological perspectives on health may reveal the many practices that stabilize ideas about age and ageing.

Jespersen's publications are, as mentioned, fine examples of applied ethnology and prove the importance of critical cultural-analytical perspectives on health and ageing. The critical cultural-analytical perspective per se has been the subject of her interest as well, as in *Kulturanalyse som reflektiv praksis* (2017, with Sandberg & Mellemgaard), and *Cultural Analysis as Intervention* (2012, with Krogh Petersen, Ren & Sandberg).

Jespersen is a productive scholar with broad experience as teacher and supervisor on all levels, including PhD supervision. As director of CoRe Jespersen has established a strong national network of stakeholders and scholars and has collaborated with researchers from various fields. Jespersen will surely continue to advance the development of (applied) ethnology in Denmark and internationally.

Fredrik Nilsson, Åbo

New Dissertations

Stave Churches in the History of Knowledge

Sine Halkjelsvik Bjordal, "Om denne haves intet mærkværdigt". En tekst- og kunnskapshistorisk studie av stavkirkene på 1700- og 1800-tallet. Institutt for kulturstudier og orientalske språk. Det humanistiske fakultet, Universitetet i Oslo 2021. 409 pp. Ill. English summary. Diss.

■ Stave churches are among the most central icons of Norwegian national identity. Over the years they have also been the subject of several studies in the history of buildings and architecture. Sine Halkjelsvik Bjordal applies a new approach and a new perspective to the stave churches in her PhD dissertation. This in itself is highly commendable, as it reveals a great deal of new knowledge about the past interest in the stave churches, how they were viewed and perceived.

The main title of the dissertation is a quotation meaning "There is nothing strange about this". As subtitle indicates, Bjordal's study investigates texts about stave churches in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the point of view of the history of knowledge. What actually constitutes the history of knowledge is still being discussed in academic circles, where there is no clear and unambiguous definition of the subject. Bjordal herself says that she is inscribing herself "in this still quite open and undefined academic 'conversation' […] about knowledge, history, and knowledge in history, and I do so through a study of stave churches as objects of knowledge, as they appear in text." The purpose of the dissertation, as Bjordal has formulated it, is primarily "to understand the many circulating texts in which stave churches occur, in order to also understand the knowledge about them that was produced and circulated through these texts." In addition to defining the concepts and the research question, the first chapter of the dissertation also includes a review of relevant previous research, the sources used, and a clarification of the theoret-

ical premises. Bjordal draws on a very large body of source material, and this is undoubtedly one of the strengths of the dissertation. She uses both published and archival material. As regards the archival material, Bjordal has gone through several private archives at key Norwegian archival institutions. Among the published material used, we find reports, topographical literature, travel descriptions, books of plates, newspaper articles, opinion pieces, illustrated magazines, yearbooks, scholarly works, poems, landscape paintings, prospectuses, and travel guides. In other words, the dissertation is based on broad source pluralism. I would particularly highlight the way Bjordal includes pictorial sources in her analysis. It should also be noted that the extensive source material in the dissertation is a product of the digital search tools now available, making the dissertation an illustrative example of the benefits that research can have from all the digitization that has been done, with the rich opportunities it affords.

In the second chapter of the dissertation, Bjordal discusses in detail what was written about stave churches in topographical writings and natural history texts. The survey starts with responses to a questionnaire posted to the Danish Chancellery by officials in Norway in 1743. In addition, Bjordal draws on topographical texts by Johan Michael Lund, Hans Strøm, and Gerhard Schøning, among others. The eighteenth century, Bjordal emphasizes, was the time when stave churches were registered. She further presents evidence that knowledge of the stave churches at this time primarily concerned the churches as ecclesiastic buildings. But Bjordal also demonstrates in this chapter that stave churches began to be regarded as "the building art of the ancients". These two perceptions did not exclude each other; they lived side by side, often in the same text.

The following chapter is entitled "Collections, History, Monuments, and Architecture". Here the author explains how the stave churches were increasingly being understood as architecture in the first decades of the nineteenth century, while they also become more relevant for the study of history. In several texts, the stave churches were

categorized as ancient monuments. Artists, historians, and also the clergy played key roles in this phase in the history of knowledge. The churches were both monumentalized and romanticized through this. Furthermore, Bjordal draws parallels between the stave churches and her various perspectives, with the emerging interest in collecting and registering antiquities and monuments in general, thereby contextualizing the interest in stave churches.

In the fourth chapter, which Bjordal has called "Stave Churches in the World and the World in the Stave Churches", she provides an exhaustive description of J. C. Dahl's work *Denkmale*. This is a book of plates illustrating Norwegian stave churches, published in 1836–1837, its full title being *Denkmale einer sehr ausgebildeten Holzbaukunst aus den frühesten Jahrhunderten in den innern Landschaften Norwegens*. Through this publication, knowledge of the Norwegian stave churches became available to the intellectual elite of Europe. This in turn led to Norwegian stave churches being mentioned in other international publications, and knowledge about them thus came into circulation. In the nineteenth century a new generation of churches was built in Norway, and Bjordal ends this chapter by examining how the interest in the medieval stave churches inspired the architecture of the new churches. This was accompanied by a greater interest in the fragments of art in the stave churches.

In chapter five, Bjordal goes on to treat "Knowledge of Stave Churches in the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments and the Life of the Stave Churches in the Public Sphere". Here she gives an account of the foundation of the Society in 1844 as an extension of J. C. Dahl's involvement with stave churches. With the work of the Society for the Preservation of Ancient Monuments, which was particularly anxious to preserve stave churches, new types of knowledge about the stave churches were put into circulation. This was primarily knowledge of the construction of the churches, but also knowledge of the ground plans and the wood carvings in the churches. The establishment of the Society must be seen in the

context of the nation-building project in which stave churches were nationalized. A key concern during this period was to communicate knowledge about national matters to the inhabitants of Norway. Bjordal also gives a detailed account of the various ways in which this was done, through channels such as newspaper articles, debates, poetry, school textbooks, historical works, books of plates, and magazines.

In the final chapter, which Bjordal calls the conclusion, she asks whether knowledge of the stave churches stopped accumulating at the end of the nineteenth century. From that time on, the stave churches became more of a tourist attraction. Some of the stave churches became museum exhibits, while others were preserved *in situ* as monuments from the Middle Ages.

Through her dissertation, Bjordal has succeeded in demonstrating that the stave churches have multiple meanings in the history of knowledge. She also shows how they were discovered and registered, and how, as cultural monuments, they became objects worthy of preservation, national monuments.

Bjordal has written a very interesting dissertation, and as noted above, its crucial strength lies in the amount of source material and the source work on which it is based. Nevertheless, from the perspective of a historian it would have been desirable to see closer criticism of the various sources and a discussion of their value as sources. In particular, it would have been useful to learn more about how the sources came into being, not least of all the purposes and motives of the people who created them. This could have had an effect on the conclusions drawn, or it might have strengthened the validity of the conclusions presented by Bjordal.

The diverse source material can offer many interesting texts and associated interpretations. Sometimes, however, the presentation just sticks closely to the sources, summarizing them in detail, and it is occasionally difficult to understand where the author wants to take us and why the sources are cited to such an extent. It would probably have been easier for the reader to follow the

development and also the reasoning if the chapters and sections had been prefaced to a greater extent with a few sentences stating the main concern of the following text and the author's purpose in writing the chapter. True, Bjordal has helpful summaries at the end of the chapters that help to clarify matters, but it would have been easier to understand if there had been some clearer clues in the introduction.

In addition, since this is a historical study, the presentation would have benefited from a clearer time dimension. Bjordal demonstrates a development in the focus of knowledge about the stave churches, but it is sometimes a struggle for the reader find any dating for the prevalent types of knowledge and when the changes occurred.

In general, Bjordal is verbose, and it might have been desirable if the presentation had at times been more concise. Despite this and my other criticisms, there is no doubt that Bjordal has delivered a very readable and interesting dissertation with a new perspective. The many illustrations also help to enhance the reading experience. With some adjustment and pruning of the text, this is definitely a dissertation I hope to see in book form.

Herleik Baklid, Bø

Dis/ability in the Changing Welfare State

Christine Bylund, Anakrona livsvillkor. En studie av funktionalitet, möjligheter och begär i den föränderliga svenska välfärdsstaten. Institutionen för kultur- och medievetenskaper, Umeå universitet, Umeå 2022. 267 (+ 8) pp. English summary. ISBN 978-91-7855-793-6.

■ In her thesis, "Anachronistic Living Conditions: Dis/ability, Possibility and Desire in the Changeable Swedish Welfare State", the ethnologist Christine Bylund unveils how a new neoliberal austerity policy in the last ten or fifteen years has changed the foundations of the Swedish welfare systems regarding the possibilities to receive support and service for individuals with dis/ability. The Social Insurance Agency (Försäkringskassan) and Swedish municipalities nowadays judge applications for personal assistance and support at home much harder than in the pioneer years of the 1990s and early 2000s when the legal reforms were introduced (Socialtjänstlagen and LSS or Lag om stöd och service till vissa funktionshindrade). As a consequence, many dis/abled individuals, as their support or service has been reduced or even taken away all together, now experience how their possibilities of living a life that is normal and equal with others are impeded. In *Anakrona livsvillkor* three generations of individuals with dis/ability are interviewed about their different experiences of this change in the welfare conditions. Together the three generations represent how the norms have changed chronologically during the development of the modern welfare state. The oldest generation, between 55 and 80 years old when interviewed by Bylund in 2017, grew up during a period from the 1940s to the 1960s when the Swedish welfare state was established. An ideal was to keep dis/abled individuals at big institutions and let them be separated from the rest of society. The middle generation, between 40 and 50 years when Bylund met them for interview, were, as young adults, affected by the reforms that closed the big institutions from the 1960s to the 1990s and simultaneously shaped a new system which made dis/abled individuals more and more independent in their way of life vis-à-vis family members, friends and society as a whole. However, the youngest generation of the interviewees, which includes individuals between 20 and 35, now experience how these welfare reforms are dismantled by the new neoliberal ideology and how bureaucracy becomes more and more restrictive in relation to dis/abled persons' possibilities to receive personal assistance and support at home. In *Anakrona livsvillkor* Bylund exhibits how what she calls an anachronism, something belonging to the past and negatively influencing individuals' possibilities to live an independent adult life, takes hold of dis/abled people's life conditions in contemporary Sweden.

In chapter 1, "Background and Starting Points", Bylund presents her aim with the study,

her research questions, previous research and theoretical concepts. The aim of the study is described as twofold. Firstly, she wants to investigate, on the basis of her interviews with the three generations of dis/abled, how these informants, having lived with dis/ability in different phases of the welfare state, understand and reflect on their opportunities for realizing relationships and family life in the context of the changing welfare conditions. A crucial research question is how these lived and described intimate relationships connect to changes in the welfare system. And what kinds of cultural images of dis/ability are expressed in these settings? Secondly, defining herself as a researcher with dis/ability and also sharing many experiences with her interview persons, Bylund wants to unfold an autoethnographic approach in her investigation. By doing so she intends to analyse her life conditions as a researcher with dis/ability and discuss the conditions and possibilities for this kind of research.

In the sections on previous research Bylund connects to both Swedish ethnology and critical dis/ability studies. Swedish ethnology lacks a distinct research field of dis/ability studies and therefore the presentation is more of a mixture of different research focuses. Here are some dis/ability studies such as Claes G. Olsson's *Omsorg och kontroll* from 2010, but also studies which are more linked to a broad field of cultural perspectives on health and medicine, such as Georg Drakos's *Makt över kropp och hälsa* from 2005, Helena Hörnfeldt's *Prima barn, helt u.a.* from 2009 and Signe Bremer's *Kroppslinjer* from 2011. Regarding the cross-disciplinary field of critical dis/ability studies, Bylund is inspired by studies on gender, sexuality, everyday life and bureaucracy. We find, for example, references to gender studies that highlight how the making of gender is biased by an ableism based on understandings of norm-breaking dis/ability as deviant. Women with norm-breaking dis/ability are as a consequence seen as not real women. Also, when it comes to sexuality, Bylund relates to studies on how individuals with norm-breaking dis/ability often become de-sexualized and lose their right to sexuality.

Bylund talks about the necessity of theory. She refers to the feminist bell hooks who sees the search for theory as a way of healing the kind of pain one feels when subjected to power orders such as racism or ableism. In this case Bylund describes her starting point as crip theoretical. This crip theory involves an interest of how norm-following and norm-breaking abilities are created and changed in processes that are viewed in a post-structural perspective. An important part of the theory is to discuss and challenge different images and imaginations of abled-bodiedness. In this discussion of what crip theory is, Bylund includes two major themes: one on power relations and power order, and a second one on phenomenology and normative lifelines. As regards power and power orders, Bylund is inspired by Michel Foucault's concept of hegemonic discourses and counter-discourses. These different types of discourses are normative as they lead to a striving for abled-bodiedness and social categorizations of norm-following and norm-breaking subjects. In her discussion of individuals' lifelines Bylund develops her phenomenological perspective by relating to Sara Ahmed's queer phenomenology. Through this viewpoint Bylund directs attention to bodies that are norm-breaking in relation to hegemonic representations of heteronormative conditions.

Connected to her theoretical framework is also her understanding of dis/ability as primarily a social rather than a medical phenomenon. In the social model that Bylund proposes, dis/ability is a socio-political issue concerning power and resources. The medical model, in contrast views dis/ability as a deficiency and as something that can be healed or overcome by training or medical improvement. Here Bylund's discussion clearly illustrates how the frame of her own investigation represents a critical polarization of two different epistemological positions rather than a social scientist's invitation to dialogue with the medical model. In the presentation of the medical model it is somewhat conspicuous that there are no references to examples of research based on the medical model. The only reference where I can read

further about the medical model is to a dis/ability studies reader originating in the social sciences. In contrast, the presentation of the social model is thoroughly anchored in legitimating reference work that includes different proponents of the social model.

In chapter 2, "Methodology, Method and Material", Bylund presents her empirical work, based on semi-structured interviews with 13 individuals and on autoethnographic writing. The interviews were conducted in 2017 both face-to-face and through Skype videos and telephone. Four men and nine women living in different parts of Sweden were interviewed. A principle of "cross-disability" was followed when the interview persons were selected. This means that the interview persons who participated in the research did not have a common diagnosis but represented different dis/abilities, comprising physical and cognitive or neuropsychiatric dis/abilities. The autoethnographic material in the form of notes and commenting text was created in parallel with the interview-based fieldwork. Below I will come back to the autoethnography.

The analysis of the research material takes place in chapters 3 to 7. In chapter 3, "Phases of the Swedish Welfare State", Bylund, on the basis of her analysis of the interviews, discusses the socio-political and historical context of the relationship between the Swedish welfare system and the dis/abled. Discourses on security and control play a central role in these processes. As described above, the establishment of the welfare state started with a great wave of institutionalization and with dis/abled people being separated from society as a whole. Later on, individuals with dis/ability were talked about as "people like anyone else". They were now expected to leave the institutions and live in society. Later still, the idea of personal assistance was formed, with increased possibilities to live an independent and more normal adult life. However, the reforms were called into question when economic costs were considered, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century the austerity policy mentioned above started to question dis/abled individuals' rights to support and

service. In this dismantling of support and service dis/abled individuals felt how their ontological security was affected in a negative manner.

In chapter 4, "Dreams, Desire and Future", the analysis is focused on how the dis/abled individuals of the three generations imagine the future through their dreams and desires when it comes to sexuality and family life. In the context of the older generation Bylund identifies a discourse in which the sexuality of the dis/abled was seen as a social, economic and moral risk as well as a taboo. In spite of this, the interviewees in this older generation tell about how they explored their sexual desires and took part in intimate relationships within the institutions. Sexual experiences were perceived as a possibility to conquer an adult's subject position. Another dream was to form a family and become a parent. In this case dis/abled individuals fought against a general distrust of their role as parents. In the interviews of the middle generation, an even more uncertain or ambivalent future appears. These individuals were more independent outside the institutions, but they also encountered a normative society where they were forced to navigate between the blind alleys and "sticky" living conditions that could restrain their dreams and desires. Thanks to legal reforms, however, this middle generation could increasingly orientate itself towards lifelines which were relatively equal to the norm-following majority of society. When this positive development was stopped due to the introduction of the neoliberal austerity policy, the future (once more) became uncertain for individuals with dis/ability. In this youngest generation dis/abled individuals' dreams of the future are even more dependent on how the system of service and support works (or does not work).

In chapter 5, "Encountering the Welfare State", Bylund focuses on dis/abled individuals' encounters with the caseworkers as representatives of the welfare state and the discourses that are formed by or form these encounters. Through their professional role the caseworkers have a powerful social position, while the dis/abled individual is in a vulnerable situation that influences his or her way

of life in different ways. In this unequal encounter the dis/abled individual sees the caseworker as an antagonist while s/he simultaneously strives for recognition and to become a deserving subject. The dis/abled subjects are disciplined through a system of measurements and assessments and risk at the same time being treated as if they were children, being made infantile.

In chapter 6, ''Anxiety and Fear'', Bylund investigates two type of affects – anxiety and fear – that are often expressed in the interview situations. Here she refers to Sara Ahmed's theoretical approach to feelings and to how affects have their origin in and are reproduced by power orders. An example of how this power order operates on its subjects is a concept that Bylund borrows from Franz Fanon: combat breathing. This concept refers to what it is like to be subjected to a certain power order – post-colonialism or ableism – and to internalize the threat of violence that the particular power order implies. Bylund sees the combat breathing as the effect of a kind of mental siege that can be caused by the anxiety and fear of losing one's support and service from the welfare system. The new neoliberal austerity policy thereby produces a restricted subject who becomes even more restricted due to anxiety and fear of additional limitations. In this way we can see how different bodies are linked to not only different power orders but also different understandings of what is dangerous and safe in particular contexts.

In chapter 7, ''Resistance and Mastering'', Bylund turns to a discussion of resistance. She starts by introducing Michel de Certeau's concepts of strategy and tactics. Strategy is here defined as a practice that may change a structure, while tactics is how one acts in a certain situation of a larger structure. In the chapter two key tactics of resistance among dis/abled people are discussed. The first one is called staging or performing a subject of knowledge. This is a dis/ability form where one understands and adjusts to the bureaucratic system and to the information that is needed in order to achieve recognition within the system. In her autoethnography Bylund shows how she herself may represent this subject

of knowledge in certain situations, a subject that also can be related to Pierre Bourdieu's class and capital theory as well as his ideas of habitus. In this context the subject of knowledge can become a subject position that is read as ''the supercrip''. The second tactic that is discussed in the chapter is called hiding. Dis/abled individuals may hide information about who they are and what relations they have in their contacts with the welfare system. The result can be a silence and an invisibility concerning the individual's sexuality, relations and abled-bodiedness.

At the end of the chapter, Bylund refers to the two key tactics as a form of mastering tactics rather than pure resistance. They are double-edged in the sense that they not only implement resistance but can also support hegemonic discourses on the power order of dis/ability as well the staging of stereotypes in varying contexts.

In chapter 8, ''Anachronistic Living Conditions – Conclusions'', Bylund summarizes her investigation of how dis/abled persons relate to the shrinking Swedish welfare state. It is concluded that the Swedish welfare state only during very short periods has had the political ambition to give people with norm-breaking dis/ability life conditions that are equal to the conditions of people with normative physical and cognitive ability. The welfare state has often lacked the imagination to dream about and include these dis/abled individuals in the reform politics. However, Bylund also sees dreams and imaginations as the very starting point for the struggle for equal rights.

In this concluding chapter Bylund argues that the changing phases of the support and service of the welfare state have created different subject positions for the individuals with norm-breaking dis/ability. These subject positions have been linked with varying grades of ontological safety, self-determination and freedom of action. In this context, discourses on family life and sexuality have made it difficult for individuals with dis/ability to gain recognition or acceptance in their contact with welfare state representatives. Images of what a dis/abled individual can be when it comes to subject positions as parent or as desired/

desiring subject have limited the possibilities to act. Individuals have been forced to give up their personal integrity and become objects of investigations and measurements. This sort of violence has also led to a kind of non-simultaneity where a dis/abled individual is not recognized as a grown-up person with the right to self-integrity. Bylund also identifies a collective identity with political features regarding what it means to live as dis/abled person in the Swedish welfare context. This collective identity is crucial for how resistance can rise against the system, but also how solidarity can form within the group. As an individual one is at risk of becoming disorientated and alienated due to the discourse of Swedish welfare exceptionalism that can position a dis/abled person as a subject with no credibility. The struggle is therefore directed against the putatively unproblematic image of the so-called good welfare state. The concept of non-simultaneity or anachronism in a way concludes how the dis/abled are stuck not only in a time reversal to non-desirable previous times before the modernization of the welfare state that started in the 1940s. They are, individually, also moved back and forth in their own life-line and are at risk of becoming either an elderly person too early or in reverse a child again, instead of being in a normative adult position.

Anakrona livsvillkor is a thesis that raises many interesting questions about the individual researcher's balancing between closeness and distance towards the ones s/he studies. From this viewpoint, the thesis is on the one hand an ethnological study of the Swedish welfare system that in many ways represents normal science thematically in its results as well as methodologically. The chapters that have been described above follow a thematic pattern that we recognize from other dissertations and studies: first we read a chapter with a historical perspective, and then we go on to chapters on different cultural themes that are relevant for the case and make our understanding of the topic better. In this instance it is a chapter about perception of the future, followed by chapters on cultural encounters, structures of feelings such as anxiety and fear, and finally resistance and

tactics. We also read a methodological chapter that we recognize in some parts from previous studies. We learn that the interviews were structured with open questions about themes such as the welfare state, family and sexuality. In reality the interview persons started by describing their life at present, family situation, age and their need of support and service from the welfare state. This was followed in every interview by a more in-depth conversation about experiences in both past and present, with a focus on the themes that the researcher was primarily interested in. Here in this second part of the interviews the questionnaire was not followed in every detail; instead it was important to have a relatively free conversation. The interviews could in the end cover a lot of different matters that were not part of the questionnaire. All this sounds very familiar from other studies and it is also something I have experienced myself in different interview projects.

On the other hand, *Anakrona livsvillkor* is also a positive challenge to normal science within ethnology due to the specific knowledge perspective that the author of the thesis embodies. The significance of the study lies both in the theoretical pain and the cripped methodology that Bylund realizes throughout the thesis. For Bylund the autoethnographic approach is a method to gain knowledge about the intimate details in the relations that are studied. Bylund argues that she could not expect her interview persons to share such intimate experiences with her. Instead she creates autoethnographic material that mirrors her own relationship to the welfare state. This autoethnographic material takes the shape of a parallel writing that tells – sometimes in a poetic and sometimes in a more realistic way – about the relation to the welfare state as well as her feelings and reflections about this. In her autoethnographic writing she also comments on what she sees as meaningful in the research material and in the theories, in her own intimate relations, in media reporting on the welfare state.

When autoethnography, as in this study, is integrated with the knowledge goal it becomes an active analytical tool. The autoethnography

makes the analysis more profound and convincing. For example, in a section in chapter 6 Bylund identifies anxiety and perceptions of disorientation among her interview persons when they relate to their own life conditions in connection to the hegemonic discourse on dis/ability. Through this analytical entry Bylund then goes deeper into the understanding of what this vulnerability does to its subjects by relating the analysis to her own anxiety when she, as the anxious researcher, is working with the analysis of the material.

This said, I also want to point out a certain overabundance of concepts and ideas that the text tends to suffer from. The text is not always so stringently structured that one can demand in a thesis. It also contains a handful of discussions that are more of loose threads and not really integrated in the analysis, such as the brief reflections at the end of chapter 1 on the meaning of movement in relation to the narratives of the interview persons, or the concept of biopolitics that is mentioned a couple of times in the thesis but not really fully defined.

In the end I must nevertheless emphasize how original this study is. Through its combined crip theoretical and autoethnographic viewpoints it offers a different, bottom-up and critical perspective on what we (still) see as the Swedish welfare state.

Markus Idvall, Stockholm

On the Challenges of Decoloniality in the Swedish Museum of Ethnography

Charlotte Engman, Desires of Decoloniality and Museal Logics: Encounters between the Swedish Museum of Ethnography, Democratic Ideals, and Contemporary Audiences. Faculty of Arts, Department of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University 2023. 304 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-8070-062-7 (electronic).

■ The pressure on museums to adopt decoloniality is a well-known fact. Museums have begun to critically examine their own histories, their collections, and their representations of cultures and communities that today can be considered both source communities and local diaspora communities. Museums have also carried out projects involving these communities in producing knowledge about their – and our – cultures.

