Peter Jakobsen
Erik Jönsson
Henrik Gutzon Larsen *Editors*

Socio-Spatial Theory in Nordic Geography

Intellectual Histories and Critical Interventions

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Chapter 1
Geographies and Theories of Geography: An Introduction

Peter Jakobsen, Erik Jönsson, and Henrik Gutzon Larsen

Introduction

This book is the latest instalment in a longer history of anthologies on Nordic geography and geographers. Initially published in a mix of Scandinavian languages and English, and more recently in English alone, these collections address the field of (human) geography in general (Hägerstrand & Buttimer, 1988; Strand, 1982; Öhman, 1994; Öhman & Simonsen, 2003), but also particular aspects of geography (e.g., Friis & Maskell, 1981; Jones & Olwig, 2008; Simonsen et al., 1982). The very existence of these regionally defined anthologies could be said to answer the question posed by the editors of one of them, "Is there a 'Nordic' human geography?" (Simonsen & Öhman, 2003). A significant number of geographers have over the years found that there is indeed something that could be termed Nordic (human) geography, and this is underscored by practices such as preparing *A Geography of Norden* for the 1960 conference of the International Geographical Union (IGU) in Stockholm (Sømme, 1960), the annual Nordic Symposium on Critical Human Geography between 1979 and 1999 (Berger, 1990), which inspired Eric Clark (2005) to initiate the still-existing biannual Nordic Geographers Meeting (NGM), and the publication of *Nordisk samhällsgeografisk tidskrift* (1984–2007). A "Nordic" geography identity has also been augmented by transnational doctoral courses and educational activities, seminars, research projects and informal networks. While not solely involving geographers, the launch of the *Nordic Journal of Urban Studies* is another recent example. Ideas of Nordic geographers as somehow forming a supranational group is also entertained by "outsiders". If in a somewhat more delimited

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form, for example, as early as the 1930s a German geographer worked on a summary of "new currents in Scandinavian geography" (Document, 1938), and in the recent historiography of critical geography (Berg et al., 2022b), the Nordic countries are – of course – lumped together (on the difficulties of such delineations of research communities, see Berg et al., 2022a). Seen from both the "outside" and the "inside", we could say that many Nordic geographers form a "community of practice" (Wenger, 1998) shaped by the various meetings, discussions and publications that bring geographers together under the rubric "Nordic". Nonetheless, almost 20 years have passed since the publication of the last collective book on Nordic geography (Öhman & Simonsen, 2003).

Our main concern in this book is not to delineate a "Nordic" field of geography. Rather, and linking up to discussions in and beyond the Nordic area, the book is guided by two overarching and often intersecting themes. First, while the field of human geography is increasingly leaning toward the old aphorism that geography is what geographers do, the book seeks to foreground theorisations of geography from human-geographical perspectives. In that respect, we are particularly (but not only) interested in articulations of socio-spatial theory, which is to say social-theoretical perspectives that approach the social and the spatial as mutually constitutive. Second, and here the "Nordic" becomes more evident, the book pursues the "double geography" that "there is a geography to all geographical knowledge" (Livingstone, 2019, p. 461) in the sense that geographical knowledge is also situated knowledge. In the following, we will dig a little deeper into the two themes of the book before considering the notion of "Nordic geography" and outlining the approach of the book.

The Social and the Spatial

Thinking about and theorising space is often understood as geographic scholarship's nodal point. Nonetheless, geographers have frequently struggled in this endeavour. "Those in the 'discipline' of geography have long had a difficult relation to the notion of 'space' and 'the spatial'", Doreen Massey (1985, p. 9) reflected on developments in geography during the 1980s. As she put it, "There has been much head-scratching, much theorising, much changing of mind. Sometimes the notion has been clasped whole-heartedly as the only claimable distinguishing characteristic within the academic division of labour. Sometimes it has been spurned as necessarily fetishized."

Though Massey undoubtedly had the United Kingdom in mind, her reflection also echoes the struggles of human geographers in the Nordic countries to come to terms with, and theorise, space and the spatial as well as related if distinct human-geographical keywords, such as place, landscape and scale. Developments in the Nordic geographical traditions are in this respect perhaps not that different from, and indeed entangled with, developments in human geography elsewhere, partly permeated by the same persistent confusions and conflicts concerning what

geography could or ought to be. Though Nordic geography could be considered as a community of practice, it has certainly not developed in a vacuum and there have been important theoretical and philosophical exchanges, not only among geographers within the Nordic region but also with geographers situated elsewhere. Particularly in the early history of institutionalised Nordic geography the discipline was strongly influenced by German geography. But later inspirations have also come from particularly French, British and Anglophone North American geographers. Meanwhile, Nordic geographers of the past and the present have occasionally made impressions well outside the Nordic region (in this book, e.g., Paasi, 2022).

A characteristic of the discipline of human geography – and since the mid-twentieth century often a bone of contention for many geographers – is its historically close connection with physical geography and related natural sciences. In most of the Nordic countries, human geography is taught alongside physical geography in the bachelor programmes, Sweden being a notable exception (Asheim, 1987). Some Nordic geographers still strive to build bridges between the natural and the social sciences (in this book, see Holt-Jensen, 2022), but in terms of research and theoretical developments, human and physical geography in the Nordic countries have increasingly parted ways. Instead, interlacings of social theory, philosophy and geography have made for important cross-fertilisations between the subject of human geography and, for example, those of sociology and philosophy. Interrelating with similar efforts beyond the Nordic region (e.g. Gregory & Urry, 1985), a productive outcome of such liaisons has been the development of socio-spatial theories – social-scientific (and humanities-derived) theories that approach geography as constituted by, as well as constitutive of, social relations. This has generated a wide range of conceptual frameworks and approaches, which are part and parcel of the shifts and turns in the discipline of geography as it has evolved – also in the Nordic countries (in this book, e.g., Simonsen, 2022).

These liaisons are of no minor importance. Though most human geographers, despite considerable intellectual and political differences, could rally around the adage that "Geography matters!" (Massey & Allen, 1984), the ways in which it matters and the ways in which geography is put at the forefront of our analyses, or perhaps sneaked in through the backdoor, depend on the theories and philosophies that infuse understandings of the world. Particular understandings of space are inescapably linked to the social and our understandings of the social, a concept whose meaning has itself for decades been at the centre of several debates within the humanities and social sciences (e.g. Joyce, 2010; Latour, 2005). Moreover, acknowledging the importance of space opens a veritable Pandora's box of never-ending debates on the proper interpretation and conceptualisation of space, and its relationship to the social. As the chapters in this book also illustrate, these debates span from whether space should be viewed as dialectical or static, absolute or relative (or both), contingent or necessary, embodied or disembodied, not to speak of the myriad of different and often seemingly conflicting ways that it can be understood and theorised as relational (e.g., Harvey, 2006; Simonsen, 2004b). Furthermore, these long-running debates are also characterised by exchanges in which several

vocabularies for theorising socio-spatial relations coexist, sometimes clashing and sometimes cross-fertilising (Jessop et al., 2008).

We should furthermore acknowledge that these discussions remain interconnected with debates about the purpose of the discipline and the interests it should serve. Most forcefully, such debates were expressed in the criticisms of and within geography, which from the 1970s onwards have guided many geographers (Berg et al., 2022b; in this book, e.g., Jakobsen & Larsen, 2022). But they have continually constituted a topic for discussion, also among geographers today (in this book, e.g., Wikman & Mohall, 2022). Our ambition in this book is to take such debates seriously, as they continuously shape and reshape the geography discipline. The shifts and turns in geography, the showdowns between intellectual positions, and the debates about whose interests the discipline should serve, have often fuelled and been fuelled by genuine scholarly interests in the subject of geography and about the ways in which the relationship between the social and the spatial could or should be understood and theorised.

A key aim of this book is to shed some light on how geographers in the Nordic countries have understood and theorised geography, particularly relationships between the social and the spatial; how they have understood and worked with the notion of space, place, landscape, region, etc. Taken together, the chapters in this book in many ways reflect David Harvey's (2006, p. 293) assertion that space "turns out to be an extraordinarily complicated keyword." Its meaning depends upon context, and "the terrain of application defines something so special as to render any generic definition of space a hopeless task" (Harvey, 2006, p. 270). Instead of embarking on a hopeless task of definition, we have therefore asked human geographers from across the Nordic countries to explore the production and adoption of socio-spatial theories in "Nordic geography" in relation to a range of key topics and concepts that they have engaged with in the span of their research careers. As such, the book is decidedly not an attempt to cover Nordic geography in its entirety, but rather a contribution to Nordic geographers' incessant head-scratching, theorising and occasional changing of mind.

Geographies of Geography

As underlined above, this is not solely a book about geographical knowledge, it is also a book about the production of knowledge within human geography. Alongside an emphasis on socio-spatial theory – and how geographical key concepts are currently and have historically been conceptualised – runs an equally important emphasis on the geographies of geographical knowledge production (cf. Boyle et al., 2019). In various ways the chapters explore a series of sometimes intertwined and sometimes discrete intellectual environments wherein geographers have conducted their research, and traces how these intellectual environments have shaped and been shaped by particular scholarly undertakings. It is in this sense a book that builds on Donna Haraway's (1988) now well-established insistence that intellectually honest

and responsible knowledge production must acknowledge the situatedness of any observer. Any view is a view from *somewhere*. Or, as Edward Said (1983, p. 174) emphasises, theory "has to be grasped in the place and the time out of which it emerges as a part of that time, working in and for it, responding to it." This is not necessarily to say that all "social theory and knowledge [is] inescapably context-bound" (Simonsen & Öhman, 2003, p. 3). But it does mean that ideas and conceptualisations are hard to unfetter from their historical and geographical moorings, and are thus tied to some*where* (and some*time*) (Livingstone, 2013; Shapin, 1995; Simonsen, 2004a).

Ideas and conceptualisations are also tied to some*one*. Fully or partially autobiographical, some chapters in this book attest to how ideas are carried by people, shaping and shaped by their lived historical geographies. This links up with the pioneering work on autobiographies in Nordic histories of geographical thought organised by Hägerstrand and Buttimer (1988), a project which has several descendants (e.g., Holt-Jensen, 2019; Illeris, 1999; Olsson, 1998; see also Ferretti, 2021; Jones, 2018). Taking readers behind the scenes of the production of measurable output, an autobiographical approach can enable a fine-grained analysis of the craft of crafting knowledge. In contrast to a CV list of achievements, an autobiography can also cover that which was *not* published or otherwise explicated, along with an emphasis on inspirations and intentions, strategic decisions and coincidences, and the dynamics of people, places and times. But rather than simply shifting the focus from social setting to individual mind, an autobiographical method can be a way to underscore a more complex social and communal nature of knowledge production. As Purcell (2009, p. 235) emphasises, "writing the life of an individual is always also, in part, writing the life of one's society".

In foregrounding the situated nature of geographical theorising, this book also engages with the circulation and reception of various conceptualisations. In this book, Wikman and Mohall (2022) explore central place theory within Swedish planning, for example, while Røe et al. (2022) discuss compact city ideals within Norwegian urban development. Both put emphasis on the academic and extra-academic contexts within which ideas are lodged, and how these contexts are subsequently transformed by these ideas. As David Livingstone (2013, p. 113) remarks, "scientific ideas do not diffuse over a flat cultural plain. Rather, they are encountered in particular places." Ideas that harmonise with hegemonic political projects in particular places are more easily inserted into policy discourse, and travel more easily as key policy concepts.

Furthermore, by emphasising socio-spatial (and geographical) theory in a "Nordic" setting, this book underscores geography as a discipline marked by a "linguistic privilege", which "results in a highly uneven distribution of power to shape what counts as knowledge" (Müller, 2021, p. 1459; see also Kallio et al., 2021). The flow of the traffic in ideas is not only a question concerning ideas' intellectual value but also, as several chapters in this book highlight, one concerning how ideas travel and transform within an academic field where some places are often seen as producing "unlimited", "global" and "universal" geographical theories, while others are seen as "limited", "local" and "parochial" (Berg, 2004). Geography is at least partly

permeated by a hierarchy between Anglo-American writers as "proper" theory-producing subjects and others, such as Nordic writers, providing "case-studies-from-another-place" (Simonsen, 2004a p. 526; see also Lehtinen & Simonsen, 2022). With this book such dualisms are put into question, as various authors elucidate how Nordic scholars have indeed produced socio-spatial theories, and continue to do so. However, there is in such theorising tensions between aspirations to make "Nordic" knowledge count as more than local illustrations or cases, and those who have instead insisted on emphasising the Nordic region as the starting point for their conceptualisations, underscoring local anchorings as a fundamental feature of how socio-spatial concepts are theorised. This is, for example, a prominent feature of Kenneth Olwig's (2003) "substantive" landscape concept (in this book, see Germundsson et al., 2022).

A Certain Nordic Legacy

This is not the place to deconstruct "Nordic" imaginations and practices in and beyond geography, but in a volume partly devoted to theorisations of geography, some notes must be attached to this inherently socio-spatial – and far from politically innocent – notion (for a historical overview, see Jalava & Stråth, 2017).[1] *Norden*, in the Scandinavian languages, or *Norðurlöndin* in Icelandic and *Pohjoismaat*/*Pohjola* in Finnish, is today by most Nordic "insiders" seen to include the five states of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, while the autonomous entities of the Faroe Islands, Greenland and the Åland Islands are sometimes recognised as parts of the Nordic region in their own right. This geographical construct has been buttressed by institutions such as the nongovernmental Norden Associations (1919), the inter-parliamentary Nordic Council (1952) and the inter-governmental Nordic Council of Ministers (1971), and by inter-Nordic policies such as a passport union (1952), a joint labour market (1954) and the Nordic conventions on social security (1955) and language (1987). During the nineteenth century there were also, particularly among segments of the Danish and Swedish elites, attempts at promoting supra-nationalist ideologies of Pan-Scandinavianism and subsequently Nordicism (Østergård, 2002). National histories have traditionally dismissed these movements as romantic flights of fancy, but while modern attempts to establish more substantial Nordic (or Scandinavian) supra-state institutions have

[1] Historically, often as a naturalistic if not deterministic way of interpreting relations between nature and society, Nordic geographers have also employed concepts such as "Fennoscandia" and "Baltoscandia" (Jalava & Stråth, 2017; Paasi, 1990). These highly politicised concepts typically divert somewhat from conventional notions of the "Nordic". To complicate things, "Scandinavia" is frequently in English used to designate what Nordic "insiders" today would term the "Nordic" (e.g. Mead, 1981), but particularly in the nineteenth century, also "insiders" used the concepts more synonymous, if often with very different political meanings (Glenthøj & Ottosen, 2021; Hemstad, 2018).

failed, inter-Nordic cultural and political-pragmatic practices have deepened (Glenthøj & Ottosen, 2021; Van Gerven, 2020). Rather than building an image of a community that is (or should be) limited and sovereign, as Benedict Anderson (1991) famously conceptualises a nation, the Nordic has in different ways reinforced discrete national identities in the North (Sørensen & Stråth, 1997). Still, while the Nordic is a mental construct, it is also a historical region (Østergård, 1997). Leaning on the conceptualisation of one of the contributors to this book, we could say that the Nordic is a region that is continuously formed and reformed territorially, symbolically and institutionally (Paasi, 1986). The aftermath of the Cold War, for instance, was a period when the spatial identity of the post-war Nordic region was opened up to new spatial-political orientations and imaginations in and towards the East, the West, the South and, indeed, the (Arctic) North (e.g., Moisio, 2003).

The Nordic is imbued with positive as well as negative auto- and xeno-stereotypes. For some it is an embodiment of progressive modernity, an early example being Marquis Childs' *This is Democracy: Collective Bargaining in Scandinavia* (1938). For others, such as Roland Huntford in *The New Totalitarians* (1971), the Nordic is a dystopia – lately self-flagellatory, as bolstered by Nordic noir crime fiction (Dyce, 2020). In the expansive and largely positive formulation of Sørensen and Stråth (1997), the North is a pragmatic inflection of the Enlightenment, involving ideas of a Nordic trajectory shaped by an independent peasantry, education from below, a socially inclusive and democratic conception of the nation, state Lutheranism, social liberalism and welfare capitalism. Such historical explanations have been criticised, for instance the idea of an independent peasantry playing a key role in the evolution of Swedish democracy (Bengtsson, 2020). But beyond the faults and merits of such historical narratives, particularly Nordic welfare states are often reflected in geographical writings, including several chapters of this book. While acknowledging that "the Nordic countries are not as different from other European countries as ideology would sometimes have us believe," Simonsen and Öhman (2003), p. 2) asserted that (at least until the early twenty-first century, see Baeten et al., 2015) "the welfare state has stood its ground" in the Nordic countries. However, the welfare state should not be understood as uncritically cherished by all Nordic geographers. Gunnar Olsson (2017, p. 81) for example famously likened the evolution of the welfare state (and Swedish geographers' involvement in this) to a Greek tragedy: "everything beautifully right in the beginning, everything horribly wrong at the end, no one to blame in between." Meanwhile, Irene Molina (1997) has argued that the construction of the People's Home, often seen as the Swedish Social Democrats' crystallisation of an all-inclusive reformist socialism, was intimately entangled in racialised forms of othering underpinning residential segregation.

The Nordic is rife with contradictions, exceptions and diverse political, economic and cultural inclinations. It is no coincidence that attempts at forming substantial political institutions, such as a Scandinavian Defence Union in the aftermath of the Second World War and subsequently a Nordic Economic Union as an alternative to the European Economic Community, were unsuccessful. And talk of the "Nordic" is frequently actually about the Scandinavian states of Denmark, Norway

and Sweden – with Sweden often occupying a “hegemonic position in Nordic discourses” (Andersson & Hilson, 2009, p. 223). Nordic states (and peoples) also use each other as an identity-political “other”. In recent years, for example, Sweden has in Danish and Norwegian debates and media frequently been construed as the “other” when it comes to policies on migration, integration and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nonetheless, “there is a long tradition of viewing the Nordic countries as one region based on considerable historical evidence” (Larsson et al., 2017, p. 11). The same could be said about the idea of a Nordic geography. This idea includes certain myths and half-truths, for example that Nordic geographers somehow are united by language. For the editor of *A Geography of Norden*, the book was in great part realised “Thanks to the similarity of the Scandinavian languages, which permits oral and written communication without risk of misunderstanding” (Sømme, 1960, p. i), while for Sune Berger (1990, p. 129), the early Nordic Symposia on Critical Human Geography were rather often characterised by “a certain language confusion” (see also Öhman, 1990). As outlined in the opening of this chapter, however, there have long been communities of practice among Nordic geographers. Borrowing from a group of historians, we could say that among geographers there is also “a certain Nordic legacy”, which consists of “a successful mixing of the national framework and transnational reflexivity, a social and cultural process, rather than a fixed geographical space” (Larsson et al., 2017, p. 15). Indeed, Baltic geographers are now part of the space of the Nordic Geographers Meeting, the 2015 meeting being held in Tallinn and Tartu, although it speaks of the inertia of the editors’ geographical imagination that no Baltic geographers were included in this book. The social space of Nordic geography is similarly not fixed. As attested by many contributions in this book, Nordic geography is heavily inspired by ideas from beyond the “Nordic”, which are often sustained by long-term personal relations. Furthermore, many extra-Nordic geographers have become part of the Nordic legacy, either by relocating to the region or without actually taking up permanent residency.

The Nordic tradition in geography could probably best be described as a “minor” one (cf. Antonsich & Szalkai, 2014), and it would be tempting to claim an underdog position. With good reason, several contributions to this book problematise the hegemony of Anglophone geography in terms of language, theory and academic practices, such as publishing. But it would be spurious to portray Nordic geography as marginalised let alone subaltern. Several Nordic geographers have become “international”, both in the sense of being present at conferences etc., and by becoming names known within geography internationally. Furthermore, the working conditions for Nordic geographers are generally superior to those found in many other places. Though characterised by scholars who often work in their second or third language, the Nordic region remains firmly entrenched in an arguably more powerful way of defining hegemonic centrality. It is Northern, Western and European, undoubtedly today part of the “core” in a Wallersteinian sense. In this book, Kirsten Simonsen (2022) positions herself (and Nordic geography) “in between” in the sense of drawing on Anglophone as well as continental European inspirations. In a wider perspective, though manifestly “Northern” and more comfortably situated

than many "Southern" geographies, Nordic geography could possibly be seen as an "other geographical tradition" (Ferretti, 2019).

The Book

The chapters in this book reflect human geography's long and complicated history in the Nordic countries. They address, in different ways and through different topics, the historical developments and intellectual histories of the subject in the Nordic region, but with an emphasis on how Nordic geographers have understood and theorised the relations between the social and the spatial, between the material-geographical and the cognitive/social-geographical. In short, socio-spatial theory. The chapters also address ways in which geographers situated here connect to contemporary debates and discussions about the subject of geography, and, accordingly, relate to discussions about the role of geography in social theory and the role of social theory in geography.

The book has its origins in a panel session of the 2019 Nordic Geographers Meeting in Trondheim, organised by Peter Jakobsen and Erik Jönsson, which sought to initiate (or re-awaken) a discussion of the role of socio-spatial theory within Nordic geography. When the panel session transformed into an idea for a book, one of the panellists was brought in as co-editor and we searched beyond the original panellists for additional contributors. We did so through a list of topics in contemporary and historical Nordic human geography we would like to cover. There are additional topics (and people) we would have liked to include, and some readers will undoubtably search in vain for their favourite "Nordic" topic or scholar. We gave contributors a relatively free hand in how to approach those topics and in what form to do so. This means that chapter authors approach the book's overarching themes of theorisations of geography (and socio-spatial theory) and situated knowledge production in different ways. Situated knowledge production and the importance of contextualisation is in this respect a key feature of most chapters, while explication of the theorisation of geography generally proved to be more challenging. Rather than a problem, we see the latter as reflecting the continuous need for discussions of what we mean by "theory" and "geography".

The chapters mostly address recent and contemporary developments in Nordic human geography, some striving to cover most of the Nordic countries, others focusing on a few or just a single country (or locality). Some authors have wholly or partially fashioned their contributions as intellectual autobiographies, but most chapters are implicitly "autobiographical" in the sense that the authors themselves have been or are active participants in what is discussed. The exceptions are the first three chapters on small state geopolitical thinking (Chap. 2), spatial science and planning (Chap. 3) and structural Marxism (Chap. 4). These chapters trace elements of what could be termed the pre-history of Nordic socio-spatial theory, modes of approaching and theorising geography, which more contemporary perspectives often strive to avoid or actively oppose. The same could be said of the subsequent

chapter on ideas about geography as importantly characterised by synthesis between physical and human geography (Chap. 5). Such ideas are often resisted by contemporary human geographers, but as also suggested by the author, notions of geography as synthesis between "nature" and "culture" are still with us in important respects. While often involving historical perspectives, the rest of the book consists of chapters engaging with contemporary concerns within (Nordic) human geography. While topically distinct, there are many interlinkages between these chapters, and to not impose artificial boundaries, we have resisted an urge to group them in sections. Chap. 6 address contemporary scholarship on the politics and politicisation of nature. Questions concerning nature and the environment are also central in Chap. 7, which focuses on theorisations of landscape. This is followed by chapters on gender (Chap. 8), innovation and regional development (Chap. 9), tourism (Chap. 10), policies for compact city construction (Chap. 11), displacement (Chap. 12), and social reproduction in northern peripheries both construed as symbolising "Norden" and othered as exotic inner elsewheres (Chap. 13). Together, these illuminate contemporary concerns within Nordic geography, underscoring the entanglements of policy, politics and knowledge production therein. At the end of this volume, three chapters address theories within Nordic geography through partially or fully autobiographical chapters. These concern nation and nationhood (Chap. 14), everyday life and the city (Chap. 15), and the institutionalisation of regions (Chap. 16).

At the very end of this book project, Arild Holt-Jensen, the author of Chap. 5, passed away at the age of 84 years. Arild was an active participant in the project. We are grateful for how he contributed, and we are happy he agreed to write a chapter on his long-standing view of geography.

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Chapter 2
Sublimated Expansionism? Living Space Ideas in Nordic Small-State Geopolitics

Henrik Gutzon Larsen and Carl Marklund

Introduction

In the run-up to the 2019 Danish elections, the Social Democratic Party took out billboards with slogans like 'Denmark should again be a green great power'. Further to the north, in 2013, the liberal-conservative Minister of Foreign Affairs, Carl Bildt, described Sweden as a 'humanitarian great power' – a phrase which has gained wider currency across the political spectrum (Swedish Government, 2013).

Something intensely geopolitical is at play in these statements, which combine a concept usually linked to territorial possession and hard power with more transcendental notions. Focusing on two Nordic proponents of classical geopolitical reasoning, Rudolf Kjellén (1864–1922) and Gudmund Hatt (1884–1960), we will in this chapter propose that such statements are articulations of a distinct mode of geopolitics. Tunander (2008) hints at this as a '*Geopolitik* of the weak', while Sharp (2013) engages with somewhat related issues as 'subaltern geopolitics'. Here, we will approach the subject as 'small-state geopolitics', which we provisionally see as 'a situated perspective on both the small-state "self" and the wider worlds' (Larsen in Moisio et al., 2011, p. 245). Even when looking at Kjellén and Hatt alone, there are many possible facets to this. We will mainly focus on the questions of geographical expansion and 'living space' and, building on Marklund (2021), we argue that Kjellén and Hatt in their small-state geopolitics proposed what we term 'sublimated expansionism'. By this, we refer to the tendency evidenced in the geographically driven, but socially oriented thinking of our two interlocutors to transform notions of success, survival and supremacy from categories of territorial control into

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cultural, economic and technological factors. Moreover, we suggest that Kjellén and Hatt in their small-state geopoliticking – i.e., their political advocacy and academic activities – exhibited somewhat surprising flashes of *avant la lettre* socio-spatial thinking. Their views were 'classical' in the sense that they saw territorial expansion and domination as essential – for great powers. But when it came to small states, notably their native Sweden and Denmark, they readily 'sinned' against these geographical-determinist ideas and engaged in more nuanced arguments stressing geography as interrelated with social and historical factors and processes.

Other politicians and scholars in the Nordic area engaged with geopolitics during the first half of the twentieth century, notably in Finland (for a discussion, see Paasi, 1990), but here we will focus on the most vocal Danish and Swedish proponents of geopolitical reasoning during this period. In the greater part of this chapter, we analyse how Kjellén and Hatt theorised territorial or, rather, spatial expansion in their small-state geopolitics. In the terminology of Ó Tuathail and Agnew (1992), we approach our protagonists as 'intellectuals of statecraft' engaged in 'formal' small-state geopolitics. By way of conclusion, however, and already hinted in the opening of this chapter, we suggest that past and present 'practitioners of statecraft' engage in paralleling 'practical' modes of small-state geopolitics. Drawing on our analyses of Kjellén and Hatt, we propose three important characteristics of small-state geopolitics: (1) determinism is qualified by voluntarism; (2) space is complemented by future; and (3) external expansion and military prowess is sublimated into internal progress and, possibly, international norm pioneering. But we also emphasise the significance of historical-geographical context. Differences between Kjellén and Hatt, and their sometimes seemingly inconsistent shifts in thinking, importantly relate to geographical and historical differences and changes.

Kjellén: 'Big Is Beautiful, But Small Is Smart'

Rudolf Kjellén began his academic career in 1891 as a teacher of political science at the newly founded Gothenburg University College, a position which eventually also included the subject of geography. Some eight years later, Kjellén (1899) introduced the concept of geopolitics as the doctrine of the state as a 'geographical organism'. While Kjellén's notion of geopolitics has often been seen in terms of determinism and the dominance of great powers, Kjellén in fact underlined the importance of the interplay between geographical factors and various power resources for the interrelations between states (Kjellén, 1901, p. 401). In this initial framing of his geopolitical theory, Kjellén rejected the notion of borders being determined by nature alone but viewed them as profoundly shaped by human agency and intentions. In Kjellén's conception, the 'laws' of geopolitics are thus determined at the intersection between nature and culture. This in turn points to another strand in Kjellén's theory of geopolitics, which underscores the elements of power struggle and processual elements in the relations between states and peoples

(Marklund, 2014; Roitto et al., 2018, p. 121; Abrahamsson, 2021; Björk & Lundén, 2021; Davidsen, 2021).

From this basic insight, Kjellén developed an organic conception that 'the peoples' develop in interplay between contraction and expansion (Kjellén, 1900, pp. 32, 34), ominously concluding that great power interests and resources would always present a threat to the security and prosperity of smaller states. In short, for great powers there could be no such thing as 'natural borders', especially not in the era of fast-advancing transport technology.

What would this imply for small states, such as Kjellén's home country, Sweden, and its future domestic and foreign policies? Kjellén (1906, 1908) sought to explore this problem in a series of popular articles as well as political tracts on Sweden's position in the world. A set of main arguments emerge in this political-scientific advocacy for a Kjellénian geostrategy for Sweden: Kjellén saw internal stability, economic prosperity and 'cultural' advancement as deeply entangled prerequisites for the survival of small states in a world marked by geopolitical competition between great powers. This programme in turn built upon three interrelated aspects: national unity, biopolitical reform and (small-state) geopolitics. While this strategy did not entail military aggression towards either neighbours or peoples far away, it can nevertheless be interpreted as a proto-fascistic program for state-led and export-oriented commercial and intellectual mobilisation at home, based on active social and population policies as well as ambitious economic and research programmes, designed to curb socialism and strengthen the state.

Kjellén's attempts at making sense of Sweden's place in the world were deeply shaped by the historical situation facing Sweden as well as Swedish conservatives in the aftermath of the dissolution of the union with Norway in 1905. To the majority of conservatives, the secession of Norway had not only caused a sense of national loss, but also an objectively different situation for Sweden in terms of military and economic geography, making the country perceptively more vulnerable to possible attack from abroad. Kjellén and his associates in the so-called academic right or *Unghögern* (Young Right), whom he represented politically as a member of the Second Chamber of the *Riksdag* (parliament) in 1905–1908 and of the First Chamber in 1911–1917, drew a different conclusion. To them, the secession of Norway served to strengthen Swedish inner cohesion and the Norwegian experience could be used to invigorate ideas on national rebirth through a social reform *within* Sweden itself. Sweden needed what he called '*nationell samling*' (national unity, national rally) in the face of internal divisions, a thought epitomised in the concept of *folkhem* (peoples' home), a figure of thought Kjellén most likely coined (Lagergren, 1999; see also discussion in Björk & Lundén, 2021). Kjellén argued that there were objective reasons for expecting Sweden to fare better than other comparable 'small' states – its territorial size and natural resources in fact implied its status as a '*mellanstat*' (middle state) akin to Spain or Turkey, rather than a genuine small state, and it thus had latent potential for self-sufficiency or 'autarky', thus ensuring Sweden's future security and wealth (Kjellén, 1906, pp. 17, 191–192).

However, Sweden's greatest obstacle to realising its latent power potential rested with its 'underpopulation', Kjellén argued. This, in turn, was exacerbated by

emigration and a declining birth rate. Additionally, the vastness of Sweden's territory itself – which encompassed the same area as Japan, but with only one-tenth of the population – complicated matters. As a member of parliament, Kjellén often spoke about the need to 'regain Sweden within Sweden's borders', a notion which in various ways had been articulated since the 1809 loss of Finland, for example by the national poet Esaias Tegnér. Acknowledging the worsening social inequality caused by rapid industrialisation, modernisation and urbanisation, he expressed both fear and understanding towards the demands for democracy and socialism following in its wake, coining the concepts of 'national democracy' and 'national socialism' in his rhetorical struggle for 'national unity'. To Kjellén and the Young Right, Sweden required an active and ambitious modernisation programme in all fields of life, not only to defend Swedish territory against external aggression by great powers locked in geopolitical competition, but, perhaps even more importantly, to secure Swedish society from inner dissolution (Larsson, 1994, pp. 63ff, 69).

As Kjellén took a seat in the Riksdag in 1905 – the same year as the dissolution of the union with Norway – he began formulating a political science research programme for a 'biopolitical' study of the state, attempting to explore the scientific laws of great power development (Kjellén, 1905, p. 23f). This programme would examine the geographical location, boundary situations and morphology of different countries (geopolitics), their economic resources (ecopolitics), their population development and 'racial' composition (demopolitics), their social conditions (sociopolitics) and finally their constitutional structure (kratopolitics). In Kjellén's initial biopolitical programme – eventually revised a decade later in *Staten som lifsform* (Kjellén, 1916; for a discussion, see Abrahamsson, 2013) – geopolitics emerged as just one of several different biopolitical methods available to states in their attempts to secure and/or strengthen their position and status in an increasingly competitive world (Kjellén, 1908, pp. 30–62).

While this initiative has correctly been understood as primarily a research programme (Elvander, 1961, p. 270f; Hornvall, 1984, pp. 313–322; Soikkanen, 1991; see also discussions in Esposito, 2008, p. 16f; Lemke, 2011; Gunneflo, 2015), it also in important ways reflects Kjellén's political activity. His motions before parliament and Riksdag debates appear as a series of attempts at a practical implementation of this theoretically oriented academic programme. Taken together, they present a kind of plan for 'internal colonisation', in the sense of drawing up an inventory of Sweden's national resources and planning for their purposeful long-term exploitation in close coordination between state agencies and corporate actors, thus combining his biopolitical and geopolitical precepts for Swedish domestic and foreign policy, as adapted to the latent power resources he judged would be available to Sweden, if modern and rational reforms were initiated to make use of them.

Domestically, Kjellén argued in general terms for social reforms. But few of his proposals addressed practical social health and social policy. His social programme appears less concerned with economic redistribution than economic growth, possibly a precursor of contemporary discourses on 'social investment'. Primarily, Kjellén detailed demands for state intervention and government support for such diverse things as home ownership and land reclamation, railways and roads, canals

and ports, transoceanic shipping lines and business schools. Most of all, he concerned himself with the nationalisation of major natural resources – especially of hydropower, iron and timber for the industrialisation of Norrland, the northern two-thirds of Sweden. These investments would, Kjellén assured, generate new jobs and opportunities for economic growth and hence social mobility within Sweden itself, above all to and within Norrland, discouraging future Swedish emigration abroad, promoting the Swedish birth rate and economic growth, thus ensuring national unity.

However, even if these measures would be implemented, Kjellén concluded, Sweden would remain 'underpopulated' not only in relation to its objective natural resources and the expanse of its territory but also in relation to Northern Europe's more obvious powerhouses: Russia, Germany and Britain. Like the United States, he noted, Sweden required migrant labour to realise its latent potential. But Kjellén did not specify from where Sweden would be able to attract migrants. Elsewhere, for example in his statement before the parliamentary Emigration Study, he spoke favourably of Chinese and Japanese seasonal migration to the United States – especially to California and Hawaii. At the same time, he argued in favour of anti-immigrations laws, primarily directed against Polish seasonal workers from Galicia, using explicitly racist rhetoric (Kjellén, 1908, p. 215ff; for a similar argument, almost verbatim, see Emigrationsutredningen, 1910, pp. 15–20).

Internationally, Kjellén's programme called for renegotiating the terms of trade and tariffs in agreements with Sweden's main trading partners, Germany and Great Britain. More specifically, Kjellén envisioned a future role for Sweden in Russia in general and in the Baltic Sea Region in particular, proposing that Sweden should serve as a transit route for Russian exports and imports, as well as a provider of modern science, technology and know-how in exploiting vast Russian natural resources (Kjellén, 1911, pp. 18, 28). This 'Baltic programme' would not entail any aggression but base itself on the proposition that Swedish immaterial resources in terms of commerce, culture, science and technology would prove attractive to Russia, Sweden being neutral (Kjellén, 1911, p. 27). Kjellén also strongly advocated the need for state support in opening markets for Swedish business interests in officially independent and sovereign nations and semi-colonies across the world. The focus on Russia is of importance as a specifically Swedish preoccupation with the East (Marklund, 2015), and Kjellén does not seem to have taken a great deal of interest in Arctic or Antarctic endeavours. This marked a contrast to Danish and Norwegian activities at the time, later leading to Dano-Norwegian competition over Northeast Greenland, which has been theorised as an example of 'small-state imperialism' (Nilsson, 1978). As concessions were not expected from the colonial powers, the efforts and expertise of Swedish diaspora, entrepreneurs, explorers and scholars active in other parts of the world were to be engaged (cf. Avango et al., 2018). His programme presaged small-state geopolitics or 'resource colonialism' (for the concept, see Vikström et al., 2017) – a kind of colonialism without colonies (Lüthi et al., 2016).

In his argumentation for the viability of this joint biopolitical and geopolitical programme, Kjellén explicitly drew upon his perceptions of Swedish 'superiority' in cultural, moral and technical terms, arguing that material and immaterial factors

conditioned each other, not least in the era of modernity when science and technology fused practical and theoretical knowledge. The dream of a 'new Sweden' based upon investment in its own natural resources and social capital, exploitation of Baltic and Russian markets, as well as commercial outreach to the semi-colonies and intermediary states of the world, suggest visions of Kjellén as a 'hyperborean' (Schough, 2008). This aligned him with other Swedish conservatives and proto-fascists enchanted by the prospect of rekindling the Swedish Empire anew, if less through military aggression but 'sublimated' through joint cultural and commercial mobilisation, directed inwards as well as outwards (Elvander, 1956, 1961, p. 270ff; Hall, 2000; Linderborg, 2001, p. 268ff; Björk & Lundén, 2021).

Here, Kjellén's thinking seems in important ways to have reflected the complex tension between small-state realism and the idealism dominating Swedish foreign policy during the 1900s, the interpretation of which is still a central question in the history of Swedish foreign policy (Bjereld & Möller, 2016; Brommesson, 2018). Moreover, to Kjellén, geopolitical laws existed in a complex interaction between culture, history and geography, where at different times one or the other could get the upper hand. These fluctuations in turn give rise to a fundamentally dynamic and processual view underpinning Kjellénian geopolitics.

In this application of small-state geopolitics, Kjellén nuanced the determinism of geopolitics, arguing for a mutuality between nature and culture in shaping geopolitical processes, preceding debates on geo-economics and critical geopolitics in important respects. However, as the First World War unfolded, Kjellén adapted his own thinking to the opportunities arising from Germany's relative military success against Russia, aligning with the so-called 'activists' in favour of a Swedish expansion in the East. These activist ideas were admittedly marginal in a society where even observers far to the right generally believed in neutrality, also marginalising the influence of Kjellén's thinking in right-wing circles. It soon lost geopolitical relevance as liminal states were established across Eastern Europe (Kuldkepp, 2014). Indeed, Kjellén's commentary on post-Versailles Europe related to the great powers rather than Sweden, and to theory rather than practice.

It has been argued that his advocacy informed Swedish 'social engineering' domestically (Larsson, 1994; Björk et al., 2014; Gunneflo, 2015), while his ideas on Sweden's imagined position in the world have been mostly obscured. There is little evidence of any 'Kjellénian programme' on the part of official Sweden (see, however, Tunander, 2008). Nevertheless, there are indications that Kjellén's small-state geopolitics – implying that Sweden's future lies in developing its material and immaterial power resources internally in order to compete on the world market – gained wider currency among Swedish thinkers on international relations in the interwar period (Marklund, 2021). Actual developments in the 1920s to some degree correspond with Kjellén's earlier ideas, as they led to a marked increase in Swedish commercial and technological activities internationally, not least in Eastern Europe, also involving a modest advocacy for Swedish transoceanic 'colonies' (see for example Key, 1922, 1923, 1926) and the return of irredentist Swedish minorities from abroad, as well as a deepening of intra-Nordic cooperation (Marklund, 2015). While Kjellén himself remained deeply sceptical about Nordic cooperation, there

are numerous instances where Kjellénian geopolitics – already sublimated into abstract notions of Swedish 'leadership' among the Nordics or otherwise unspecified 'tasks' in the East (e.g., Staël von Holstein, 1918) – were refocused by the next generation of Swedish conservatives towards the issue of eventual security and/or military cooperation with newly independent Finland (e.g., Rappe, 1923; Essén, 1930) as well as stating explicitly that 'the Baltic Sea and the Nordic countries are Sweden's "living space"' (for the concept, see Andreen, 1940, p. 12; for a recent discussion, see Stadius, 2020). These expressions demonstrate another, geo-economic and more regionally oriented 'internationalism' alongside the more known Swedish (and other Scandinavian) 'socio-political' internationalism addressing global issues of justice and peace, within for example the League of Nations (for the latter, see Gram-Skjoldager et al., 2020). While Kjellénian notions of future deterritorialized Swedish grandeur gradually became reterritorialized by young academic conservatives during the interwar years, progressive interlocutors protested, arguing that Sweden's future lay in international cooperation and that 'Sweden's living space is the world!', as proclaimed by national economist Gunnar Westin Silverstolpe (1941; see also Myrdal, 1944).

Hatt: 'Through Private Enterprise and Frequently Under Foreign Flag'

Gudmund Hatt was drawn to geography by an interest in ethnography, and during his ten years at the National Museum in Copenhagen, he developed a life-long passion for archaeology (for a biography, see Larsen, 2009a). However, around the time he was appointed professor of human geography at Copenhagen University, in 1929, he started to cultivate ideas about geography and world politics. These ideas transpired in scholarly texts, but his work increasingly took the form of articles for newspapers and magazines as well as subsequently published radio talks (for a bibliography, see Larsen, 2009b). Hatt was in various ways a political activist, but unlike the radically conservative Kjellén, he did not engage in parliament or party politics. He wrote almost exclusively for newspapers of the conservative Berlingske Printing House, but if he oriented himself party-politically, he was probably a social liberal (Lund, 2007). Hatt was a remarkably productive public intellectual, which made him a well-known if ultimately infamous figure, and in the recollections of a student at the time, his 'teaching on political geography aroused so much interest that students from other faculties thronged the lecture room' (Hansen, 1988, p. 149). His predominantly popular form of communication makes it difficult to pinpoint his sources of inspiration. That said, Kjellén is highly visible in his most systematic discussion of geopolitics, the essay 'What is geopolitics?', and the copy of Kjellén's (1916) *Staten som lifsform* at the now defunct library of the Department of Geography at Copenhagen University was well annotated in Hatt's unmistaken scrawl. He recognised Kjellén as the originator of the term 'geopolitics', and in the

opening of his essay, Hatt (1940b, p. 170) summarised Kjellén's understanding of geopolitics as 'the science of the state as a geographical organism.' This 'sounds German' Hatt added, 'and to understand Kjellén's conception of the state it is necessary to go to German science from which he has his impulses.' For Hatt, this involved Henrich von Treitschke and particularly Friedrich Ratzel.