Decoloniality as a discourse and a set of demands for transformations in museums is the starting point for Charlotte Engman's doctoral dissertation, which aims to extend our understanding of how discussions around decoloniality and claims to decolonze museums are articulated in museums' activities. Furthermore, the study dissects the kinds of tensions and contradictions an examination of these articulations can reveal when investigated in relation to other ideals, conditions, and traditions that define museum work. The project *Ongoing Africa* at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm deals with representations of Africa, Africans, and people who identify with the African diaspora in Sweden, as well as collaborations and encounters between the museum and African diaspora subjects. As a site where the many demands concerning decoloniality, as well as different activities, practices, and aspects of museum work, can be investigatedinvestigated, the *Ongoing Africa* project is a good choice as a case study to examine decolonization efforts in the Swedish context.

Engman describes the objectives of her study as follows: to explore "how different museal logics condition activities, are reproduced, and relate to each other". The more detailed research questions related to Ongoing Africa's different areas of activity concern the museum's audiences, archives, collections, and museal timeliness. The dissertation is divided into seven chapters. In addition to the objectives and research questions, the first introductory chapter presents the case – and the site of the study. The brief introduction to the Ongoing Africa project includes information about the museum as a part of the state authority, the National Museums of World Culture (NMWC), and the background, objectives, project team, activities, and collaborations with external stakeholders.

The theoretical framework, empirical data, research methods, and ethical considerations are ex-

plained in Chapter 2. Research materials included interviews with staff members ($n = 11$) and collaborators involved in the Ongoing Africa project ($n = 10$), as well as field notes concerning activities arranged under the project. Information on these and other textual and visual materials referred to in the study, such as political and other documents, are listed at the end of the book. Chapter 2 ends with a discussion of Engman's positionalities as a researcher, especially as a "partial insider" due to her earlier activities in the ethnographic museum and as a "young, white, and female academic without experience of being racialized in similar ways as many of the research participants" (p. 68), many of whom were of African diasporic backgrounds.

The theoretical framework is built on political discourse theory, especially on the ideas of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001[1985]) and the logics approach developed by Jason Glynos and David Howarth (2007). In the logic approach, which aims to explore and understand the social, political, and fantasmatic logics of a social practice, the concept of logic refers to an organizing principle to be found within a discourse. Museal logics, which, according to Engman, is an original concept, refer to the organizing principles for how museum activities are constructed, in both speech and material practice.

The analysis, discussed in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6, involves the identification of different logics and an examination of their workings and meanings in different practices. In identifying social logics, which refer to rules and structures that are taken for granted, Engman focuses on what the research participants expressed as natural and self-evident. Political logics are about challenging ideas and practices, and they may create tension and friction by politicizing social logics. Here, Engman focuses on expressions of irritation and strangeness and moments where certain practices were problematized. Fantasmatic logics, which Engman compares to cultural imaginations, address the ideological dimension of what appears natural and encourages contestation or defence. It also directs attention to emotions in mean-

ing-making processes. Engman analyses how research participants wanted the museum to develop, their narratives of success as well as how the museum's future was imagined in negative ways to understand why people cling to certain practices and how different and contradictory ideals coexist.

To develop her analytical themes, Engman follows the idea of retroductive explanations, referring to the dialogue, or cross-reading, between her interpretations of the data, theory, and previous research on the studied phenomena. Social, political, and fantasmatic logics are the basic concepts used in the analysis, but as the analysis progressed, Engman identified and named a number of other logics that were linked to and/or challenged these logics.

Chapter 3 offers an analysis of the logics related to the museum audience and how they determine museums' efforts to be inclusive of new audiences, African diasporic subjects and their communities in particular. Engman shows how both economic logic and difficulties in addressing issues related to racism and racialized relations challenge and complicate social inclusion. For example, it is unclear how – or whether – it is possible to obtain information, or even talk about, museum visitors' (or staff members') racial and ethnic identifications. To ensure inclusion, addressing such issues would be necessary, but the discursive silence related to racism makes it difficult, even impossible.

Chapter 4 focuses on the logic of timeliness, dealing with the staff's experiences and ideas concerning the museum's identity and the relevance of the museum's collections when the raison d'être of ethnographic museums has been questioned. Chapter 5, "Objects and Heritage Justice(s)", discusses the changing meanings of museum objects and the timely discourse of repatriation. The increasing relevance of museum objects for diasporic communities, related both to their attempts to raise discussions on the injustices created by colonialism and to the ways in which the objects can play a role in strengthening local diasporic communities, puts political

pressure on museums and museum professionals. However, the logic of impartiality, rooted in museum professionalism and public institutions' working cultures, allows museum professionals to become an "opinionless instrument" (p. 183). The logic of restorative justice, as a political logic, underlines museums' social responsibility and obligation to reform museum practices, but it also includes a fantasmatic dimension, "imaginative geographies", that link together objects, places, bloodlines or cultures. Here, Engman's analysis makes visible essentialist thinking that can also be inherent in discourses on social justice.

In chapter 6 Engman describes the racial logic of the archive and shows how discursive leakages of racial terminology occur between the museum's private and public spaces. Digitalization and the opening of archives to the general public have brought new challenges, requiring museums to break the discursive silence around racism. Using empirical examples of how different knowledge claims are articulated and valued through different logics, Engman also reveals frictions between knowledge associated with professional training and other forms of knowledge, including the situated knowledge of the project's collaborators.

Chapter 7 summarizes the results of the study and offers a list of conflicting ideals and interests that shape museum work and construct the museum as an always unfinished, incomplete space for antagonism. When presenting the contributions of her study, Engman reminds the reader that research ethics, the need to hide her informants' identities, prevented her from using some of her materials, for example, "the few statements some staff members made about their own blackness". I assume that this explains why the concluding chapter also includes discussions concerning racism and the whiteness of the Swedish museum sector which did not emerge directly from the analysis. Throughout the work, Engman avoids presenting views on how things should be done in museums. At the end of her work, however, she mentions, as a cautious message regarding what can be learned about the project based on her findings, "its ability to (intentionally or unintention-

ally) stretch and strengthen the boundaries in the aforementioned fields of tension" (p. 257).

Engman's material is rich and sheds light on several aspects of the studied topics. However, the dissertation does not clearly describe how the participants were informed of the study objectives, nor does it specify the questions that were used in the interviews. Therefore, it is difficult to assess the quality of interview data or, for example, whether also the informants (museum professionals and their collaborators) consider the activities and aspects of the Ongoing Africa project that are addressed in the dissertation to be key to the project, and to the achievement of its objectives. A broader application of the logic approach to, for example, curatorial work could have added to the interesting debate on co-creation (pp. 89–95).

Engman's dissertation is a comprehensive study of the complexity of and the challenges in developing museum work. It is a pioneering work in the application of the "logics approach" to museum studies, and Engman demonstrates the usefulness of this approach for studying ideas, traditions, policies, as well as other forces that influence museum activities. The results of the study are clearly based on the carefully constructed and well-argued theoretical framework and a skilful analysis. Engman has rigorously applied the logics approach and made use of previous work in various fields, including critical race and whiteness studies. Although some of the findings, for example, concerning the clash between democratic ideals and economic conditions, are fairly predictable, the logics approach extends the study's focus from what is or has been done – that is, the activities – to why something is – or is not – done. By illuminating how people relate to different discourses and how different logics can emerge and operate in different encounters and situations, Engman's research offers useful tools also for handling conflicts and contradictions in museums.

However, the discursive silence around racism has limited also Engman's opportunities to examine and address the meanings of racism and racialized relations in the studied project. References to African/Black diaspora studies, and Afro/Black

European studies in particular, would have made it easier to deal with some of the questions which have been difficult to address in this work, due to research ethics or for other reasons. Such studies, also concerning diaspora communities' activities with museums in other European countries, are available but are not referenced in this dissertation's bibliography. I also missed references to Achille Mbembe, especially concerning archives, and some other post/decolonial theorists. Nevertheless, Engman's careful analysis produces a considerable number of interesting results, such as when, how, and why different – even contradictory – logics can be identified in an individual's agency and how these logics can contribute to or limit transformations that support the decolonization of museums.

The theoretical framework has facilitated the use of meta-language that has helped the researcher maintain some distance from the empirical data. However, the researcher could shift away from this meta-language when discussing the study's findings. Currently, the results are described primarily using the theoretical concepts which are, above all, analytical tools. This, I'm afraid, may make it more difficult for readers to realize and acknowledge the study's many merits.

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Listening to the Radio in Sweden

Elin Franzén, Radio. Vardagsliv tillsammans med ett massmedium. Föreningen Mediehistorisk arkiv 51, Lund 2021. 319 pp. Ill. Diss. ISBN 978-91-985800-2-0.

■ The book about radio listening in Sweden is based on a doctoral dissertation from Stockholm University by Elin Franzén. The aim is to investigate and understand radio listening from an ethnological perspective, which means focusing on experiences of listening to radio by users of all ages in their everyday lives. The analyses of radio listening go along two paths: One is a phenomenological perspective, perceiving the presence of objects as subjectively experienced phenomena.

This may for instance concern a wireless set and its specific, objective and materialistic presence, which, on the other hand, is subjectively experienced by a person in a specific context of time and space. The other path in the analysis is historical, taking account of temporal aspects regarding the history of radio, for instance the development of the material substance representing radio broadcasting, from a big wooden box to a smartphone, or subjective memories of radio listening in a life-course perspective, marking important cultural-historical moments in national or personal lives. These two paths are intertwined, mutually fertilizing each other and bringing new insights about the topic of radio listening in Sweden from the inception of the Swedish National Broadcasting in 1925 ("Swedish Radio") until now. Overall, the research question is linked to a phenomenological quest to investigate the construction of meaning in everyday life, in this case regarding the impact of radio on human lives in a past and present perspective.

Elin Franzén has collected empirical material via 17 qualitative interviews and group conversations with people aged from 26 to 90, one group living in Stockholm, another group from a more rural area in Sweden. Keeping a diary of radio listening for one week was also an element in the task for interviewees.

Franzén has also compiled responses by 200 persons to a questionnaire, and furthermore she has used archived material from a national questionnaire during the 1960s by the Nordic Museum.

Three analytical chapters focus on phenomenological and temporal aspects related to the apparatus, content and time, and these three chapters are framed by an introductory chapter about the history of Swedish national radio broadcasting and the development from broadcasting to stationary homes until today's broadcasting to mobile devices distributed digitally.

These three chapters are rich in interesting analytical perspectives revolving around the experiences of listening to radio. An important factor in the first aspect, the apparatus, is of course materiality, space and place. Franzén describes how

ways of listening have changed saliently since devices turned mobile, and not only due to current digital listening from smartphones, but, before that, the development from stationary furniture in central places like living rooms to mobile transistor radios which transported radio listening out of the home and on to the road, into the cars, out on the beaches etc. These changes also have effects regarding, for example, individual versus collective listening, concentrated versus distracted listening, which also touches upon radio listening as a background or a foreground activity. Especially with the smartphone representing a multifunctional device, radio listening becomes a less concentrated activity, and these aspects also include a discussion about how to define "radio" listening, because the different material devices influence the options not only to listen, but how to listen, where to listen, and what to listen to.

The chapter focusing on content is not *about* content but presents a variety of aspects of how content influences daily life, rhythm, activities, and how content attracts different kinds of socio-cultural groups, related to gender, social class, locality and dialect, which relates to communality or individuality of listening, enforced by the distribution in time and place.

The chapter about time presents three phenomena concerning temporal aspects of radio listening: (1) Life-course aspects and memories related to radio listening; (2) the influence on everyday life, for instance on the rhythm of the day or the year with specific times for activities related to specific radio programmes, and the influence of temporal aspects such as listening to streaming or live radio, which also creates different experiences of sharing/not sharing the listening experience with other listeners.

Across the analytical chapters are dimensions of time, everyday life, social and individual experiences and activities, leading back to the theoretical inspiration from phenomenology. The book represents a cornucopia of detailed smaller analyses of the impact of radio on everyday life which is sometimes overlooked as a cultural phenomenon, because radio listening is somehow perceived as an "invisible" element in cultural life, not only pointing to its invisible essence, but also to its impact on everyday life in a cultural-historical perspective.

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Women in Icelandic Folk Legends

Dagrún Ósk Jónsdóttir, Trapped within Tradition: The Portrayal of Women and Femininity in Icelandic Folk Legends. School of Social Sciences, The University of Reykjavík 2022. 248 pp. Diss.

■ The article dissertation *Trapped within Tradition: Women, Femininity, and Gendered Power Relations in Icelandic Folk Legends* is a well-structured and masterful analysis of concepts regarding women and their expected roles and behaviour, as interpreted from Icelandic legends collected in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The topic is important as it develops international folkloristic work on gender expression in oral traditions that gained popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. The author approaches her topic holistically and the reader is given a thoughtful and analytic overview of this theme from four diverse but complementary perspectives, each encapsulated in one article. The dissertation consists of an introductory section consisting of its own five chapters, four articles (all published), a concluding section, an appendix with the original Icelandic versions of the in-text translated legend examples, and a full bibliography.

Dagrún Ósk Jónsdóttir used for her data published legend collections and archived sound recordings in Icelandic. For her analysis, the author uses qualitative methods rooted in data-grounded thematic content analysis, informed by both feminist studies and critical discourse analysis. Throughout the manuscript, the author demonstrates her thorough and wide-ranging knowledge of scientific discussion in gender and folklore. The author's critical argumentation in her analysis of these legends leaves the reader clear about how the author's theoretical interpretation has taken place step-by-step. This is a rare talent.

The main strengths of the article dissertation are the author's expert knowledge of previous relevant literature and the high quality of her argumentation, which pre-empted any critical questions I might have had while reading. The author also pays attention to *how* the legends were produced and considers this question from various critical angles. She gives consideration not only to questions of gender but also to those of class, marital status and social position.

However, the book has a small but notable tendency to overgeneralize about patriarchy, leaving the reader potentially mystified at the implied self-evident nature of patriarchy as an idea of men oppressing women in all situations. Not all would agree with Raewyn Connell's (1987, cited in Article 1, p. 89) claim that "all masculinities nonetheless dominate all femininities". As has been well documented over the past five decades, patriarchy is much more than this. It is a complex, ubiquitous and often invisible power structure that encompasses societal pressure on men to take the burden of responsibility to provide for women and families, women exerting their power over other women (e.g. farm mistresses over female servants, mothers over daughters and mothers-in-law over daughters-in-law); younger men's lives valued less and wasted in wars that benefit the state (i.e. historically mostly older and privileged men), and men directly oppressing other men (e.g. hazing in the military).

There are also a few places in the book where feminist ideology is used beyond what the evidence merits. Although Article no. 3, "It was Ill Done, My Mother, to Deny Me Life", is compellingly argued in the second half of the article, it contains perplexing and overgeneralizing claims in the first half about a gender ideology shift in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries towards "the idea that women were meant to stay at home and oversee the private sphere, the house and children, while men went out to work in the public sphere." It is not made clear here whether this was a middle-class ideology and only attainable for the landowning or position-holding middle classes. How well had it been internalized by the majority of rural inhabitants in nineteenth-century Iceland? This ideology was also present in some segments of European societies long before the eighteenth century. In the same paragraph, the author states that "During this period, increasing emphasis was placed on the idea that women naturally wanted to become mothers: motherhood came to be considered an important characteristic of femininity." The only authors cited for this statement are two that do not appear to have any connection to Iceland, leaving this compelling idea without convincing evidence. The concept of pariah femininity, on the other hand, works well with the author's argumentation.

Despite these minor shortcomings, reading this dissertation was a pleasure from start to finish. It is filled with lively and determined female trolls, hidden women, ghosts, vengeful revenants, seemingly upstanding human members of society who keep slipping into the realms of these supernatural folk, and diverse forms of violence directed at all of these characters. It is a substantially original contribution to scholarly knowledge on the subject and provides interesting space for reflection on the question of exactly how legends reflect broader cognitive patterns in society and culture.
Laura Stark, Jyväskylä

Phenomenological Reflections on Seafarers' Experiences from the Era of Steamships

Ulla Kallberg, "Sillä ainahan merimies sentään on erimies". Merimiesidentiteetit muuttuvassa maailmassa. Annales Universitatis Turkuensis B 592. University of Turku, Turku 2022. 271 pp. ISBN 978-951-29-9014-6.

■ Ulla Kallberg's doctoral thesis describes and analyses the experiences of sailors who worked in the era of steamships. The book gets its title from a popular song, which describes sailors as a special breed. The second part of the title mentions the most important concept of the study, identity or rather identities. Kallberg has pursued a long career in Finland in Forum Marinum and

its predecessor organizations, as a museum curator specializing in maritime history. It is fantastic that after retiring from her museum post she has concluded her PhD thesis and the line of maritime ethnology themed doctoral dissertations has a welcome new addition.

In her museum work Kallberg has done documentation and ethnography on ships and this work has affected her PhD thesis, even though the analysed material is written reminiscences by sailors. The core source material consists of qualitative thematic inquiries focusing on the everyday life of sailors. The inquiries were conducted by the Department of Ethnology at the University of Turku in 1963. In addition to written reminiscences, the material consists of photographs, certificates, letters and one memoir. The inquiry, a set of questions and motivational text (in Finnish and in Swedish) was sent to regular "informants" but also to active and retired sailors in the magazine of the Finnish Seafarer's Union. All in all, 144 sailors sent their reminiscences to be archived, and Kallberg has used 46 of these as the material for her thesis.

These kinds of inquiries were a regular part of research at the Department of Ethnology and there were many inquiries on various themes. If any reader of this review is interested in these inquiries, there is a new doctoral thesis on this topic written by Anna Kirveennummi. This inquiry "Sailors' memoirs" (in Finnish and in Swedish) is a unique set of material and it is significant that now there is a doctoral dissertation based on this material.

Kallberg's research questions are interesting and ambitious. The first set of questions concerns sailors' selves and self-understandings and Kallberg asks how they become evident in different situations and what kind of experiences they are. How do sailors live their identities? How does gender become apparent through creating, experiencing and living identities? The second set of questions focuses on communities and social life. Kallberg asks how social relations affect the individual processes of forming identities on the one hand and forming the social reality of a com-

munity on the other hand. Finally, Kallberg asks how culture becomes evident in the working communities of ships. After the methodological and theoretical parts Kallberg leads the reader through a general description of seafaring in Finland between the 1880s and the 1960s. The first chapter analysing the findings is about the ship as a lived space. The second findings chapter is called "On the first trip" and the third "Everyday life on board". These chapters are packed with knowledge and interesting stories. For me the fourth findings chapter, titled "Differentiations and unifications", is the most interesting since it includes more new and fresh narratives about maritime life. This chapter gives an in-depth picture of different kinds of hierarchies and power relations in the ships' communities.

Kallberg explains meticulously how the inquiry was conducted in the first place and how she chose the texts she has used as her sources. There is plenty of previous literature on how the inquiries were conducted in general by different organizations, for instance by the National Board of Antiquities, and Kallberg makes good use of it. Inevitably, the way the questionnaire was formulated had a great impact on how the respondents wrote their stories. This should not be seen as a negative aspect but instead a possibility to analyse the interaction between the researchers and the respondents, who both had agency and their own (also individual) goals. This point of departure is acknowledged by Kallberg, but she could have made better use of it, digging deeper into the memoirs and distancing herself from them. For instance, nostalgic reminiscences on community spirit could have been pondered upon more. The dissertation includes interesting reflexive parts drawing on Kallberg's work as a curator, for instance her experience in documenting vessels and everyday life on ships. Nevertheless, a little more self-reflexivity would have given more depth to the findings chapters. At the same time I feel that functional self-reflexivity in a research text is one of the most difficult things in current ethnological practice.

According to Kallberg, the sailors' working life on board a cargo ship is defined by the official

maritime working culture and at the same time the crew's own (unofficial) culture. All respondents had worked on several vessels and in different positions and made comparisons of different styles of managing things on different vessels. One definite strength of this dissertation is that it brings together and makes knowledge on the era of steamships more complete. Interest in the disappearance of sailing ships was one of the main motivations of early maritime history research. Therefore, a lot of research has been published about seafarers on windjammers. Also the more recent years of motor ships have seen extensive documentation and scrutiny. The era of steamships is also interesting, since the decades witnesses massive changes in seafarers' living conditions and working patterns. Communal sleeping and living spaces ("forecastles") were replaced by cabins for one or two crew members. In addition, facilities such as toilets and washing rooms were better on new vessels.

When describing the everyday life of sailors, Kallberg uses plenty of maritime historical and ethnological literature, and her take on previous research is adequately critical. The reader really benefits from the depth of Kallberg's knowledge of the topic. The introductory part also includes interesting and useful compilations and discussion of several theoretical and methodological issues. These include ethnological discussions of identity and especially of phenomenology. Unfortunately, the concept of identity or identification is not explicitly discussed through the text. All things considered, Kallberg's hard work pays off. Her thesis includes important new knowledge about seafarers' experiences. In addition, the compact and clear theoretical and methodological discussions can be inspiring, for instance, for many researchers writing their PhD thesis or masters' degree students. Hopefully, we will later see a popular version of this book with plenty of photos from different museum collections.

Tytti Steel, Helsinki

Pilgrimage in Norway

Hannah Kristine Bjørke Lunde, Pilgrimage Matters: Administrative and Semiotic Landscape of Contemporary Pilgrimage Realisations in Norway. University of Oslo, 2022. Diss.

■ Pilgrimage in Norway and other countries across northern Europe has made a surprising come-back. During the 16th century the Protestant Reformation swept away pilgrimage shrines and the network of routes trod by devotees across northern Europe and it was only during the late 19th century that pilgrimage emerged from the shadows in England, for example, helped by the revival of ritualism led by the 'High Church/Anglo-Catholic' wing of the Church of England and increasing toleration of a Catholic minority, swelled by migration from neighbouring Ireland. In other areas of northern Europe where Lutheran and Calvinist traditions were strong, the revival of pilgrimage has been more recent.

Until the 1970s the academic study of religious pilgrimage in the West largely focussed on the Middle Ages. Historians and theologians produced a range of studies concerning the emergence and rapid expansion of Christian pilgrimage shrines and routes across western and central Europe. Although researchers examined the political and cultural processes associated with the Protestant Reformation and the Catholic Counter-Reformation during the 16th century, the disappearance of most shrines in northern Europe and the decline of routes to Rome and Santiago de Compostela encouraged the assumption that contemporary pilgrimage was confined to Catholic Europe and had little significance for a secular, 'modern' Europe.

The situation has changed dramatically during the last forty years. There has been a massive expansion of those visiting pilgrimage shrines globally. Old routes such as those across France and Spain to Santiago and the Via Francigena to Rome have been revived, new ones invented in Latin America and even in countries shaped by the Protestant Reformation such as the St Olav route across Norway to Trondheim. Looking be-

yond western Christianity we can see the revival of Eastern Orthodox pilgrimage in the former socialist countries of central and eastern Europe and Russia, the increasing popularity among Muslims of performing hajj to Mecca and Medina, the attraction of Hindu pilgrimage to local, regional and national shrines across India, the throngs visiting the Sikh holy city of Amritsar or the visitors to Buddhist sacred centres across south-east Asia, China and Japan. At the same time, other forms of pilgrimage have also rapidly developed. These involve journeys to sites associated with iconic figures, viz. Lenin's mausoleum in Moscow or the grave of Elvis Presley at Memphis, Tennessee, or such tragic events as Auschwitz and the First World War battlefields in Belgium and France.

The contemporary significance of pilgrimage is a complex phenomenon, therefore, since it is shaped by social, economic, cultural and political processes. Religious pilgrimage reveals the interweaving of different interests such as religious elites, those working in the travel and tourism industry and other areas of the service sector such as shops, hotels and restaurants, and is promoted through global communications powered by the internet. Hence, attempts to separate the 'sacred' from the 'secular' fail to understand the intimate relationship between the two. Religious pilgrimage is more than a quest for some sacred centre divorced from the secular world.

While the Lutheran Church in Norway has been closely involved in the development of the St Olav Ways to Trondheim from the 1990s, Lisbeth Mikaelsson and others have shown that this development has been encouraged by a mixture of influences – the support provided by government agencies at European, national and local levels, a long established interest in the natural environment linked to more recent assumptions concerning the therapeutic advantages of walking, the growth of the travel and tourism industry linked to a burgeoning travel literature and the media, as well as alternative spiritual beliefs and practices often categorised as 'New Age'. The development of the St Olav Ways not only illustrates the complex mixture of agencies involved within Norway

but also more general cultural, social, economic and political processes associated with the rising popularity of walking the 'camino' network of routes converging on Santiago de Compostela in north-western Spain.

Hannah Lunde's thesis explores this complexity through a careful analysis of rich ethnographic data which has been collected over a number of years and draws on her own walking along the routes and volunteer working at a pilgrimage centre. She not only researched the St Olav Ways but also two maritime pilgrimage projects – the Project Sunniva Route and the Coastal Pilgrimage Route. The thesis consists of eight chapters and follows the conventional format of an introduction, conceptual framework and methods, followed by chapters that focus on these three routes, a penultimate chapter which discusses pilgrimage landscapes and a conclusion. The text is illustrated by maps, official documentation and photographs and makes good use of Hannah Lunde's personal involvement as a walker and volunteer.

The thesis demonstrates the importance of working across disciplinary boundaries, i.e. ethnology, anthropology and folklore studies. She uses this eclectic approach to explore the important role played by bureaucracy – an important corrective to the dominant focus in pilgrimage studies on people's motives and shared meanings – and how this is linked to the signs and symbols promoting these three routes. Her research also combines an analysis of land pilgrimage with maritime pilgrimage which is attracting research interest not only in Norway but other countries across Europe from Croatia to Ireland. The thesis, therefore, helps us to locate Norway and the Scandinavian region within the wider context of European pilgrimage and how the development of pilgrimage routes has been encouraged by the Council of Europe as part of its attempt to promote European identity. It also engages with the role of religious institutions, the decline of hostility towards pilgrimage among Protestant churches in northern Europe and the building of ecumenical networks.

From a comparative point of view, developments in Norway are strikingly different from

what has been happening in most other countries in Protestant northern Europe. The bureaucratic support which pilgrimage has received from the nationstate at central, regional and local level contrasts markedly from what has been happening in Britain, Ireland, Estonia and Latvia, for example. In Britain pilgrimage routes have been developed by entrepreneurs at the local level with no funding from nationstate institutions. In the case of the most active group – the British Pilgrimage Trust – the emphasis on inclusivity has encouraged those who see pilgrimage as a 'spiritual' rather than a 'religious' quest reflecting the influence of 'New Age' beliefs and values.

In the English section of Britain the Anglican Church has only recently got involved and maritime pilgrimage has yet to emerge, although it has long been practised in Roman Catholic Ireland at the local level. Pilgrimage has also become even more multicultural with the emergence of Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist and Jain shrines reflecting the country's increasing cultural diversity and providing again an interesting contrast to the dominance of the nationstate and the Lutheran church in Norway.

As Hannah Lunde's thesis suggests, the differences between Norway and other European countries like Britain may be partly explained in terms of the 'heritagisation' of religion. The Norwegian government appears to have not only worked more closely with the majority church in promoting pilgrimage routes as part of national cultural heritage but also provided the flexibility for a broad range of agents to engage in pilgrimage to historical shrines. Lots to learn!!
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Life-Modes in a Changing World Order

Niels Jul Nielsen, Livsformer i en verden under forandring (Life-Modes in a Changing World Order). Diss., University of Copenhagen 2021, defended September 2022, consisting of a summary, five articles (2013–18), a book (2004), and the nine book chapters reviewed here, to be published 2023. Saxo-Instituttet, University of Copenhagen 2023. ISBN 87-7289-8623.

■ The main part of Niels Jul Nielsen's doctoral dissertation consists of nine chapters, which together make up half up of the book *Life-Modes in a Changing World Order,* which he publishes here together with the Danish ethnologist Thomas Højrup. In Denmark, a doctoral dissertation represents the highest academic degree achievable. It has been awarded six times during the 62 years of ethnology as a university discipline in Denmark.

The nine chapters explore how various forms of cultural practices, understood as distinct life-modes with different ideas of what makes up "the good life", relate to each other and within a broader social context, and how the totality of life-modes embedded in the industrial society has changed over time, putting the main emphasis on the transformation that has taken place since the end of the Cold War, marked by neoliberalization and globalization. The exploration of this wide-ranging and complex field is based on thousands of pages of interviews and observations, mainly in a particular region of Denmark where a similar study was carried out more than 40 years ago, thus enabling a deep historical frame of reference. Fieldwork has been conducted among families, companies and public authorities and with people on all steps of the social ladder. The global dimension, crucial for state forms and life-modes in the fluctuating state system, is concretely illustrated using China's development and especially its relationship with Danish manufacturing industries in China, where extensive fieldwork has also been undertaken.

Jul Nielsen's dissertation also consists of five articles (2013–18) about migrant workers on the Danish labour market and a book from 2004, *Mellem storpolitik og værkstedsgulv – den danske arbejder før, under og efter Den kolde krig* (376 pp.). In the book from 2004, Jul Nielsen explores workers' culture from the 1930s to the turn of the millennium, not only from "inside and below" (based on both extensive archive material and fieldwork accounts mainly from Denmark's largest industrial plant, Burmeister & Wain) but also from "outside and above", thus exploring the

role of "the working class" within the perspective of the developing Danish welfare state (and in relation to welfare politics more generally in "the West"). A main result is that through most of the twentieth century, the conditions for ordinary working people had the highest political priority in the effort to "immunize" the population against communism and socialism in the ideological struggle of the West against the "workers' states" in the East (a state of affairs with decisive consequences also for other life-modes, such as owners and managers, that had to take the strength of wage-earners into account in their own everyday practices). The last part of the book describes how the end of Cold War paves the way for globalization and neoliberalism – a development that is followed by an increasing marginalization of workers. In the new world order, career-people and entrepreneurs come into the political focus, because they are regarded as being able to deliver the creativity and unique solutions that are required in the knowledge-economy of the "competition state".

The reality of a post-Cold War labour market with increased precarity and occasional clashes between non-national and national workers is under scrutiny in the five articles published between 2013 and 2018. The articles – three of them co-authored with colleagues – are based on fieldwork accounts from building sites and farms where non-national workers are employed, as well as from the families of some of these, mainly eastern European, workers.

When a dissertation, as in Jul Nielsen's case, is a compilation of separate texts, it has to be supplemented with what is called a summarizing exposition. Thus the dissertation also consists of a 77-page paper, *Livsformer i en verden under forandring* (accessible here).[1] Here Jul Nielsen condenses his research agenda over the past twenty years to "the coexistence of different cultural practices in changeable social wholes" and argues for its roots in classical ethnology. His point of departure in workers' culture from the middle of the nineteenth century till today has been broadened significantly with the nine chapters mentioned

above, which also includes analyses of specialists, managers, owners (both owner-managers and investors), and public employees of different kinds. The analyses are built up as both company and family "portraits" where the coexistence of different cultural practices and ideas of "the good life" are seen within a work and a family setting. Different companies are compared, and he shows convincingly how the different life-mode priorities, for instance in a factory or on a modern farm, constantly alter the total landscape for other life-modes involved. One chapter – analysing a high-end company – develops new concepts to scrutinize how "career professionals" (i.e., the ones that continuously contribute the unique qualifications that keep a company afloat) make up a highly composite group, from those who disrupt the agenda to specialists deeply absorbed in developing new solutions. It will be interesting to follow the fruitfulness of these concepts in the future.

With Jul Nielsen's emphasis on understanding everyday cultural practices as necessarily dependent on a "larger whole", and vice versa, he has dedicated much effort to exploring the practices that (together with elected politicians) "run the state". Continuing other scholars' work on a "civil servant life-mode", and in dialogue with the Foucauldian governance tradition, he proposes three necessary and interdependent "dimensions" of practices required to connect (potential contradictions between) the many different "wills" of a society (its contrasting, perhaps clashing, "interests") with the one political "will" that continuously has to be configured (in spite of instant inner controversies) in order to constitute a viable state-subject. The dissertation contains several analyses of processes of governance – or "interpellation" as Jul Nielsen calls it – in both Denmark and China and on both macro- and micro-level, for instance with vulnerable citizens; and comprehends the complexity of governance in the present era where public services and political agendas are often carried out by non-public actors such as NGOs or private businesses. Continued empirical challenging will test whether these new concepts contain the decisive and necessary inner interdependency that makes

them scientifically consistent. And time will show if they become a new standard of understanding, just as Jul Nielsen's analyses in the 2004 book of the connection between the conditions of workers – with decisive corollaries for the other life-modes – and the external milieu of the state(s) has today become generally accepted.

In all of Jul Nielsen's works he discusses contributions from other scholars, such as in connection with the concepts of "identity" (introduced in the 1990s as a more appropriate term than "class", but, according to Jul Nielsen, with the risk of ending up in a postmodern accumulation of any imaginable identity feature) and "transnationalism" (according to Jul Nielsen criticizing, rightly, a too narrow focus on national "containers" as quick explanatory solution but failing to substantiate why and how survivable state-subjects are, nonetheless, impossible to ignore as providing the basic preconditions for social life, also in a "transnational" era). Thus, for everyone interested in everyday practice relating to work, family and community life, to subjectivation, identity, discourse, governance, interpellation, state and the transformation of the cultural history, Niels Jul Nielsen's comprehensive work can be warmly recommended. It stands out in its incessant dedication to understanding not only the complexity of everyday practices but also how these necessarily – if their viability is to be explained – must be related to a "larger whole".

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Affect in Online Hate Speech

Karin Sandell, Parasiter och "bättre folk": Affekt i näthat mot det svenska i Finland. Åbo Akademis förlag, Åbo 2022. 198 pp. Diss. ISBN 978-952-389-007-7.

■ This new dissertation, written by the folklorist Karin Sandell, is a contribution to the ever-expanding study of online hate speech. It is titled *Parasites and "better people": Affect in online hate speech directed at the Swedish in Finland* and is an analysis of the discourse on the web

forum Suomi24. Finland has two national languages, and the hate speech posts directed against the Swedish-speaking minority are what Sandell terms "continuations of a dream of a monolingual Finnish nation originating from a time long before Finland's independence from Russia in 1917" (p. ii). Sandell is inspired by theories of affect in the cultural sciences, and sees hate speech as an affective, performative folkloristic genre. The dissertation develops a model for analysing affect, and analyses the performance and performativity of emotion and populist discourse online, with particular attention paid to intersectional categories of language, ethnicity, class and gender.

There is a general understanding that public debate has grown harder and more populist in recent years. Hate speech is very visible online but it feeds off offline events and also triggers offline speech and action. In recent years, the issue of free speech versus the protection of vulnerable groups, questions concerning the regulations and laws of online platforms, have been placed high on the agenda across the world. It is an obvious responsibility for scholars in cultural studies to participate in these debates with sound knowledge and analysis. What is hate speech, why do people participate in it, what role does it play in everyday life, and what effect does it have on our societies? There has been a tendency in folklore studies to focus on the benign and the beautiful sides of folk culture, but it is also our responsibility to look the malignant and ugly in the eye. In choosing the topic as well as the theoretical foundation for the dissertation, Sandell places herself in the midst of a lively ongoing debate.

One of the strengths of the work is how Sandell articulates her paths through the existing literature and clearly explains why she has made the theoretical and methodological choices she has made. This also means that her chapter on theory and method will make for an excellent introduction to readers unfamiliar with the affective turn. She describes the writings on affect by such authors as Ahmed, Massumi and Wetherell, and shows how new theoretical developments justify the use of the relatively new term *affect* in the study of emotion and social performance.

The dissertation is also an important contribution to the field of folkloristics in the sense that it takes seriously the question of what constitutes folklore: transmission and the creation of tradition through repetition. The dissertation uses concepts of genre and intertextuality to understand the phenomenon of hate speech, the play in-between context, genre forms and content (p. 47). Sandell shows how online hate speech can be productively understood as a performative genre. The writers of hate online break into performance and use a variety of affective utterances to get attention and reactions.

The dissertation delves into questions of vernacular literacy and the importance of the online worlds in our daily lives. Sandell shows how hate can be expressed in many ways, and often in a dry and objective form, or through humour and irony. She shows how the online posters manage to avoid breaking with the forum rules but still express stereotypical and extremely negative notions of Swedish-speaking Finns.

The hate directed towards the Swedish-speaking population in Finland has many similarities to the hate directed at other minorities around the world. It is related to the idea of the nation as a unity of language, people, and land. The utopia of a pure nation requires a homogenous society. Sandell shows how the hate speech in her data express a longing for a heteronormative, conservative Finland.

Sandell bases her work on a popular discussion forum on the website Suomi24 from 2015 to 2017, but also uses discourse from other sources such as news media to find and understand online hate speech. Her data are rich, and the dissertation creates a multifaceted picture of the creativity and intertextuality that goes into hateful performances online. For each specific case she presents, she dives into the specificities of the multitudes of e.g. metaphors, references to popular culture (such as the Moomin, p. 88) and uses and understandings of class, gender, language and ethnicity. I imagine that the work must have been heavy at times, working with hate that is directed at your own in-group. (Sandell addresses this question towards the end of her text, stating that others have commented on the fact that she herself is in the target group of many of the statements she is analysing. I hope she follows up on her hint that she may work on that question in the future.) For those who post hate speech online, Sandell writes, the important thing is to get reactions, to express emotion but also to stir emotions in the audience (p. 47). Even though the topic is a sensitive and heated one, Sandell manages to keep her promise (p. 35) of steering clear of making statements about the writers as individuals. Her interest lies in the perceptions of Finland as a nation, the Finnish, the Swedish and so on that the online posts reproduce – and how they do just that.

The dissertation is an important contribution to our understanding of the links between historical antagonisms and today's online worlds, to our awareness of the intertextuality of online speech, and last but not least how widespread hate speech is and how it spills over into offline everyday private and political speech and action. As Sandell writes, the content of online discussions does not stay within the "walls" of the online forum, but leaks into both public and private quarters, "echoes in Parliament and around coffee tables" (p. 159).

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Reviews

Book Reviews

Objects in Flight

Mirja Arnshav & Anneli Karlsson, Föremål på flykt. Nordic Academic Press, Lund 2022. 160 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-89361-15-7.

■ In 2016, the Danish parliament enacted the infamous "jewellery law", which allowed the Danish police to appropriate possessions of refugees for payment of the costs they caused the Danish state (for accommodation, health service etc.). The law included the right to seize jewellery from the refugees, which gave the law its popular name. The law was heavily criticized, both internationally and in Denmark. The supporters of the law defended it against the criticism; they described it as a purely rational economic solution: it only concerned importance of refugees being able to earn their own living, just like native Danes. But the arguments of the critics of the law – some of them refugees themselves or descendants of refugees – made it clear that they saw something which the politicians arguing rationally did not see: that belongings of refugees, often the very few things they are able to take with them from their home, are not just any objects. They are not primarily property with a specific economic value.

This is relevant to bear in mind when reading the book *Föremål på flykt* ("Objects in Flight") by Mirja Arnshav (text) and Anneli Karlsson (pictures), about objects connected to refugees fleeing from the Baltic states to Sweden during World War II.

The book has an academic connection, albeit quite slight. In the "Epilogue", the generalizing discussion of the work at the end, the authors refer to a present tendency in historical research to focus on physical *objects*. Within that research, objects are acknowledged both as parts of the historical course of events and as bearers of memories and experience. They constitute source material enabling the scholars to bring to the fore previously neglected or unnoticed stories. The authors also note that objects tend to affect people's minds,

provoke thoughts and make the past present. They claim that the objects in the book "all have a story to tell", and that they arouse images of the events close to the actual reality (pp. 147–148).

The book is not an academic work, however, even though it is published by Nordic Academic Press. There are no research questions, no arguments, and no scholarly conclusions. The book is entirely dominated by photographs, mainly pictures of individual objects. The text in the book does not serve the purpose of analysing or discussing the objects in an academic way. Instead, the main idea is obviously to let the objects speak for themselves as much as possible, with short pieces of text only as background for an understanding. Nevertheless, the texts accompanying the pictures, in all their brevity, often contribute considerably to our understanding of the objects – and thereby to the historical situation and the experience of the refugees.

Apart from the pictures of the objects, there are also full double-page pictures of the nature where the journey of the refugees across the sea took place. Those pictures are new, by Anneli Karlsson, and, in a contrastive way, they bear witness to the tragedy of the refugees through their mostly idyllic character. They demonstrate, without being over-explicit, that the tragedies of the book take place in the same reality that we see around us every day. These people lived in the same well-known reality as ordinary Swedes, Estonians, and Latvians today, and these pictures do indeed bring the reality of the refugees in the 1940s closer to us. The pictures show us beaches and coastlines on Saaremaa, in the Riga Gulf, the Stockholm Archipelago etc. The scenery is beautiful and friendly, as it must mostly have been in the 1940s, when it was the place of terrifying tragedies.

Thus, not all the pictures in the book represent physical objects. Another type of pictures consists of a number of large close-ups of still living individuals who experienced the journeys as refugees across the sea in the 1940s. Each picture is accompanied by a short quote, usually two or three sentences long, describing a memory from the

flight. An old woman remembers her embarrassment when she had to urinate in her pants on the boat during the journey. She was then four years old (pp. 108–109). An old man remembers how the biscuits which his mother had sent with him at his departure were polluted by oily water at sea and could not be eaten (pp. 100–101). These cases are typical of these individual memories. They might be described as remarkably trivial. These survivors do not remember themselves as parts of a large human tragedy or a historical event, and they do not even remember any agony of death, despite the extremely dangerous conditions. The memories are instead entirely individual and particular, focusing on trivial details which often underscore how young these refugees were, and precisely through their individual and trivial character, these memories make the larger human tragedy of the period intensely alive and close to us.

The main text in the chapters of the book is generally short and occupies only a small part of the space of the book in relation to the pictures.

The first two chapters ("The Great Flight" and "Time of Unrest") give a general background to the flight, providing a historical survey of the events from the independence period of the Baltic states in the 1930s to the war and the Soviet and German occupation in the 1940s. While the description of the political history is somewhat superficial and the history of the flight itself only provides a very basic background, the part describing the non-political contacts between Sweden and Estonia in the 1930s is highly interesting and probably includes facts unknown to most readers today. It shows that there were intense contacts during the period, not least regarding tourism. Estonia became "Sweden's first Majorca", and there were daily flights between the countries as well as several boat lines from Sweden to Tallinn and Pärnu (p. 7). This paints a background to the refugee situation in the 1940s and also creates a total contrast to the Soviet era, when these highly developed contacts were almost completely broken. For the Estonians in Swedish exile, that situation was always seen as an anomaly, and they found

the general Swedish acceptance of the status quo difficult to understand. A look at the situation in the 1940s shows that they were right. The lack of close contacts between Sweden and Estonia in the Soviet era was indeed the exception, not the rule, in the history of the two countries.

Other chapters are more thematic in their focus: on their departure from the home ("Breaking Up and Taking Farewell", pp. 37–56), the various kinds of luggage of the refugees ("Light and Heavy Baggage", pp. 57–74), an individual case study ("One of a Thousand Boats", pp. 75–90), the boat trip across the water ("Over the Sea", pp. 91–116), the arrival in Sweden and the first period in the new country ("In Harbour", pp. 117–146). The last chapter, "Epilogue", summarizes the book and places its theme, as mentioned above, in a general discussion and scholarly tendency of focusing on objects (p. 147-149).

However, the dominant feature of the book is, as mentioned, the pictures of the objects. It must be mentioned that the pictures are of an excellent quality and have an artistic value in themselves. Here, however, I will focus on what they and their accompanying texts communicate.

Many of the objects on the pictures are accompanied by texts which briefly explain the background of the object in question and the significance it had for its owner. A considerable number of the objects belonged to children and helped to console and comfort them during the journey over the sea. A teddy-bear on p. 122 is said to have belonged to a seven-year-old girl, who had kept it close to her during the whole boat journey; on arrival in Sweden she was forced to hand it over for disinfection. The textile dog Tommi on p. 16 belonged to a boy who brought it with him to Sweden. It was named after a real dog in Tallinn; at the departure, the boy had to leave him and never saw him again, but he kept the textile Tommi. A guestbook on p. 45 was one of the very few things a Latvian family was able to bring with them when they fled; the short accompanying text describes the chaotic situation at their departure. A sewing machine on p. 42 has its own story, and again the text depicts the chaos of the flight sit-

uation and the particular circumstances in which the object on the picture was saved during the flight. A watch on p. 44 was a father's gift to his son at the departure of the latter. They never met again, but the watch was important for keeping the memory of the father alive; in a few lines the text follows up this story of a tragic separation by describing how his grandchildren much later were able to visit the family's farm in Estonia, but then the man left behind was long since dead. Such stories are individual, but they also shed light on the tragedy of the time in general.

A picture of silver spoons on p. 126 is accompanied by more general comments. Objects of this kind are among the very few ones with any economic value which the refugees were able to bring with them from their home. The text notes that the spoons in principle could have been used for payment in Sweden, but also that the owners nevertheless normally chose to keep them. In practice, these and other objects were primarily important for keeping the memory of the home alive. A photo album and some of its contents can be seen on pp. 132–137. The accompanying text comments on its importance for transmitting the family stories over the generations and also keeping the bright, pleasant memories of the home country alive (p. 132). A picture of a christening robe on p. 139 is accompanied by the comment that this and many other objects chosen to be brought on the journey might seem to be an irrational choice; but such objects were connected important moments in the family history and served as a link between the generations.

Some of the objects of the book more directly bear witness to the historical situation, albeit connected with individual memories. An Estonian school diploma from 1941 on p. 27 contains pictures of Lenin and Stalin, reminding of the period of the first Soviet occupation. A picture on pp. 22–23 of a couple of stamps and banknotes from one single wallet illustrates the turbulent changes in the political situation – German stamps with a portrait of Hitler, Soviet stamps with communist symbols, and Kroon banknotes from the pre-war Estonian independence are found together.

Föremål på flykt is a book combining artistic quality – the beauty of the pictures – with texts which are both informative and emotionally touching. It is precisely the interplay of pictures and texts that constitutes the overall success of the work. Pictures of often trivial and in themselves neutral objects are charged with both emotional meaning and a historical source value, especially with the help of individual stories. Through the particular and individual cases, the pictures shed light on a whole historical period and, although that is not explicitly mentioned by the authors, on the situation of refugees in general. Although the book cannot be described as academic, it certainly illustrates the relevance of the scholarly trend of studying physical objects as sources for the past and its humans.

Daniel Sävborg, Tartu

The Swedish Theory of Love

Henrik Berggren & Lars Trägårdh, The Swedish Theory of Love. Individualism and Social Trust in Modern Sweden. University of Washington Press 2022. 381 pp. ISBN 978-0-295-75055-2.

■ *The Swedish Theory of Love* is an English language version of a book first published in Swedish in 2006 [second edition in 2015] topped and tailed with a new Preface, Introduction and Coda. It examines the character, origins, and some consequences of 'the Swedish theory of love' and 'statist individualism' and considers their possible future. The Swedish theory of love is the name the book gives to the idea that true love is possible only when given freely between individuals who are not dependent on each other. It's one example of what the authors argue is Swedes' propensity to value personal freedom and believe that 'only autonomous subjects can meet as equals'. This raises what they call 'the Swedish paradox' – i.e. why people so keen on personal independence, constructed a modern state with the power to impinge on so many areas of their lives. The answer is 'statist individualism', a system in which the state delivers extensive and substan-

tially egalitarian welfare directly to individuals *as individuals*, thus freeing them from particularistic, dependence on specific others. Here the book's subtitle 'Individualism and Social Trust in Modern Sweden' becomes relevant, because the system's functioning requires people trust both each other and the state. The latter should be a non-corrupt and impartial deliverer of what its citizens want, not the servant of particular limited interest groups. And people must feel confident that everyone who can, is contributing and there is no free-riding. At one level, statist individualism must rest on a kind of national collective solidarity.

The authors briefly contrast the Swedish, German and American welfare systems. The latter, emphasizing freedom from the state, pushes people to rely on help from family and their local community when needed, or, if they can afford it, buy support in the market. Receipt of the residual-level state benefits is often stigmatized. Germany, meanwhile offers its citizens more extensive help, but typically delivered in relation to the individual's family or other intermediate group membership. At various points, reasons for differences between these three countries' systems are touched upon. [Interested readers might usefully compare Berggren and Trägårdh's analysis with Esping-Andersen's 1990 classic, *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism.*]

Part One broadly sets up the theme of statist individualism, presenting it as a particular kind of response to the universal dilemma of relating the individual to society. Kant, Rousseau and Tocqueville are referenced here. These chapters provide information on pre-modern Sweden. They describe the distinctiveness of its independent peasantry, free from feudal obligations to a landed aristocracy, politically represented in its own estate and [as depicted again in Part Two] with a family system less restrictive than that in some other parts of Europe. The young had comparatively free choice of sexual partners and were expected to leave the parental home on marriage. A discussion, new to the second edition, of Lutheranism [and then of 19th century revival-

ism] at the end of Part Three, provides a different example of individualism in pre-modern Sweden. Established by Gustav Vasa as the state religion in the early 16th century, institutionally it balanced a centralizing tendency with the local freedom of parishioners to select their own clergy. Doctrinally, salvation was through faith alone, but dutiful hard work and probity in dealings with others encouraged. In line with the assumption that the faithful could directly connect to the deity without clerical mediation, the scriptures were made available in the vernacular, and literacy encouraged as facilitating independent access to the word of an all-powerful God before whom each individual essentially stood alone. However, Berggren and Trägårdh also suggest that 'the primacy accorded to reading, rested on the existence of a privileged text that, though open to private interpretations, was not allowed to give rise to public divisions that might affect the collective solidarity'. If it seems odd so much time is spent referencing the past in a book whose subtitle refers to 'Modern Sweden', the reader will soon recognize that its authors want to challenge the idea that contemporary Swedes' individualistic tendencies are the *outcome* of the 20th century social-democratic welfare regime. They aim to show this trait long predated and contributed to the establishment of statist individualism.