Hatt sometimes used the term 'geopolitics', and as war engulfed Europe, his commentaries included excursions into military geostrategy. But his approach to the geography of world politics was essentially economic, tied to what he called the 'industrial culture' (for an elaboration of the following, see Larsen, 2011). Access to well-developed markets for raw materials and sales was in this respect central, and while he also (if frequently inconsistently) dabbled in racialised environmental determinism (e.g. Hatt, 1928), access to cheap and exploitable labour eventually became an important element in his understanding of colonialism. To a significant degree, he was a geo-economist rather than a geo-politician.

For Hatt, the industrial culture was geographically expansive, and he found that 'any vital people possesses the need and ability for expansion' (Hatt, 1928, p. 230). Ultimately, and clearly (but not uncritically) related to the popularisation of Ratzel's notion of *Lebensraum* in the interwar period, he termed this as a need for *Livsrum* (living-space) propelled by *Livsrumspolitik* (living-space politics) (e.g. Hatt, 1941b). In this perspective, the second part of the nineteenth century had been Europe's 'happiest age' (Hatt, 1940b, p. 176). During this 'great age of liberalist politics' under British hegemony, the world was open for trade and navigation: 'Humankind has never been closer to a coherent world-economy' (Hatt, 1941b, pp. 5, 7). He recognised that this involved 'much human extermination and much bloody oppression' and mocked altruistic portrayals of colonialism (Hatt, 1940b, p. 176; also Hatt, 1938a). The notable exception was Denmark's remaining colony of Greenland, which for him was 'one of the few colonial areas where the consideration of what is best for the native population weighs more heavily than the demands of European trade' (Hatt, 1929b, p. 13). Despite moral reservations, he seems to have recognised (direct and indirect) colonialism as an unavoidable feature of the expansive industrial culture. But the 'happy age' crumbled. 'Liberal principles could only hold sway as long as possibilities for expansion were practically limitless' (Hatt, 1941b, p. 93), and by the early twentieth century 'the Earth was divided between its conquerors' (Hatt, 1940b, p. 176). Moreover, it became apparent that 'economic liberalism did not bring equal economic progress to all states' (Hatt, 1938b, p. 5), and as Britain in the face of crisis turned to imperial nationalism, opportunities for non-territorial expansion through access to resources and markets dried out. This entailed the emergence of 'satisfied' and 'hungry' great powers, where the former – mainly Britain, Russia and the United States – were powers that had acquired autarkic 'living-space' through territorial expansion, while the latter – Germany, Japan and Italy – sought border revisions 'because they lack raw materials, markets, land for settlers, and generally fields of action for their national energies' (Hatt, 1938a, p. 72). The global conflict was thus driven by great-power quests to establish or maintain 'living-space' through autarkic 'economic-geographical great-spaces' (Hatt, 1941b, 1941c), a notion clearly inspired by

contemporaneous debates on *Großraumwirtschaft* (see also Lund, 2012). As Hatt put it, 'what is happening in the world today is a tremendous struggle, not over ideologies but over real assets … the struggle concerns such realities as colonies, markets and resources' (quoted in Jerrild, 1939, p. 174).

Despite placing a heavy emphasis on economic forces, Hatt's great power geopolitics largely paralleled contemporaneous ideas about expansionist grand designs (cf. Walter, 2002), and while in a more reduced form than Kjellén's magnum opus on the great powers, he analysed them in broadly similar form (e.g. Hatt, 1941b). However, small states were also accorded a place in his geopolitics. The basis of this was his longer-standing emphasis on the expansive nature of the industrial culture. But in the final years of his engagement with geopolitical analyses, at a time when the future of the Danish state was uncertain and frequently in outlets and contexts that proved politically controversial (Larsen, 2015), he developed explicit small-state geopolitical ideas. He often directly related these ideas to Denmark, but even when he wrote in general terms, he was implicitly referring to particularly Denmark.

Referring to Ratzel and Kjellén, Hatt saw the state as an 'organic whole' of land and people, emphasising a qualitative assessment of this relationship: 'Small states can be strong, well organised, full of life and leading in cultural development' (Hatt, 1940b, p. 174). In fact, like Kjellén, he hinted that small states could be qualitatively superior to large states. But Hatt's small-state geopolitics was more radically deterritorialised than Kjellén's, arguably because Sweden territorially was a 'middle-state' for Kjellén, while continental Denmark unquestionably was small. Unlike Kjellén's Sweden, however, Denmark had overseas colonies and dependencies. Yet Hatt does not seem to have lamented the 1917 sale of the Virgin Islands to the United States (Hatt, 1924), and he seems to have accepted Icelanders' quest for independence from Denmark (Hatt, 1941c). Nor are there any indications of him being an irredentist in relation to the land lost to Prussia in 1864, a national trauma that had sealed Denmark's small-state status, which was only partly rectified when Northern Schleswig/Sønderjylland returned to Danish control following the 1920 Schleswig plebiscite. Greenland was the exception. He was an outspoken proponent of Danish sovereignty over the island (Vahl & Hatt, 1924; Hatt, 1940a), and his previously mentioned self-serving analysis of Danish colonialism in Greenland appeared in a volume aimed at the Hague settlement of the Danish-Norwegian dispute over Northeast Greenland.

Apart from his 'small-state imperialism' (Nilsson, 1978) when it came to Greenland, Hatt could be said to have heeded the post-1864 saying 'Hvad udad tabes, skal indad vindes' (What is lost on the outside, shall be won on the inside) – with a particular take on expansionism beyond small-state borders. The expansion, which he considered inherent to the industrial culture, could for a small state be achieved through networking into the world economy rather than through territorial control: 'the Danish people's expansive capacity has primarily not unfolded through state expansion. But through private enterprise and frequently under foreign flag, the Danish expansive force has asserted itself all over the globe' (Hatt, 1942, p. 6). As seafarers, traders, engineers and managers and owners of plantations, for example, Danes had accessed overseas resources and markets that were essential for the

country's intensified agriculture and industrialisation: 'The mounting intensity of Danish economic life has thus gone hand-in-hand with – and partly depends on – a kind of expansion, an increasing adjustment to and entanglement in the world economy' (Hatt, 1942, p. 7). The small state of Denmark had, in other words, established a 'living-space' through economic-geographical relations rather than military-geographical control and domination. Hatt was not alone in this sort of non-territorial expansionist thinking. For one of the leading Danish contractors, Rudolf Christiani, the aim of his company's far-flung multinational operations was 'to make Denmark larger' (see Andersen, 2005), while one of the very few female Danish geographers at the time, Sophie Petersen, similarly found the multinational The Great Northern Telegraph Company to be 'one of the enterprises that make Denmark larger' byrunning telegraph lines in Russia and the Far East (Petersen, 1936, p. 49). Notably, for Hatt, this non-territorial expansion happened through the people (*Folk*) rather than the state. This does not imply that he bought into concurrent German ideas about *Lebensraum* and *Volk* – with its underlying emphasis on aggressive expansion of political boundaries (Klinke & Bassin, 2018). Hatt was not a *Blut und Boden* geopolitician. Rather, he emphasised the nation as the source of capacities to establish non-territorial living-space. Moreover, as we will see, his geopolitics seemed to include the possibility of a small-state existence detached from notions of absolute territorial sovereignty.

Considering his emphasis on economic-geographical relations, it is neither surprising that Hatt mourned the passing of the liberalistic free trade era, nor that he worried about the rise of autarchic 'economic-geographical great spaces' under the sway of competing great powers: 'The idea of national self-sufficiency, in its origin geopolitical rather than based on considerations of economic geography, can strike root in big states with rich and varied natural resources,' Hatt (1938c, p. 143) observed, 'but it can never be a very tempting gospel to small countries with undiversified resources.' Like others at the time, he considered whether the Scandinavian or Nordic states could be a viable economic 'block', but rejected such ideas (Hatt, 1934, 1938c). Denmark had to find a place in a wider European space, and he initially saw prospects in Coudenhove-Kalergi's ideas about 'Pan-Europe' (Hatt, 1929a). He later dismissed these ideas as 'unrealistic' (Hatt, 1943, p. 54), and as realities on the ground changed and Denmark was occupied by Nazi Germany on 9 April 1940, he – like the Danish elite more generally (Andersen, 2003; Lund, 2004) – worked hard to protect the Danish economy in what seemed likely to become a 'New European Order' under Germany. A fear in this respect was that Denmark would be ruralised, forced away from the industrial culture (Hatt, 1941b). As the Soviet Union entered the European war, his 'pro-German' position also became a question of protection against what he saw as a naturally expansive 'Russia' (e.g. Hatt, 1943). The fate of Finland seemed to have animated this fear (e.g. Hatt, 1941a).

Hatt's 'pro-German' stance (and activities) came to haunt him. But beneath his wartime writings and activities lurks an important element of small-state geopolitics that arguably has wider purchase. As we have seen, back in the 1920s he had written about the expansive capacities of a 'people', and not least when it came to small

states, he frequently wrote about peoples rather than states. While not desirable (and thus something that should not be expounded too clearly), he seemed to recognise that a small state, like Denmark, could not defend its territorial sovereignty. Rather, the key was to maintain the nation as an economically viable and – as far as possible – independent political unit. For example, one of Hatt's (very few) praises of Hitler was a wartime appeal for Nazi Germany to respect national self-determination in the reordering of Europe (Hatt, 1941c), and as he defined himself as a democrat (Jerrild, 1939), national self-determination probably included a measure of democracy (which, indeed, Denmark maintained under Nazi German 'protection' until August 1943). In this way, Hatt tapped into a wider and longer-standing 'survival strategy' in which powerful political actors, in and around the Social Democratic and Social-Liberal parties in particular, strove to protect and maintain the Danish nation (rather than the state of Denmark) as a coherent, viable and democratic entity (Lidegaard, 2003). 'The land conditions the people and the people condition the land,' Hatt (1940b, p. 175) argued in a Kjellénian fashion, 'and together they form a higher entity that is the state.' While he emphasised an intimate bond between people and land, he seemed to recognise that this social-geographical relationship – for a time, at least – could be maintained without the 'higher entity' of the fully sovereign territorial state. Also in this respect, there seems to be an important note of de-territorialisation (but not de-spatialisation) in Hatt's small-state geopolitics.

In the post-war purges, Hatt was convicted of having engaged in 'dishonourable national conduct' during the Nazi-German occupation, on the grounds of his geopolitical activities. He was neither an active nor ideological supporter of Nazism (or other radical ideologies), and, with reason, he felt that he had simply served the policy of the legitimate Danish government. Nonetheless, he was divested of his professorship and, to a large extent, became persona non grata (Larsen, 2015). Against this background, it is no surprise that he effectively vanished from scholarly and public discourse. Even less than Kjellén, he did not attract followers or spark a school of thought. Nonetheless, and with the notable difference that the United States replaced Germany in matters of defence, Denmark adhered in key respects to Hatt's small-state geopolitics in the post-war decades of 'block politics', first by joining NATO and subsequently the EEC (Borring Olesen & Villaume, 2005). This is not to suggest that Hatt was uniquely insightful. Rather, in the historical-geographical conjunctures of his time, he articulated key elements of a wider small-state geopolitics, which in important respects emphasises social-geographical relations as de-territorialised from the sovereign state.

Conclusions

Drawing on our analyses of Kjellén's and Hatt's thinking, we conclude by outlining what we see as three important characteristics of small-state geopolitics. First, while their small-state geopolitics is also marked by realpolitik and materialism, Kjellén and Hatt viewed the opportunities of their own small-state home countries as

significantly brighter than the 'vulgar geopolitics' they have been associated with would imply. Determinism is complemented by a measure of voluntarism, as the prospect of (their) small states is not simply determined by territory and natural endowments, but to a significant degree by how states and peoples make use of such factors – in a global perspective. Second, in acknowledging the impossibility of territorial expansion for their home countries, ambitions to improve their international status and security are projected onto commercial and technological prowess in the future, rather than upon geographical expansion in the present. Third, this reasoning is premised upon territorial expansionism being 'sublimated' into internal progress in an internationalist setting. The critical factor in their small-state geopolitics is not primarily the *quantity* of material factors and geographical acquisitions. Rather, they emphasised the *quality* of domestic relationships and linkages into global networks, thus balancing the determinist materialism traditionally viewed as central to geopolitics.

Kjellén's and Hatt's articulations of these three dimensions of small-state geopolitics are particular to their time and place. However, as suggested in the opening of this chapter, although beyond our present scope, we propose that they reflect more widely on 'formal' as well as 'practical' small-state geopolitical practices (for some indications, see Marklund, 2015; Tunander, 2008). These are as geographical and political as the more well-known instances of large-state geopolitics, and therefore worthy of critical scrutiny, but they take distinctive forms. A key aspect in this respect is how the expansionist theme of classical geopolitics is maintained in a sublimated form.

As emphasised in critical geopolitics (e.g. Ó Tuathail, 1996), geopolitical reasoning is situated knowledge. In fact, when reflecting on geopolitical thinkers of his time, Hatt seems to have approached such an understanding when he called attention to '*the personal equation*, i.e., the error included because of the individual's particular position' (quoted in Jerrild, 1939, p. 173; see also Larsen, 2011). While neither Kjellén nor Hatt engage with their own 'personal equation', their small-state geopolitics was highly situated too. Indeed, we suggest that their small-state geopolitics emerged from the fact that they, as national if not nationalistic inhabitants of small states, had to make geopolitical sense of their home countries. As suggested above, we find some common themes in this. But due to their different historical and geographical settings, and perhaps also because of different political outlooks, the small-state geopolitics of Kjellén and Hatt also differed in many respects.

Arguably spurred by their small-state setting, Kjellén and Hatt demonstrated surprisingly nuanced approaches to 'geography' in their small-state geopolitics. This does not amount to socio-spatial theory in a contemporary sense of the term. Neither Kjellén nor Hatt employed social theories systematically (if at all), and their approach to relations between the social and the spatial was not dialectical. However, when shifting their gaze from great powers to small states, they relaxed their deterministic approach to geography. Often, if tacitly, this involved nuanced considerations of social relations and spatial structures that were ahead of their time – and their great power geopolitics.

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Chapter 3
Translating Space: The Rise and Fall of Central Place Theory and Planning-Geography in Sweden

Pär Wikman and Marcus Mohall

Introduction

Geography in the Nordic countries has long experienced a close yet often tense relationship with spatial planning. Sweden is no exception. From the mid-1950s and a few decades onwards, Swedish human geography was strongly focused on regional planning. In this chapter, we examine the influence of the German geographer Walter Christaller's (1966 [1933]) central place theory on Swedish human geography and the closely related emergence of a distinctive kind of Swedish "planning-geography" (Mels, 2012). Originally developed to explain the distribution of towns in southern Germany in the early twentieth century, Christaller's theory came to be used by geographers and planners across the world in the decades after World War II (Berry & Garrison, 1958; Barnes, 2012; Barnes & Abrahamsson, 2017). In Sweden, the theory played a key role in the development of the rapidly expanding welfare state. This ambitious political project created a demand for new knowledge and tools which could help realise the goal to provide all citizens with equal access to quality public services (Åmark, 2005). For some time, the development of human geography in Sweden was heavily geared towards these efforts.

While central place theory influenced both spatial planning and the subject of human geography in all of the Nordic countries (see for example Illeris et al., 1966; Sjøholt, 1981; Granö, 2005; Dale & Sjøholt, 2007), this chapter is primarily concerned with the Swedish context and the work of the geographers at Lund University, particularly that of Torsten Hägerstrand and Sven Godlund. The reasons for this are twofold. First, the growing popularity of Christaller's theory reflected a broader

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shift within geography towards quantitative approaches, one which was especially strongly manifested at the geography department in Lund. Second, the Swedish case offers an instructive example of how scientific knowledge can be translated into political reforms and the kinds of relationships that can emerge between researchers and policymakers. By involving themselves in regional planning, geographers created a demand for planners with geographical training, and academic geographers were frequently called upon as experts on planning matters. Through a series of major welfare reforms and infrastructure projects in which geographers played a key role, Sweden was quite literally restructured in the image of central place theory.

In the early 1970s, however, a number of geographers strongly criticized how the reliance on reductive theories such as that of Christaller and the extensive focus on planning constrained the academic development of the discipline. Moreover, the influence of central place theory on geographical research decreased when the expansive phase of the Swedish welfare state ended in the 1980s. When the politics and material conditions which had made the theory popular changed, its usefulness soon declined. In hindsight, it is evident that the theory only allowed for overly simplified analyses of socio-spatial relations, but that its proliferation nonetheless contributed to the transformation of Swedish human geography into a modern social science. In essence, central place theory advanced a comparatively novel understanding of space which contributed to the development of more complex and philosophical theories and approaches to geography, such as Hägerstrand's concept of time geography.

Central Place Theory in Theory

Walter Christaller first presented his theory in his dissertation *The Central Places in Southern Germany* (*Die Zentralen Orte in Süddeutschland*) (1966 [1933]). As a number of scholars have demonstrated, his subsequent career was intimately associated with the Third Reich. During his time working at the Planning and Soil Department (*Stabshauptamt für Planung und Boden*), part of the Commissariat for the Strengthening of Ethnic Germandom (*Dienststelle des Reichskommissars für die Festigung deutschen Volkstums*), an organisation headed by the Schutzstaffel leader Heinrich Himmler, Christaller was intimately involved in the making of the genocidal *Generalplan Ost*. The plan outlined a blueprint for the post-war German colonization of Eastern Europe, a project centred around the murder and enslavement of tens of millions Soviet and Eastern European residents (Rössler, 1989; Barnes & Minca, 2013; Kegler, 2015). After the war, Christaller's superiors were acquitted in Nürnberg on basis of the argument that *Generalplan Ost* was never fully realized, yet as he and his colleagues were in all likelihood aware, the plan contributed to the genocide on the Eastern Front (Aly & Heim, 2002, p. 289). These circumstances, however, did not affect the popularity of Christaller's theory after

World War II, and Swedish geographers paid little attention to his Nazi past (Hägerstrand, 1959; Wikman, 2019, p. 53).

At heart, central place theory is a spatial model of market interactions. It posits a hierarchical relationship between towns based on what services and goods are available. Whether a town has a high or low level of centrality is determined by the size of its surrounding area (*umland*). The size of the surrounding area is measured by examining the distance people are willing to travel to access goods and services. Towns to which people are willing to travel a long distance are located at a higher point in the central place hierarchy. Most applications of the theory use an index of the availability of goods and services to measure each town's level of centrality. Since people travel further to buy rare goods (such as fridges) than common goods (such as milk), towns where rare goods or services are available obtain higher scores in the centrality index.

The localization of towns had traditionally been explained with reference to the proximity to waterways, natural resources, or other topographical factors. By contrast, central place theory posited that economic activity was the most critical factor. The sole focus on economic activity made the theory nominally applicable to most industrialized societies regardless of their geographical conditions. Christaller's framework thus offered a highly flexible model for "translating" societies into economic relations (Christaller, 1966 [1933], p. 16–18). Since the theory was developed with economic relations at its core, its "ideal" world was flat. In a theoretically flat world, transport costs (what Christaller referred to as "economic distance") is the only factor that influences travel times. The theory furthermore assumes an even distribution of the population. Accordingly, towns in a flat world of this kind would be evenly spatially distributed. Smaller towns would be located in the surrounding areas of larger towns, and these, in turn, would be located in the surrounding areas of even larger cities. Each town would thus belong to a different level in the central place hierarchy. If one draws a map of this flat world with an evenly distributed population, the towns will be located in a hexagonal pattern (Fig. 3.1). The corner

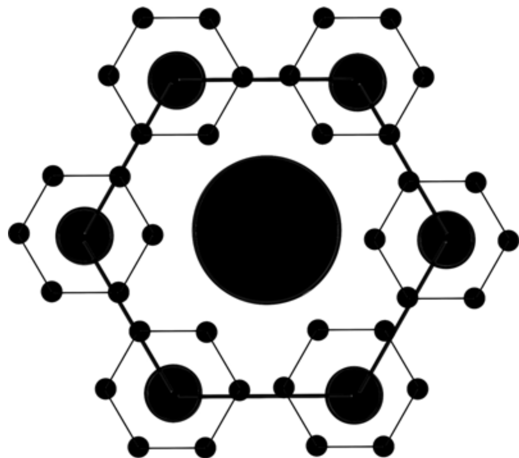

Fig. 3.1 An example of an 'ideal' world planned and organized in accordance with the principles of central place theory. (Authors' own elaboration)

of each hexagon will be a central place with a surrounding area in the shape of a smaller hexagon, in a theoretically infinite fractal pattern (Christaller, 1966 [1933], p. 58–80).