Parts Two, 'Sweden Imagined' and Three, 'Sweden Realized', are the book's main core. The former covers the period from the early 19th century to the 1930s when P. A. Hansson's Social Democratic party began to realize his vision of Sweden as a People's Home/*Folkhem*. Part Three first takes the story forward to the late 1960s and '70s, when some might claim social democratic welfarism achieved its fullest flowering. It then shows how this produced, in generally more uncertain times, challenges and possibly retreat. [Therborn has spoken of a 'socio-economic counter reformation'.] As the subtitles suggest, Part Two focuses mainly on *ideas* about the Swedish national character and desirable forms of social relations, subscribed to before statist individualism was achieved. 'Sweden Realized' provides

some indication of what was actually put in place, and to a limited extent, the *processes* by which this occurred, although also showing that debate about the connection between state policies and good social relations continued.

Part Two's chapters 4–6 focus on the views of Geijer, Almqvist and the slightly later Strindberg and Ellen Key and shows them all to be theorizing how individuals should relate to each other and the collectivity. To gloss over the many subtleties, it seems that late [but not early] Geijer and the others, conceptualized individuals as the prime building blocks of society. Geijer, and Almqvist accepted some limits to individual freedom, focusing on people's right to live life as they pleased, within the private realm, whilst respecting the overarching rule of law. Strindberg and Key, however, with Nietzschean undertones, tended to reject societal constraint, at least for particularly talented individuals [whom Strindberg, but not Key, thought were most likely to be men]. The former's literary works and Almqvist's novel *Sarah Videbeck* [whose plot is analyzed in some detail] show characters fighting to liberate themselves from what they perceive as suffocating bourgeoise family norms, in order to realize their true selves and, in Sarah's case, experience freely given love.

That there were such bourgeoise family forms to be fought, shows premodern peasant norms weren't seamlessly adopted by all sections of nineteenth century society. Berggren and Trägårdh speak of a reconfiguration of family relations inward, but also propose that the small size and late development of Sweden's urban middle-class meant it was more shallowly rooted and offered fewer mitigating attractions than some of its European counterparts. It was thus particularly vulnerable to attack by those who could contrast it with their image of the traditional freedom-loving peasant. The latter's resilience and self-sufficiency had earlier also been used by Geijer and Almqvist when seeking an emblematic, positive *national* characteristic, in the wake of the destabilizing effect on national self-conception of the recent loss of Finland to Sweden, introduction of

a new constitution and imported monarch in the wake of the Napoleonic wars.

By the end of the century, however, during another period of nationalistic concern in Europe and when Norway was seeking to separate from Sweden, right-wing theorists like Kjellén and Sundbärg described in chapter 7, elevated the collective above the individual, drawing their heroes from a past of aristocratic military commanders rather than peasants fighting to retain their freedoms. However, Berggren and Trägårdh present these nationalists as often disappointed with their country's citizens, criticizing them for insufficient social solidarity or attachment to their homeland, as evidenced by a propensity to emigrate elsewhere. Thus these theorists also recognized a solitary tendency in their countrymen, although they regretted rather than celebrated it.

Chapter eight shows how Hansson, on gaining the premiership in 1932, aimed for a particular kind of national solidarity, at odds with the assumptions of the Marxist-influenced radicals who identified with an *international* proletariat, saw socialism as inimical to the private ownership of capital, and the state as inevitably an instrument of the ruling class. Hansson by contrast saw the Swedish state, with its tradition of relatively non-corrupt administrative efficiency, as a potential impartial instrument to be used to create a more equal society, and deliver good living standards for all Swedes, especially the working class. The *Folkhem* was to replace unproductive opposition with a unifying national consensus which might even allow labour to reach a satisfactory accommodation with capital without expropriating the latter. This view of the state as a potential tool for mitigating economic problems wasn't unique to Sweden at the time – both Roosevelt and Hitler used public works programs to reduce the effects of the 1930s depression. The latter's fascist regime theorized the nation to which his policies were addressed, in racial terms. But the Swedish *Folkhem* project [which might also be described as a specifically national kind of socialism] mainly understood collective identity as based on a common history and culture rather than a distinc-

tive race. An early advert for the Social Democrat [Workers] Party, pictures a direct line of 'succession' through various 'rebel' figures including the early peasant leader Engelbrekt, to their first prime minister, Hjalmar Branting, although the retrospective legitimations later began to be replaced by representations of Sweden as a distinctly modern, forward-looking nation.

Berggren and Trägårdh see Geijer's understanding of the historical continuity of Swedish culture, particularly the peasant-related belief in individual freedom and respect for rule-based law and order, as an influence on Hansson, via the standard history teaching texts in school. Besides his own poor working-class upbringing, they also point to his experience of the Co-operative social movement, which they present as combining aspirations for individual self-improvement with collective solidarity. It was just one of the *folkrörelser*/popular movements, that began to appear in the mid 19th century, which besides their ostensive aims of providing welfare support or education for their members, or promoting temperance and non-conformist religiosity, also offered opportunities for democratic self-organization in the years before universal franchise [for which they also fought]. By the time this was achieved [1921], around 25% of Swedes were connected to one or other popular movement, which the authors note offered a practical base for, and schooling in, collective action. However, the exact nature of connection between the *folkrörelser*, particularly the trade union movement and the Social Democratic political party is not spelled out. Maybe this is taken for granted by the Swedish reader.

Part Three's initial chapters examine how relations between state, family and individuals were discussed from the 1930s onwards, cross-referencing this with the views of some of the theorists presented in Part Two. [Luther's opinions on family relations are thrown into the mix in chapter 13.] We see that children, because of their inevitable dependence on others, pose a problem for those valuing individual autonomy, because they threaten to compromise the freedom of their carers – typically women. Berggren and Trägårdh

suggest that whilst Strindberg felt 'a man's right to seek self-realization at the price of his family was inviolable', he would only countenance a mother abandoning her children if serving some greater collective good. Earlier, Geijer, though arguing for equal rights to self-realisation, nonetheless saw the mother's role as so important that women would, or should not want to, relinquish it. Similarly, Key presented childrearing as a mode of self-realisation for women – one in which they could foster the next generation's inner self-reliance. Later, social reformer Alva Myrdal, also accepted a gendered division of childcare, but not women's total exclusion from work outside the home. She envisaged many of them sandwiching a period of primary childcaring between an earlier and later spell in the workforce. Worried about falling birth rates in the 1930s, she wanted the state, for the good not just of the child, but society as a whole, to take an increased interest in how the young were raised, proposing greater public supervision and support of children's health and more nursery provisioning. Less attractively, she was also tempted by the idea that some were so unsuited to raise, or even bring children into the world, that they should be prevented from doing so.

But none of these moves really solved a problem that Almqvist had earlier recognised. That is that, even if the responsibility for childcare is freely accepted and socially valued, it can make those providing it dependent on their partners if it deprives them of independent access to economic resources. Berggren and Trägårdh show that in the years after the second world war, two partly related solutions to this were investigated by a plethora of governmental and other committees, advocated by a range of interest groups and variously actioned from the late 1960s onwards. The first possibility was to allow carers to escape unsatisfactory domestic situations, by offering direct state support to those bringing up children on their own. The second was to provide encouragement for women to earn their own income and the means by which, even as the prime child-carer in the household, they could do so. Both options

challenged what had become the typical family pattern of husband as wage-earner and woman as home-maker, but when labour was in short supply in the 1950s and '60s, could be presented as good for women and the national economy without threatening men's employment opportunities. Thus after considerable debate in the 1970s, the unit of taxation became the individual rather than the household, removing the possibility of a wife's wages pushing a couple's joint income into a higher tax bracket and discouraging her labour market entry. Meanwhile the possibility of taking up a job was facilitated by rapid growth in subsidized pre-school child care – sometimes presented as better quality than a family could provide. The presumed independence of individuals was also underlined by ending widow's pensions and decoupling student grants from family income.

However, there were limits to these trends, meaning that not everything reformers had hoped for was achieved. Eva Moberg failed to get the general reduction in the length of the working day, which she had advocated in the 1960s as a means of encouraging more men to help with childcare. This may have contributed to significant numbers of women now choosing to work part-time, often in less well paid 'caring' employment in the public sector, to better balance work and family life. And, in a significant deviation from targeting benefits at the individual, the later [1974] generous paid parental leave provision was allocated to parents as a unit, to divide as they saw fit, resulting in it mostly being taken up by mothers [subsequently modified to designate one, and in 2015, three months, specifically for fathers]. Berggren and Trägårdh acknowledge Sweden's high placing on international comparisons of gender equality, but nonetheless conclude, 'if there is any sense in which [Swedish males] have become demasculinized' by Sweden's statist individualist family policies 'it is primarily in that they have shaken off their role as family breadwinner, not in having relieved women of any of their childcare and other responsibilities….. Statist individualism', they suggest, 'has liberated men from their traditional role as head of the family, provider and

protector' without producing full gender equality in either the workplace or the home. They also show some critics of these state policies arguing these had positively harmed women by devaluing the home-making role and almost pushing once contented housewives into employment which often offered little intrinsic satisfaction. Meanwhile, they claimed, children were also suffering when forced to spend a high proportion of each day separated from their families in impersonal environments detrimental to their development. As the whole apparatus of publicly funded state support for childrearing increased, there were also concerns about how its financing could be sustained.

Chapter twelve moves on to examine the general debates emerging at the end of the 1960s about how Swedish society was developing. As the authors perhaps insufficiently bring out, the '60s and '70s were a period of radical and countercultural movements in many Western countries, with activists often influenced by what they saw happening outside their nation's borders. In Sweden the social democratic project might be described as moving towards its zenith. There was a rapid growth in the public sector, raised social insurance offerings – and the introduction of unprecedently high taxes. But this led to some from both sides of the political spectrum suggesting the state had become too powerful and bureaucratic, insufficiently responsive, with its large-scale approaches, to the differentiated needs of individuals. Some therefore advocated creating new, intermediate-level organizations in civil society to challenge or counterbalance excessive state power and wean citizens from an over-dependent passivity, by offering them alternative, more satisfying ways of meeting their needs. Others proposed breathing new life into the traditional popular movements, whose original educational and insurance functions had largely been usurped by the state. Fears were expressed however, that they had become too much a part of the status quo to remedy its defects. The limited, and often middle-class social base of most civil society groups could also make them seem less well suited than the state, to further the interests

of the poorest sections of society. New research in the 1990s possibly confirmed this anxiety, by revealing that though voluntary associations had far from disappeared, they were now not principally oriented towards providing welfare for their members or the needy, but had become simply a means by which leisure, sporting and intellectual hobby interests could be pursued.

Critical voices from the right also increased, not least as the 'depressed state of the Swedish economy following the 1973 global oil crisis steadily eroded the basis for expansionist social policies.' As Berggren and Trägårdh partly explain, this was also when the element of carefully managed social democratic consensus between capital and labour, as represented by the Swedish Employers Association/ *Svenska Arbetsgivareföreningen* (SAF) and the Swedish Trade Unions Confederation/ *Landsorganisationen* (LO) was put under stress. The famous Saltsjöbaden Agreement, which from 1938 had centralized and regulated much of the bargaining between workers and employers began to break down. There were various moves, not noted by the authors, to increase workplace democracy and reduce employers' ability to freely dispose of labour. But they do briefly mention the possibly more provocative wage earner funds/ *löntagarfonderna*, designed to 'gradually transfer full control of Sweden's largest stock-market-listed companies to its trade unions'. The latter short-lived experiment ended when the Social Democrats were defeated in the 1976 election for the first time since 1932. In 1978*,* the Swedish Employers Association founded its own think tank *Timbro,* heavily influenced by neo-liberal ideas on the benefits of limiting state-provided welfare, low taxation and a workforce motivated by competitive individualism, that had already gained ground in the USA and elsewhere.

Nonetheless, towards the chapter's conclusion, we are told that, despite the criticisms of statist individualism presented above, there is still much popular support for provision of high levels of welfare to individuals as of right. However, there have been certain neo-liberal-like changes in how this is delivered. Some public service provision is now contracted out, including to profit-making bodies, who have a different kind of managerial culture to that of civil servants. Education offers a case in point; today pupils can choose to attend schools run independently of municipal authorities although publicly funded– contributing to the demise of a unifying, nation-wide curriculum. The following chapter on religion continues the de-homogenizing theme by citing not only the disestablishment of the Lutheran church in 2000, but also decreased state control of postal services and the broadcast media. Not discussed, however, in either chapter, are twenty-first century increases in wealth and income inequality linked to growing fragmentation of the occupational structure and also to changes in tax regime. The 90% top rate of income tax of the 1970s is long gone and inheritance tax abolished in 2004/5. Nor do the authors remark how residential segregation by income has also grown, potentially further undercutting a sense of national social solidarity.

Further evaluation of Sweden's statist individualism and prognoses for its sustainability are offered in the rather convoluted Coda, which also more generally problematises the individual:collective relation in modern society via brief references to a large number of social theorists [I counted at least thirteen] from Toennies, Durkheim and Weber, to Foucault, Putnam, and Bourdieu. However, the chapter mainly focuses on the endogenous 'paradoxes' of statist individualism, seeming to imply that if these become too great there may be pressure for change. Globalisation's exogenous impact is also touched upon. Thus the danger of the state being or becoming overpowerful is raised again, this time by reference to the lack of satisfactory institutional means [a bill of inalienable natural rights, or a Supreme Court for example] by which individuals can ultimately challenge its actions. The authors also mention historic examples of 'the dark side of the state' when individuals' freedom has been abused, particularly in the field of health interventions. They contrast responses to the Aids and the recent Covid epidemics, suggesting these indicate

authorities shifting in a more libertarian direction. But one could argue that reaction to the recent crisis fits into a longstanding Swedish tradition, predating, though adopted by the social democratic state, of relying on the rational, expert-led assessment of the best solution to societal problems. If anything has recently changed, it may be that experts now assess the population as less ready than previously to limit their personal freedom for the common good.

Berggren and Trägårdh do in fact raise, as their second 'paradox', the possibility that excessive individualism can undercut the underlying solidarity on which social democratic welfarism depends. But they reassuringly point to studies which suggest increasing personal autonomy need not correlate with decreased trust in others. However, they don't consider whether rising incomes and a revolution of rising expectations might make meeting needs via the market, rather than the state, seem more attractive to those who can afford this. Neo-liberals at least, might see the cost of providing services of sufficiently high standard to prevent defections from the collective project, as a potential drag on an economy already facing increased international competition. However, Berggren and Trägårdh do suggest that the state's contribution to producing a well-educated workforce and to the possibilities of women easily entering the workforce, is an asset in a globalized world. This could also be claimed for the way state underpinning of unemployment insurance has facilitated internal labour-market flexibility. That globalization has also contributed to Sweden, along with other western nations, outsourcing some of its manufacturing to countries with far less developed welfare systems could also be worth noting.

Immigration is a further factor mentioned as potentially problematic for the traditional social democratic project. Today nearly 25% of the Sweden's inhabitants are first or second-generation migrants. Swedes' have sometimes had difficulty dealing with diversity. Berggren and Trägårdh don't mention attempts made, well into the 20th century, to suppress the cultural distinctiveness of its indigenous or long-standing ethnic minorities such as the Sámi, Roma and Tornedalians. But they do reference *Jantelagen*, the relatively benign social pressure to avoid publicly distinguishing oneself from others by advertising exceptional wealth or talent. Most importantly they suggest here and in the preceding chapter on religion, that the specific character of many of the recent migrants' culture appears threatening to those who view it not just as different but specifically at odds with contemporary mainstream Swedish values of secularism and gender equality and with statist individualism's core premises. Fears have been expressed that rather than support the impartial, universalistic allocation of state benefits, this new section of the population might seek to further the particular interests of their family, kin or ethnic group, or fail to abide by the essential tenet [so well-aligned with the Lutheran tradition] that those who can, will work, contribute and not draw benefits unnecessarily. It seems that they aren't fully trusted by 'mainstream' Swedes. Berggren and Trägårdh don't specifically investigate whether these negative presumptions are true, how far any differences of orientation link to experiences of discrimination as well as culture, nor consider whether such variations as do exist might be mitigated over time by longer exposure to Swedish norms. But they do mention the rise of the immigrant-unfriendly right-wing party, the Sweden Democrats/*Sverigedemokraterna*. It's popularity and ability to draw support from traditionally Social Democratic voters has become even clearer since the book's publication. They obtained the second highest number of votes in the 2022 general election [20.54% to the Social Democrats 30.33%], facilitating a coalition of right-oriented 'bourgeois'/*borgerliga* parties under a prime minister from the liberal-conservative Moderate/*Moderata samlingspartiet* party gaining power.

I conclude that this is a work, whose complexity and range of detail makes it hard to summarize. On its back cover, commentators praise its 'remarkably wide range of sources and richness of argumentation', suggesting 'it provides a nuanced and complex view of a topic often flattened

and distorted'. Undoubtedly my review, in its struggle to offer a coherent overall account, has steam-rollered over many subtleties. How satisfying Berggren and Trägård's text seems to other readers, particularly those with limited prior knowledge of Sweden, may depend on what they hope to get out of it. If they want an interesting delve into two century's worth of historians', philosophers', novelists', playwrights', and politician's ideas about the national character, and how the individual:society and individual:family relation should be characterized, they will have much to get their teeth into. They may also appreciate the sporadic cross-referencing of these Swedes' ideas to those of assorted American and European theorists. If they are hoping for a straightforward, easily accessible chronology of the development of the Swedish welfare regime and statist individualism, they might find it less than comprehensive and tricky to extract what they are looking for amid all the cross-referenced depiction of different theorists' and activists' positions and disputes. A time-line diagram of key events and dates would have been extremely helpful.

Those readers already aware that what was distinctive about the Swedish social democratic project was not just its welfare policies, but the way it organized capital/labour relations, may be disappointed that the latter are so briefly touched upon. Here Berggren and Trägårdh could riposte that they aimed to depict and account for statist individualism, not the totality of what's often called the Swedish 'model' or Swedish 'middle way'. However, the limited discussion of how social democracy also sought to deal with potential economic conflict, and increase workers' power, relates to the authors' general underplaying of the importance of economic factors in establishing statist individualism itself. Theirs is a largely idealist account of the latter as an outcome of a very long-established propensity to value individual freedom from direct dependence on particular others. Few would deny that cultural orientations, especially if deep-rooted, strongly and widely held, can influence how societies develop. But they are never causally sufficient. They affect what people

hope to achieve, and perhaps their understanding of how to achieve it. But whether goals are attained or not will also depend on a whole range of non-ideal factors, not least the character and distribution of economic and political power. Moreover, people's positioning within political and economic structures often contribute to shaping their ideas in the first place and to influencing who they do or do not ally with when trying to reach their goals. Berggren and Trägårdh don't completely ignore such factors but they tend to be mentioned in passing rather than systematically presented. By the end of the book even the alert reader is unlikely to feel they have a very firm grip on the character and development of the economy and polity over the time-frame that it covers. I'd like to know more, for example, about the significance of Sweden's industrial urbanization occurring late and swiftly and whether this had an impact on the character and strength of the popular movements and particularly the trade unions [who do not even get an index entry]. How long did the agricultural sector remain politically significant and how did it define its interests? Why, for example, did the Bondeförbundet/Peasants' Party support Hansson's 1932 bid for the premiership? Indeed, what was the configuration of political parties at key points in the establishment, change and development of statist individualism and who did they typically represent? How were the capitalist and non-capitalist classes internally structured when the Social Democrats were seeking and first gained power and did this subsequently alter as Sweden shifted from being a largely poor to an 'affluent society'. Were industries initially mainly large or small-scale, extractive or manufacturing, oriented to internal or external markets, comparatively low or high tech, requiring unskilled or specialized labour and has this changed over time? Is the economy today more post-industrial than industrial? How has all this affected the organizational capacities and power of the employed in both the private and state sector? In what way has it influenced employers' willingness to accept, or ability to oppose, the birth and maintenance of the social democratic 'middle way'?

The Swedish Theory of Love does unravel the conundrum of Swedes' simultaneous demand for personal autonomy and acceptance of a very high degree of state involvement in their lives. It also shows, if perhaps not emphatically enough, that a desire for independence has been compatible with a very high degree of collective organization to put statist individualism in place. The authors are right to suggest the latter is an 'historical product'. But it is the outcome of the complex interplay of cultural and *other* factors and I think the latter get insufficient systematic attention in Berggren and Trägårdh's account.

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Danish Ballads and Folk Songs

Kirsten Sass Bak, Ballader, skæmt og skillingstryk. Fortællinger om dansk sanghistorie frem til 1900. Videncenter for Sang, Sangens Hus, Herning 2022. 298 pp. Ill. Music examples. ISBN 978-87-971983-2-2.

■ Folk song has a long history that has interested practitioners and researchers alike. In the study reviewed here, the focus is on Danish folk song. The author seeks to paint an overall picture of the Danish tradition of solo singing of ballads, which she says is not as well known as the history of community singing (*fællessang*) in Denmark. The book covers 600 years of Danish ballad singing, from the Middle Ages to the end of the nineteenth century. It presents previous research findings and, for obvious reasons, it cannot be an exhaustive account; the aim instead is to survey the long lines of development in the field and to stimulate interest in further studies of folk ballads.

After a brief introduction on singing traditions before 1300, an extensive chapter (almost half of the book's nearly 300 pages) is devoted to the ballad, which the author views as synonymous with "the old folk song". A ballad is a solo song in which the singer tells a story to the listeners. The narrative element is central, and the most important function of the songs is to give listeners an experience and some entertainment.

Characteristic features are described, with verse and refrain and formulaic language as important constituents. The ballads have mainly been handed down by oral transmission. The source material is stated to come from three main areas: manuscripts belonging to the nobility, printed sources from the sixteenth century onwards, and collections from the early nineteenth century onwards. The three different types are presented with concrete examples and detailed discussion.

Two chapters in this section are by Lene Halskov Hansen. The first is about the age, provenance, and genesis of the ballads. Svend Grundtvig's collections and research from the mid-1850s are discussed and examined critically, for example when it comes to the dating of certain ballads, where Halskov Hansen, using source material and recent research, questions Grundtvig's datings. The second chapter addresses the question of the relationship between dance and ballads in the Middle Ages. Here the author starts by outlining the view that has prevailed since the 1960s and 1970s, namely, that people danced to the ballads in the Middle Ages. According to Halskov Hansen, this perception is based on several uncertain assumptions, which are examined in the chapter. Her conclusion is that the lack of sources makes it very difficult to say anything about whether people danced to the ballads in the Middle Ages, but that there is ample evidence of dancing in later centuries.

After these two short chapters, Sass Bak takes over again to give a comprehensive description of the collecting of folk songs during the nineteenth century. Important collectors are considered chronologically and their work is described in detail, with names such as Rasmus Nyerup, Peter Grønland, Evald Tang Kristensen, and Andreas Peter Berggren, and of course the central figure Svend Grundtvig, with the publication of his *Danmarks gamle Folkeviser* in the 1850s, a milestone in the work of collecting folk songs. There is also a discussion of performance situations and what they can tell us about different versions and variants. A long section presents the well-known discussion of the age and origin of the tunes. A

central question here is the character of the tunes before the major/minor system began to dominate, and the author describes different ways of categorizing the songs based on the type of tune.

The following sections present the folk songs that are not termed ballads, but are categorized into one of the four textual groups that Grundtvig defined, namely heroic songs, magical songs, historical songs, and romances. Here the author seeks to cite examples of the different categories and also to add new songs. Although the lyrics are the basis for the categorization, the crucial factor for the author is the way they are transmitted through singing. The presentations are based on the words of one song in each genre, with an account of how many tunes have been used for the words. The number of tunes used is regarded as a possible indication of the popularity and spread of a song. Then the author considers the importance of the ballad in Danish cultural life in the nineteenth century, looking at connections between the ballads and works of art music from the mid-nineteenth century, such as *Elverhøj* by Kuhlau, which includes quotations from ballads.

Three concluding chapters deal in turn with jocular songs, younger songs, and Kingo songs, that is, the folk hymn singing of the early eighteenth century. The jocular songs are a genre that never made it into the nineteenth-century collections, since they were viewed as indecent or violent and therefore not suitable for inclusion in the editions. Younger songs comprise a large group of different songs whose common feature is that they are not ballads but have nevertheless been sung as solo songs. They have existed in oral and written tradition since the sixteenth century, often in different variants.

The book offers interesting reading through its way of following a genre over a long period of time. But this longitudinal section is also somewhat problematic due to the difficulty of obtaining knowledge about matters in older times. In many cases the statements are unsubstantiated and the history is painted with far too broad a brush. The aim of providing a survey of a long period of time also means that it becomes mainly descriptive,

with only occasional critical scrutiny or discussion. Since the book is based almost entirely on previous research, some of the material is also already well known, for example, the account of publishing activities during the nineteenth century.

The repertoire is highlighted through many examples of music and text, illustrating both the ballads and the repertoire that is designated "jocular songs" and "younger songs". The examples give the reader a good understanding of the repertoire as a whole, which is commendable. The performance situation is emphasized as crucial in the book, but it is mostly mentioned in conjunction with certain examples. Here it would have been interesting to read a more extensive discussion of the contexts in which these songs appeared and what characterized the performances of ballads and other songs.

The word "ballad" is used in the book synonymously with "old folk song". The refrain and formulaic character of both musical and textual motifs are highlighted as important features. However, there is no detailed discussion of the term "ballad", which is a shame, as it can have different meanings in different Scandinavian traditions. The book distinguishes between older and younger folk songs, but the boundary is unclear as regards the time when the songs were created, the content of the texts, and the characteristic musical features of the songs, as the author herself states. In addition, older songs may have changed character through the way they have been performed over the years, the author argues, which makes the dividing line even more difficult to draw. Here, in my opinion, the reasoning is somewhat vague, and it would have been useful to have a more profound discussion of the typical features of the different songs, with everything from tune and tonality to form and text types; this could have provided new knowledge in the field. As it is, the description of the differences is brief, merely mentioning the existence of a refrain as an important difference, and possibly also that younger songs may have a more explicit major tonality than the older songs.

Another problem with the ballads is that a ballad is sometimes defined on the basis of the text,

sometimes on the basis of the music. In the section "The Breadth of the Ballads", the ballads are divided according to the text, as scholars did in the mid-nineteenth century and later. After that, the author makes brief comments on the music. But it is still the content of the text that defines the criteria for the categorization. It would have been interesting if the author had elucidated this problematic relationship in research between viewing the ballads as texts or song tunes.

The book contains two comparatively short chapters by another author, Lene Halskov Hansen, whom readers must assume to be a specialist in the field. These two chapters are interesting, examining concrete questions that are discussed in relation to previous research on issues of performance practice. They thereby stand out from the rest of the book, which only in a few cases undertakes critical scrutiny in relation to relevant research. This makes the book somewhat uneven, and one may wonder about the intended readership. It may be supposed that it is primarily a presentation of a topic to interested practitioners and listeners, rather than academic researchers. As such, it ought to do the job well, not least thanks to the detailed description of the repertoire.

The bibliography, where most of the titles are in Danish, shows that songs and ballads are a vibrant field of research in Denmark. Folk song has often been linked throughout the ages with ideas of nationalism and national traditions. Today, however, we know that tunes and people have crossed borders, and the clear connection to a national tradition can be questioned. It would therefore have been interesting if the author had looked at the other Nordic countries for comparison. Only in a few cases are examples from other Nordic countries cited, such as the well-known debate between Grønland and Geijer-Afzelius in the first decades of the nineteenth century. Nor is research from other Nordic countries drawn on. An overview of the research situation from a Nordic perspective would be very interesting and could help to broaden the boundaries of research into the absorbing field that is folk song.
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Learning from History

Anne Eriksen, Livets Læremester. Historiske kunnskapstradisjoner i Norge 1650–1840. Pax Forlag, Oslo 2020. 328 pp. ISBN 978-82-530-4184-1.

■ What a fine book Anne Eriksen has written! Instructive, packed with information, thorough. Matter-of-fact and orderly.

The subject is historiography, with all its complex diversity, traditions, methods, and models, as it developed before the professionalization of the discipline of history in the course of the nineteenth century. The well-substantiated thesis is that professionalization made the subject more constricted, so that older ways of approaching the past were reduced to either curiosities or sources. The development also entailed a change in what was regarded as the task of history – von Ranke's famous *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist* – and also its topics and its focus on the past as constituent elements of the university discipline and the teaching subject of history. Against this background, the book is about the things and the people that disappeared.

Inspired by both the conceptual historian Reinhart Koselleck and the historian of science Arnaldo Momigliano – along with a great many others – a distinction is made between historiography and antiquarianism as ways of doing research on history, the relationship between the two approaches, and what was gained or lost. The overarching idea – going all the way back to classical times – is the notion that history teaches us about life, as a collection of useful examples to guide people's actions, viewed as a tradition in its own right. In a way, the subject of the book and the author's approach concern the predecessors of the modern discipline of history, subjected to an ethnological analysis that displays an understanding, an empathy, and a not inconsiderable degree of solidarity with the object of study. Throughout the book, this is accomplished with clarity and distinction.

The study is structured with an introduction and an epilogue, but the main part of work brings together examinations of eleven examples of earlier knowledge traditions in the study of his-

tory. Apart from a few, such as Ludvig Holberg, Gerhard Schøning, and Ove Malling, the authors considered – or the works by them – have mostly fallen into oblivion or else been reduced to a secondary place in the eyes of academic historical researchers. Yet Eriksen illuminates both their significance in their own time and their links to a roughly thousand-year tradition of European historiography; she demonstrates how these writers were particularly fond of models in the Roman and medieval tradition.

The selection seems comprehensive – there are accounts of whole countries, large stories with either theological or secular explanations, local topography, antiquarian works in the proper sense, and composite history textbooks, such as Ludvig Holberg's – but it also appears, as Eriksen herself hints, to include authors or texts that are her special favourites, just as a certain pride in the Norwegian past cannot be denied. But this does not matter, partly because the selection is so comprehensive, partly because it goes so well with the subject and the analysis in the book itself, which can probably be summed up in a view of history as "learned literary work rather than research in the modern sense" (p. 310), and which could also be pursued in a rectory far away from Bergen, Trondheim, or Oslo.

As the author notes at many points in the book, a characteristic part of the older approach was either to write and copy books with an emphasis on the aesthetic expression, or to have them printed on good-quality paper, complete with engravings and illustrations and bound in leather. It is therefore a pity that the preface to the book is marred by two careless errors – particularly glaring is that the list of supporting foundations in the preface is left uncompleted by the publisher, although it is correct in the colophon; it is easier to forgive the regrettable typographical error that Ove Malling has acquired an 'r' in his first name. But they are the only errors, and the author should not be blamed. But while on the subject of printing quality and appearance, it is a shame, to say the least, that that the book has been published as *pay-per-print*, which means that it is a paltry

paperback that reaches the reader, if one does not just settle for downloading an open-access PDF file. How I wish that such a solid work as this, and on this particular topic, could have been published as a proper book on good paper and with a worthy finish. The text deserves nothing less, a study that, apart from everything else, bears the stamp of Anne Eriksen's many years of work on the theme, which enables her to master it with assured insight.

The book can be warmly recommended to students and experienced scholars alike.
Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, Copenhagen

Methodologies in Cultural Studies

Kulttuurien tutkimuksen menetelmät. Outi Fingeroos, Konsta Kajander & Tiina-Riitta Lappi (eds.). SKS Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura. Tietolipas 274. Helsinki 2022. 429 pp. ISBN 978-951-858-571-5.

■ This collection of article dealing with qualitative research methods is positioned in the fields of cultural studies in humanities in Finland. According to editors, cultural studies includes disciplines such as anthropology, ethnology, folklore, heritage studies and religious studies. Archaeology and cultural history are excluded from the list, perhaps because of their somewhat different methodologies. Furthermore, cultural studies in this volume does not refer to the research field developed in 1950s England, in which culture was and is understood as cultural products and practices and is viewed in relation to power and society. Thus, cultural studies in this volume refers to humanistic cultural research with strong emphasis on ethnography. The importance of defining cultural studies in a Finnish context has to do with the current university policies that require developing larger study programmes. Cultural studies in different universities in Finland has slightly different combinations of disciplines and emphasis. This might affect the toolkits that students are taught to use in method studies.

The book is organized in five different sections, beginning with articles dealing with episte-

mological starting points and paradigmatic changes. These are closely connected to ethnographic fieldwork and the development of that method. The first section also includes two very necessary and helpful articles dealing with ethical questions. In the first one the authors go through new EU regulations and other laws and codes of conduct that impact research ethics. The second focuses on the specific ethical questions one must address when research has to do with people in vulnerable positions. The authors in both articles show how dealing with ethical issues is at the core of professional toolkit and expertise of the cultural researcher. On the one hand there are laws and regulations one must be aware of, and on the other hand there are specific ethical questions that change from one study to another and often arise only during the actual fieldwork.

The second section of the book deals with the predominant research fields in cultural studies. The third section moves on to analysing methods. In the fourth section the book turns to articles dealing with particular skills such as ethnographic writing and how to form a research problem and questions. It is an interesting choice to end the book with something that usually comes first in the research process: forming a research plan. However, it makes sense because often in empirical studies it is very common to think over, or at least a tweak a little bit, the aims and questions in the final phase of the research. However, I think the article is placed in the final part because writing a research plan is a particular skill that one can practise to become better at it. It is a skill just as much as writing. Both can be taught and practised. Academic texts in their final form have their particular conditions, such as correct referencing and a specific structure. However, the ethnographic research process also requires writing in different phases and producing different kinds of texts. Ethnographic writing also gives scope to write creatively, because the ethnographer wants to convey the feelings, sensory experiences and situations in the field so that they are relatable and understandable to the reader. The authors of an article dealing with ethnographic writing give

detailed and useful advice about what to consider when writing different texts during the research process, but also how to work with the text to arrive at the final form. The article also offers very useful guidance on situations when writing is difficult.

Interestingly I have been reading at the same time a new Swedish methodological book called *Etnologiskt fältarbete: Nya fält och former* (2022, eds. Kim Silow Kallenberg, Elin von Unge, Lisa Wiklund Moreira), which has quite a similar structure (with four sections instead of five) and also relies on ethnography. A comparison of the two article collections shows that both have ethnography as the overarching method and approach, with observations and interviews as a foundation. Both emphasize the role of writing as part of thinking and analysing in the research process. Both consider participant research and ethics and both have included digital ethnography and autoethnography in the methodological toolkit. The main differences are that the Finnish version has articles about audiovisual methods, using photos in interviews, and sensory ethnography. Especially embodied ways of doing fieldwork have increased in popularity in Finland, partly because of the need to understand different ways of knowing.

Furthermore, the Finnish version has an article about materiality and a museum collection in the section about the fields where research can be done. The qualities and functions of objects have been in the focus of ethnological and heritage studies for a long time. Nowadays the interest has moved to the intangible meaning of materiality and how objects are intertwined in our everyday life and cultural meanings. The Swedish version mentions new fields of study such as institutional ethnography, co-productive ethnography, and research done beyond the borders of Sweden. Materiality and sensory ethnography are only briefly mentioned in relation to observations.

The difference in the emphasis might reflect some national dissimilarities in the current fields and ways of doing cultural research and ethnology. However, I think this reflects more the increas-

ing diversification and specification of methodological choices that are difficult to capture in one book. In each research project the methodological questions need to be rethought and adapted to make them best suited to provide an answer to the research question. Combining and overlapping of methods, an embodied and emotional way of transmitting experiences, and questions concerning on whose terms and for whom we do research are affecting and diversifying the methodologies of cultural studies.

The book ends with a section about theoretical approaches to analysis. It covers, for example, narrative and discourse analysis. This section could and should be much wider. However, to include all the ways in which theoretical analysis can be applied in cultural studies would have made the book even bigger than it is. Perhaps theoretical approaches applied in cultural studies should be the topic of a new book.

Finally, I think the book is a welcome and necessary addition to methodological literature in cultural studies in Finland. It is instructively written with its highlighted boxes that summarize the concrete advice. It will serve very well for students, teachers and researchers alike.

Jenni Rinne, Turku

The Untold Story of Men's Fashion

Men's Fashion. An Untold Story (Manligt mode. En okänd historia). Ingrid Giertz-Mårtenson (ed.). Bokförlaget Langenskiöld, Stockholm 2022. 256 pp., ill. ISBN 978-91-987441-0-8.

■ This book begins with an account by the publisher's director of how it has become possible to show new perspectives on male fashion here thanks to the Erling Persson Foundation, which made a generous donation to the project now accomplished by the initiator Ingrid Giertz-Mårtenson. She has many years' experience of working in and with the fashion world, and both she and the Foundation played a crucial role in creating the subject of fashion studies at Stockholm University.

In a detailed foreword, Giertz-Mårtenson discusses why so little has been written about the history of men's fashion. One of the answers she gives is that so few male garments have been preserved in museum collections. Perhaps it was because they were of such high quality that they could be reused over and over again, which she believes clearly links this to what the fashion sector is striving for today: sustainability and reuse. She also discusses the difference between clothes and fashion.

The book has an international perspective but also seeks to highlight the men's fashion that can be found in Swedish museums. The purpose is both to convey new knowledge about the history of men's fashion and to start a discussion of how male fashion and masculinity have developed and changed. A world of new knowledge about the cultural history of men's fashion is opened up in no fewer than eighteen essays, which means that only some of the texts can be treated here. The design is elegant, but with a restraint that manages to avoid this becoming just a coffee-table book to flick through. The many exquisite illustrations play an important part, but it is more rewarding to find the deeper knowledge provided by the fascinating texts. Even the captions are packed with detail and insight. And the images certainly require special comment, as it is unusual to see such a breadth of illustrations. There are not only pictures from museums, archives, and fashion companies, but also special photographs, such as the one of a painting by a French artist who, in his fondness for vintage denim, communicates both corporate history and aesthetics. A detailed bibliography and a list of images complete the book.

I have chosen to discuss the ten texts that I found most interesting. The first is written by the curator at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, Claire Wilcox, who recently was responsible for a major exhibition on fashion and masculinity at the V&A. She begins by continuing the discussion about why so little male clothing has been preserved in museums. The garment she focuses on is the frock coat, which was common during most of the nineteenth century. She won-

ders if the lack of this type of men's garment in the collections can be attributed to the fact that they were made of wool and not of elegant silk as in the eighteenth century. For a long time, the material was the important factor when garments were acquired by the museum. She then shows how these men's coats made of wool survived for a long time, reused right up to our time as sought-after second-hand garments.

The dress historian Lena Rangström, who previously worked at the Royal Armoury in Stockholm, uses the collections there to describe how the sixteenth-century Vasa dynasty adopted a style of dress that was a shared European fashion. She describes how men's bodies at the royal courts were adorned with heavy, precious fabrics of velvet and silk with thick embroidery, sumptuous jewels, and delicate lace. The seventeenth century saw the introduction of several new fashion items which she believes gave men a more balanced look, which later also became much stricter, perhaps mainly as a contrast to the bizarre baroque dandy.

The Bishop of Västerås, Mikael Mogren, writes about the power of liturgical vestments. These signal the rank and function of the wearer, but they can also constitute an unusually beautiful textile treasury, as he demonstrates in the bishop's cope from 1751 that is preserved in Västerås Cathedral. It is woven in gold brocade and was made in Paris for the coronation of Adolf Fredrik and Lovisa Ulrika, but has since been worn by the bishops of Västerås well into the twentieth century. There is tenacious continuity in this particular fashion, and Mogren concludes that today's clergy still dress like the state officials of late antiquity.

The longest and most interesting article in the book is by Johan Hakelius, political editor-in-chief of *Fokus*. It can scarcely be called an essay like the others. He discusses how the dandy is always out of touch with the times yet still timeless. Dandyism is a matter of external elegance and dress, but also, and perhaps above all, an attitude. Hakelius believes that above all, the dandy must be irreverent. Starting from Beau Brummell, who appeared around 1800 and has been called

the original dandy, he shows how important he has been for male fashion ever since. Brummell was reported to spend five hours a day dressing. He even rivalled the Prince Regent aesthetically, and eventually he was forced into exile, pursued by his creditors. Hakelius asks who the dandy is and answers that he is a paradox, interested in clothes but also an orderly opponent on the fringes of society. Contradictions are his very nature. Most important in this context, however, is that the dandy has left both broad and deep traces in the history of men's fashion. He has been credited with the birth of the lounge suit, and even the tailcoat and the tuxedo, according to Hakelius, were born out of what he calls the dandy's challenging innovations. In our time, he would see the dandy as fighting against a male fashion characterized by trainers, shorts, and gym clothes. He also has an interesting discussion of today's need for the subversive dandy, although he is struggling against difficulties. How can Andy Warhol serve as a figurehead for contemporary dandyism? How can you be unique in a mass society? Can the dandy preserve his chosen status in popular culture?

Ingrid Giertz-Mårtenson writes in a short essay about the French dandy Count Robert de Montesquiou, who at the beginning of the 1900s shaped the lifestyle of intellectuals in Paris through his fastidious elegance, with subtle details such as the white shirt collar and a silk cravat tied with apparent nonchalance. Giertz-Mårtenson's picture of the dandy differs slightly from that painted by Hakelius. Here he is not only elegant and snobbish, but also explicitly homosexual and decadent.

The director of the Zorn Collections, Johan Cederlund, describes how Anders Zorn was transformed from a provincial son of Dalarna into a fashion lion. When Zorn began to earn enough money he designed clothes for himself and his wife Emma, which were then sewn by famous tailors. His exquisite and elegant attire was often described in the contemporary press, where he could be compared to a Russian Grand Duke. The attire of the people whose portraits he painted was carefully prepared, and he even managed to

get King Oscar II to change his clothes for a por-
trait. Zorn's red sports suit and wolfskin fur have
become particularly famous as they appear in the
artist's well-known self-portraits.

The art historian and Strindberg scholar Göran
Söderström highlights August Strindberg's in-
terest in clothes under the telling heading "Role
Play with Clothing". In his novels and plays,
Strindberg depicts the main characters' clothes in
detail. But clothing was also an important part of
his own self-presentation, especially during times
when he could afford to pay attention to his dress.
Even when his income was meagre, however, he
was able to follow the fashion. He is depicted
here, for example, in a sports jacket of Norfolk
type, in which he has been described as an aris-
tocrat. Elisabeth Wilson describes this jacket as
a men's garment developed during the nineteenth
century to cater to the growing interest in sport.

Elisabeth Wilson, emeritus professor at
London Metropolitan University, writes about
how tennis has influenced fashion. For a long time
it was a leisure pursuit among the upper classes
in Britain. It later became an international sport,
and by the early twentieth century its centre had
moved to France. The white colour signalled up-
per-class exclusivity. Here too, the dandy appears
in the form of Fred Perry, the tennis star who cre-
ated a clothing empire based on a short-sleeved
cotton shirt. The French tennis star René Lacoste
likewise created a successful sports brand. Since
tennis involves only two players and not an entire
team, Wilson notes that their attire has become
much more important than in team sports. Today
tennis clothes are no longer white but colourful
and patterned, yet still with a strong connection to
the fashion world.

The director of National Museums Scotland,
Christopher Breward, explains why the suit has
become the perfect garment. The description is
highly personal and concerns both what he has in
his drawers and how the seventeen suits he has
in his wardrobe depict his physical development.
He has obviously attached great importance to his
suits. I remember myself how, during a confer-
ence at Nordiska Museet, he changed his suit no

less than three times. Breward also mentions the
importance of dandyism for the new life in a suit
in the big cities in the 1840s. He does not believe
the talk about the imminent demise of the suit. It
will live on.

The presenter of the Swedish radio programme
Stil i P1, Susanne Ljung, has written an essay
showing how rap music created a new fashion of
sneakers. She begins by asking why so many men
today have come to regard sneakers as fashion-
able. Her answer is: hip-hop. Musicians have often
captured the trends of the time when it comes to
fashion. We see here how Jimi Hendrix created a
new fashion in the 1960s by wearing second-hand
clothes, women's blouses, and gaudy colours, or
how Bob Marley started wearing Adidas shoes as
part of an agreement for the company to sponsor
his football team in Jamaica.

In addition to the texts that I have singled out
for specific comment, a great deal of interesting
knowledge is conveyed in the other essays, such
as how American university campuses have creat-
ed a special style that has lived on and changed, or
how jeans have shaped and defined male identity.

There is certainly a tremendous breadth in
what we learn about the history of men's fashion
from this book. This is not about how ordinary
people have dressed in different times, but about
how the male elite have expressed their identity.
The men whose clothes we are shown here are
individuals who have dictated or followed what
fashion has created. They are royals, court nobles,
writers, artists, jazz legends, movie stars, and
fashion icons. It is only when we come to the age
of jeans and sneakers that we find out what fash-
ion might have looked like in the broader strata
of society. Jeans were originally workwear and
sneakers have their roots in the world of sports.
Yet here too the presentation focuses on heroes
like John Wayne, Elvis Presley, and James Dean.
They were the role models whose clothing style
was adopted by men all over the world.

In the bibliography I miss many of the young
historians, ethnologists, and fashion scholars who
have written about fashion, including men's fash-
ion, in recent years. Perhaps the reason for this

is that several of the authors are art historians and design historians or belong to the elite of the museum world in this field. In any case, this is a learned book that presents new knowledge about both fashion and masculinity. It will occupy an important place in further discussions of the history of fashion.

Birgitta Svensson, Lund/Stockholm

Cultural Heritage in Change

Kulturarv i förändring. Lizette Gradén & Tom O'Dell (eds.). Studentlitteratur, Lund 2020. 223 pp. ISBN 978-91-44-13845-9.

■ Through a series of examples, this book on "Cultural Heritage in Change" gives good insight into how cultural heritage, far from being static, is always a process. Cultural heritage is created, recreated, and constantly changing through time. It is thus people and cultural institutions that shape what these same people and institutions designate as cultural heritage. This is a view of cultural heritage that has existed for a long time in the field of cultural heritage research, which describes itself as *Critical Heritage Studies*, and where researchers such as Laurajane Smith and Rodney Harrison have long set the research agenda for the field.

This collection of essays makes that point through six example studies, most of which are based on the cultural heritage practices of museums in North America and the Nordic countries. The six essays are written by researchers with backgrounds in ethnology, folkloristics, and Scandinavian studies. The book is primarily aimed at students and people who work professionally with cultural heritage management and who are therefore interested in learning more about how others have worked with cultural heritage over time and how attitudes and perceptions of the past can change, either as a result of a strategic intention or simply to keep in step with other changes in society.

One obvious strength of the book is that it provides insight into concrete examples and uses detailed descriptions to convey an understanding

of the complexity of changes in cultural heritage. The ambition to demonstrate, through ethnographic descriptions, how cultural heritage is created is achieved in the six chapters.

The introduction sets the framework for understanding critical heritage studies, which is the academic field to which the editors of the volume profess to belong. Here the reader is introduced to the reinterpretation of the concept of cultural heritage which has taken place since the end of the nineteenth century, through the twentieth century and down to the present day. The professor of cultural history at Stockholm University College, Viktor Rydberg (1828–1895), is credited with being first to use the Swedish term *kulturarv* to describe how norms, values, and traditions are shaped by cultural processes. Furthermore, we learn that the focus on "inheriting" culture, which underlies the concept of cultural heritage, coincided with the spread of the museum as an idea in the late nineteenth century. The development of modern society, with industrialization and urbanization, engendered the romantic idea of preserving the past, the remnants of the vanishing peasant society that modernity was leaving behind in its zeal for progress. In the Nordic countries, the past was thus given its place in the Sweden's Nordic Museum and Skansen, in the Norwegian Folk Museum, and in Denmark's Open-Air Museum and Danish Folk Museum, which since 1920 has been an integral part of the National Museum of Denmark.

Today, the interest in cultural heritage can still be understood in relation to a yearning for the past as an element of identity creation. But an interest in the commercial potential of cultural heritage is also typical of the present. In this way, cultural heritage has proved to have an economic potential for activities such as museums, tourism, and local development. According to the editors of this volume, this raises the question of how it affects the view of cultural heritage when cultural heritage is also to be regarded as a commodity that can be marketed and used as a strategic tool for growth and development.

Of the six studies that make up the book's

chapters, the first three deal with the Norwegian-American cultural heritage. The first essay is by Thomas A. Dubois, professor of Scandinavian studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It deals with the Norwegian stave church in Orkdal, which was exhibited as part of the World's Fair in Chicago in 1893 and was later moved to an open-air museum, Little Norway, in the state of Wisconsin, only to be moved back later to the centre of Orkdal in Norway.

The second chapter by Anna Rue, a Scandinavianist, is a study of the Vesterheim Museum in Decorah, Iowa. The museum was founded in 1877 and hosted Norwegian-American folk music festivals from the late 1960s until the 1990s. Through its events the aim has been to get locals actively involved in the work of the museum.