The hexagon has become the iconic image of central place theory, representing the "ideal" central place world. As with all ideals, this world rarely fully corresponds to reality. When central place indexes of actual towns with actual surrounding areas were created, they did not look like hexagons, but the towns could still be placed in a central place hierarchy (King, 1984). For the users and supporters of Christaller's theory, his framework provided an ideal organization of space against which reality could be tested and contrasted. In other words, the theory made it possible to compare the actual spatial organization of a country or region to an ideal flat and hexagonal world. Critically, the theory could be used to analyse all forms of goods and services, and it could easily be scaled up or down depending on what level one wished to investigate. The world looked different through the lens of central place theory: it helped geographers to interpret the world and enhanced the possibilities of policymakers to change it. The deviations from the ideal provided insights into where reform efforts should be directed. As we will see, this was one of the core reasons behind the popularity and diffusion of the theory.

Post-war Social Science and Geography in Sweden

The most significant theoretical and methodological transformation of geography during the twentieth century was the shift away from regional geography – the largely descriptive and historical approach to geography that dominated Anglophone, German, French, and Scandinavian geography from the 1870s until World War II – towards quantitative, model-based approaches (Barnes, 2001). In the 1950s, a quantitatively oriented urban geography became an increasingly important field in Anglo-American geography. This interest eventually contributed to the creation of what became known as regional science (Barnes, 2004). In Sweden, however, descriptive regional geography was still influential, although Swedish geographers – particularly economic geographers – were quite familiar with quantitative urban geography (Pred, 1983). In the immediate post-war period, the methodological shift towards quantitative approaches that would redefine the discipline in the coming decades had already begun (Buttimer & Mels, 2006, pp. 52–60).

After World War II, Swedish higher education was significantly reformed. New disciplines, including human geography, were provided with their own departments at the public universities. In the late 1940s and early 1950s, in Sweden, unlike the other Nordic countries, geography was formally split into physical geography and human geography with separate departments. A new research council for the social sciences (*Samhällsvetenskapliga forskningsrådet*) was created in 1947 (Nybom, 1997, pp. 64–104). In 1950, the council organized a major conference in Uppsala which gathered social scientists from all the disciplines the council represented. The

intention was to provide researchers from each discipline with the opportunity to discuss in what direction they were heading (Wikman, 2019, pp. 71–73).

The human geography sub-conference was titled *Towns and their surrounding areas (Tätorter och omland)* (Enequist, 1951; Forsberg, 2021). Since geography had historically been a wide-ranging but unified discipline, there was an evident need to define human geography anew and discuss what human geographers ought to be doing. The conference was attended by most of the geographers working at Swedish universities, including the three central actors this chapter is concerned with, all of whom worked at the Department of Geography at Lund University: Torsten Hägerstrand and Sven Godlund, two younger researchers who had yet to complete their dissertations, and the Estonian-Swedish geographer Edgar Kant. Hägerstrand would eventually become one of Sweden's most renowned geographers. Godlund, on his side, did not reach the same international fame but became an influential geographer in the Swedish context. Kant, who significantly influenced Swedish geography in ways we will explore further below, came to Sweden from Estonia as a refugee in 1944 and spent the remainder of his career at the department in Lund (Tammiksaar et al., 2018).

At the conference in Uppsala, Kant suggested that geography was an "amphibious" discipline, neither a social nor a natural science, but rather a hybrid of the two (Kant, 1951, p. 19). These comments were directed at the relationship between human and physical geography. Yet the amphibious qualities of human geography can also be said to pertain to the relationship between geographers and policymakers. Although the boundaries between science and politics are never stable or uncomplicated, human geographers in post-war Sweden – perhaps due to the amphibious nature of the discipline – proved to be very adept at navigating these complicated boundaries.

Boundaries, Translations, and Mobile Models

Thomas Gieryn's (1999) writings on boundary work are helpful for analysing how the boundaries between science and politics are created and maintained. Gieryn argues that students of science should not primarily investigate *what* science is but rather *where* science is. Knowledge that comes to be accepted as scientific is produced, and it is possible to examine where this production takes place. To this end, he uses the metaphor of a "cultural map". Science and other cultural phenomena can be understood as nations on a map. Maps are used to navigate the world, and cultural maps are used to navigate culture. They show where different phenomena begin and end, and politics and science are located at different places on the map. Yet the boundaries are far from fixed: they are continually moved, erased, and renegotiated. The desirable places on the map, such as science, are always contested. Actors who are not included within the boundaries of science are trying to redraw them at the same time as those located within them seek to defend their positions. When the boundaries between science and politics are blurred, the knowledge

scientists produce can become less credible; social scientists who engage in policy-making risk losing their autonomy. At the same time, to do so potentially offers them the power to *influence* the societies they study.

Notably, the transformation of human geography into a planning science and the highpoint of the popularity of central place theory coincided with the period when the Nordic welfare states were significantly expanded. In the United States, during the Cold War, the military contributed significant funding to and made use of social science (Lowen, 1997; Simpson, 1998; Mirowski, 2002; Solovey, 2013). In the Nordic countries, the expanding welfare state played a similar role (Kuhnle, 1996; Larsson, 2001; Lundin et al., 2010).

A key reason behind the popularity of central place theory was that Christaller's framework made it possible to translate economic activities into geometrical figures. Translations, then, are an integral part of scientific knowledge production. Nature is translated into equations, categories, and abstractions that can be analysed in laboratories and printed in journals. They simplify the world and makes it "mobile" (Callon & Latour, 1981, pp. 277–301; Latour, 1986, pp. 264–278, 1987; Law, 1999). Such translations make possible analyses that would otherwise be impossible.

During the post-war period, social scientists increasingly made use of abstract models (Crowther-Heyck, 2015). The proliferation of computers allowed social scientists to analyse large quantities of data without the aid of a large staff. Statistics had always been integral to the social sciences, but the new computational power made possible the development of far more sophisticated statistical models (Hägerstrand, 1967; Edwards, 1996; MacKenzie, 2006). The use of models made it possible to formalize what data to analyse and what methods to use. Hunter Crowther-Heyck (2015) characterizes the most influential models developed by social scientists as "manipulable mobiles". Like all translations, models can be moved, but they can also be manipulated after they have been moved. They are scalable, which makes it possible to adjust them to local conditions. Crowther-Heyck has devised nine criteria for manipulable models:

> [T]hey must be (1) mobile (movable over long distances); (2) unchanged in their meaningful characteristics when so moved; (3) flat; (4) scalable; (5) reproducible; (6) recombinable (as when maps of different sections of a coastline are joined); (7) superimposable (as when population data is added to a topographic map); (8) capable of being merged with written text; and (9) capable of being "merged with geometry" (they convert multiple dimensions and vast scales to two dimensions and convenient sizes for synoptic visual representation) (Crowther-Heyck, 2015, p. 168).

Models are mobile rationalities, and they proliferate because actors find them useful. Where those actors are located determines how the model is implemented. The same model can be used for different ends, but the core rationality remains the same. Central place theory is an example of a highly mobile and adaptable theory. The framework always places the supply of goods and services at the core of the social order. This abstract and consistent theory allowed geographers to cross the boundary between science and politics without undoing it, and it presented

policymakers with the opportunity to draw on the authority of science without undermining it with the intrinsic partisanship of politics.

Central Place Theory and Swedish Planning-Geography

In the 1950s, the Swedish state needed methods to realize its welfare ambitions, and the human geographers needed to establish their discipline as a producer of socially beneficial knowledge to justify its status as a social science. Central place theory came to play a vital role in the transformation of Swedish human geography into a planning science and the creation of a mutually strengthening cooperation between researchers, planners, and policymakers.

The reshaping of the academic discipline of human geography was entirely contingent on the political and material conditions associated with the unfolding expansion of the social democratic welfare state. A key tenet of the welfare state as a political project was that all citizens were entitled to the same level of social service regardless of class, occupation, or place of residence. The planning of services such as housing, education, and health, elder and childcare presented a number of spatial challenges. The construction of the welfare state was closely intertwined with the organization of space (Lundquist, 1972; Gustafsson, 1988; Ekström von Essen, 2003). As the number of social services increased, so did the demand for planning expertise. Well before the expansion of the welfare state was initiated, social democratic intellectuals discussed the need for a more extensive form of spatial planning not merely limited to the built environment. The social sciences would complement the expertise of engineers and architects (Rudberg, 1981; Larsson, 2001).

The adaptability and versatility of central place theory were important reasons behind its dissemination and popularity. The theory made it possible to translate society into a form that opened up new aspects of it to political intervention, and it opened up new career paths for geographers. The amphibious nature of geography Kant spoke of became visible as the boundaries between science and policymaking became blurred. For some time, human geography became virtually synonymous with regional planning.

Edgar Kant was one of the theory's early adopters. Some have suggested that Kant introduced Christaller's hexagonal world in Sweden (Buttimer, 2005), but although he played an important role, central place theory was not entirely unknown in the country prior to his arrival in 1944. For instance, the Stockholm-based economic geographer William William-Olsson referenced Christaller in his 1937 dissertation (1937, p. 82). Kant's influence on the department in Lund was nonetheless significant. Young geographers such as Torsten Hägerstrand and Sven Godlund felt validated by his approval of their work (Tammiksaar et al., 2018). In a 1985 interview, Hägerstrand explained how Kant's original research foci and creative approach to geography made a lasting impression on him and his colleagues:

> When I met him [Kant] I had already worked on population analysis, and my work on migration was almost finished before I met him. I think what he showed me was the possibility of summarising data in mathematical formulas. What was really new was his social geography. He never published anything in Swedish, and his Esthonian [sic] publications are not accessible here. But he talked a lot about his studies of Tartu in Esthonia [sic], where he had actually mapped the activity spaces of every social class and even showed pictures of homes of various social classes. This was so impossible for us here in Sweden, because being a geographer was to be out in the field looking at the landscape. To include the inside of people's homes in the concept of landscape was absolutely new. (Hägerstrand, 1985, p. 12)

In the intellectual environment Kant and Hägerstrand were part of, there was an early interest in the quantitative methods that would dominate the discipline in the coming decades. Hence, it is unsurprising that central place theory was enthusiastically received. However, before the theory could be integrated into their scientific practice, it was necessary to "translate" it to fit the Swedish conditions.

Translating and Diffusing Central Place Theory

The quantitative turn, which central place theory was part of, changed *how* geographers worked. Hägerstrand described his initial foray into migration studies as an attempt to investigate the relationship between settlement patterns and the physical geography of landscapes. This approach, he explained, was the norm within Swedish geography in the 1940s (Hägerstrand, 1985, pp. 12–13). In one of his early studies, Hägerstrand drew on data on population density and the distance between the Swedish towns that migrants moved to and from to calculate the level of migration intensity (Hägerstrand, 1947). The significance of this particular study was that he primarily used demographic data to simulate the migration patterns. In another early study, he used hexagon patterns to study the diffusion of automobility in Sweden (Hägerstrand, 1951). While he did not explicitly cite any of Christaller's works in this study, his analytical framework clearly appears to have been inspired by central place theory. These studies reflected the broader shift happening in geography at the time towards quantitative approaches, a shift that the use of central place theory was very much a part of.

Central place theory played a fairly small role in Hägerstrand's early studies of migration. In these studies, he attempted to create abstract models that simulated social processes, but his ambitions were larger than the confines of the theory would allow. In his dissertation, the study that gave him international recognition, Hägerstrand used an assortment of quantitative data to simulate the diffusion of technical innovations in rural Sweden (Hägerstrand, 1953). This was a necessary step towards abstraction for making possible more elaborate simulations and models. The dissertation also marked a step away from the regional approach to geography the earlier generation of geographers had been concerned with.

The person who would more fully translate central place theory to fit Swedish conditions was Hägerstrand's long-term collaborator Sven Godlund. In his

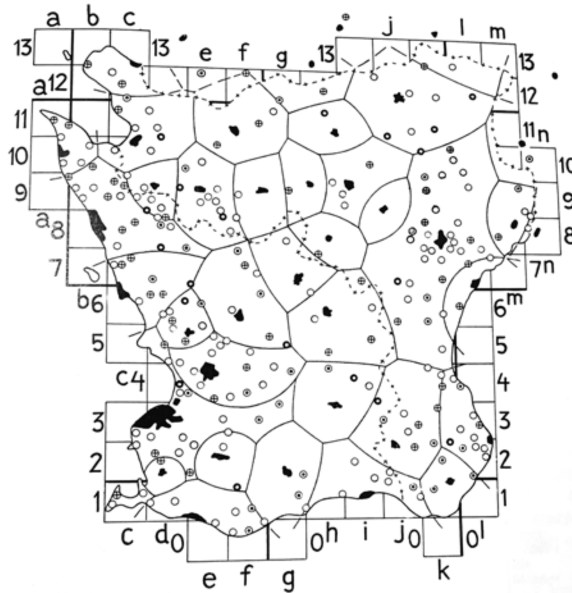

Fig. 3.2 Central place theory translated to Swedish conditions. This map depicts the theoretical surrounding areas in southern Sweden as calculated using Godlund's centrality index. (Source: Godlund (1954, p. 333))

dissertation, Godlund (1954) developed a central place index for towns in southern Sweden on the basis of his analyses of bus commuting patterns (Fig. 3.2). Christaller had initially devised a large number of criteria for calculating the hierarchy of central places, not all of which were related to retail trade. For Godlund's purposes, however, population data, data on the number of retail employees, and the number of passengers on each bus line was sufficient to determine the hierarchy of towns (Godlund, 1954, pp. 60–69). In line with Christaller's ideas, the basic assumption was that towns should be studied by examining their surroundings. The analytical model Godlund developed was abstract but less complex in comparison to Christaller's original version.

In the work of Godlund and Hägerstrand, social interactions were construed as the primary explanation for the localization and importance of towns. Spatial phenomena were examined independently from their topographical circumstances. Godlund's centrality index was less complex than Hägerstrand's simulations, but they both developed and worked with abstract models of society. Notably, the influence of central place theory was in part a product of its simplicity: the index computed by Godlund was simple enough to be mastered by others than professional researchers. On the whole, the theory was relatively simple to use, even though more complex simulations of the kind developed by geographers like Hägerstrand required combining the theory with other models. Nevertheless, familiarity with central place theory made such models more accessible.

The usefulness of central place theory, specifically Godlund's centrality index, was more critical for the credibility of human geography as a planning science than Hägerstrand's sophisticated and complex simulations. In comparison to Hägerstrand, who became a professor at the department in Lund in 1957, Godlund's academic career was less straightforward. In 1962, he became the first professor of human geography at the University of Gothenburg, but for the better part of the 1950s, he had to find employment outside of academia. Since his early research had primarily been concerned with transportation issues, he was hired as an expert in a public study on the reorganization of the Swedish road network. The car had become the dominant mode of transportation, and the infrastructure had to be expanded and restructured accordingly (Blomkvist, 2001, pp. 176–200; Lundin, 2008). In this study (Statens offentliga utredningar, 1958), which culminated in one of the hitherto largest infrastructure investments in Sweden, Godlund used his expertise to devise where the road network should be expanded. As such, central place theory played a key role in transforming Sweden into an automobility-oriented society.

Godlund and Hägerstrand, who operated at opposite ends of the applied-abstract spectrum, remained lifelong friends and collaborators. After Godlund left Lund, he used his position to involve Hägerstrand's students in his work as a planner, as their private correspondence makes evident (Godlund, 1955a, 1955b, 1955c; Hägerstrand, 1955). Several students who contributed to Godlund's planning efforts used the data they had gathered to write graduate theses with Hägerstrand as their supervisor (Godlund, 1955d, 1955e). Many of these students eventually became full-time planners (Wikman, 2019, 151–157).

Central Places and Municipal Reforms

The shift towards planning had significant implications for Swedish human geography. Geography departments came to have a distinct function: to train planners. Several members of the young discipline saw and seized the opportunity to establish human geography departments as producers of "useful" knowledge. Geographers working in the vein of Godlund and Hägerstrand gained influence, while those who worked in the tradition of regional geography were increasingly marginalized. When the boundaries of the discipline were redrawn, the regional approach did not disappear completely, but it was no longer located at the core of the cultural map of human geography. The centre of the discipline shifted towards research topics that revolved around the planning needs of the state (Buttimer & Mels, 2006, pp. 63–82; Wikman, 2019, pp. 174–176).

The work and career path of Bengt Jacobson, one of Hägerstrand's students, offers a good example of how the new geographers trained in the use of Christaller's theory contributed to planning. Using Godlund's centrality index, Jacobson developed proposals for delineating rural school precincts (Jacobson, 1956, 1958). His studies were not particularly original, but they well demonstrate how central place theory came to be used for planning purposes. Jacobson's professional path was

also indicative of what was to come. He did not make an academic career but became a civil servant in the Ministry of Education and Research. Early in his career as a bureaucrat, he represented the Ministry in the processes that preceded the pivotal municipal reform initiated in 1962 (Jacobson, 1988, 1992).

By the late 1950s, geographers were still trying to become a part of the larger planning milieu. The involvement of academic geographers in the 1962 municipal reform was vital for this ambition. This major reform was intended to restructure the administrative geography created by a municipal reform carried out a decade earlier. Despite being preceded by thorough and detailed studies, the population in many municipalities had proved too small to create a tax base large enough to fund the expanding social services local governments were legally required to provide. The goal of the reform initiated in 1962 was to create a framework for inter-municipal cooperation, so-called municipal blocks. Municipalities within a block were initially encouraged to voluntarily merge into a single municipality, yet these mergers were soon made mandatory (Wångmar, 2003, 2013).

Through the municipal reform of 1962, Sweden's administrative geography was reorganized in line with the assumptions of central place theory. Appointed as an expert by the committee tasked with carrying out the reform, Godlund was essentially given free rein to develop the principles for how the new municipalities should be delineated. He was also granted the opportunity to hire his own assistants, several of whom had studied under Hägerstrand. The process was purposefully structured so as to give the experts involved significant influence and power. Parliamentary support for reorganizing the municipalities had been secured during the first round of reforms in the late 1940s. Hence, the experts could act autonomously and with a strong mandate. It was an ideal situation for social scientists keen to traverse the boundaries between science and politics without undoing them. While politicians had formulated the goals of the reform, the experts could more or less freely decide how to achieve them (Wikman, 2019, pp. 192–195).

Around the same time, the Swedish education system was also the subject of major reforms. The mandatory public school was extended to 9 years and the syllabus was revised to include more science education. As a result, schools needed dedicated science classrooms. For financial reasons, it was argued that the schools would thus have to be larger in size. The general principle was that no district should include students from more than one municipality, and that no pupil should have to commute more than 40 minutes to their school (Wikman, 2019, pp. 215–223). Accordingly, the planning problem that had to be solved was to create school districts large enough to have a substantial number of students but small enough to ensure that the commutes would not be too long. These kinds of challenges were precisely the ones for which Godlund had designed his index. Neither Godlund nor any other academic geographers were directly involved in this process, but civil servants in the public administration made use of the tool he had developed to restructure the school districts (Jacobson, 1988, 1992).

As Christaller had argued, hospitals, schools, and other services determine where a town is located in the central place hierarchy. By deciding where such services were to be located, the Swedish state could shape and direct the development of

central places. Through regional planning practices informed by Godlund's index, central place theory thus played a decisive role in the organization of the spatial order of the Swedish welfare state.

Central place theory translated economic activity into geometrical figures, and when it was used to implement political reforms, it transformed society. As a by-product, the discipline of human geography became largely defined by its focus on planning. The strong position human geography occupied around this time is attested to by how no other discipline received more funding from the social science research council during the early 1970s (Pred, 1974, p. 3). The cultural space of regional planning between science and politics allowed geographers to shape social relations without becoming political actors. For their part, policymakers were able to draw on geographical expertise and theory to make political issues into technical issues. Citizens could contest the political decisions to redraw municipal boundaries, but it was far more difficult for members of the general public to challenge the authority of experts and scientific principles such as central place theory. By making the political issue of how municipal borders should be drawn into a scientific question of the hierarchy between central places, the issue was moved into the cultural space of spatial planning and placed under the authority of experts.

Escaping Central Place Theory

By the early 1970s, central place theory reached its zenith in Swedish human geography. In the following decades, the theory gradually became far less influential. Two key reasons explain its declining popularity. First, a number of geographers argued that it constrained the development of human geography as an academic subject, and that the involvement of geographers in regional planning had largely failed to create a more just society. Second, the theory was closely tied to the particular historical moment when the welfare state was rapidly expanded. When the politics and material conditions which made it useful as a planning tool eventually fundamentally changed, so did its status and utility.