The third chapter is by Marcus Cederström, a Scandinavianist at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. It is about the Ulen Museum in Minnesota, which when founded in 1965 was called the Ulen Historical Museum. In 2007 the museum changed its name to the Viking Sword Museum and ten years later, in 2017, it was renamed the Ulen Museum. These changes of name bear witness to a changing view of the museum's purpose. From the beginning the idea was to communicate the history of the Norwegian immigrants. Then it sought to inform about the connection of the place to the Viking Age, based on the a spectacular find of a sword which was initially believed to date from the Viking Age, the period 800–1050, but later turned out to be a nineteenth-century replica of a Viking sword. Finally, the museum's purpose today is to serve as a meeting place for locals, where the multifaceted history of the place is commemorated, from the Norwegian immigrant stories of the nineteenth century to the history of the contemporary local population.

All three chapters and their examples show that cultural heritage is constantly negotiable and that its meaning is created through practice, that is, in relation to the present time when the negotiations take place.

Chapter 4 returns to Sweden, where the ethnologist Britta Zetterström Geschwind takes the reader on an archaeological excavation of the Lovö refugee camp outside Stockholm, which operated from 1944 to 1946, a period when Sweden received approximately 200,000 refugees fleeing from Europe as a result of the ravages of the Second World War. The Lovö camp housed Estonian and Romanian refugees. The refugee camp is an example of how historical events can disappear but can also be unearthed to become a cultural memory for people today, if its sources are materialized in archives and museum collections, as in the case of the Lovö camp. But not everything is made into cultural heritage and not everything can take the necessary materialized form to be elevated to the status of cultural heritage. This circumstance reflects the political field within which cultural heritage moves. Cultural heritage requires a will that it should exist; it takes someone to piece together its sources into a meaningful whole.

In Chapter 5, the reader is taken back to the United States, more specifically to Seattle and the Nordic Heritage Museum. In 2018 the museum acquired a new building and with it also new demands to attract more visitors, from all over the Seattle area (America's fastest-growing city), in order to secure the long-term financing of this cultural institution. Until recently the museum was primarily aimed at local people. Whereas the cultural heritage managed by the museum used to be all about communicating the past, it is argued in the chapter that the modernization of the Nordic Heritage Museum has assigned a different purpose to the cultural heritage. With the new museum and its larger target group, the cultural heritage has to be presented as something "hip". Cultural heritage has to be filtered through a hip factor, in the hope that it will be more relevant to the larger new target group. For the museum this has meant that the focus of its communication is so-called hip topics such as Vikings, new Nordic food culture, Nordic fashion, and the like, with exhibitions replacing each other at short intervals in order to keep the audience's attention and

encourage them to visit the museum repeatedly because there are always new things to see. The more traditional understanding of the importance of cultural heritage for creating and maintaining local communities seems to have evaporated in favour of the museum positioning itself as a competitive attraction in a market with many players that can compete, like the modernized museum, by having a fancy café and a lifestyle store.

In the last chapter of the book, the reader is back in Sweden, where the topic is the role of nature, what the authors call a "memorial arena", in the field of cultural heritage. More specifically, it is about how lupins can evoke different memories of Swedish cultural heritage, depending on time, place, and social environment. The authors Mattias Frihammar, Lars Kaijser, and Maja Lagerqvist begin by presenting the eye-catching example of the Japanese town of Sweden Hills, where Swedish wooden architecture with houses painted red and white, surrounded by fields of wild lupins, create an image of Sweden in a foreign setting. The example is exotic, and it is even stranger when we are told that lupins, after many years of being appreciated as an expression of Swedishness, are now considered to be an invasive species that threatens local Swedish biodiversity and must therefore be combated as much as possible. In this way the chapter also demonstrates how cultural heritage and natural heritage are intertwined concepts, with a distinctive history that goes back to the nineteenth century and to the dichotomy of viewing nature as something essentially different from culture, while each one actually presupposes the other.

This volume takes the reader far and wide in the field of cultural heritage. The examples show how cultural heritage is a phenomenon created through practice, always subject to negotiation and discussion, and thus never fixed. Cultural heritage changes because it moves with the times and serves changing purposes for us as historically conscious beings. The book diagnoses the latest changes in cultural heritage and is therefore eminently suitable for use in teaching the subject to university students who can contemplate working

with cultural heritage management and development in the long term.

Marie Riegels Melchior, Copenhagen

House Dreams in Gothenburg

Kerstin Gunnemark, Villaliv i Ekebäck. Om generationsskiften och gentrifiering. Makadam förlag, Göteborg/Stockholm 2022. 123 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-7061-390-6.

■ Old wooden houses in many cities and towns across the Nordic countries have drawn attention for decades and centuries while existing as a form of urban living. Today, old preserved wooden houses are considered attractive, also as cultural heritage.

In the period of modernization before and after the world wars, wooden houses were considered an obstacle to the development of the modern city, whereas today, old wooden houses are considered valuable and prestigious, adding diversity to the urban structure and its living environments. In many cases, the attraction of old wooden houses is about realizing house dreams, as Professor Kerstin Gunnemark writes in her new book *Villaliv i Ekebäck: Om generationsskiften och gentrifiering* ("Villa Life in Ekebäck: On Generation Shifts and Gentrification", 2022).

The aim of Gunnemark's book is to shed light on a piece of residential history with a focus on the development of houses built at the beginning of the twentieth century. Starting from the present, Gunnemark explores the use of history by today's residents when they engage in making their homes in old wooden houses. This in turn implies a form of contemporary study in which the emphasis is on aspects of cultural heritage. Gunnemark argues that from a critical cultural heritage perspective, it is surprising that the voices of the wooden-house owners are so scarcely documented. Gunnemark reminds us, rightly so, that a democratic cultural heritage perspective takes into account everyone's right to be represented, as in museums and archives, regardless of social background, gender, ethnicity and age. This way we can ensure that

future generations can also take part in the multifaceted and rich knowledge of urban spaces and neighbourhoods.

Realizing house dreams through the purchase of old villas has become increasingly trendy in Sweden during the 2000s. Ekebäck in Gothenburg is an example of a popular residential area with a century-old history. In *Villaliv i Ekebäck*, new villa owners share their renovation and interior design ideas. What did they know about the neighbourhood before they moved there? Why did they want to live there?

Kerstin Gunnemark started her journey into these house dreams by strolling around in Ekebäck. Before going on these journeys, Gunnemark had received a phone call back in the 1980s from a lady who had suggested that the ethnologists at the University of Gothenburg could study the Ekebäck area, which for Gunnemark, as for many other inhabitants of Gothenburg, was unknown back then. Gunnemark never forgot that phone call, and even though it took almost forty years, she finally had the chance to get to know this somewhat mysterious but fascinating neighbourhood, where generations of inhabitants have made their own imprint on the houses and gardens of the once very rugged environment constructed on a stony hill.

The phone call generated a well-deserved and much-needed piece of research that contributes to neighbourhood studies and to the discussion of cultural heritage, built environments and city development as well as gentrification aspirations. As Gunnemark writes, not many studies have been conducted that shed light on old living environments like Ekebäck, and still they are like laboratories for studies of all kinds of dimensions. By looking closely, by zooming in and zooming out, many interesting things can be highlighted.

One of Gunnemark's many interesting observations and findings is related to generations of residents. Generational shifts are clear markers of changes over time. New households with meagre living conditions in the early twentieth century were followed in the 1960s by young artists and left-wing sympathizers, who had low demands as regards comfort and cherished the small-scale environment. Among today's home owners, there is an interest in recycling and a sustainable lifestyle.

Nowadays it is obvious that Ekebäck, like many other old working-class areas in Sweden, has undergone a total make-over – in the sense of the appearance of the environment and the condition of the houses, as well as in the mindsets of people and their relation to these environments. Old wooden houses and their surroundings have gone through a process of gentrification that has shaped the social and material appearance of the environments and also the attitudes to the areas where they exist. Other investigations in this field concern areas with multi-family houses, but Gunnemark's study of Ekebäck is unique as it draws attention to the transformation of a residential area over a hundred-year period.

Gentrification is the transformation of a city neighbourhood from low value to high value. Gentrification is also viewed as a process of urban development in which a residential area develops rapidly in a short period of time, often as a result of urban renewal programmes. Gentrification is derived from the word "gentry", which historically referred to people of an elevated social status. In the United Kingdom, the term "gentry" originally described landowners who could live off of the rental incomes from their properties. The term was first popularized by the British sociologist Ruth Glass in 1964 and has since become one of the most frequently studied forms of urban development.

Numerous cities around the world experience the phenomenon of gentrification, which can have a direct impact on their housing market dynamics. The same trend is seen in Gothenburg and the Ekebäck area. Gentrification is a complex social issue with both benefits and drawbacks. In previous decades, young families welcomed the opportunity to buy reasonably priced homes like the ones in Ekebäck. Nowadays, and because of gentrification, the residential area of Ekebäck is no longer available for just anyone who wants to move in. Gentrification has made the area more popular than ever before, causing housing prices

to skyrocket. The ones with enough financing capability can purchase a house in today's Ekebäck. This fascination with old houses is vividly described in Gunnemark's book.

Step by step, chapter by chapter, we get the hang of it – the fascination for the old and the possibilities of today and the future. In chapter I, "Dream Houses with Historical Layers", Gunnemark takes us on a journey to Ekebäck. She strolls around the area observing the materiality of the neighbourhood and taking photographs. What kinds of signs can be spotted in the environment of former and present residents? How are changes visible in the houses and the gardens? When ethnologists dismount in environments like Ekebäck, our focus is drawn to details – both visible and unseen – and to the people who have inhabited and those who now inhabit the neighbourhood. Gunnemark's journey in Ekebäck is built on layers of visits, explorations and findings, making her book very compelling and exciting.

In chapter II, Gunnemark deepens our knowledge of Ekebäck by setting foot in the area through present residents. Many of the people living there today had no previous knowledge of the neighbourhood before they started looking for a house to buy. What they wanted was to live in an old house. For these residents the age of the neighbourhood and the vintage feel were the key factors, as well as the location just a mile outside the city centre. Also the materiality of the nature and the view towards Vinga – the lighthouse and the sea – are among the defining factors.

The transformation of the houses is described in chapter III. Many if not all of the houses in Ekebäck have gone through phases of renewal, upgrading and preservation. The debates about how to preserve and how to renew are ongoing, as wooden houses are organic and under constant change. These more than hundred-year-old houses have lived through times when many original parts have been removed because of upgraded insulation and other renovations intended to make the housing standards more up to date. On the other hand, old elements in the houses have also been recreated by using old or old-time wallpaper

and installing old furniture. These transformations have followed trends in time, allowing greater or lesser changes to be made.

In the current trend, interiors are becoming whiter, as Gunnemark has noticed, making many interiors look alike. In the whitening of the interiors, little attention is given to the period from which the house originates. Instead, a certain feeling and sense of place seems to be the driving force. It is not unproblematic, as it makes all interiors look and feel the same. While the inhabitants express their reluctance to live in a museum, many choices they make actually bring them closer to a museum when their houses are designed to look like interiors rather than homes. In these white homes, inhabitants often want to surround themselves with old furniture and objects. Nostalgia is therefore combined with the age of the objects, not necessarily with the ownership of the objects.

The natives of Ekebäck are the topic of chapters IV and V. In contrast to the elegantly furnished homes of today, the houses as used by the people who once settled in and built them seem very modest. For the settlers the environment near the harbour was probably chosen for practical and financial reasons. In Ekebäck, workers of all kinds could live in larger houses instead of living in small apartments in the town. Houses also enabled them to have subtenants, who helped with daily chores and paid for their living. Who these people were we can get a hint of by looking at the street names like Maskinistgatan, Montörsgatan, Åkaregatan, referring to titles of occupations in industry. The old photos Gunnemark has found in archives and among the residents tell of an environment that was especially built for families.

It is tangible how gentrification sets the tone for the future development and draws a clear line between the old Ekebäck and the new Ekebäck. In chapter VI, Gunnemark describes how new generations move in. These generations of newcomers, the gentrifiers of the creative class, might not have any attachment to the neighbourhood before. It is true, as Gunnemark points out, that the time of the transformation is a key factor as generations of house owners are affected by the time and the

trends in which they live. The materialization of the houses is given an accentuated importance compared to previous generations. With gentrification, the neighbourhood has risen in status and become an attractive living environment for people who have money to buy into it. Therefore, many inhabitants of Gothenburg do not have access to the area today.

Chapter VII, which also serves as summarization of the contents of the book, opens up for interesting reflections. As in many previous chapters, quotations from interviews add a personal touch to the book as a whole and remind us of all the voices through which we are able to soak in the rich descriptions of Ekebäck. Gunnemark's personality and her voice can also be followed throughout the book. This is a very nice touch, as it carries readers from one chapter and theme to the next. Besides of being a residential area with a very interesting and multi-layered history, the stories told about Ekebäck also touch upon the unevenness of gentrification. Gunnemark could have problematized this unevenness even more than she does, but I can also understand that this was not the key purpose of her book. Therefore, the book can be recommended to a broad spectrum of readers interested in the transformation of a residential neighbourhood and how it shifts in meaning over time, both as a neighbourhood in a city and most of all in the minds and actions of its residents.

Sanna Lillbroända-Annala, Åbo

The Consequences of Different Covid Strategies

Anders Gustavsson, Covid 19 pandemins konsekvenser utmed den norsk-svenska riksgränsens södra del. Strömstad akademi, Strömstad 2022. 68 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-89331-56-3.

■ In this study, the ethnologist Anders Gustavsson analyses how everyday life changed for Norwegians and Swedes living along the national border, specifically, in the Strömstad area, from the beginning of the corona pandemic and

the following two years. The research material is gathered from the newspaper *Strömstads tidning*, which published a large number of Covid-19 articles and readers' posts during the pandemic years.

In the Strömstad area, there are normally lots of contact between neighbours on both sides of the border, as both commuters and tourists. However, this was not the first time the border has been closed between the two countries: it was also closed during the alcohol prohibition period (1916–1927), and during the Nazi occupation of Norway (1940–1945).

There has been extensive border trade in this area for decades, where Norwegians have descended on shopping malls on the Swedish side of the border to buy cheap alcohol, meat and other goods. Norwegian tourists have also crossed the border in large numbers: some stay in hotels or on campsites, while others own holiday homes in Sweden. From Sweden to Norway, there has been a steady flow of commuters, working primarily in the building industry, in hotels and restaurants, and as health workers.

Gustavsson's comparison is interesting because the authorities in the two countries chose different corona strategies. The different phases in the development of the pandemic in the two countries are carefully explained. Norway had by far the strictest corona measures. The borders closed a few days after the pandemic was a fact, and the restrictions lasted much longer than the Swedish corona measures. Long quarantine periods were implemented upon entry to Norway; Norwegian police and soldiers tested arrivals at the border; and heavy fines were imposed on those who did not comply with the rules. This was a challenge, especially for commuters. Several reported that they felt discriminated against by the new corona measures, and were also subjected to rumour mongering and scapegoated as spreaders of infection. The constant introduction of new measures, closing and opening of the borders, differing test regimes, changing the levels of fines etc., made everyday life difficult on both sides of the border, and the measures led to the formerly good and dynamic neighbourliness being considerably soured.

This study of everyday life highlights important events in the corona pandemic in a border area and also serves as an important contribution to the debate about the intentional and unintentional consequences of corona measures.
Tove Ingebjørg Fjell, University of Bergen

Sleeping – A Cultural History

Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen, Søvn. Ei Kulturhistorie. Skald, Leikanger 2022. 384 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-82-79959- 233-4.

■ Taking his point of departure in Christian Krogh's painting from 1883 of a mother taking a nap while sitting by her child's cradle, Bjørn Sverre Hol Haugen, ethnologist and head conservator at the Norwegian Folk Museum, emphasizes how sleep is much more than a biological phenomenon. The right and possibility to sleep has always been unevenly distributed according to class, gender, and age – however first and foremost sleep is culturally organized. We never sleep in a cultural vacuum, but our sleep must be adapted to the culture we are part of. However, even though sleeping takes up one third of our lives, the quotidian nightly practices of sleeping have been treated in a stepmotherly fashion in the disciplines of history. This has now been remedied by this new book, or at least countered regarding Norway, with its empirical wealth richness of stories, accounts, customs, folklore, and illustrations on nearly every page (paintings, sketches, archival photos, photos from museums).

The book is structured in 11 chapters. In the introductory and concluding chapters the question of having a "heart for sleeping" (*et godt sovehjerte*), that is to say, a natural disposition for sleeping is problematized. Instead, the cultural dimensions of sleeping practices are highlighted and the topic and themes of the book presented, and also how the book is deeply anchored in the author's work at cultural history museums and with open-air museums and textiles especially. Following the open-air museums and the early tradition of the ethnological discipline Hol Haugen draws

attention to patterns of cultural differences according to place rather than time or chronology. Furthermore, the author stresses that the rhythmic and repetitive nature of sleeping involves cyclic temporalities rather than linear and chronological time, and when it comes to religious holidays and life-cycle events (such as birth, wedding, and death), rituals, superstition, then sacred time also comes into play. Even if examples are drawn from the Viking Age and Middle Ages as well as modern city life, the overall empirical focus is on rural Norway in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The source materials are primarily presented as archival folklife material and museum collections, and the museums where Hol Haugen has worked intensely with textiles for bedding in particular.

The following four chapters – on rooms for sleeping, beds and bedding, social differences in bedding (from silk to straw), and clothes for sleep – zoom in on the material dimensions facilitating sleep. In these chapters social differences are emphasized, but also how the custom of communal sleeping, often with more than two in the same bed, was the norm across the middle and lower classes, from peasants and merchants to loggers and vagabonds. Practices of co-sleeping were a necessity in times when space, heat, and covers were sparse resources, and the living room was the place for all kinds of daily and nightly activities: eating, working, and resting. Co-sleeping was not restricted to family members, and bedfellows cut across age, social status, and gender. Also, bedfellows could involve strangers travelling, thus underscoring the necessity of sharing rules of conduct and micro-practices of sleep. Privacy was in short supply, but sleeping also involved non-human bedfellows from the invited and warming dogs and cats to ferrets, mice, and lice, to which a full chapter is devoted.

Sleeping and resting often took place during the daytime and outside the bed, and in the next four chapters Hol Haugen describes how the daily routines were carefully organized to allow time for resting after the fixed meals; however, resting often took place outside beds and was unevenly

distributed according to gender and social status and gradually disappeared as industrial and standardized work time came to pervade everyday life. The folklore of sleep, such as taking omens from dreams or performing rituals around sleep, is also treated through many examples, and a chapter on "sleepless nights" discusses the sexual activities we nowadays attribute to practices of the bed, including pre- or extra-marital sex and the social custom and regulation of "night courtship" (*nattefrieri*).

Even if co-sleeping was socially regulated, it gave rise to illegitimate children, infanticide, and young women sentenced to death, and it was also one of the drivers of the emergent research into ordinary people's bed practices, as in the famous studies by Eilert Sundt, who is often referred to throughout the book. However, topics such as masturbation and homosexuality – which Sundt refrained from mentioning – are also treated in the book, as well as a few stories about open or fluid gender identification.

For a trained ethnologist, the topics of the book may overall appear primarily as classic themes and well-known features and relationships between Scandinavian regions, forms of housing, the materiality of beds and bedding, and the gradually changing everyday practices and distributions of sleep and rest according to social status, age, and gender. However, this is not so much a book presenting new research in a very systematic way or as an academic genre. Rather, it embodies a well-presented synthesis of ethnological insights across scholarly generations. And with its empirical richness and generous use of examples, quotations, and illustrations, this book is a good read.

In 2009 the Danish ethnologist Mikkel Venborg Pedersen published a similar book covering the cultural patterns of sleep among the peasantry in Denmark. Even if the general insights offered by the two books are more or less identical, the examples and museal anchorage make them different. They both appear as products of methodological nationalism, but also can be read with relevance and interest across Scandinavia.

In the case of Hol Haugen's book a newer trend in cultural history is occurring, the transparent and personal curatorship of museums and exhibitions. Thus, the author is clearly present in the text and occasionally with personal memories and sensory experiences of textiles and bedding. Overall, the book offers a grand tour of the cultural history of sleeping and bed practices in pre-industrial Norway – laid out as one big and textual open-air museum, where one can visit the different regional customs and social classes. As the story-telling tour guide, Hol Haugen performs as a profoundly knowledgeable museum professional as well as a reflecting ethnologist in ongoing discussions with earlier and recent research on the matter of sleeping.

Tine Damsholt, Copenhagen

Smugglers of Denmark

Nils Valdersdorf Jensen, Smuglerlandet Danmark. Mennesker, sprut og cigaretter. Gads forlag, Copenhagen 2022. 288 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-87-12-06871-6.

■ In this book about "Denmark as a Land of Smugglers: People, Booze, and Cigarettes", Nils Valdersdorf Jensen, historian and head of department at Svendborg Museum, presents the cultural history of Danish smuggling. The book covers the period from 1750 to 2000, with an emphasis on the South Funen Archipelago. The book is published in collaboration with Svendborg Museum and the Maritime Museum of Denmark.

During the period under consideration, Danish society underwent radical change as a result of industrialization, urbanization, democratization, globalization, and demographic change. To this we can add war and occupation. Of course, the changes affected the Danish state: the country was gradually reduced in area and the national borders have constantly changed. With smuggling as a lens, the author captures important changes in society while showing that smuggling is influenced by political, economic, social transformations. In the book, the author considers the different goods smuggled in different periods, such as silk, cig-

arettes, sugar, whisky, and narcotics. Valdersdorf Jensen also highlights the many different, often creative, methods used by the smugglers, such as secret compartments, hiding places, and bodily tactics, with the smugglers' clothes functioning as a secret borderland. He also shows that smuggling networks often extended across class and gender boundaries, and of course national borders. A great variety of sources are used, with everything from written documents of sundry kinds to oral history – the author has interviewed twenty former smugglers.

This book is said to be the first concerted narrative of an illegal activity that has often been viewed among broad strata of the population as a natural, at times necessary, activity, which the state has desperately tried to prevent, often in vain. At times it makes for entertaining reading, indirectly capturing the strange dynamic between state border regimes and popular border work in the form of smuggling. The book also reveals how local networks included local customs personnel, further reminding the reader that the moral economies of smuggling are not always in agreement with the central government's idea of order. To varying extents, the author also shows how smuggling and smugglers have been portrayed in literature and popular culture.

Finally, the publisher must be commended for the excellent work of producing this volume. Nils Valdersdorf Jensen's *Smugglerlandet Danmark* is a beautiful book on a subject that never ceases to fascinate.

Fredrik Nilsson, Åbo

New Fields and Forms of Ethnological Fieldwork

Etnologiskt fältarbete. Nya fält och former. Kim Silow Kallenberg, Elin von Unge & Lisa Wiklund Moreira (eds). Studentlitteratur, Lund 337 pp. ISBN 978-91-44-15326-1.

■ This book, entitled "Ethnological Fieldwork: New Fields and Forms" and edited by Kim Silow Kallenberg, Elin von Unge, and Lisa Wiklund

Moreira, is a new book where fieldwork and methods are in the centre. The title immediately arouses associations with another book from 2011 called simply *Etnologiskt fältarbete* ("Ethnological fieldwork") edited by Lars Kaijser and Magnus Öhlander, and clearly the two books are related to each other. Many of the chapters deal with the same themes and some of the authors have made contributions to both publications. The period of ten years between the books, is, however, noticeable. This is far from being a new edition of the first book. New and current methods and fieldwork are added, and most importantly, the new book has, apart from the introduction, four sections that chronologically follow the process of academic writing: "Getting Started", "In the Field", "Methods", and "Interpreting, Writing and Analysing". This indicates progress and must be regarded as a pedagogical device, as the book is mainly aimed at students with or without much experience of carrying out research projects.

The first section of the book has two chapters. Jenny Gunnarsson Payne and Magnus Öhlander focus on why we conduct research, how we do it, and not least what characterizes ethnological research. They stress how theories, methods, and empirical questions create a constant pendulum movement. To start writing and doing research is not a straightforward process!

Starting out a writing process also requires an understanding of the relation between the researcher and research persons involved. In the chapter "Ethical and Qualitative Methods", Ida Hughes Tidlund and Elin von Unge elaborate on this theme. Keywords are reflexivity, situation, and transparency. The ethical problems concerning digital materials are also discussed in detail.

All in all, the first part of the book may curb anxiety and reduce the difficult period between thinking thoughts and writing words.

The next section, "The Field", introduces three different fieldwork projects related to different methods. Maria Björklund and Kim Silow Kallenberg write about doing fieldwork in institutions. By introducing the term "institutional ethnology", they point out that this is a field with its

own problems, such as how to get access, how to gain insight into dominant rules and norms, and how to elucidate and analyse their own research questions and perspectives.

Christine Bylund and Kristina Sehlin MacNeil present two research projects. Bylund is working among indigenous people, and Sehlin MacNeil has written a thesis about physical deviation. In her work Bylund uses the method called *yarning*, which is a term that underlines the close contact between researcher and the indigenous people made possible by social conversation and interaction. Sehlin MacNeil uses what is called the *cropped method*. She focuses on "normality", which again results in new perspectives in studies of deviation. The title of the chapter, "Researching With, Not On: Two Forms of Critical Method", points to the author's ideal research strategies. Different groups in society are given possibilities to become active participants in the creation of the research work. The fieldwork and methods are interesting, but the text is rather compressed, and a question which may be raised is whether this chapter is accessible for students with little methodological and theoretical experience.

The last chapter in the field section presents a field without borders: "transnational everyday reality". The researchers, Aida Jobarteh and Lisa Wiklund Moreira, are studying the lives of Japanese emigrants in New York and Gambian refugees in Italy respectively. The authors shed light on the different backgrounds and encounters with a new world. In the emigrant's new life, the authors emphasize the importance of the new digital meeting places that both create and maintain contacts. Here geographical and national boundaries are set in parentheses.

In this section of the book, the choices of fieldwork are not specified, yet they are highly topical and may also give rise to new ideas for other and different projects.

In the next part of the book, still presenting different fieldwork projects, the focus is now, as the title indicates, on "Methods". Charlotte Hagström and Susanne Nylund Skog are responsible for the opening chapter on the topic of interviews. This represents a method that never loses its relevance, but the authors keep the method updated by highlighting new potentials made possible by digital equipment. "Walk-along interviews" are also recommended. Strolling together with informants opens for new knowledge, feelings, memories, and sensory experiences.

The chapter "Autography", authored by Evelina Liliequist and Kim Silow Kallenberg, is an introduction to a less well-known method where the interviewer and the informant are one and the same person. The emphasis is on personal experiences and self-reflection, interpreted in the light of societal and cultural structures. Autography may also take on different writing forms, such as essays, short stories, and poems. This may not be something everyone can succeed at, but it shows some of the depth and breadth of the method.

Observation is a mandatory method in a book like this. Here Andrea Dankić and Elin Lundquist make the chapter stand out by using theories of materiality such as the ANT model to demonstrate how observation may influence our lives. Further they demonstrate the "follow-the-object" strategy whereby transformations of research objects may be observed. Sound pictures and atmosphere are qualities that may come forth in observation methods. Today these aspects are made even more distinct through digital media.

Today digital methods also are an obligatory chapter in a context like this. This topic is presented by Coppélie Cocq and Evelina Liliequist. They point out how digital techniques offer new possibilities in the process of collecting material as well as knowledge enhancement. The chapter is informative but at the same time rather general and summary. This may appear so when digital possibilities are highlighted in almost every chapter in the book.

Britta Geschwind and Hanna Jansson have composed an inspiring chapter, which deals with "Sources Others Have Written and Collected". Different archival materials are exemplified, everything from minutes and collections of letters to digital sources and images. Even the appear-

ance and traces of use are underlined as important. The groups of sources are numerous, but the authors point out that they are not to be regarded as isolated categories; they may be part of material triangulations. It would not be difficult to let some of that method mentioned constitute a chapter of its own. Taken together, however, this has become a text which inspires both further reading and research.

The method section has chapters with different degrees of reflection, and this part of the book captures a range of methods, and how to use them. Leaving methods behind, the focus is moved to interpretation, writing and analysis.

Jenny Ingridsdotter and Kim Silow Kallenberg open the section with a chapter on "Ethnographic Writing as Method". They concentrate on the start of the writing process, the genres of academic texts, and also how it is possible to break the given norms. Most emphasis is given to ethnographic writing, and hence Geertz and thick description is essential. They underline how writing is thinking, how reading includes fiction which addresses feeling and understanding. In this extension, creative writing also is recommended. This chapter addresses many points that have already been highlighted in previous chapters, but the advantage is that different chapters in the book are tied together. Ethnography is a keyword throughout the book. One may ask why this term is only explained in the last section of a book addressed to students.

In the next chapter, "Method Questions Where, When and How", Maria Bäckman and Kim Silow Kallenberg problematize the concept of method. Their main goal is to show how concepts, theories, analyses, and writing all have built-in methods and as such set the text in motion. Method is not a self-evident or unambiguous term but can be used at different levels and have consequences for different texts. Methods are not synonymous with material.

"Analyses" is the last chapter of this section. The authors, Lars Kaijser and Susanne Nylund Skog, both underline the complexity and comprehensiveness of the term analysis. Thus, it is difficult to describe straightforward procedures for analyses and writing of academic texts. What they do is to exemplify the process through their own research project. Susanne Nylund Skog writes about her study of narrative experiences and cultural heritage, while Lars Kaijser writes about his research project "Staged Nature: Public Aquariums as Institutions of Knowledge". Both presentations make for interesting reading, but Lars Kaijser manages in an instructive way to show how a research process involves constant switching between writing and the use of theory and methods. He also demonstrates how the working process includes both failures and new starts. Undoubtedly, this must be relevant reading for anyone struggling to find structure and combine the different levels in their research projects.

The three chapters in the last section may be seen as texts which sum up both different aspects of doing a research project and the different chapters in the book. This includes writing, fieldwork, methods, theories, and how to make it all fit together. This is not easy, but the book gives a helping hand to hard-working students.

The final chapter of the book is a résumé of the Swedish history of ethnology, which is easily recognizable in neighbouring countries. The attention is directed towards different fieldwork and different methods. From being a discipline with strict boundaries concerning how to research and what to research, today's ethnology may be characterized through reflexivity, creativity, and flexibility. On the other hand, fieldwork and empirical methods have been continuous key components from the start until the present day.

To sum up, this handbook demonstrates a wide range of methods and how to use them in a range of different fieldwork. It also gives insight into changes both in the choices of fieldwork and in the methods, depending on the time and the world we are living in.

Sometimes there may be some uncertainty concerning who the book is addressed to, the inexperienced student or someone starting a PhD project. Yet the book is exemplary in the way the different chapters give references to each

other and how the chapters are procedurally tied to each other. The biography also provides hints for further reading, which gives the book a contextual autonomy. There should be no doubt that *Etnologiskt fältarbete: Nya fält och former* will find its way into many classrooms and reading lists.
Eva Reme, Bergen

Pop, Rock, and the Sixties

Sven-Erik Klinkmann, Ropet från gårdagen. Popen, rocken och sextiotalet. Scriptum, Vasa 2021. 296 pp. ISBN 078-952-7005-84-2.

■ This book examines how pop and rock music changed during the 1960s and how these changes can be understood in today's light. It is framed in a personal way. As a teenager in 1965, the author published an article in the youth column of the local newspaper *Vasabladet*, in which he argued that pop music should be studied from new perspectives. Until then, it had been perceived as a lightweight and insignificant form of entertainment, but in the article Klinkmann claimed that there were qualities in pop that were worth taking seriously. What was the shift that he had identified, and what has it meant for his understanding of pop and rock? That is the main thematic track of the book. Another, equally important, starting point for the book is the question whether Klinkmann himself belongs to the so-called rock generation, as a friend told him that he did. The assertion raised concerns about participation and exclusion. Did Klinkmann really belong to the rock generation? Pop and rock were important during the sixties, and is it really possible to live outside one's own time?

At the same time – it may be important to point out – this is not an autobiography. Although the premises and the questions in the book are personally grounded, the answer is given in the form of cultural analysis. It is an attempt to understand what happened to popular music in the mid-sixties which meant that it could be perceived as important. The question whether the author was part

of a rock generation opens up an analytical track where, by reasoning about what he has listened to through his life, he problematizes his musical interests and his belonging. This also leads to a discussion about genre boundaries, the social climate, and the writing of history.

The structure of the book is chronological. The author tells about some of the changes that took place in popular music from the late fifties into the seventies. It is not an attempt at an all-encompassing history, instead following Klinkmann's own musical interests and what has appealed to him during different periods of his life. It is tied to, but not limited to, the author's own listening. This means that the choices are selective, but they nevertheless reflect changes in the musical landscape. The personal selection ties the history to what he listened to and it neatly problematizes the relationship between a more objective history of music and a more subjective interest in music. The history of the music is showcased through brief presentations of artists, songwriters, producers, records, and songs. This is music that has been significant to the author, but also – as he writes – to others.

The book comprises twelve chapters which can almost be characterized as essays. As mentioned, the account is partly chronological, but each chapter considers a separate problem and they can to some extent be read independently. The text is associative in nature. The chapter headings serve as starting points for the discussion, which can follow slightly different paths. The two questions that frame the book – the one about the significance of the changes that took place in rock and pop during the sixties, and the one about the author's participation in this context – serve as a backdrop for the analysis, although the questions themselves are not always articulated. Often it is like attending a lecture where the author has a script to follow, but where he also allows himself certain digressions along the way. Klinkmann is far from being the first to tackle the history of rock and pop. He refers to scholars of music and popular culture such as Antoine Hennion and Simon Frith, but he does so in an independent way, re-

flecting not only on his own position but also on those who in different ways have formulated the history of popular music.

For those interested in popular music, it is often easy to follow the author as he brings up songs, albums, and artists. Although it is mainly music from the late 1950s and into the 1970s that is in focus, there are frequent looks both backwards and forwards in time. At the same time, it can happen that the many references sometimes make the author's train of thought more difficult to follow – at least if the reader is interested in what it actually sounded like. Here, the easy accessibility of Spotify facilitates the reading when the artists or works mentioned are unfamiliar. Without reducing the author's survey of the music, it can be said to be represented by the Brill Building, Holland/Dozier/Holland, Motown, the Supremes, the Temptations, Smokey Robinson and the Miracles, Stevie Wonder, Marvin Gaye, Mary Wells, Tammi Terrell, girl groups, the Crystals, Phil Spector, the Ronettes, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Who, the Kinks, the Animals, the British invasion, Bob Dylan, the Beach Boys, Woodstock, The Band, Creedence Clearwater Revival, Van Morrison. Curtis Mayfield, Bobby Womack, Sly and the Family Stone, and Steely Dan. This list illustrates the path taken by the author's listening. It also shows how his involvement in rock music is related to a broader interest in music. Some of the listed artists can be categorized as rock, but not all. I will come back to that.

The author's treatment of the topic is rooted in a geographical place. The starting point is growing up in Vasa in Österbotten, a Swedish-speaking part of Finland. This meant that he was excluded from most contexts where pop and rock were created, although there was a local music scene in Vasa. Popular music was available in the local record shop, but it was mainly heard on radio, often Swedish Radio. This is an example of an experience of popular music shared by most people in the Western world, at least for those who did not live in a big Anglo-American music metropolis. Klinkmann can also be counted among the generation – so-called baby boomers born from the

mid-forties until the early sixties – that grew up in harmony with the social conditions that shaped rock and pop.

An important question in the book is how popular music is produced and consumed in a time whose zeitgeist it expresses. It has been a seismograph that has sensed contemporary moods, while at the same time being able to communicate them. In this way, it carries the experience of living in a new age. The technology of the time dictated the conditions for listening to music. Transistors and car radios, together with travel gramophones, made listening more mobile and freer at the beginning of the sixties. Initially, the single was the medium of pop music. It was a format that suited the charts. With the rise of rock, the LP became important. It had previously been used mainly for classical music, but now it was found to serve the more serious ambitions of rock music, with albums such as Bob Dylan's *Highway 61 Revisited*, the Beatles' *Revolver*, and the Beach Boys' *Pet Sounds*. Pop and rock emerged at a time that generated a new relationship with the surrounding world, when motor cars and charter tourism gave broader social groups an opportunity to travel in a more relaxed form, and this also shaped the music. To capture the changing social climate of the sixties, the author also highlights the popular films of the time, which in many ways expressed a similar zeitgeist to that which can be detected in the music.

An important, perhaps the most important, thread in the book is a running discussion of the dividing line between pop and rock, the affinity and the difference. Rock and pop are not limited to specific sounds, harmonies, or musical expressions. It is mainly about emotional registers, ideas, and fictionalizations. The author is looking for the gestures, attitudes, and movements that are present in the works or in the relationship between the works and the listeners. The author cites scholars such as Antoine Hennion who have sought an understanding of popular music in the desires and passions of the audience. Popular music cannot be separated from the context in which it is attributed importance. It is elusive, precisely

because it is also part of social contexts where it is continuously assessed and where the foundations of these judgements are constantly in motion.

There are no watertight bulkheads between pop and rock, but the author identifies a set of characteristics that are often attributed to each genre. The premise is that popular music as a category denotes all the styles and genres. By the mid-sixties, pop was the name given to what would later be called rock. However, rock soon acquired a more specific meaning, distinguishing itself by being something other than pop. The designations have thus shifted and at different times have been filled with different meanings. Of course, it is not so simple that artists can easily be divided into pop or rock. It is rather the case that the individual artists can act in both fields and at the same time derive inspiration from blues, folk, country, or soul. Here the Beatles are an example that drew nourishment from all these musical expressions.

The idea of pop is to be popular. The music is in the present, albeit fabricated. It has a driving rhythm and sweet tunes. A pop song is made to be catchy, both musically and emotionally. It is music for the charts and for consumption. It is music that fosters romanticism and escapism. It is the music of dreams, of teenage crushes, rife with insecurity, longing, and desire. At the same time, the dreams can also be linked to a changed world and an opportunity to wish oneself away to other places. For the listener, pop can be banal, but also sublime, conveying hope and confidence. Pop as a genre is described as lacking history; it is not concerned with the music that came before. It is music that is fully aware that it is a commodity produced to be consumed today, not to change society.

Unlike pop, rock does not want to be ephemeral, commercial, or indifferent to the audience. It wants to be taken seriously and is well aware of its history. It is based on a relationship between music, critics, and fans. It is a self-conscious genre, in that it both formulates a canon and relates to it. Rock can be perceived as orthodox, a genre that, through its self-affirmation, excludes music listeners who are felt to lack the right knowledge

and relationship to music history. (For those who remember, Nick Hornby's book *High Fidelity* from 1995, filmed in 2000, is a fine example of musical interests and exclusion.) At the same time, the idea of a canon is counter to rock music's self-image. A canon is based on an idea from literature and classical music in which continuity and stability are important. Rock, for its part, includes a narrative of change and freedom, characterized by breaking with the past, with parents and authorities. It wants to see itself as independent and rebellious while being clearly rooted in a capitalist economy. In other words, there is a demand for authenticity in rock music that does not gel with the context in which it is created.

According to the author, the different categorizations of pop and rock lead to a dichotomization in which rock is perceived as hard, dirty, heavy, authentic, masculine, profound. In contrast to this, pop is soft, transitory, inauthentic, feminine, and superficial. Well aware that the dividing line between pop and rock is not as static and stereotyped as it may seem in the descriptions, Klinkmann employs an interesting symbolism to identify the differences. Rock is compared to a Ferris wheel, while pop is a carousel. In pop, everything goes around, around, and around. It is an experience of the moment which does not change any positions, although the experience itself can be quite intoxicating. The Ferris wheel is different, with fame and canonization going up and down. While the dichotomy of the carousel and the Ferris wheel should not be scrutinized too sharply, it can be read as a way to understand the different movements in pop and rock. But it places the music in an amusement park, separate from the everyday reality in which it is embedded. This is a shame, as Klinkmann otherwise shows how pop and rock are integrated into people's everyday lives.

Klinkmann also highlights how the historiography of popular music is shaped by the zeitgeist. He emphasizes the role of the music critic in defining and drawing the boundaries. Initially, the historicization of popular music took place in music magazines and newspaper review pages. This was where rock and its myths were defined

and communicated. This was where influential re-
viewers wrote music history, while also acting as
arbiters of taste. This is a history of music where
judgements of music have been clearly rooted in
the music reviewers' own taste register and where
other musical tastes have been stigmatized. An
important characteristic of popular music crit-
icism is that it has not been so much about the
musical expressions. A heading in the section on
music criticism reads "Musicological Illiterates",
which somewhat pointedly emphasizes how
music is covered from the point of view of jour-
nalism, cultural analysis, and sociology. In this
respect, rock has not been so much a genre as a
fiction, an idea, and a discursive project.

This is one of Klinkmann's important contri-
butions. The recurring dissection of the difference
between rock and pop is not primarily a question
of where the boundary really runs. The aim is
rather to unravel the canons and the hierarchies
in order to understand what happened in popular
music during the sixties and thus also to under-
stand why the author as a teenager felt that pop
needed more serious coverage. One conclusion
here is that the conditions that once created the
music no longer apply and the self-image that
once held up rock as a demarcated type of pop-
ular musical expression has changed. Klinkmann
emphasizes the importance of a critical view of
history. This applies both to one's own history and
memories of it and to historiography in general.
He cites Walter Benjamin's idea that it is in to-
day's reflections on the past that development and
change are driven. My interpretation here is that
change is, among other things, about shifts in the
view of rock music and its relevance. This does
not mean that the rock music of the sixties loses
its meaning as an expression of its time. But the
self-image that rock music has lived with can be
problematized. For those who listen to the music,
it can also be a way to move back and relive the
feeling of a time that has vanished.

An example of how history can be understood
and reinterpreted comes in a discussion of the
longing for freedom that rock has been consid-
ered to express. Rock emerged in a time of social
change. There is a collective narrative of freedom
attached to alternative culture, youth revolt, and
the ongoing Vietnam War. It was a quest for free-
dom rooted in a social class in a certain time. In its
creative situation, rock was in many ways tied to a
political context. The hippie ideal that once set its
stamp on San Francisco would fade in the 1970s,
to be transposed instead to the nearby Silicon
Valley, where there was another idea of freedom
embedded in a commercial logic. The author
notes that the home computer is perhaps the real
legacy of the aspirations to freedom in the 1960s.

Klinkmann also shows that the concept of free-
dom that has distinguished the historiography of
the 1960s has been able to hide other concepts of
freedom. Whereas rock primarily cultivated an
idea of a collective freedom, there was a parallel,
and perhaps somewhat overshadowed, concept
that advocated a different view of individual free-
dom. Here Klinkmann mentions the ultraliberal
writer Ayn Rand and her works, which framed
freedom in a different way. Here, the ideals of
freedom nourished by young conservatives fo-
cused on egoism, a self-centred ideal that gained
importance in the eighties. With these changes,
the freedom that the rock music of the sixties as-
pired to came to be perceived as outdated.

It is fascinating to read the author's analyses
and interpretations. As a reader, I was not always
clear about where the text was headed, but now,
having reached the end and all the parts of the
book have fallen into place, the whole thing seems
pretty clear. It is a book for people with an inter-
est in music who want to reflect on how popular
music can be interpreted and how this can be done
on the basis of an individual listener's biography.
This is also a book for those who are interested in
contemporary history and how the understanding
of this can take new forms as conditions and per-
spectives change.

So, does the author belong to the rock gener-
ation? Klinkmann shows how, in different phases
of life, he has become hooked on different types
of music which can be described to different de-
grees as rock. Sociologically and culturally, he
belonged to the rock generation. But not subcul-

turally, as a special culture that he belonged to, because he did not smoke or let his hair grow, as rock adolescents tended to do. His interest in rock music also cooled slightly when, in his early twenties, he began to study and then started working. His interest in music, as he writes, was not so much an identity project as an existential matter. Here I am struck by the author's descriptions and musings about Van Morrison and his musical quest in the early seventies. This account also captures Klinkmann's relationship to rock and the ambivalence about being categorized as part of the rock generation. The artist Van Morrison started in rock but moved towards a wider range of styles. He is described as an artist in the borderland between different genres, rooted in everyday life and with a desire to understand his time, the world, and life. My impression is that the author identifies with this position. An interest in popular music and its importance is a gateway to understanding society, history, and the place of individuals in these contexts, and how these positions can change over time. Maybe it was not exactly this that made the young Klinkmann, in his text in the mid-sixties, wish that pop music could be taken more seriously. But this is where the older Klinkmann's more serious view of popular music finally ended up.

Lars Kaijser, Stockholm

Feasts: Celebration, Intoxication, and Rituals

Fest. Fejring, rus og ritualer. Ditlev L. Mahler & Elisabeth Colding (eds.). Gads Forlag, København 2022. 299 pp. ISBN 978-87-12-06513-5.

■ What is a celebration? This is a key question in a collection of essays written by researchers from the Danish National Museum. As the subtitle indicates, Celebration, Intoxication, and Rituals are at the core of this volume, which takes the reader on a journey through time and space with partying, drinking, and dancing. Sixteen authors have contributed to this volume, archaeologists, anthropologists, ethnologists and historians, coming

from different research traditions and disciplines, which makes it a multidisciplinary project. The editors of this work are the archaeologist Ditlev L. Mahler and the ethnologist Elisabeth Colding. Mahler states in the introduction that the idea was born already in 2018. In view of the last couple of years marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, restrictions and social emptiness, this volume seems almost nostalgic in its quest for partying.

The book is arranged in six themes. Celebrations connected to different seasons come first, with a text about the summer solstice and bonfires in different contexts, centuries, and countries that signal the human relationship to the ritual year marked by the sun. The author includes modern Druidic traditions as well as pagan rituals, Swedish Midsummer, Danish bonfires, and German firewheels, to name just a few practices connected to the sun and fire – important elements in human life. The second chapter focuses on changes in celebrations. The custom of dressing up and wearing masks is presented in a temporal perspective. Next, masked parties from the eighteenth century are presented. The following text takes the reader to ancient Rome and the feast of Saturnalia. Here we are give a reminder of the change and adaptation that can be seen in a ritual year, as we are reminded that the birth of Jesus Christ is now celebrated on 25 December, which was the time of Saturnalia, and the two traditions overlapped for some time.

The volume continues as a spatio-temporal smorgasbord of partying. There is a section on mythological feasts, with texts about the symposium of Socrates, Dionysian celebrations, and feasts in Norse mythology. Ritual celebrations are exemplified by Celtic, Incan and Mexican feasts, the latest referring to death (the famous feast of El Día de los Muertos), the playful and intriguing use of skeletons. The authors refer to historical or archaeological sources, but also bring us up to modern times, showing connections, change, traditions that hang on despite social upheavals. It is a colourful and engaging read, providing a light version of research for anyone interested in history or archaeology.

These are followed by sections on political celebrations. A chapter on Stone Age places of celebration is especially engaging. Examples from Australia, Turkey, France, Ireland, and Denmark make a mosaic of hunter-gatherer societies with traces of feasts. The following chapter brings us to contemporary Indonesia, although with a strong historical background, providing an example of a tradition in constant change. Feasts with social and ethnic markers are covered in the next chapter, exemplified by Danish Renaissance parties and Powwow, a Native American celebration.

The final section, in my opinion, is the strongest part of the book – a chapter about Noma, the (already) legendary restaurant in Denmark, written by Elisabeth Colding. Noma is a focal point in discussing Nordic cuisine and modern food celebrations. There are intriguing quotations from people who have dined at Noma, and a discussion of the political element in a food culture. Incidentally, only a couple of days ago (January 2023), Noma announced that it will close and become a laboratory. Thus, the text has just gained an interesting historical dimension. Last comes a chapter on feasts at Lille Mølle, a private (yet historic) property in Copenhagen where parties and celebrations took place in the first half of the twentieth century. It is a captivating ethnographic glance at the owners, the Flach-Bundegaard couple, their social life, and the types of celebrations that were held there. Focused on just one place, it paints a broad picture of Copenhagen party life.

Robust, broad in its field of study, and rich in beautiful illustrations, this could be described as vanity project, created by researchers who know their fields inside out and are able to eloquently present complex study objects to the broader public. On a critical note, it would be nice to have a bit more information about the writers. Short biographies included at the end sometimes only say "senior researcher" without stating a discipline. Introducing the authors in two to three sentences would help to frame their chapters. The weakest point in the book is at the beginning. Somehow the opening chapters try to cover too much too quickly, listing more than engaging with the phenom-

enon. I would actually say that the more specific the object of study, the better it works for an academic audience. Furthermore, the contributions are uneven, some very short and ending abruptly. The jumps between different cultural and ethnic contexts are sudden at times, and they could have been better connected. Yet, these are minor academic points, and this publication is more popular than academic and should be viewed as such.

At its core, the message is this: celebrations are integral to human existence. They have always existed and they will exist in the future. They mark birth, death, joy, and sorrow. There is no end to what can be a celebration and there is no limit to what can be celebrated. This is a good book to be enjoyed with a cup of coffee.