Beginning in the early 1970s, a number of geographers levelled strong criticism against the shortcomings of positivist approaches and how the involvement of geographers in regional planning had impacted Swedish society (Gullberg & Lindström, 1979; Alvstam et al., 1979; Mels, 2012). One of the most vocal critics was Gunnar Olsson, who had made significant contributions to the development of quantitative geography (see for example Olsson, 1965; Olsson & Persson, 1964). In the early 1970s, Olsson, who had left Sweden for the University of Michigan in 1966, began to feel increasingly uneasy about the involvement of geographers in the planning of the welfare state and the dominance of positivism more broadly (Olsson, 1974, 1980; Gren, 2012). Swedish regional planning, he suggested, had largely failed to achieve its laudable goal "to abolish the spatial element of social and economic inequality" (Olsson, 1974, p. 19). The theories and models geographers had relied

on were inadequate and had mainly reproduced the shortcomings of the societies they had ventured to improve:

> In retrospect, it appears that the majority of spatial analysts – among whom I certainly include myself – have confined ourselves so thoroughly within our categorial frameworks, within our particular mathematical language, and within our artifacts that we thereby have helped to perpetuate the functional inequalities of the past. In fact what we seem not to have realized is that in order to acquire a new world, we must at the same time acquire a new analytical language, less dogmatic than the old, but no less abstract and no less difficult. (Olsson, 1974, p. 19)

Writing a decade later, Hägerstrand (1983, p. 253) similarly critically reflected on the legacy of his involvement in planning. "In many ways", he wrote, "present-day critics are right when they say that we tried to sweep up after the moves of a capitalistic industry involved in international competition. At that time, however, this seemed to be the sensible thing to do."

In part, these critiques should be understood in relation to the changes taking place in the discipline around the same time in Anglo-American geography, where humanistic and radical geographers criticized and sought to transcend the dominance of positivist approaches (Harvey, 1972; Barnes & Sheppard, 2019). Importantly, however, quantitative geography never reached the same hegemonic status in Sweden or the other Nordic countries as it did in the United States (Öhman, 1994, pp. 90–92; Helmfrid, 2004, pp. 7–8). The criticism voiced by people like Hägerstrand and Olsson must be understood in relation to the perceived failures of spatial planning and how the focus on planning constrained the development of human geography as an academic subject. In an insightful piece on the state of Swedish geography by the early 1990s, Jan Öhman (1994) noted that there had long been scant interest in exploring and contributing to theoretical questions and debates beyond the world of applied research (see also Gren, 2005; Simonsen & Öhman, 2003).

Following his involvement in planning, Hägerstrand shifted his attention towards developing the novel concept of time geography. In brief, he sought to create a theoretical framework and notational apparatus for grappling with the complex relationship between time and space, and the ways in which social structures and the lives of individuals are shaped by this relationship. Hägerstrand's work on time geography cemented his international reputation, and during his turn towards these more experimental and philosophical approaches, he explicitly distanced himself from the hexagonal world of central place theory (e.g. Hägerstrand, 1970, 1977). Hägerstrand's later career path, then, clearly reflects how moving away from the limits of central place theory and applied planning research opened new possibilities for theoretical inquiries.

Central place theory played an important role in transforming Swedish human geography from a largely descriptive practice into a modern social science. Ultimately, however, it could not be used to develop more advanced and philosophical theories and approaches to geography. This is not the place for an in-depth review of the development of human geography in Sweden in the decades after the interest in central place theory began to decline. Yet as Öhman (1994, pp. 91–92)

also noted, the dissertations presented at Swedish geography departments from the late 1970s up until the early 1990s demonstrate how there was an increasing interest to engage with theoretical questions and issues which had been largely neglected during the era of planning-geography. As the other chapters in this book reflect, this trend has continued insofar as geographers interact with and contribute to a wide range of theoretical currents and debates (see also e.g. Simonsen & Öhman, 2003; Sircar, 2019). Undoubtedly, the development of more nuanced and far more illuminating understandings of socio-spatial relations was predicated on abandoning the dependence on reductive theories such as that of Christaller.

Central place theory lives on in how it continues to shape Swedish society: the municipal structure remains unchanged for the most part, and many of the schools and hospitals planned in accordance with its principles are still in use. By contrast, the story is rather different within the world of research and higher education. Many students who take an introductory geography course are presented with an image of the iconic hexagonal pattern and a brief overview of how Christaller's ideas have influenced spatial planning in Sweden and beyond (his involvement in the Nazi state is unfortunately rarely mentioned). However, the theory plays a fairly marginal role in the research conducted by human geographers.

In the summer of 2018, a major debate unfolded in the opinion pages of the daily *Svenska Dagbladet* on the role and future of Swedish human geography. Among other things, the debate revolved around the policy relevance of the subject and the extent to which geographers can and should cater to the planning needs of the state. Jan Amcoff and Thomas Niedomysl (2018) argued that it was a pity that most geographers no longer conduct the kind of research that would make them attractive as experts on regional planning. Specifically, they contrasted the contemporary conditions to how Swedish geographers were once heavily involved in spatial planning, taking as one of their examples how central place theory had been used to restructure the country's administrative geography.

This critique, however, fails to consider how the declining involvement of geographers in planning must be understood in relation to the gradual unwinding of the welfare state over the last few decades (Enlund, 2020; Schierup & Ålund, 2011; Christophers, 2013). Unfortunately, we cannot discuss these developments here at any length, yet it suffices to say that the main reason for why there is no longer much demand for analyses of the kind geographers like Godlund were tasked with providing is hardly that geographers are no longer primarily concerned with central place theory or applied research. Rather, what has changed is how and to what extent the state *asks* for this kind of expertise.

In this regard, one of the arguments presented by Trevor Barnes (2004) in his study of the rise and fall of regional science in the United States is illuminating. Barnes observes that regional science emerged in tandem with the post-war economic boom in the decades after World War II, and that one of the reasons for why the discipline fell apart was that these material conditions eventually changed. A similar analysis, then, holds true also for the use and status of central place theory in Sweden. Planning-geography was fundamentally a product of the rapidly expanding welfare state. Similarly to how the cold war informed the growth and development of social science in the United States, the welfare state thoroughly shaped the

development and expansion of human geography in Sweden. Human geographers successfully secured funding made available as a result of the expansion of the welfare state, yet the demand for the particular type of expertise they offered gradually declined when the welfare state was no longer being expanded.

Conclusion

Through their adaptation and development of central place theory, Swedish geographers were able to position themselves as authorities on spatial planning. Since Christaller's framework reduces socio-spatial relations to market relationships the theory only allowed for abstract and highly simplified models and representations of socio-spatial relations, yet its high level of abstraction made it flexible, mobile, and useful for the planning needs of the expanding welfare state. By translating central place theory to Swedish conditions, the geographers made it possible to systematically examine and intervene in social processes in new ways. Through these translations, the theory shaped the material and administrative infrastructure of the Swedish welfare state. In turn, human geographers gained access to significant funding and became regarded as experts and producers of socially useful knowledge.

Critically, central place theory allowed geographers to cross the boundary between science and politics without erasing it. It played a key role in the creation of a space on the cultural map where social scientists could engage in political reform work without losing their credibility as scientists. At the same time, policymakers could draw on the authority of science to justify their decisions. A space was created where sticky questions such as where schools or hospitals should be located could be delegated to experts who employed abstract models to determine their purportedly optimal localization. However, things changed when the expansive phase of the welfare state drew towards its end. Methods for localizing hospitals were less useful when fewer new hospitals were being built. The intimate relationship between planning and the subject of human geography also became a subject of criticism from academic geographers. The cultural space that had functioned as a neutral zone between science and politics gradually threatened the autonomy of the discipline.

The development of more complex and philosophical theories and approaches to geography clearly reflected a desire to move away from the confines of central place theory. The simplified understanding of socio-spatial relations the theory was based on and reproduced did not allow for the pursuit of more intricate and multifaceted analyses. To a certain extent, it is understandable why some would like to see human geography regain the position the discipline occupied during the heydays of planning-geography. Yet as we have argued in this chapter, the political and material conditions which gave it this status are no longer there. What is more, the very notion that the discipline would have continued to be inhibited by the confines of central place theory and cognate simplistic theories is frankly terrifying.

The relationship between social science and politics is always tense, given that scientific influence commonly turns into political influence. The development

trajectory of Swedish planning-geography illustrates the Janus face of applied social science. The boundaries between social science and politics are constantly redrawn. Spaces on the cultural map where social scientists can shape the development of society can quickly become spaces where political concerns structure and constrain what they can do.

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Chapter 4
Territorial Structure: An Early Marxist Theorisation of Geography

Peter Jakobsen and Henrik Gutzon Larsen

Introduction

"It is a curious fact of contemporary history that one of the Western countries in which radical geography has acquired its strongest position is the small and complacent kingdom of Denmark", Steen Folke (1985, p. 13) reflected in an early overview of radical geography in Scandinavia. The meaning of "strongest position" can be debated, of course, but in comparison with other Nordic countries, there is no doubt that the radical-geographical movement that took form at Copenhagen University in the years around 1970 was particularly lively (Asheim, 1987). In Sweden, Gullberg and Lindström (1979, p. 4) bluntly assessed that "the radical critique and the Marxist alternatives are particularly rudimentary and undeveloped within the geographical disciplines." With some exceptions, the same could be said about Marxist geography in other Nordic countries in the 1970s (Folke, 1985; Lehtinen & Simonsen, 2022).

Radical geography can take many forms. Among the radical geographers at Copenhagen University, however, the project quickly became unequivocally Marxist (e.g. Folke, 1972). Indeed, for the students and teachers who in late 1971 established Fagligt Forum as an alternative structure at the Department of Geography, the aim was to provide "teaching and research on a Marxist theoretical basis" (Buch-Hansen, 1972, p. 9). Similar turns to Marxism happened elsewhere, but for many Danish radical geographers the initial inspiration came from a somewhat unusual direction, namely from *Elementare Theorie der ökonomischen Geographie* by the German Democratic Republic (GDR) geographer Gerhard Schmidt-Renner (1966).

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This book became the basis for what we will discuss as the territorial-structure approach to human geography.

In this chapter we revisit the territorial-structure approach. In part, this is a contribution to the emerging contextual histories of radical geography (e.g. Barnes & Sheppard, 2019; Berg et al., 2022), which nuance and problematise the generalising and all too often Anglo-American-centric "textbook" accounts of this varied field (see also Ferretti, 2019). But we particularly examine the territorial-structure approach as an early attempt at theorising geography as a dialectical relationship between the social and the material, in this case from a Marxist position. We start by introducing the historical-geographical context for the territorial-structure approach.

Radical Geography at Copenhagen University

Danish radical geography, like many radical geographies elsewhere, emerged from the intersecting developments that have "1968" as their emblem. More than in Norway and Sweden, for example, the Danish "youth rebellion" was a "student rebellion" (Jørgensen, 2008), and the rise of radical geography at Copenhagen University was part and parcel of this. Until the establishment of Roskilde University in the mid-1970s, Danish geography was only institutionalised at the universities in Copenhagen and Aarhus. A radical-geographical environment emerged at Aarhus University, which during the "red decade" of the 1970s became a bastion of Marxism (Jørgensen & Jensen, 2008). For example, it was a group of geography students at Aarhus University who translated Schmidt-Renner's book (Schmidt-Renner, 1977). But radical geography did not get the same foothold at Aarhus University. In significant part, this was because radical ideas found a particularly nourishing context at the Copenhagen Department of Geography (Larsen, 2022). As elsewhere, the geography students (and some young teachers) in Copenhagen rebelled against professorial hegemony and traditional understandings of research and education. "Break down the professorial regime – participation, now!" and "Research for the people, not for profit!" were slogans of the time. But the radicalising geographers at Copenhagen University also rebelled against what they saw as an antiquated approach to geography. This was less pronounced at Aarhus University, where many geographers in the 1960s had joined the "Quantitative Revolution" (Framke, 1982; Jensen-Butler, 1999). At Copenhagen University, on the other hand, the radicalising geographers saw their department as a quagmire of problematic specialisation, regional description and environmental determinism, all smothered in a heavy emphasis on natural science and a vocal distaste for "theory". Somewhat like geography at Clark University, which also had allowed the "Quantitative Revolution" to pass by (Huber et al., 2019), geography at Copenhagen University was overripe for criticism.

The 1970 University Act (Styrelsesloven) did much to democratise Danish universities, notably by securing students influence in the governing boards of the universities and equalising the formal status of professors and non-professorial staff

(Hansson, 2018). Through often bitter struggles the radicalising geographers also won important local skirmishes (but rarely the battles) at the Copenhagen department. But frustrated with internal departmental struggles and becoming increasingly politicised, a group of students and young teachers in late 1971 established Fagligt Forum as an alternative structure for radical geographical research and education (for elaborations of the following, see Folke, 1985; Hansen & Jensen, 1983; Larsen, 2022). This included educational activities, such as a rather gruelling introduction course in Marxist theory, as well as working groups for research (and action) on the European Economic Community (EEC), development (and Imperialism), urban issues and the production of alternative teaching material for the upper secondary school – the destination for many graduates. Later, in 1973, Fagligt Forum launched the journal *Fagligt Forums Kulturgeografiske Hæfter* (from 1979 simply *Kulturgeografiske Hæfter*).

The radical geographers never included more than a handful of the academic staff, but radical geography was dominant among the students at the Copenhagen department in the 1970s. This radical environment played an important role in establishing geography at the new Roskilde University in the mid-1970s, even if for some it was to deliberately avoid particular theoretical avenues – such as the territorial-structure approach – taken at Copenhagen University (Brandt, 1999). The radical geographers were also involved in launching the annual Nordic Symposium on Critical Human Geography (Lehtinen & Simonsen, 2022; Öhman, 1990) that inspired the still-existing Nordic Geographers Meeting (Clark, 2005). By the early 1980s, however, Folke (1985, p. 15) detected a "stagnation – some would even speak of crisis – in Danish radical geography." Radical geography was indeed entering a crisis, but we will first (and foremost) focus on the Marxist theorisation of geography that took form during radical geography's heyday at Copenhagen University.

The Need to Analyse Territorial Structures

Taking the cue from Schmidt-Renner's *Elementare Theorie der ökonomischen Geographie* (Schmidt-Renner, 1966), which was reviewed in the first issue of *Kulturgeografiske Hæfter* (Nielsen, 1973), the concept of territorial structure was arguably the most distinct idea in Danish radical geography of the 1970s. The concept was systematically presented in an article by Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977a). Buch-Hansen was at the time a postgraduate researcher at the Copenhagen department, while Nielsen was a newly-minted lecturer. *Antipode* – misspelling both their names – subsequently published the article in translation (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b).[1] Manoeuvring around some of the more obvious shortcomings

[1] The *Antipode* article was later reprinted in a special issue on "The development of radical geography", where it appeared in the section on "Theory of space" (*Antipode*, volume 17, 1985, issue 2–3, pp. 50–59).

of Stalinist Marxism-Leninism and introducing a view of geography that was still to emerge in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), Schmidt-Renner's book received some positive comments but had little impact in FRG geography (Belina, 2014; Belina et al., 2022). Its impact was undoubtably greater in the radical-geographical environment in Denmark. For the group that translated Schmidt-Renner's book (and noted some important problems in his GDR Marxism), for instance, the book was "an important foundation for the elaboration of a critical and materialist geography" (Pedersen et al., 1977b, p. 180).[2] The "travel" and "translation" of Schmidt-Renner's theory into Danish radical geography is interesting and could be studied in its own right. Here, however, we will mainly focus on how the theory was articulated in Danish geography.

In positioning their articulation of the territorial-structure approach, Buch-Hansen and Nielsen argue that several attempts had been made to combine Marxist theories with geography in the Western world, but find that these attempts failed because they did not successfully integrate the two. On the one hand, many attempts at introducing Marxism in geography simply became a "repetition of what Marx might have written about that particular topic, or a more general repetition of the central factors of political economy" (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b, p. 1). On the other hand, and closer to their concern, they argue that attempts at synthesising geography and Marxism had failed because they only dealt with the spatial expressions of classical Marxist problems. This was also the case for Soviet geography, which, a Marxist philosophy notwithstanding, was as non-synthetic as in the West and thus only amounted to very simple theories about the location of production. For Buch-Hansen and Nielsen, dealing with spatial expressions ultimately relied on a traditional "bourgeois microscale geographical approach" that was unable to "explain anything about inequality and poverty in the capitalist society":

> We have, as geographers, to get rid of our inherited bourgeois traditions and concern ourselves in our academic work with the task of producing an historical and dialectical materialist theory which develops the spatial aspects of development and underdevelopment to a higher degree than it has been until now by Marxists. (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b, p. 2).

It was from these considerations that Buch-Hansen and Nielsen proposed the concept of territorial structure as a way to overcome the weaknesses of conventional economic geography as well as the embryonic attempts at Marxist geography. In this endeavour, they argued, a theory about the location of production is central because it enables a geographical analysis of the capitalist mode of production and its social effects.

Theoretically, the territorial-structure approach linked up with at least two overarching concerns in Fagligt Forum. First, human geography was seen as a social science by most of the radical geographers. In the words of a radical staff member, it was "unacceptable to claim that human geography is natural science" (Document,

[2] Parts of Schmidt-Renner's book was also translated and published as a mimeographed compendium by the Department of Urban- and Landscape Planning at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts, School of Architecture (Institut for by- og landskabsplanlægning, 1974).

1974). This was significant, because geography was (and is) at Copenhagen University located at the Faculty of Science, and natural science dominated in teaching, research and in the general outlook at the Department of Geography (Hansen & Jensen, 1983). For the territorial-structure approach, as for virtually all radical geography at the department during the 1970s, the social-scientific foundation was Marxism. Second, if closely linked, the radical geographers were highly critical of the specialisation and compartmentalisation of knowledge production. "Bourgeois science focuses on the detail and has neglected to understand the totality. The political aim is always well hidden", Fagligt Forum (1972, p. 6) argued programmatically: "We find that Marxist science better explains the reality – its aim is exactly to uncover reality in its totality, not to disguise some parts of it." It was primarily for this reason that the radical geographers resisted suggestions that they should be moved to the social sciences, as that would fragment human geography. The radical staff members also opposed the establishment of sub-disciplinary research groups (so-called laboratories) within the department. When they finally agreed to form a separate "laboratory", it was characteristically called "General Human Geography" ("Almen kulturgeografi"). The overarching objective of this research group was to "clarify the relationship between mode of production, social formation and territorial structure" (Laboratorium, 1975, p. 13), and for Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 3), it was "important to realize that the geographical structure can only be analyzed, described, explained and understood through the total social development."

Aiming for an approach in which social relations and territorial structures were theorised dialectically, Buch-Hansen and Nielsen found encouragement in the newly-established journal *Espace et sociétés*. Interestingly, they did not refer to the work of one of the founders of the journal, Henri Lefebvre, who later became a key inspiration for Marxist geography as well as other critical-geographical perspectives (in this book, see Simonsen, 2022). But through a range of articles from the journal, they found support for their dialectical position: "a given social formation is reflected spatially" and "the spatial structure in itself is a factor in the development of society" (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b, p. 3). However, they found the notion of *l'espace* somewhat unclear and instead preferred the concept of territorial structure derived from Schmidt-Renner.

As one would expect for a radical-geographical theory, the aim was overtly political. This was also the case for the wider radical-geographical movement at the Copenhagen department. Initially, however, the activities of students and a few staff members were mainly political in the sense that they were directed at radically changing how the university was organised and how teaching and research were performed. But from around the establishment of Fagligt Forum in late 1971, this radicalisation became more clearly aimed at changing society (Larsen, 2022). "We worked to establish an education that could serve the oppressed instead of our hitherto masters", as the call to establish Fagligt Forum put it; but the radicalising geographers found that they had been drawn into university-political "pseudo-rebellions" (Document, 1971). Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 4) provided an example of this radical re-orientation in their presentation of the territorial-structure approach:

"it is in [the theory's] ability to generalize the experience gained from class struggle and, thus, in its usefulness as a guide in this struggle, that our view of geography, like all other views and theories about the development of society, will be tested."

Territorial Structure as Concept and Approach

The territorial-structure approach is a general Marxist theory about how and why different localities of production and consumption are connected, and how they are historically and geographically conditioned by the modes of production that determine the social and economic development of society. It is in this way an early attempt at a Marxist theorisation of geography. For its proponents, this could only be achieved by developing a human geography that takes its point of departure in the "laws of the development of society" (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b, p. 3) and thereby analyse the relations between a society and its geography. This meant analysing the territorial structure. In fact, although they were critical of certain aspects, even the group that translated Schmidt-Renner's book reaffirmed this position, arguing that "Without an understanding of [the laws of the development of society], one cannot analyse and explain the structuring in space of material production, neither abstractly nor concretely" (Pedersen et al., 1977b, p. 190).

Put simply, the territorial structure is an expression of the physical and functional spatial structure of localities characterised by production and consumption connected via infrastructure (Fig. 4.1). For Schmidt-Renner (1966), such localities are referred to as *Standort*, a term retained in the Danish translation with reference to Marx' notion of *locus standi* (Pedersen et al., 1977a), but Buch-Hansen and Nielsen generally used "lokalitet" and "locality" (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977a, b). And as Brandt (1990) later noted, *Standort* was "one of the concepts that we never succeeded in translating to an understandable Danish." Nevertheless, the central purpose of the approach is to analyse how the social and economic development of societies are both reflected in, and create, territorial structures, and how this enables an analysis of what was discussed as the "regional problem"; that is, in short, why productive activity, or economic development, occurs in one place and not in another, resulting in uneven geographical development (see, e.g., Nielsen, 1976b). For Schmidt-Renner, regional differences and inequalities within capitalism can be explained by the basic features of its mode of production. This was a significant argument for the Danish radical geographers, because it eschews explanations of regional differences based on nature, race or religion, arguments they accused traditional "bourgeois geographers" of advancing (see, e.g., Buch-Hansen et al., 1979). In an assessment of different Marxist theories about regional differences, Nielsen (1976b) finds Schmidt-Renner's approach to be the most promising. And arguing from a historical-materialist point of view, which sees social and economic development as determined by the modes of production, the proponents argue that it is the modes of production that determine the localisation of production, and thereby determine the territorial structure. This is probably why some referred to the

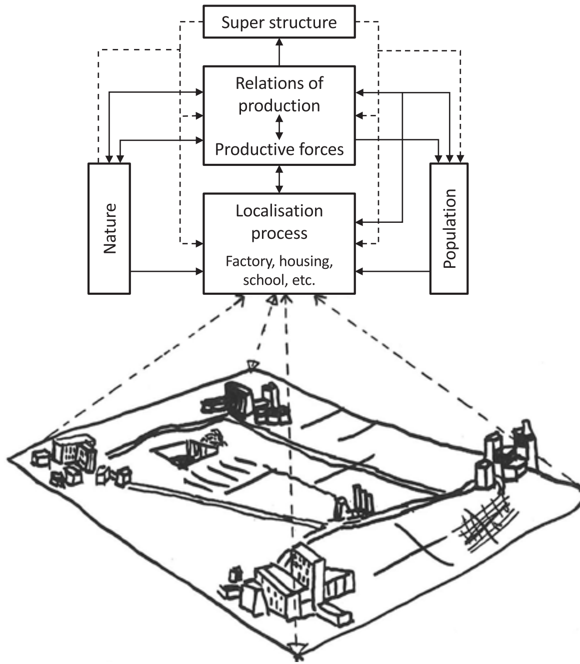

Fig. 4.1 Model of the territorial structure concept. (Adapted from Hansen, 1994, p. 111)

territorial-structure approach as the “mode-of-production perspective” (Pedersen et al., 1977b). In this way, a core aspect of the approach is to show how modes of production shape, and are themselves shaped by, territorial structures. In Buch-Hansen and Nielsen’s (1977b, p. 5) definition: “The territorial structure is – for the capitalist mode of reproduction – the totality of production localities (productive and unproductive), consumption localities and the localities of the external conditions with the infrastructure that physically and functionally ties it all together.”

Infrastructure has an important role in the territorial structure. But infrastructure should not be approached in isolation, something Buch-Hansen and Nielsen accuse “bourgeois geographers” of doing. Rather, infrastructure should be theorised and understood as part of the mode of production. It should be viewed in the totality of which it is part, and governed by the same “laws of development” as those that determine other parts of the material life of societies. Infrastructure, understood in this way, should be viewed as the physical and functional network that connects the localities of production with localities of consumption. The cultivation of fields, for example, or the production of raw materials or goods in any given locality, all demand certain infrastructural requirements like railroads, waterways and telecommunication networks in order to function and connect to localities where they can be consumed or used. Within this theorisation of geography, infrastructure takes a specific role in the capitalist mode of production, where it should be viewed as “the physical and functional manifestations of exchange” (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen,

1977b, p. 5). This is similar to arguments advanced by Marx about the circulation of capital, but references to Marx are surprisingly absent from Buch-Hansen and Nielsen's (1977b) *Antipode* paper (elsewhere, however, they engaged more with the work of Marx and classic Marxist literature; see, e.g., Buch-Hansen, 1976).

The territorial-structure approach is based on five "elementary conditions" (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b), or "Standort-factor groups" (Schmidt-Renner, 1966), which are theorised as the general determining factors of localisation and hence the form and function of the territorial structure. These are (1) the mode of production (composed of the productive forces and the relations of production), (2) nature (or the physical-geographical environment) and (3) the conditions (growth and density) of the population, which Buch-Hansen and Nielsen see as derived from "historical materialism". In addition to this, they add (4) the social (political-ideological) superstructure and (5) the already existing territorial structure.

First, the mode of production is theorised as the main determining factor for the territorial structure, but to understand its geographical role it is important to distinguish between the productive forces (human labour power and the means of production) and the relations of production (the relations between labourers and the owners of the means of production), and how they develop in a dialectical relationship. The general idea is that since the development of the productive forces is always subject to different historical and geographical conditions, it manifests differently in different places and at different times. For example: "To transform nature into usable products, humans use tools and machines. The development of these has taken place as an uninterrupted process throughout history. Sometimes development is fastest in one part of the world, other times in another" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 21). The development of the productive forces in this way comes to have an important influence on the processes that drive the localisation of production, often viewed in a long-term historical perspective. Furthermore, the development of the productive forces (particularly through industrial specialisation) is theorised as forcing a technical division of labour that, in turn, necessarily develops into a social division of labour. And since the division of labour manifests differently in different places and at different times, this also involved a societal division in the territorial structure, which leads to the conclusion that the class structure of capitalist society has, and creates, a distinct geography.

The relations of production, though importantly understood as developing in a dialectical relationship with the forces of production, is also theorised as playing an important role for the development of localities characterised by either production or consumption, and thereby for the form and development of the territorial structure. "The productive forces have developed throughout history," Buch-Hansen et al. (1979, pp. 21, 23) argue, "but they do not develop by themselves and independently of society in general. On the contrary, the social structure of society is crucial" in terms of "the ownership of the means of production and the social distribution of the societal product." An example highlighted in relation to this is the historical and gradual technical and social division of labour from industrial specialisation and the changes in the productive forces. This means that some locations are, or become, more profitable localisations for production than others, based among

other things on social and geographical differences in the supply of labour power. Accordingly, it is maintained: "With the development of the productive forces, there has been an ever-increasing division of labour – technically, socially and geographically. Not only production and consumption, but also the individual parts of production have been geographically separated" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 27). Nevertheless, while Buch-Hansen and Nielsen pay much attention to the relations of production and their connections to the territorial structure, it is ultimately the mode of production (or, more correctly, the purpose of production) that is the determining factor for the localisation of production. This assertion goes hand in hand with a broader critique of capitalism, underscoring that: "Under the capitalist mode of production it is profitability for the owner of the means of production that determines what will be produced" (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b, p. 8). But it also extended to considerations of the general purposes of other modes of production. As Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 8) put it, this can be "production to fulfil the needs of the producer (some precapitalist modes of production); production to accumulate capital (the capitalist mode of production); or production to fulfil social needs (the socialist mode of production)." They emphasise that although the relations of production play an important role in forming territorial structures, in any mode of production it is primarily the development of the productive forces that controls the development of the territorial structure. Still, the saying "each mode of production forms its own territorial structure" (Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977b, p. 5) virtually became a theme-tune for Danish radical geographers in the 1970s (Brandt, 1990).

Second, nature constitutes an "elementary condition" for the localisation of production. Nature is here understood as the physical or natural-geographical environment, and as related to changes in the modes of production. Since the use of the natural environment changes over time, the localisation of production and hence the territorial structure also changes. This potentially entailed a profound subordination of "nature", which was not accepted by all radical geographers (see below). Using the historical-geographical development of Sweden's wood industry as an example, Nielsen (1976a) contends that it is changes in the mode of production rather than factors in the natural environment that cause transformations in the localisation of production and, thus, the territorial structure. From this perspective, "nature, the geographical milieu," is not without significance, but "the mode of production defines what at any time is fit and useful nature" (Nielsen, 1976a, pp. 75–76). Since capitalist development is predicated on constant expansion, a global chase for resources has contributed to what Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 9) call "a global development of the territorial-structure", linking otherwise disparate places to each other through the mode of production. This is theorised within the territorial-structure approach. But it was a focus point that was mainly developed within the radical geographers' research on imperialism and underdevelopment, which was Marxist but generally not as structuralist as the territorial-structure approach (e.g. Enevoldsen, 1978; Fagligt Forums Imperialismegruppe, 1974; Folke, 1973).

Third, the territorial-structure approach pays attention to population as a factor for the localisation of production. "The human being itself is the most important

productive force", Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 9) argue; "where there is no population, there is no production." The population is in this respect primarily understood in terms of growth and density. This related to the idea that the greater the density of the population, the greater the possibility for the social division of labour. Aspects such as the geographically uneven distribution of labour reserves and the differentiation of wage rates can in themselves influence the localisation of production, something that is highlighted in terms of the historical relationship between town and country. For instance, it is argued: "In general, developments in population follows developments in production, i.e., that the distribution of the population is linked to the distribution of workplaces" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 97). Furthermore, based on considerations of rural-to-urban migration, geographical variations in profit and wage rates, changes in land rents and general shifts in production towards industrial specialisation and agglomeration, it is argued that the development of the capitalist mode of production not only deepens regional differences between centre and periphery, but also actively generates "economic and social differentiation within the urban area" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 102). Generally, it is maintained that the distribution of population plays an important role in any mode of production, and thus also influences the form and function of the territorial structure. Importantly, however, for the radical geographers this has implications for class struggle. For example, Nielsen (1976b, p. 43) notes: "The real wages of workers is a result of their activity in the class struggle," and argues that "Due to the development of the mode of production, the fighting conditions become most favourable in precisely the same centres where capital accumulation and monopolisation take place most strongly."

Fourth, the social superstructure is theorised as an "elementary condition" that influences location. The focus here is on the political, juridical and ideological aspects that shape territorial structures, not least in terms of planning and regional-economic policies from state authorities and other institutions with territorial dimensions. It is emphasised that there are several ways in which the social superstructure can influence the localisation of production, not least depending on which type of authority is involved. Somewhat archetypal for Marxist scholars at the time, this involves the relative autonomy of the state; in the words of Harvey (1976, p. 89) this is about "how State power can be and is used in a society which remains basically capitalist while constantly shifting and changing its institutional forms." Similarly, within the territorial-structure approach, the state's relative autonomy is connected to theorisations of the state's role in capitalism. Since the state has some independence from the mode of production, regional-economic policies by the state may not always serve capital accumulation and may diverge from the requirements of the capitalist mode of production. While this is considered in theory, Buch-Hansen and Nielsen are sceptical towards such ideas and argue that while there is something to this argument, state policies will in general reflect the requirements of the mode of production and serve as the political foundation for transformations in the territorial structure. Using the Danish state's infrastructural policies in the 1960s as an example, they argue that such transformations can happen though investments in infrastructure in support of industrial agglomeration or in relation to state

subsidies for localisation in peripheral areas, but also through direct location of state institutions themselves: "The state, being the political instrument of the dominant relations of production", Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 8) argue, can thus "either further or inhibit a development in the mode of production." Occasionally, the social superstructure is discussed in blunter, and perhaps more politically potent, terms. For instance, it is argued that: "The state apparatus is part of the superstructure through which political power is exercised. Through the state apparatus, the possessing class (the one who owns the means of production) exercises its political power" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 24). For the Danish radical geographers, perhaps not surprisingly, the clearest example of this is how "the private ownership of the means of production is enshrined in law and enforced by the means of the state power bodies," arguing that in this way "a ruling class can use the state apparatus to strengthen the economic and social foundation on which its power is based" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 24). This echoes the well-known Marxist dictum that "The executive of the modern State is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" (Marx & Engels, 1998, p. 37), but it also attests to the revolutionary spirit that characterised much of the academic left in Denmark in the 1970s. Other aspects of the social superstructure, such as institutionalised religion and culture, are theorised as having an influence on location, for example through specific prejudices and habits that can influence population mobility or through resistance towards adopting a wage labour system or entering a specific type of commodity production. This, Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b) argue, is often seen in shifts from one historical period to another, such as when a pre-capitalist mode of production collides with a capitalist mode of production. In other works, emphasis is placed on the coexistence and possible combination of different modes of production. As an example, it is highlighted that even in Denmark, "which is a developed capitalist country, we still find conditions created under the feudal mode of production" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 24).

Fifth, and finally, the existing territorial structure is seen as playing a role in the development of new territorial structures. "Every mode of production attempts to create its own territorial structure to match the given relations of production and the given development in productive forces", Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 9) argue; "it is within the territorial structure that a given mode of production will itself develop in consequence of the continuous changes in the productive forces and in the relations of production." In this sense, an existing territorial structure may hasten the development of new territorial structures because of relative advantages in expenditures towards infrastructure or production activities. Similarly, an existing territorial structure may also hamper or restrict the development of new territorial structures. For example, it is pointed out that feudal towns often constitute a limiting physical structure for the development of a territorial structure to fit a different mode of production. There is, in other words, an inertia of territorial structures. However, it is generally maintained that "Based on the economic and political laws it contains, a new mode of production will seek to transform both the physical territorial structure and the distribution of the population so that they fit into the new economic, social and political framework (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 33).

In a somewhat self-critical conclusion, Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b, p. 10) stress that it is "a complex dialectical coalition of the factors" that constitute a territorial structure. Nonetheless, they strongly emphasise that it is ultimately development in the productive forces that determines the development of the territorial structure. Other conditions can only either hamper or hasten this development. Significantly, and well in tune with its time, considerations about territorial structures and the prospects of Marxist geography also connected to ideas about the anticipated, if not inevitable, transition from a capitalist mode of production to a socialist mode of production. For instance: "In the socialist countries (the transitional societies), the formal property rights to the means of production are state- or collectively governed, which can make possible the real breaking down of the class society" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 23). Such discussions naturally led to an interest in comparing differences in state formations and modes of production in the socialist countries or, as they preferred, transitional countries (such as the USSR, China, Yugoslavia and Albania), and their expected progress towards a communist society (see, e.g., Buch-Hansen et al., 1979). But even the antithesis to capitalism was within the approach theorised as dependent upon the development of the productive forces, which ultimately led the proponents to argue that: "Only a massive development of the productive forces makes it possible to replace the socialist mode of distribution – to enjoy according to one's labour efforts – with that of communism: to work according to ability and enjoy according to need" (Buch-Hansen et al., 1979, p. 171).

Reception, Fate and Wider Influence

The territorial-structure approach was pursued in some studies (e.g. Andersen et al., 1977; Buch-Hansen, 1976; Jørgensen, 1978). But its substantial impact was arguably the upper-secondary school textbook *Om geografi* (*On Geography*), first published in 1975 and written by a collective of radical geographers as part of Fagligt Forum's aim to produce alternative teaching material. The book was also published in translation in the FRG (Buch-Hansen et al., 1982). "Territorial structure was one of *Om geografi*'s code words", Alex Bredsdorff (1988, p. 12) later noted: "If one did not grasp that, one had a problem." More than 24,000 copies of the book had been sold by 1984 (Document, 1986), and it became an important tool for the many radicalised geography graduates, who became upper secondary school teachers during the 1970s. But the book lost its appeal in the early 1980s. Bredsdorff (1988, p. 12) suggests that this was because many sections were too abstract or unclear ("probably as a result of internal disagreements in the writing group"), because the book "consciously neglected nature/the natural conditions", and because a slow movement away from "the – declared – genuine 'Marxist' standpoints" required change. These points also reflect on the territorial-structure approach.

The role of nature – and physical geography – was the most visible discord in Fagligt Forum. As Karsten Duus Jørgensen (1983) later noted, this was a "sore

point" on which virtual "trench warfare" had been fought, as it concerned the identity of the field and was "messed up in a web of political conflicts in pretty well all directions." Spearheaded by the proponents of the territorial-structure approach, the majority in Fagligt Forum sought to develop an unequivocally social-scientific Marxist geography. This ruled out an "ecological" approach bridging human and physical geography, which for Nielsen (1976a, p. 78) entailed a return to the environmental determinism of "bourgeois geography" and, in the final analysis, "ideological support for capitalism." Opposing this position was a smaller group of self-styled "dialectical materialists", who argued that the territorial-structure approach amounted to a kind of idealism: "there is a danger in singling out the territorial structure and make it an independent object of analysis" (Brandt et al., 1976, p. 94). For these radical geographers, who, for instance, published translations of Karl Wittfogel's *Die natürlichen Ursachen der Wirtschaftsgeschichte* in *Kulturgeografiske Hæfter* (no. 1, 1973; no. 9, 1976), "Reality is a whole, dialectical materialism perceives events in their context, and the sciences thereby come to overlap if they are to have any explanatory power" (Brandt et al., 1976, p. 93). There was, in other words, a place for nature as well as physical geography for the dialectical materialists, who from a radical point of view – and spurred by mounting environmental concerns – sought to maintain the "geographical experiment" of "keeping nature and culture under the one conceptual umbrella" (Livingstone, 1992, p. 177; in this book, see also Holt-Jensen, 2022). The dialectical materialists were marginal in Fagligt Forum, however, but some found a "sanctuary" at the new Roskilde University (Brandt, 1999).

From radical geographers closer to the territorial-structure approach, more immanent criticisms were voiced during the 1980s and 1990s. Steen Folke (1985) suggests, for example, that what eventually made many radical geographers reject the theory was its interpretation of history and the overwhelming role accredited to the development of the productive forces, which resulted in a kind of historical determinism and neglected the role of the relations of production. Frank Hansen (1994) similarly argues that the territorial-structure approach was too structuralist. The massive focus on the material side of social change made the theory mechanistic and deprived it of serious considerations of the role of political conditions and movements in the shaping of territorial structures. Furthermore, and contrary to its intention of guiding class struggle, the limited focus on social problems made the theory "action-oriented only on a very general political level" (Hansen, 1994, p. 113).

Beyond such criticisms, the territorial-structure approach came up against more fundamental changes. As Hansen and Simonsen (1984, p. 44) put it in the early 1980s:

> Critical geography in Denmark is synonymous with one form or another of a Marxist approach to the subject. Therefore, it cannot surprise that the current problems in critical geography – apart from specific geographical fixations – parallel the theoretical problems the neo-Marxist wave today faces within the social sciences.

Rather than developing the territorial-structure approach or similar theories, Danish Marxist geography was gradually – as also happened in other contexts (Best,

2009) – diversified into (or replaced by) wider critical geographies during the 1980s. For some, as Andrew Sayer (1995) suggests for radical political economy more generally, this involved a shift towards middle-range theory and empirical research, particularly in the form of more narrowly focused economic geography. But more turned to perspectives that had little or no place in Marxist approaches. As Ole Beier Sørensen (1990, p. 75) put it, for example, "we say farewell to the big chromy statements and we to some extent leave the 'grand theories' behind. Instead we enter the microsociology of the everyday." This was reflected in the topics that entered *Kulturgeografiske Hæfter* during the 1980s, and while the territorial-structure anchored *Om geografi* had been the textbook of the 1970s, the next collaborative textbook – written by radical pioneers as well as representatives of the next generation – was a signpost of a realised shift to more diverse critical geographies (Christiansen et al., 1991; in this book, see also Simonsen, 2022).

Conclusions

The territorial-structure approach was the most systematic attempt at theorising geography in Danish radical geography. Not all rallied around this theory, as we have seen, and it soon lost momentum. In revisiting the territorial-structure approach, our aim is not to resurrect it. For us, the key significance of the territorial-structure approach is that – through consent as well as dissent – it helped to mobilise an important theoretical as well as political movement in the formation of contemporary Nordic geography. Beyond bringing attention to a mainly forgotten piece in the histographies of (radical) geography, we find that a critical scrutiny of the territorial-structure approach – and the context in which it emerged – provides interesting perspectives on the development of socio-spatial theory and the situatedness of knowledge production. Besides this, the territorial-structure approach and the context in which it emerged affords a glimpse into a time when geography was more feisty and politically engaged than is perhaps the case today, something we presently miss, although it is also all too easy to succumb to uncritical nostalgia when narrating past perspectives that you essentially sympathise with, but not always agree with.

The territorial-structure approach was a conscious attempt at theorising geography historically and dialectically using social theory. One could question whether this theory was the best way to do that, as some did and more came to do. But the territorial-structure approach marked a radical departure from the traditional naturalisation of geography, not least at the Copenhagen department. Geographical space was seen as a product of history and social relations, and in its circumscribed manner, the theory was in this way an early attempt at applying what David Harvey (1973) termed a relational concept of space. However, as Frank Hansen (1979) – himself a radical geographer at Copenhagen University – bluntly put it in a criticism

of Buch-Hansen's (1976) early articulation of the territorial-structure approach, "It is throughout a physical structure that is defined." But also on the more developed articulation by Buch-Hansen and Nielsen (1977b), Hansen (1994) finds that the theory did not adequately reconcile the relationship between the spatial and the social: a society produces a territorial structure, but it is unclear which role the territorial structure plays in the reproduction of society. Somewhat ironically, there is a traditional ring to the territorial-structure approach. "It is possible to assert that beneath the Marxist terminology there lies a plain statement of the traditional geographical enterprise", Eyles (1981, p. 1377) notes on early attempts at Marxist geography: "There are geographical variations not within regions but within modes of production" (for a Nordic articulation of such criticism, see Vartiainen, 1986). Similar criticisms were also voiced by radical geographers in Denmark. Thyge Enevoldsen (1978, p. 12), for example, argued that by making the totality of spatial structures the object for Marxist geography, proponents of the territorial-structure approach eliminate the critical element of Marxism and "run the danger of degenerating to a bourgeois analysis with (borrowed) Marxist terms" (see also, Büchert et al., 1980; Nielsen & Rørdam, 1980). But in stark contrast to traditional geography, most of the radical geographers were keen to assert human geography as a social science. The territorial-structure approach might have been deterministic, but it was most certainly not environmentally deterministic. Still, the massive emphasis on the material in the territorial-structure approach entailed that "the dialectics between the social and the physical space is lost" (Hansen, 1994, p. 113). If not always with a radical agenda, other radical and critical geographies have done a better job of articulating truly socio-spatial theories.