Katarzyna Herd, Lund

A Rich History of Danish Fashion

MODEN i Danmark gennem 400 år. Bind 1. *1660–1900. Status – Luksus – Velklædt.* 255 pp. Ill. Mikkel Venborg Pedersen. Bind 2. *1900–2020. Chik – Smart – Moderne*. 245 pp. Ill. Marie Riegels Melchior. Gads forlag, København 2022. ISBN 978-87-06109-0.

■ This is a comprehensive work that requires a comprehensive review. It consists of two parts. The first was written by Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, senior researcher at the National Museum, while part 2 is by Marie Riegels Melchior, who works at the University of Copenhagen.

The first part begins with a joint preface and an introduction to the two volumes, with an emphasis on how the two authors' research rests on a foundation of cultural history, a field in which several ethnologists before them have written about fashion, dress, and everyday life in Denmark. There is also a presentation of the chronological division of the two parts and the source material from the National Museum on which the entire work is based. The purpose is not only to show the research that has taken place on Danish fashion, but above all to reach out to a wider readership. What the two parts have in common is that, in addition

to the history of style and culture, they also discuss such matters as identity, environment, and consumption.

The author of part 1, Mikkel Venborg Pedersen, has published a number of books on cultural history and fashion, including one about the perfect gentleman. The author's previous experience is evident in this work, where the development of fashion during the first 300 years is described in the broader context of cultural history.

The presentation covers the time from the magnificence of the baroque period in the seventeenth century up to the end of the nineteenth century, when new shops made it possible for more people to be well dressed at the same time as the elite tried to maintain their status with tailored clothes.

In the very first pages the author presents the many folk costumes in museum collections to show that they will be treated in this work as fashion, which has not hitherto been a common practice. Then we are led into baroque ceremonial costumes for men, including the wigs. The garments are described as pompous and airy, which is underlined by the fact that they were made of velvet and silk. Paris was already setting the tone at this time. To illustrate how the common people dressed, Venborg Pedersen uses paintings from the time. Their dress probably did not follow the vicissitudes of fashion but remained stable for a long time. The bourgeoisie, on the other hand, tried to keep up, but with simpler fabrics than those used by the aristocracy. If nobles wore silk, the burghers wore wool, he writes. This chapter contains a great deal that is worth delving into. To take just one example: the basic types of elite women's costume changed during the 1680s towards a one-piece gown, often pattern-woven and adorned with embroidery. The pictures of gowns here are exquisite and so well rendered that it is possible to study all the details.

Young nobles went to Paris to acquire the latest fashions, and there they could buy ready-made items such as shoes and boots. The eighteenth century was dominated by wide dresses and tricorne hats. The hair was combed back and powdered white. Autocracy persisted but the bourgeoi-

sie was growing, not least because of the many new trading houses that were founded. Venborg Pedersen discusses whether the rococo is a style of its own or the long death throes of the baroque. In either case it is distinguished by more refined elements such as florid embroidery and finery in both men's and women's clothes. He describes the rococo as feminine and the baroque as masculine. Men's breeches now reached down over the knees and their legs were clad with white silk stockings. Shoes became narrower and pointier. Among the nobility and in the salons of the bourgeoisie, beautiful dresses of silk brocade with beautiful floral motifs now caught on. For the initiated, there is plenty of detailed information here about fashion and the art of dressmaking.

It is incredible to see how many fine dresses have been so well preserved in the collections of the National Museum. Outstanding work has been done to produce the splendid photographs in this book. Of course, it is the beautiful clothes of the elite that attract the reader's attention, but there is also plenty of information about how peasants and burghers were dressed. However, this is not shown by illustrations of the objects themselves, but in paintings from the time.

The revolutionary period at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century had a decisive impact on fashion, which became simpler. The Enlightenment had led to new ways of thinking about bourgeois reason and the social duties of the elite, which is reflected in costume through a rejection of courtly culture and instead an emphasis on bourgeois self-determination, the author notes. Imports from the east led to the Empire style, with thin cotton dresses that required cashmere shawls to keep the wearer warm. From the early nineteenth century, several simple cotton dresses are preserved in the National Museum, which is described as being rather unique as they have rarely survived to this day. Outer garments still consisted of a coat, now edged and lined with fur and accompanied by a muff.

For a long time, children were dressed like small adults, but as the Enlightenment focused on

children, it also influenced fashion so that special children's clothing was created. Boys' clothes became roomy and easy to move around in, while girls' clothes changed more slowly, but the dresses of the Empire stye were also suitable for children and so could simply be made in smaller versions. Children's clothes, incidentally, were the first that could be bought ready-made, apart from things like underwear and stockings. Purchased girls' dresses were often in the colourful cotton fabrics of the time.

Well into the nineteenth century, the Empire style also reached the countryside. When the peasants became freeholding farmers and had more money to spend, the womenfolk could wear dresses with purchased fabrics and the home-woven cloth died out, according to Venborg Pedersen. He also notes that women's fashion among the common people changed more rapidly than men's.

The Biedermeier style, which developed out of English Victorianism, also made itself felt in fashion, and an expressive image from the mid-nineteenth century shows an airy summer dress in thin white cotton fabric. It was once worn by the wife of a wine merchant. The corset has now returned to squeeze the female body into the shape of an hourglass. Three major changes can now be discerned in women's fashion: the waist was moved to its real position, the blouse was invented and since then has always been part of a woman's wardrobe, and a stiff skirt was revived in what is called neo-rococo. Crinolines peaked in the 1860s, as illustrated here by a beautiful green silk ball gown.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the bourgeois man set the style for men in the higher social classes, and his attire was now dark and solemn, but also well-made and of high quality. Soon, however, brighter summer clothes came along too. Ordinary people in the countryside at this time wore long trousers of homespun and their everyday footwear consisted of clogs.

Closer to the turn of the century in 1900, historicism also made itself felt in Danish fashion, and even Renaissance dresses could be revived. But women simultaneously criticized the corset,

which led to the "reform dress", based on rational ideals of health and freedom. It was created and sold at the Magasin du Nord in Copenhagen. Reform dresses resembled the airy cut of the Empire style that did not require a corset. Men wore top hats and sported a moustache.

For scholars who want to immerse themselves in bygone fashions, this book is a treasure chest filled with rich expressions of French fashion, how it was used and how it changed. And in the same way, interested readers can learn about underwear, shoes, gown details, hats, fabrics, tailors, and patterns.

Part 2 is the work of Marie Riegels Melchior. For many years, at least since 2008 when she defended her dissertation on design, identity, and history in the Danish fashion industry, she has investigated and described the history of Danish fashion in different ways in several books. It is therefore with a solid background in the subject that she sets out here to summarize how fashion has developed in Denmark in the last 120 years. The focus is primarily on how fashion has changed through history, but there are also many interesting discussions of what fashion really is and how it can be viewed as a social movement where a number of social activities lead to its development and change.

The book is arranged as a chronological tour of the twentieth century in six short chapters, each of which covers a period of about fifteen years. This is followed by a chapter ranging from the late 1980s into the present century. The last chapter, which is perhaps the most interesting, discusses fashion and politics in the last fifteen years. The external societal context sets the framework for the division into chapters.

In Riegels Melchior's first chapter, we meet a cultured person who likes to buy fashions from one of the big department stores. Copenhagen's female elite attended fashion shows while the less well-off followed fashions by altering their clothes or making new ones from patterns in fashion magazines. The turn-of-the-century reform dress initiated a change in both underwear and dresses. The silhouette became long and slim. Sportswear for

riding, tennis, and sailing became common among the elite in both men's and women's wardrobes.

Under a fine chapter heading about emancipation and seduction, with new dreams of the future, the author describes what the great upheavals in the world, chiefly in the 1920s, when the car had its breakthrough in society, meant for Danish fashion. Ford introduced its cars to the Danish public in 1924 with advertisements which also presented the new fashions in the form of a woman wearing a typical twenties dress. The decade was marked by optimism, and fashion reflected both American and French influence. Both hair and skirts became shorter when the economy was good, and became longer again when the national economy darkened.

The little black dress, introduced by Chanel in 1926, has since proved to have a long life in ever-new variants. The clothing industry developed with serially produced garments. Menswear came first, then working clothes, and for the women the first mass-produced items were long stockings made of artificial silk.

Development during the 1930s and 1940s is described by the author first as a dream world and then, during the war, there was a switch to escapism and common sense. The limited import of textiles during the war led people to reuse and alter the clothes they had. But it was still the case that a well-dressed person was regarded as civilized. Housewives could now read fashion magazines to learn how to act in order to look proper and well-dressed. During this time fashions for both women and men began to resemble uniforms. But the men that Riegels Melchior describes as the three B's in Danish fashion – Holger Blom, Preben Birck, and Uffe Brydegaard – were all still active. In this chapter there is an interesting section about how Germany during the Nazi era tried to move the haute couture industry from Paris to Berlin. There is also a description of a fashion show of German and Austrian models in Copenhagen. But this period also saw the first youth culture in Denmark, including the distinctive fashion of the swing fans.

With the post-war period a new fashion made itself felt, not least through the many new artifi-

cial fabrics created when the usual fabrics were in short supply. Men wore terylene trousers and nylon shirts, which did not need ironing. Fashion was still dictated from Paris and Christian Dior launched the New Look with narrow waist and soft hips. The woman's suit, the shirtdress, and the cocktail dress become role models, clearly gendered as feminine garments. A fashionable woman of the 1950s had to be beautiful and practically dressed. The importance of leisure was reflected particularly in men's clothes, for example in ready-made sports jackets.

In her interesting summary, Riegels Melchior in this section looks both backwards to Holger Blom's dresses and forwards in time to the research on Blom and how Danes in general learned about the fashion icons of the time through television programmes in the first decade of the present century. During this time a new fashion was also created for teenagers, for example the jeans that came from the world of cinema.

The author says that Danes in the 1960s were well-dressed when they entered the growing welfare state. Popular culture now directed young people's fashion interest towards London and New York. The decade was also characterized by anti-fashion and self-fulfilment. Here it is especially clear how changes in society can lead to changes in fashion. Fashion became a reflection of society.

The energy crisis of the 1970s left its mark on the fashion trade. As a result, reuse and home-made clothing dominated. The big department stores experienced a crisis. Eventually, however, new low-cost chains of clothes shops appeared on the market. Ordinary people were better off and the female yuppie could wear a masculine "power suit" to manifest her ambitions. Men once again wore jackets, trousers with press folds, well-ironed shirts, and a good-quality tie.

The last two chapters of the book bring the reader from the late twentieth century into the twenty-first. Denmark is now part of a globalized world where people buy into a lifestyle with the associated fashion, Riegels Melchior writes. Here we find, for example, hip-hop streetwear alongside elaborate lingerie fashions. Now it became

possible to display underwear on large advertising posters. Vintage has become fashionable, but the luxury fashion of supermodels is also manifested in advertising and reportage. There is also a place for the fashions espoused by minorities.

In recent years, the author notes, fashion is back again thanks to increasingly rapid production in what is called fast fashion, although this has been countered by an increased awareness of sustainability and environmental issues, which are now the subject of growing discussion in the fashion industry. Side by side with this development, one can also see how fashion is exhibited in museums and studied in academic research, and books about fashion are becoming more common.

The two volumes of this work are beautifully designed and lavishly illustrated. The rich pictorial material not only serves to illustrate the text but to a large extent speaks for itself. Both textiles and period styles can be clearly followed through all the illustrations, which have really been allowed to overflow the pages.

The many in-depth sections on things that were particularly characteristic of each period are marked with a different colour, which gives the reader the opportunity to dwell on them for a while, or they can be read separately by anyone with special interests. These sections are particularly absorbing in Part 2.

Extensive notes not only give the books a solid scholarly foundation but also furnish the reader with hints on further reading about different aspects of clothing, whether it be stockings or the historical origins of fashion.

An index of persons provides guidance on fashion icons as well as famous wearers of fashion such as royalty, actors, and politicians. There is also an index of place names. For anywhere outside Copenhagen it refers simply to places, but inside Copenhagen it includes street names. This index seems somewhat confusing as it also contains, for example, museums and shops.

In a very interesting epilogue to part 2 of the work, Riegels Melchior and Venborg Pedersen together discuss, among other things, how interdisciplinary fashion research gained momentum

during the 1990s. Changes in norms and identity markers have been particularly characteristic of fashion since then. Research on fashion is pursued not only in universities but also in design schools and museums. The authors find that the different forms of research ensure great breadth, and they single out four different positions: object-based, culturalistic, practice-based, and production-based. Finally, these two ethnologists present their own research as something in between practice analysis with an eye for objects, grounded in older costume research, and the culturalistically oriented research inspired by material cultural studies and economic movements.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about these two books is that together they provide such a broad overview of the development of fashion in Denmark. In addition, comparisons with other countries also make the reader aware of the development of fashion outside Denmark. It is a work with a wide scope and always with a firm footing in the prevailing zeitgeist, and with a broad social spread. Here we can enjoy a queen's yellow dream dress in the fashion of the 1890s and dream back to our own 1970s, when we in Sweden did Danish *hønsestrik* knitting and long-haired people were influenced by all the new fads of Danish fashion, with everything from flared trousers to clogs and leg warmers.

Birgitta Svensson, Lund/Stockholm

Food Heritage

Matarv. Berättelser om mat som kulturarv. Anita Synnestvedt & Monica Gustafsson (eds.) Carlsson Bokförlag, Stockholm 2021. 253 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-8906-502-4.

■ Since 2013, there has been a project underway at the University of Gothenburg called the *Kulturvetarakademien* with the aim of bringing together students around current issues of cultural heritage, where conferences have been organized, networks built between the university and institutions dealing with cultural heritage, primarily in Western Götaland.

One of these networks between several institutions was around food heritage or food as cultural heritage with the aim of producing an exhibition entitled *"Food in Need and Lust."*

The corona epidemic unfortunately led to the exhibition almost having to be closed before it started. However, a book *Matarv. Berättelser om mat som kulturarv* or *Food heritage. Reports on food as a cultural heritage* was also published in connection with the exhibition.

After an excellent reflexive introduction by Richard Tellström about the problem of heritage that one accepts and heritage that one renounces, the presentation is divided into main themes that include both the material and immaterial, as well as the social aspects of the food heritage. Within each theme there are from two to four contributions – a buffet of 18 articles in total.

Food heritage from Rome to Bohuslän begins with a presentation of the daily bread – panis qvotidianis in ancient Rome (Lena Larsen Lovén), where bakeries emerged early on to supply the population with bread of various kinds. The next contribution (Jenny Högström) is about the significance of *honungskaka* – the honeybread as a known cultural marker for the Herrnhut Christiansfeld. A special regional dish in Bohuslän (Jenny Högström Berntson), egg cheese has to date become a local identity marker, where the designs of the cheese shapes are almost as important as the cheese itself.

In the section *Food heritage in collections and archives*, the starting point is collected records about food, which begins with an orchestration of the content in the actual exhibition itself, of which the book is a part. The next contribution (Lisa Sputnes Mouwitz) is about patients' good and less good memories of food served in hospitals over a long period. The section ends with a presentation (Annika Sjöberg) of a knowledge bank with old recipes, which is also related to the intangible value of food.

In a section on *Swedish food heritage,* there is at contribution (Annika Sjöberg), about the special Swedish phenomenon of *att fika*, which is drinking coffee with others in forms that are quite

well defined in Swedish culture. In the next contribution (Susanne Rolfsdotter Eliasson), foreign students with limited experience are asked in essays to report on what they consider to be significant in Swedish food culture, where *fika*, together with the special Swedish way of eating crayfish, scores highly.

The section *Food heritage in change* begins with a description (Carina Carlson) of how people in pre-industrial societies preserved food and stored it to keep it as fresh as possible for as long as possible, until electric refrigeration and freezing technology revolutionized the field and where today, the supermarkets are the daily stockroom supplemented by a fridge and freezer at home. The next contribution (Henrik Alexandersen) is an impact on older food culture in Bohuslän, where the old fishing community has largely ceased, but where they still try to preserve some of the older fish dishes, as a local food marker in a modern world. The last contribution (Maria Bodin) in the section is about how various seaweed growths from having been used as fertilizer in ancient times, in modern society under international influence have become an ingredient in more fine dining.

In the section on *Food inheritance for good and bad*, the initial contribution (Elisabet Punzi) is about the more traumatic aspects of food and food inheritance, from personal eating disorders and how famines have affected people temporarily, but also in their later relationship with food rationing and food crises (Maria Person) could lead to previously unnoticed potential food items coming to replace the deficiencies in the normal diet. The authorities' guidance on choosing a survival diet, as well as the prepper phenomenon, are also mentioned.

A relatively new phenomenon that has arisen in Korea, *mukbang* (Jenny Högström). Where cooking and eating, in their similar facets, is a digitally based community, gained particular importance during the Corona epidemic, where the participants could also get a certain digital organoleptic satisfaction. The contribution of a *fika* break – coffee break – in the forest pleads for

many more or less romantic and positive experiences of an existential nature.

The last section of the book is about *Food heritage and memories*, which are especially associated with the school meals (Cecilia Magnusson Sporre & Hillevi Prell), which have been available in Sweden since 1946. The financial framework also limited the culinary possibilities. The pupils' homes were also different. For the poor pupils, the memories of the school meals were usually good, the food was often better than the food they had at home. The school meals have become nutritionally better over time and also more politically correct. The last contribution in this section is about the Swedish *köttbullar*, meatballs, part of the Swedish food terroir, which has become a special offer at the furniture chain IKEA, which is everywhere launched as an imaginary part of the Swedish.

Finally, in the book's last contribution (Monica Gustafsson & Anita Synnestvedt) the threads are drawn back to the problem surrounding the phenomenon of food heritage, partly as a shared Swedish tradition, family traditions, but also as a phenomenon that has significance for the individual.

Each individual contribution is provided with one or more recipes that the reader can try in their own kitchen. The contributions are without references but end with suggestions or reading tips for further reading.

The authors have managed to touch on many aspects of what is launched as food heritage, both tangible and intangible, and often in a wider social context. Several of the contributions are parts of ongoing research. Although each of the contributions are small, the prospects for further work are great.

Jóan Pauli Joensen, Tórshavn

Swedish Belief Tradition in a Nutshell

Tora Wall, Folktrons väsen. Encyklopedi. Bokförlaget Stolpe, Stockholm 2021. 255 pp. Ill. ISBN 978-91-8906-975-6.

■ Tora Wall's *Folktrons väsen* is a reader-friendly overview of Swedish folklore concerning supernatural beings. It is properly research-based and provides an accurate view of the preindustrial Swedish belief tradition. But it starts from the basics and can be recommended to readers who have no previous knowledge about belief tradition.

The book is titled an encyclopaedia but it represents that genre only in its broadest sense. Instead of listing beings in Swedish belief tradition separately in alphabetical order, it includes broader thematic chapters. The book starts with a compact but comprehensive introduction describing the concepts of belief tradition and folklore, as well as the relevant genres and sources. Furthermore, it explains magical thinking and what kind of significance and meanings the supernatural beings once had in the communities. Wall introduces the reader to the world view of preindustrial belief tradition, with the idea of the limited good and the significance of boundaries and exceptions and the difference between black and white magic.

As any scholar of belief tradition knows, national collections of folk belief teem with local fairies, goblins and ghosts with a myriad of names but only slight differences. Wall handles the mess by presenting the creatures in larger groups by type. The chapters are thus about general categories such as trolls, guardian spirits, underground people or death beings. Each chapter first gives information about the category and then describes the variety. This is a justified decision which saves us from a lot of repetition, helps to focus on the important features and gives a better understanding of the beings' relations to each other than mere cross-referencing. Yet even the main groups overlap slightly: trolls, for example, share motifs with the underground people. This is an essential feature of belief tradition, and a research-based representation like this is correct in not trying to hide or deny the fuzziness.

Chapters on the beings also give contextual information and discuss related beliefs and various themes of belief narratives. For example, in the chapter about trolls, we learn why certain people were more prone to be taken into the mountain or hill by the trolls, what liminality had to do with it,

and how to prevent such danger. Furthermore, the chapter includes a subsection about changelings, because in folk legends it is quite often trolls that steal a small baby from the cradle and replace it with their own baby or grandfather. Essentially, Wall's work is not only about the beings. It is actually a general view of the whole belief tradition, just organized according to the beings.

In any survey of belief tradition, a crucial point is how the topics and motifs are selected and how they are organized. The distinction between various groups of beings is relatively unambiguous, and Wall applies almost the same pattern as in Bengt af Klintberg's index *The Types of the Swedish Folk Legend.* The only difference is that Wall distinguishes trolls from fairies while af Klintberg handles them together. Another question of choice is ontological. Belief tradition includes beings which only exist in the popular imagination, but there are also beliefs which concern real entities, for example conceptions about magical skills or properties of certain people or animals. The distinction between these is not always clear. For example, magical snakes range from dragons and giant serpents to popular beliefs concerning unusually big, yet ordinary snakes. But perhaps sometimes it would be more suitable to note the difference; especially when the question is about people. Here, as in many other books too, the supernatural beings include people who allegedly had special supernatural abilities – people like sorcerers, healers, priests, smiths and even folk musicians. These agents have not been labelled supernatural per se, but I wonder whether it is justified to present them as beings of belief tradition. A similar case is the chapter on trees, including information about sacred groves as well as rituals and healing connected to trees. Yet trees as such are natural entities. These examples illustrate the fact that the book begins with beings, but towards the end, the being-ness of the topics breaks up. This critique does not change the fact that ritual specialists are a central theme of belief tradition. Trees may not be equally central, but perhaps trees and forests serve the interests of contemporary readership.

Wall has chosen to include figures from Norse mythology in the gallery of preindustrial belief tradition. This requires an excursion to ancient pre-Christian religion and the medieval sources which shed light on the ancient gods and the Æsir cult. Since mythology is not in the focus of this book, characteristics of the gods as they were known in the *Edda* and other ancient poetry are only described briefly. The emphasis is on the fragmentary representations of Thor, Odin and other figures' in legends and incantations in nineteenth-century folklore. These materials look like scarce survivals, and thus the old Norse gods appear in the world of preindustrial belief tradition like special guests who actually belong to some other sphere. The role of Norse gods in this book may be justified on grounds of popularization and the aim of showing their relationship to later belief tradition. The excursion to the *Edda* and its remains demonstrates the temporal depth and layered characteristics of belief tradition.

The twenty-first-century readership and their expectations are considered in all the chapters. For example, contemporary readers probably only know werewolves from popular culture and thus expect the full moon to be involved. Therefore, it is explicitly noted that this was not the case in Swedish vernacular tradition. Likewise, the chapter on death beings begins by explaining how modern society and esoteric movements have shaped our ideas of the dead. In order to understand the preindustrial folklore about death beings, we need to know an older view of death and the dead. The chapter on guardian spirits, in turn, includes a subsection on the development of Swedish Christmas gnomes and Santa Claus. After all, the Swedish word for the guardian spirit – *tomten* – has later been used predominantly in those senses.

Folktrons väsen combines folkloristic accuracy with a popular style which serves the needs of contemporary readers. It guides the beginner to the world of belief tradition and gives enough background information to help understand the point of preindustrial belief legends. For those who are inspired to know more, the book briefly

summarizes the work of relevant researchers and offers tips for further reading. As an object, the book is well designed. The rich illustrations in the book include artwork from six centuries, starting from late medieval church paintings and peaking in the variety of legend-based illustrations and paintings by Nordic artists in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The pictures display artistic interpretations of the beings and also the landscapes and environments in which they lurked.

Kaarina Koski, Helsinki

Instructions for submission of manuscripts to *Ethnologia Scandinavica*

Articles should be sent by e-mail to the editor or one of the members of the editorial board. Manuscripts should be in English. Articles will undergo peer review and language review.

Articles should not be longer than 50,000 characters (including spaces). Please aim for clear and concise language, remembering that you are writing for a non-Scandinavian audience. If the manuscript is intended for a compilation thesis, the editor should be informed of this.

Captions to figures should be written separately and clearly numbered. Illustrations – photographs, drawings and tables – should be clearly numbered. Credits should be stated at the end of the caption. The author is responsible for the publishing rights of figures. The placing of the figures in relation to the text should be marked. Figures should be submitted along with the manuscript.

Notes should be avoided as far as possible. References should be included in parentheses at the relevant place in the text. Notes should only be used for comments, clarifications or discussion.

The list of *References* should include subheadings like Archives, Literature, Internet and Fieldwork. Literature should be presented as follows.

Burke, Peter 2009: *Cultural Hybridity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Fjell, Tove 2014: Sterke kvinder – svake men. *Tidskrift for kjønnsforskning* (03–04:302–318).

Lowenthal, David 2015: *The Past is a Foreign Country. Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Löfgren, Orvar 2018: Mitt eller vårt? Hemmets moraliska ekonomi. In *Mitt och ditt: Etnologiska perspektiv på ägandets kulturella betydelse*, ed. Karin Salomonsson. Lund: Lund Studies in Arts and Cultural Sciences 17.

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