Not least with the territorial-structure approach in mind, Kirsten Simonsen (2004, p. 526) notes that the inspiration from German social theory "resulted in an independent (but maybe also insular) development" in Danish radical geography. Indeed, generated independently from emerging radical geographies in the United States and the United Kingdom in particular, and strongly linked to situated struggles (and contingencies) in and around the radical-geographical movement at the Copenhagen Department of Geography, the territorial-structure approach was – with its strengths and weaknesses – an "original" contribution to early radical geography. At the same time, however, the theory had little "impact" beyond its particular place and time. Some of this undoubtedly has to do with language barriers. Most of the literature surrounding the territorial-structure approach, and Danish radical geography more generally, was produced in Danish. Only on rare occasions was material published in English, such as Buch-Hansen and Nielsen's (1977b) *Antipode* paper. When Buch-Hansen and Nielsen's (1977b) paper does get mentioned by English-speaking colleagues, it is primarily only in passing (e.g., Peet, 1979, 1983; Smith, 1979).

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Chapter 5
Synthesis of Physical and Human Geography: Necessary and Impossible?

Arild Holt-Jensen

Introduction

During the 1970s and 1980s, a number of research branches and social-spatial theories developed within global and Nordic geography, as demonstrated in the contributions to this book. Human geography became characterized by a multi-paradigm situation and a wealth of exemplars on which research became based. It became difficult to define geography as a science of synthesis. At the same time there was an increasing demand for research focusing on impacts of globalization and human's role in transforming nature. The concept of sustainability, as defined by the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987), is multidimensional and has economic, social and environmental dimensions, well fitted for geography as a discipline based on geographical synthesis.

However, many geographers, such as Bjørn Terje Asheim (1990), have maintained it is utopian to believe that it is possible for an individual researcher to integrate physical and human geography. Asheim cites Ron Johnston (1986), arguing that the natural and social sciences cannot be integrated because they have different epistemologies and are different forms of science; an organizational split between human and physical geography at the universities may be preferable. Hansen and Simonsen (2005) maintain that to locate geography between the main fields of research (nature, culture and society) and to provide a synthesis between natural, social and cultural disciplines is problematic, with the danger of ending up in naturalism. In contrast we find an influential chain of philosophical arguments from Immanuel Kant to Alfred Hettner (1927), Richard Hartshorne (1939) and Robert Sack (1997) for a geography analyzing and explaining co-existing complexities, chorologically integrated in places and regions.

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A world-wide survey of 61 leading geography departments showed that most departments provided specialization in physical, environmental and human geography (Dasgupta & Patel, 2017). But often there seemed to be limited interactions between physical and human geographers and their publication strategies, even in the same geography department. Furthermore, geography has no obvious position in the traditional classification of sciences by faculty in the universities. In Eastern Europe and in Finland, for example, geography is most often located in the faculty of natural sciences; in other countries we find geography in the faculty of social sciences or even arts. In Sweden, geography is in most universities split into departments of physical and human geography, administratively located at the faculties of natural and social sciences respectively.

In university politics it seems that cooperation between human, environmental and physical geography is necessary and profitable. But is it possible in research projects? To answer this question, we need to look at both the historic legacies and present research activities in the Nordic countries.

Geographical Societies and Institutionalization of Geography in Nordic Countries

The ancient term *geography* literally meant 'earth description', but from the Renaissance scholars preferred the term *cosmography* (the descriptive science of the globe and its relations to the universe). In Sweden, the Society for the Study of Cosmography was founded in Uppsala in 1738 and supported publications in cartography, physical geography and on the 'customs and character of folk' in different parts of the world (Buttimer & Mels, 2006, p. 19). Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859) promoted the synthesis of climate, level of elevation, biogeography and human life, and, in exile in Paris, the Danish geographer Malthe Conrad Bruun (1775–1826) followed this up in his eight-volume *Précis de Géographie Universelle* (1810–1829), focusing on regional descriptions of the continents. In 1821, Bruun took the initiative to establish the world's first geographical society, Société de Géographie in Paris. Bruun promoted cosmography and the further development of geographical societies (Illeris, 1999a).

Geographical societies were established in many countries from the 1830s onwards, and these societies played an important role in supporting scientific expeditions in a wide range of disciplines. They also supported imperialism and colonialism, and they had a key role in national identity building. The Royal Danish Geographical Society was founded in 1876 and the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography (SSAG) in 1877. Both published reports on research travels and expeditions. Adolph E. Nordenskiöld (1832–1901) was an explorer who in his ship *Vega* sailed through the North-East Passage north of Russia and back to Sweden around Asia and Europe between 1878 and 1880. This stirred immense popular enthusiasm. SSAG every year celebrates 'Vega Day' on 24 April, attended

by the Royal family. The Norwegian Geographical Society was founded in 1889 after Fridtjov Nansen (1861–1930) had crossed Greenland on skies from east to west. Nansen gave a lecture on the Greenland crossing at the first meeting of the society and was its chairman 1903–1905. He was an acknowledged Norwegian scientist with a broad field of interest and could be called a cosmographer. He became ambassador to the United Kingdom when Norway split from the union with Sweden in 1905 (Nystad, 2012).

Michael Jones (1989) points out that the geographical societies in Finland and Norway played an important role in the 'spatial socialization' of the nations. In both countries there was a process of building national identity, in Finland from 1809 as Grand Duchy under the Russian Tsar, in Norway in the union with Sweden 1814–1905. In Finland, the poet, historian and geographer Zachris Topelius (1818–1898), who regarded geography as the basis for history, played an important role as professor of history. Topelius distinguished between the political border and the 'natural' border between Finland and Russia.

In Finland two competing national geographical societies were founded in the 1880s. Suomen Maantieteellinen Seura/Sällskapet för Finlands Geografi (the Society for Finland's Geography) became a scientific academy for researchers from many disciplines and maintained the cosmographic view that geography was a collection of different sciences and not a science by itself. A main task for the society was the first edition of the *Atlas of Finland*, published in 1899. Maps of landscape and language promoted spatial socialization among the Finnish people and became expressed in an aggressive Finnish nationalism in the 1920s and 1930s (Paasi, 1994, 1996). Suomen Maantieteellinen Yhdistys/Geografiska Föreningen i Finland (the Geographical Association in Finland) was established to give geography an independent position in schools and universities as a science analyzing the relations between nature and humans (Granö, 1986). Ragnar Hult (1857–1899), who had a background in botany, became first reader in biogeography and later geography professor. His aim was to make geography a discipline based on the natural sciences. Regional geography, based on synthesis between human and physical geography, was regarded as 'real' science through its natural science basis (Vartiainen, 1994).

The initial period of institutionalization involved geography largely as a pedagogic subject, often taught in schools by teachers with very different backgrounds. The leaders of the geographical societies regarded more and better geography teaching in schools as a political aim, consequently demanding chairs in geography at the universities. However, a multidisciplinary cosmography became outdated when geography was established as a university discipline.

Environmental determinism, the belief that human activities and cultures are profoundly influenced and constrained by the natural environment, long dominated Nordic geography. In Denmark, Ernst Løffler (1835–1911) became the first professor in geography at the University of Copenhagen in 1888, with a dissertation in physical geography. He regarded each region as a unit with a personality developed through human adaption to the natural conditions, and this should be studied through regional geographical synthesis. Regional geography should be the main field, as

geographers otherwise could stray into other disciplines (Buciek, 1999; Löffler, 1891).

In Sweden, the first professors were primarily trained in both physical and human geography. Helge Nelson (1882–1966) submitted his doctoral dissertation in geomorphology and became an influential professor in Lund (1916–1947). Focusing on regional geography, he stressed 'a genetic approach' whereby nature and historical processes over time create a unity (Åquist, 1994, p. 4). Sten De Geer (1886–1933) was another influential geographer with qualifications in both physical and human geography. For him population studies formed the basis for a more empirically grounded approach to regionalization at different scales and he provided population maps that became important tools for later projects in planning. In the 1920s and 1930s, there was tension between geographers like Nelson, who favoured a focus on humanity's relationships to the biophysical environment in regional studies, and those such as De Geer who believed scientific work should focus on analysis and comparison of spatial distributions (Buttimer & Mels, 2006, pp. 40–44).

In Norway, Werner Werenskiold (1883–1961) became geography professor in 1925. His research was in physical geography, and in his inaugural lecture he stressed that geography is the study of how human livelihood depends on the natural conditions. He acknowledged that geography's various themes ranged from geology to political geography but emphasized that regional geography tied them together. Axel Sømme (1899–1992), who in 1936 became reader in economic geography at the Norwegian School of Business Economics, had gained a doctorate in regional social geography from the Sorbonne and could freely choose lecture themes and reading lists for his students. He felt that even business economics students needed some education in geomorphology, meteorology and biogeography, provided by guest lecturers (Sømme, 1969).

To some degree, political geography became a theme in Nordic human geography. This often determinist perspective was particularly developed in Sweden by Rudolph Kjellén (1864–1922), who taught political science and geography in Gothenburg and later in Uppsala. Kjellén focused on international studies at a time when most Swedish geographers were engaged in local studies. He propounded geopolitics and analyzed the strengths and weaknesses of the major powers, their degree of racial supremacy and resources, based on a view of the state as a social-geographical 'organism'. Similar views were pursued by Gudmund Hatt in Denmark and some Finnish geographers (Björk & Lundén, 2021; Larsen, 2011; Paasi, 1990; in this book, see also Larsen & Marklund, 2022).

Exemplars for Research Projects in Regional Geography

The early university professors needed to develop a scientific base for their projects. New academic journals were founded in contrast to the journals and yearbooks of the geographical societies, which to a large extent had printed reports on explorations and expeditions. In Norway, for instance, *Norsk Geografisk Aarbog* (Norwegian

Geographical Yearbook) was discontinued and *Norsk Geografisk Tidsskrift* (Norwegian Journal of Geography) published its first issue in 1926, with Werenskiold's inaugural lecture as its opening article (Werenskiold, 1926). Academic geographers set out to justify geography as a science and establish research projects which students could use as exemplary models in their projects.

The new professors with scientific training in geology had to find research themes not already covered in that discipline. Research in geomorphology gave such an opening. Many Nordic geographers became inspired by Albrecht Penck (1858–1945) and his main work *Die Alpen in Eisalter* (Penck, 1901–1909). Penck's exemplary model for research-initiated studies on the effects of glacial periods in Nordic landscapes. For a long time, research in physical geography explained natural landscapes using natural science methods, whereas descriptive presentations and environmental determinism dominated publications in human geography.

In Denmark, regional and landscape geography was initially based on the influence of landscape morphology, but later became based on the functions of culture and economic processes (Hansen, 1994). This focused on three different types of landscapes: physical, biological and cultural. It was supposed that the categories used to describe physical landscape forms were useful in analysis of human uses of the physical landscape. Starting with studies in geography and natural history, the Danish geographers Axel Schou (1902–1977) and Niels Nielsen (1893–1981) provided important insight into synthesis of the natural and human processes that form Danish landscapes (Illeris, 1999b, c). Nielsen became particularly interested in the regional land-forming processes on the west coast of Jutland and established a research field station on the Skallingen peninsula west of Esbjerg. Here it was possible to observe the physical forces of sea currents and wind as well as land use in the coastal human settlements. Reclamation of agricultural areas from this wetland created a link between applied physical geography and human geography (Schou, 1945).

On the west coast of Denmark, the sea level is rising, whereas along the Finnish west coast the land area has increased by more than 1000 km^2 in 50 years, in both cases as an aftermath of the Ice Ages. These landscape changes create challenges for local settlements and have provided research topics for Finnish geographers. Michael Jones followed this up in his dissertation, *Finland, Daughter of the Sea* (Jones, 1977), in which he analyzed the physical processes, their influences on settlements and the juridical issues related to land ownership on the rising land area.

In Finland, Johannes Gabriel Granö (1882–1956), in his theoretical study *Reine Geographie* (1929, translated as *Pure Geography* in 1997), tried to give landscape geography a strong scientific fundament. In Granö's work the landscape is identical with the physical elements we can recognize through our vision, elements of nature as well as of human settlement and activities we can factually observe. Taking as starting point the perceived environment, and developing a code of landscape symbols for delimiting and mapping regions, this provided a practical approach in his regional study of Estonia. A synthesis is provided by juxtaposing morphological, vegetation and settlement maps. The regions are delimited where the different mapped borders correspond. Granö developed a landscape formula characterizing

each region. Granö did not regard the regions as obvious objects of geographical study in their own right, as all regional information is relative, bound to the human agent who observes, experiences and records it. Regional geography should focus on the coexistence and interrelations characterizing a region. Landscape and regional research combining geography and natural history continued to dominate Finnish geography. Granö believed that geography and sociology – both spatially bound – should be regarded as constituting between them the field of human ecology (Granö, 2003; in this book, see also Germundsson et al., 2022; Paasi, 2022).

Possibilism and Local Subsistence Economy

Granö and other leading geographers declared that in dealing with the influence of nature upon human beings, we are only dealing with possibilities, not certainties. Coined as possibilism, this was fundamental for the French school of regional geography, as developed by Paul Vidal de la Blache (1845–1918), which sought to analyze historical relations between land and humans that over time created specific regional characteristics of preindustrial landscapes in Europe. However, industrialization, global trade and international trends in building styles etc. made the regional exemplar gradually outdated. Vidal became aware of this situation in *La France de l'Est* (Vidal de la Blache, 1917), which studied the development of the landscapes and agricultural settlements in Alsace–Lorraine over a period of 2000 years. The finely balanced interplay or synthesis between humanity and nature was profoundly disturbed in the 1850s, when the traditional local, self-sufficient economy declined. The vertical dependence of humans on local natural resources dwindled.

The Norwegian Axel Sømme followed up the regional study in Alsace–Lorraine in his doctoral thesis *La Lorraine Métallurgique* (Sømme, 1930), which explored the socio-spatial transformation from an agricultural to an industrial region. He included elements of Vidal's study of human-land relations as remnants of past rural agriculture and settlements that could be traced in present landscapes. But Sømme's main findings related to the changing socio-geography of the region, including the new industrial settlements and migrations of the workforce.

My regional master's project (Holt-Jensen, 1963, 1968) started with an approach to trace the dependencies between natural conditions (climate and moraine deposits) and human settlement in a mountain farm district in Telemark. I was inspired by studies that the Swedish geographer Sten Rudberg (1957) had made in peripheral settlements in Northern Sweden. Farms were located where the local climate was most favourable for growing grains and potatoes, which meant south-facing hillsides and particularly slopes down to lakes that were less prone to frost in the autumn. I used this to define mountain farm districts in South Norway (Holt-Jensen, 1963). But in the 1960s the dependence of farm settlements on climate could only be traced as historical remnants and the results of inertia. When visiting the district again in 2017, I found the historical remnants were of little importance, whereas new activities and settlement were linked to tourism and service institutions. The

French regional exemplar could not be used, as local settlements and industries to a very limited degree depended on local natural resources. Jones (1988) has stated that to analyze the cultural landscape we need three modes of explanation: functional, structural and intentional. Only the functional mode is properly covered in traditional regional studies, which suppose that land use is closely related to local natural resources. Julian Wolpert (1964) showed in a study of agriculture in Central Sweden that farmers are not 'optimizers', but 'satisfiers', based on personal intentions and influenced by the structures of the market and agricultural policies.

As pointed out by Anne Buttimer (1978), an important lasting value of Vidal's approach was the focus on understanding the region and its inhabitants from the 'inside'; that is, the local perspective rather than the perspective of the researching 'outsider'. Bob Sack in his book *Homo Geographicus* (Sack, 1997) underlines that the researcher must focus on the 'somewhere' in the local place or region, integrating forces from the realms of nature, meaning and social activities. Sack relates this to embodied phenomenology through which the practically oriented body continuously weaves meaning throughout its life course. From a different approach, this is also developed in analyses by Kirsten Simonsen (in this book, see Simonsen, 2022). Sack provides a philosophical approach to and support for geographical synthesis. But the philosophical arguments do not provide an exemplary model for how to carry out an integrated research project. Granö (1929) makes a distinction between the observer's immediate surroundings, or proximity, and the broader landscape or region. The immediate surroundings are a complex of phenomena including visual, acoustic and tactile sensations, from which a unitary impression can be formed, similar to the relations between place and self in Sack's model. This can also be linked to new ideas on non-representational theory, the idea that the world around us is experienced before it is represented.

Critical of geographers' longstanding quest for synthesis between the human and the natural, Hansen and Simonsen (2005, p. 106) claim that most suggestions for geographical synthesis in research have resulted in naturalism, whereby humans are reduced to 'things', robbed of intentions, reflexivity, meaning and social relations. Their answer is to emphasize contextuality, that is, to seek the articulation of the natural on the one side and the social and cultural on the other, not on the ontological and epistemological levels, but rather on the practical level. This is about time-space; on articulation in specific temporal and spatial contexts, and on possible clashes between the different temporalities and spatialities of social and natural processes respectively (Hansen & Simonsen, 2005, p. 193–196).

The study of living conditions and welfare became, in response to a demand for social relevance, an important field in Norwegian geography from the 1970s (Aase & Dale, 1978; Dale & Jørgensen, 1986). This illustrates how relations between themes and processes, which other disciplines isolate, are emphasized in geography. Living conditions in a neighbourhood are partly dependent on physical factors (architecture, housing standard, access to nature, service provision such as shops, schools, transport etc.) and partly on social factors (roots, local social capital, symbolic environment, ethnic and age structure etc.). To get a complete understanding, there is a need for local case studies and acceptance that places are linked to external

forces and are always becoming (Dale, 2015). This can be linked to research on modes of life (in this book, see Simonsen, 2022).

Transitions and Different Nordic Profiles

After the Second World War, the vernacular definition of geography changed, demonstrated through the closing of geography departments in the American Ivy League universities. The president at Harvard came to the conclusion that geography was not a university subject. The claim that regional synthesis constituted geography's identity lent the subject a dilettante image in the 1950s (Livingstone, 1992). The idiographic regional paradigm based on synthesis between physical and human features seemed outdated. In the Nordic context, systematic studies in physical and human geography with nomothetic aims were grasped particularly by Swedish geographers.

Most professorships in Sweden until 1950 were advertised for teaching in an integrated field. All students had a primary training in physical geography and at every institution the discipline was undivided. This opened for research initiatives over a broad field. Hans W. Ahlmann (1889–1974) and William William-Olsson (1902–1990) became very influential in the 1940s. Ahlmann focused initially on glaciology, but covered a broad field and became a public figure and pioneering theorist on global warming. He also started a comprehensive investigation of Stockholm's metropolitan area. This was followed up by William-Olsson's analyses 'from within', focusing on people and their uses of the city. These studies were based on analytical and deductive reasoning in contrast to traditional regional geography. William-Olsson became actively involved in planning issues in Stockholm and Sweden (Buttimer & Mels, 2006, pp. 54–56). The first female Swedish geography professor, Gerd Enequist (1903–1989), was instrumental in bridging classical regional geography and the new post-war worlds of regional science. She inspired further work on the economic basis of settlements and urban development (Enequist, 1951; see also Buttimer & Mels, 2006, pp. 68–69; Forsberg, 2021).

The Swedish school system changed in the 1950s. Geography no longer exists as a separate discipline and geographic themes are only partly represented within 'social science' or 'natural science'. Geography was split up at the universities in 1948, with separate departments in physical and human geography. Within the Nordic countries, university geography developed different profiles, which has led to varying approaches to the question of geographical synthesis.

Olof Wärneryd (1987) presented a simple overview of the internal structure of the discipline in the Nordic university system in the 1980s. He pointed out that there had developed a clear difference between the way geography was taught and organized in Finland compared with Sweden. Finnish geography was seen as focusing on human–nature synthesis, as can be studied by empirical natural science methods, and on 'core' regional studies. Swedish geography had gone far in research specialization and in a division between physical and human geography. Denmark and

Iceland remained, according to Wärneryd, linked to synthesis, but more prone to specialization in some fields, such as the physical geographical projects connected to Skallingen coastal landscapes, but also turns to critical social science, particularly at Roskilde University. In Norway, university geography at University of Oslo has been split into physical geography and human geography, as in Sweden, whereas geography in Bergen and Trondheim exists in integrated departments.

New projects on services and the welfare state along with international inspiration created institutional growth, most notably in Sweden. J.G. Granö's pupil, Edgar Kant (1902–1978), was one of the first to make use of Walter Christaller's (1933) central place theory in a study of Estonian central places. As a refugee in Sweden after the Second World War, he brought the theory to Lund. He inspired Torsten Hägerstrand (1916–2004) and thus those Swedish geographers involved in developing spatial science and model building (in this book, see Wikman & Mohall, 2022). The 1960s was an optimistic period for geographical innovators in the Nordic countries. In connection with the International Geographical Union (IGU) conference in Stockholm in 1960, a seminar in Lund led to a breakthrough for spatial science research in the Nordic countries (Norborg, 1962). At the same time, the number of students grew very fast as the 'baby boomers' entered the universities.

Spatial Science Models and Geographical Synthesis

Hägerstrand made a clear break with the regional tradition. He stated in the first sentence of his dissertation (1953) that although his material threw light on processes in a single area, this should be regarded as a regrettable necessity rather than a methodological subtlety. This was a deliberate provocation aimed at traditional regional geographers.

Spatial science involved models, quantitative methods and a demand for a paradigm shift from an idiographic to a nomothetic discipline. But it was much more than this; it also threw open the hitherto introvert discipline, as methods and theories were openly borrowed from geometry, physics, economics and other social sciences. Haggett (1965) argued that there are three traditional disciplinary associations in geography: earth sciences, social sciences and geometrical sciences. 'Much of the most exciting geographical work in the 1960s is emerging from applications of higher order geometrics', maintained Haggett (1965, pp. 15–16). The aim for Hagget was to develop models and through these provide a new form of geographical synthesis, demonstrated in his undergraduate textbook *Geography: A Modern Synthesis* (Haggett, 1972, 1983). In many ways, geographical research became regarded as the art of the mappable. But did this provide a clear synthesis of physical and human geography? Experience with my doctoral research project may illustrate this problem.

Changes in settlement over time in relation to natural conditions could be linked to new methods of quantitative mapping and the spatial science focus on models. With this in mind, I started on a doctoral project that took me 20 years to finish

(Holt-Jensen, 1986). The theme was settlement and population changes 1900–1980 in the Kristiansand region. My maps showed settlement changes with the help of computer cartography. I had intended to develop a model for settlement change that could provide some general understanding. But settlement growth could only to a limited degree be explained by suburban development and settlement decline explained by long distance or poor communication to urban centres. Maps of changing settlement patterns could not in themselves explain these patterns, even if I added my knowledge of the physical landscape, land and human resources. I had to add many local case studies to finalize the dissertation! The empirical mapping could describe the transition from agricultural to industrial and service livelihoods. But most interesting were the deviations. Christaller's (1933) central place theory had been used to investigate a central part of Norway by Peter Sjøholt (1981) in his doctoral dissertation. The interesting conclusions were linked to deviations from the model and local activities that could explain these. However, the problem was that spatial science models became, particularly in Sweden, used in planning in a normative way to organize service development in the welfare state (in this book, see Wikman & Mohall, 2022).

There are definitely important structures that are global, but even economic globalization and global warming are met with local answers or adapted to through contingencies at particular localities. For a physical geographer studying global warming, for example, the interesting thing could be how and why retreat (or growth) of glaciers differs from place to place and is contingent on the type of glaciers. Sayer (1984) recommends intensive concrete research that on the basis of abstract considerations of some structures and mechanisms analyzes their possible effects in limited empirical case studies to achieve an understanding of the functions of necessary and contingent relations. This provides an opening for new regional geography. But does this mean synthesis of physical and human geography?

A United or Split Discipline?

Although an organizational split in the universities between physical and human geography had strong advocates in the Nordic countries, especially in Sweden from the 1950s, the international congresses of the IGU and geography in most countries continue to accommodate both human and physical geography within the same department. In Norway, the Norwegian Association of Human Geographers was established in 1974, and physical geographers split off to attend meetings together with geology. But in 1991, human and physical geographers once again united in the Norwegian Geographical Association (Norsk Geografisk Forening, NGF) and finally, in 2000, NGF and the Norwegian Geographical Society were amalgamated (Dale, 2021). Both physical and human geographers are welcome to the Nordic Geographers Meeting (NGM), held every second year since 2005. Even Johnston (2002), in contrast to his viewpoint cited in the introduction (Johnston, 1986), came to the conclusion that physical and human geography need each other academically,

institutionally and politically for holding on to a market for geography and geographers, warning that a definite split would slay both. What are the reasons now for keeping the discipline united?

I think the main reason is that we have a discipline traditionally bridging the gap between social and natural sciences. Actor-network theory has given a new basis for breaking down the nature–culture binary and providing for a new form of geographical synthesis. A growing number of geographers resist talking about 'socially constructed nature', and one of the most interesting critical steps in recent years has been the acknowledgement of the agency of things. The world is not solely socially constructed; natural phenomena are to a large extent actants, playing an important role in human life and development. An example is the increasing land area on Finland's west-coast, a development which is not induced by humans, but which creates challenges for land use and planning (Jones, 1977).

Lave et al. (2013) point out that we are now in a new geological period, the Anthropocene, in which the most fundamental global processes are dominated by human activities. They argue that we need an active integration of critical physical geography and a more physical critical human geography.

It has become clear that it is not possible to provide research exemplars providing a full synthesis of human and physical geography, as was earlier intended in regional geography. But it could be possible to stick to particular (or partial) synthesis in physical geography, environmental geography (or eco-geography) and human geography, as illustrated in Holt-Jensen (2018, p. 191). A study of desertification in the Sahel region by Danish geographer Anette Reenberg (1982) provided a system analysis including many human and physical actants and processes. Hence, as argued by Hansen and Simonsen (2005, p. 106), geographical research is not defined by a particular phenomenon, as in most systematic sciences, but analyzes the spatial relations of different phenomena. As shown by Paasi (2022) in this book, locality studies have inspired a 'new regional geography'; the region can be seen as an entity that is dynamic and connected to the spatial division of labour.

A very interesting research trend is found in political ecology, which focuses on power in environmental governance (Benjaminsen & Robbins, 2015; Widgren, 2015). The research themes that have developed in Nordic political ecology took inspiration from research in developing countries that focused on tensions between local inhabitants, the state and capitalist companies, including discourses on sustainable land use: 'The Nordic landscape tradition, which includes a strong emphasis on landscape-scale analysis, suggests a potentially useful bridge between political ecology and land change science' (Benjaminsen & Robbins, 2015, p. 195). Good examples are found in conflicts over reindeer herding in Sámi regions (Benjaminsen et al., 2015) and on negotiable boundaries in conservation-production landscapes (Dahlberg, 2015). A similar project in socio-economic geography analyzes the effects of tar sand extraction in Alberta, Canada, which dramatically transforms the landscape and leads to loss of traditional land use practices (Wanvik, 2016). Using assemblage theory, the project examines power structures in which governance instruments are delegated to industry from the outside and indigenous communities have poor bargaining power.

Sustainability – A Major Research Focus

There really is something special about geography. Geography is by tradition and evolution a jumping-off point and basis for research and activism on global sustainability, which provides the most challenging tasks in politics and research today. Geography in all its specialties is in a good position to provide documentation and research in this crucial field. We can exemplify this looking at ongoing Nordic geographical research projects based on teamwork which aims at:

Analyzing what is happening (global warming and its causes, natural resource mapping). There are many such projects within physical geography. Methods and instruments used to monitor geomorphological processes over thousands of years have been applied to study contemporary processes. Projects at the Geography Department in Bergen have documented changes in the Greenland and West Antarctica ice sheets and provided prognoses of sea-level changes in different parts of the world (Vasskog et al., 2015). Another project (Robson et al., 2016) has used remote sensing techniques to map changes in glacial development in Himalaya and the Alps, which in both cases may have serious effects on water supply and agriculture in the lowlands.

Analyzing the effects of what is happening and what this means for different regions and social groups. There are many relevant projects within development geography, biogeography and economic geography. In Bergen, projects in biogeography in Nepal aim at providing sustainable use of forests, assessing both needed use, ownership effects and biodiversity. A moderate use of forests is often a crucial part of widespread land-use in the hills of the Himalayas and at the same time this practice will facilitate high biodiversity (Vetaas et al., 2010). Projects in Himalaya are summed up in *Climate Change and the Future of Himalayan Farming* (Aase, 2017).

Analyzing the ability of public and private organizations to carry out necessary actions (as in urban planning). There are an increasing number of projects within applied geography. In the Bergen department, we have established a Centre for Climate and Energy Transformation (CET) that also integrate researchers from other disciplines such as political science and psychology. A project on possibilities for urban low-carbon transition is connected to a European network of cities that cooperate to reduce carbon dependencies. The compact city is an ideal, but also often in conflict with regional policies promoting settlement dispersal, as demonstrated by Røe et al. (2022) in this book. Recently, the *Norwegian Journal of Geography* published a special issue on climate change and natural hazards, focusing on the geography of community resilience; that is, the ability to meet and adapt to environmental change (Setten & Lujala, 2020).

Analyzing the economic costs and priorities needed to sort out the best local, regional and global actions. In economic geography, several projects could be mentioned. One example is *Grønn omstilling: norske veivalg* (Green transitions – Norwegian pathways) (Haarstad & Rusten, 2018). A particularly relevant theme during the Covid19 pandemic is the global production network, in which many

products rely on parts and raw materials being transported for assembly close to the market. Some strange networks occur in food production, as when Norwegian cod is sent by air to China, fileted and sent back to Europe. Or when Danish pig farmers send their piglets to Poland to be fattened and sent back to slaughterhouses in Denmark to be marketed as Danish bacon. We need to investigate whether it is possible to find economically sustainable means to develop 'short travelled food'.

Research following the identification of anthropogenic climate change began with the atmospheric sciences. Then came the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and research concentrated on mitigation, particularly in the energy sector. As an afterthought, and largely as a result of pressure from the developing countries, the need for adaptation was recognized. The periodic assessments provided by Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) have increasingly emphasized the latter, as it has become clear that it is unrealistic to stop ongoing climate change at the present pace of mitigation. Again, this is a highly relevant arena for synthesis, as illustrated by Karen O'Brien from University of Oslo. Her research particularly concerns vulnerable populations that suffer a double exposure to climate change and globalization. The two processes not only overlap but also create feedback that can accelerate or diminish them. The vulnerability of the population to climate change depends not only on climate but also directly on social and political measures. In many cases, adaptation is more directly needed than mitigation. The challenge is physical, social and cultural (Leichenko & O'Brien, 2019) and highly relevant for synthesis between physical and human geography.

Conclusion

Synthesis between physical and human geography has been regarded by many geographers as giving the discipline its meaning and identity. Others have derided the concept as superficial, unobtainable or a barrier to scholarship. 'Our standpoint, a middle position, is that the objective of geography is not to provide a total synthesis of geographical phenomena,' Aase and Jones (1986, p. 18) argue, 'but that the broadness of the subject gives full scope for working on the borderlines between several disciplines and sub-disciplines'. I agree with this conclusion. The synthesis between physical and human geography can be philosophically supported, but it is difficult to provide exemplary models for research that can be used in all branches of the discipline. However, it seems suicidal to split up the organizational unity of the discipline that is still found in most countries and universities. There are many indications that the nature–culture binary is fading as research projects across the traditional divide have become increasingly important. This does not mean that the methods used are the same, but that both physical and human geographers try to analyze and provide critical answers to the contemporary natural and social factors affecting the sustainability of humanity and environment.

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Chapter 6
Politicisation of Nature in Nordic Geography

Ari Aukusti Lehtinen

Introduction

This chapter presents those extensions of Nordic geography that have engaged with the variation of human values, intentions and practices linked to nature and the environment. This orientation developed alongside the advancing environmental consciousness and attached administrative changes in the Nordic countries and soon began to systematically analysing the political disputes linked to nature-use. Consequently, these analyses resulted in stimulating conceptualisations of social natures and plural natures (see Häkli, 1996; Olwig, 1984; Seppänen, 1986). Later, on this ground, the studies have much focused on the trends of politicisation and depoliticization of nature and its use.[1] The particular Nordic moment has most clearly emerged in studies dealing with socio-environmental tensions and their resolutions in resource conflicts related to forestry and mining, as well as in oil-based development. Accordingly, nature has not been defined, and thus identified as a question on its own in these studies but located under the multitude of practical socio-spatial processes and projections. This has let the empirical variation of plural natures be fully presented.

[1] Clarification of key concepts: Studies of the *politicisation* and *repoliticisation* of nature have concentrated on unveiling the (apparently unpolitical) forces, motives and techniques of nature-use. Correspondingly, researchers of *depoliticization*, and *postpolitics*, have focused on those governance practices that exclusively advocate technocratic and consensual decision-making. The existence of *unpolitical* or *pre-political* vacuums has also been identified when, for example, decision-making culture is burdened by traditional (and often patrimonial) administrative customs. (see Anshelm & Haikola, 2018; Kellokumpu & Sirviö, 2022; Takala et al., 2020, 2021).

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In general, the socio-spatial rethinking in this subfield of Nordic geography has focused on (1) the variations of nature's roles and meanings, hence it's placing, in societal change, (2) the affordances and risks, such as tipping points, emerging from within socially modified natures and (3) the necessities of societal transition due to socio-environmental emergencies. This historical grounding is shortly presented in the subchapter below.

Politics of Nature

In Nordic geography the initial research formulations on the politics of nature were greatly inspired by the critical geographical tradition – *kritisk samhällsgeografi* – which forged approaches that covered both the material dynamics of society-nature and the multiple representations of social and ecological natures in the 1980s (Lehtinen, 1991; Olwig, 1984, 1986; Seppänen, 1986). This move significantly broadened the earlier strictly materialist, and Marxist interpretations of nature in Nordic critical geography (Brandt et al., 1976; Nielsen, 1976; Olwig, 1976; Vartiainen, 1979, 1984) and it also aimed at diversifying both the European continental conceptualisations of nature in critical geography (Ossenbrügge, 1983, 1993; Wittfogel, 1973, 1976, 1985) and respective trans-Atlantic advances in nature research (Blaikie, 1985; Burgess, 1978; Lowe & Warboys, 1978; Peet, 1985; Smith, 1984; Walker, 1978).

In the 1990s Jouni Häkli further developed the Nordic geography tradition by exploring nature's social and spatial place in urbanisation (Häkli, 1996, see also Häkli & Uotila, 1993). Focused on Berlin in the immediate years after the fall of the Berlin Wall, he regarded urban nature as a material realm and a reality conceived of and conceptualized by humans. Nature's meanings are, according to him, negotiated within "a multitude of social situations and practices with particular histories and geographies" (Häkli, 1996, p. 137). In other words, nature should be thought of as plural natures. Consequently, he argued, "as we do not have a single essence of nature […] we are engaged in a politics of nature in the city, a collision of meanings and values attached to different places and uses of environment" (Ibid., p. 138).

This type of approach to the politics of nature was thereafter developed by Jarno Valkonen (2003, 2007) who studied, in a Sámi context, how diverging claims of nature and their collisions influence the practices of culture-nature. Consequently, he analysed how various practices of claiming and placing nature affect the politics of nature-use. According to him, emphasising placing practices allow for the material grounding of politics. For Valkonen (2007, pp. 30–35), the politicisation of nature takes place where various coalitions (of nature-use) arise due to confronting definitions and valuations of nature, their history and placing. Similarly, Eveliina Asikainen (2014), while studying suburban politics of nature in Tampere, turned towards the continuous contestation and politicisation of the forms of nature-use (Asikainen, 2014, pp. 22–24). She traced the enactment of nature, that is, the emergence of novel ecosystems and "future natures", due to political-administrative

negotiations and agreements, various lay practices and related changes in local-ecological processes (see also Asikainen & Jokinen, 2009).

The placing of nature was also the question for Holgersen and Malm (2015) in their study of the politics of greening in Malmö as a solution to its industrial fallout of the 1970s and 1980s. In the mid-1990s the city launched efforts to regain economic growth through the promotion of environmental issues in comprehensive planning. Inspired by David Harvey's (2001) notion of spatial fix, Holgersen and Malm called this linking of economy and ecology a green fix. By this they referred to the concerted politics of greening to stop companies' withdrawals, i.e., spatial fixes, and attract new investments – which in the case of Malmö were successful to such a degree that the city was later "reckoned to be among the world's greenest cities" (Ibid, p. 275). However, the authors criticise Malmö municipality's tactics of locating greening under growth priorities and, moreover, utilising it as a mask to hide from heated ecological questions, such as carbon control, the social realities of segregation, unemployment and unrest.

The incorporation of the material realm and grounding is present, with slightly differing nuances, in the politics of nature studies referred to above. This linkage was richly expressed by Haila and Lähde (2003) in the introduction to an anthology entitled *Luonnon politiikka* (Politics of nature, or, Nature's politics). They underline that natural processes and non-human actors in fact do take part in politics by affording "material", and hence fuel the debate on the feasibility of human co-being within the conditions set by nature (Haila & Lähde, 2003, pp. 9–10). In addition, they argued, this feasibility can only be specified in comparisons between constraints and prospects afforded by nature. Risks thus need to be assessed against the strains they put on nature's vitality and socio-environmental vulnerability to ecological catastrophes (see also Haila & Dyke, 2006).

Niko Humalisto (2014) advanced neo-materialist geographical applications in his study of biofuel governance in the European Union (EU). He concludes that the unintended changes in the assemblages of biofuel production and consumption demonstrate serious weaknesses in the type of spatial modelling approach that the EU has favoured. The first decades of the EU's ambitious biofuel programme became a textbook example of the mismatch between aims and outcomes. The programme, launched in the early 1990s, soon resulted in increasing carbon emissions and environmental degradation and, due to "dedicating food to fuel", severe backlashes from food safety advocates (Humalisto & Joronen, 2013, p. 182). Globally, the most challenging backlash was witnessed in South-East Asia in the form of the rapid expansion of tropical palm oil plantations. Palm oil hence afforded, and in a way fuelled, the extraction of rainforests, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia. Moreover, palm oil consequently also extended its transnational presence in consumers' daily lives, not only in the form of biofuel, which is to be cancelled by 2030 in the EU, but also as a critical component in a multitude of food items to be consumed in our kitchens throughout the world.

Rather similarly, Haarstad and Wanvik (2017) suggest in their study of fossil fuel dependencies that the assemblage approach might be useful when facing the instability of contemporary "carbonscapes". They argue that carbonscapes, the social

and material landscapes of fossil fuels, are today under increasing attack and this might result in rapidly rising systemic volatility. Less car-centric urbanism, for example, questions the established systems of automobility and, to keep up with this transformation, a conceptual framework is needed that is open to unpredictable volatility and systemic ruptures (see also Haarstad, 2016; Haarstad & Oseland, 2017; Haarstad & Wanvik, 2020).

Furthermore, an inspiring rethinking of this type of (planetary) neo-materialism was advanced by Juha Kotilainen (2021), who throughout the 2010s had concentrated on mining issues. This research made him realise how thoroughly minerals and their extraction are linked to world history and politics. In addition, due to his attentiveness to general trends in local-global resource extraction, he devoted a major part of his book to the reconceptualisation of the planetary dynamics by reflecting upon, for example, moving frontiers for extraction, multiscale resilience and shifting spatial divisions and scales linked to expansive extraction (see also Quimbayo Ruiz, 2021).

To summarise, Nordic research of the politics of nature has thus identified three complementary angles to nature's politicisation: First, studies of nature have evolved into studies of plural natures and, consequently, often included analyses of the collision of meanings and values of nature. Nature's contested placing and the attached socio-spatial change has been here the primary research question. Second, politics of nature researchers have examined the constraints and affordances of material nature and they have also analysed the active (political) role of nature in shaping human/non-human conditions. Here the focus has moved from everyday oil addictions to movements of geopolitical minerals and lately also toward he causes and consequences of Covid19 (Pyy & Lehtinen, 2021; Rannila & Jaatsi, 2021). The emphasis of nature's active presence, and performance, has in this way inspired the conceptualisation of posthuman socio-spatialities (Hankonen, 2022; Lehtinen, 2022). This extension has, however, given rise to an intense debate regarding the dire consequences of universalising social nature (Malm, 2015, 2019), the actual prospects of nature's agency (Hornborg, 2017) and the risks of eroding human sense of responsibility due to distributed agency (Häkli, 2018). Third, the re-articulation of critical co-dependencies, intensifying multiscale extraction and shifting socio-spatial turbulences, have introduced the drama of deepening planetary emergency as a decisive moment for the global regimes of economics and politics. Systemic volatility is on the agenda, as is the necessity of systemic change.

Post-politics of Nature

Signs and tendencies of depoliticisation have, as elsewhere, increasingly been scrutinised and analysed by Nordic geographers during the last decade. Case studies have contributed to the specification of the post-political turn, or era, and moreover, advanced the theory of a post-politics (Ahlqvist & Sirviö, 2020; Anshelm et al., 2018; Anshelm & Haikola, 2018; Haikola & Anshelm, 2018; Kellokumpu & Sirviö,

2022; Luukkonen & Sirviö, 2017, 2019; Takala et al., 2020, 2021). This orientation is in many ways emerging from within the Nordic context as part of the disciplinary development summarised above, but it has also been broadly informed by both continental European inspirations (e.g., Arendt, 2002; Bourdieu, 2002; Latour, 2004; Mouffe, 1993/2020, 2005; Ranciére, 2009; Zizek, 2009) and the latest progress in related trans-Atlantic research (especially Swyngedow, 2011; Swyngedow & Wilson, 2014).

In general, the Nordic analysis and critique of the depoliticization of nature owes much to the profound European continental rethinking among those political philosophers who have conceptualised the risky features of depoliticisation, especially from the viewpoint of democracy. The concern is that the technocratic and consensual practices that evolve and expand beyond the transparent political sphere tend to reduce radically the differentiation, disagreements and contradictions that are constitutive of healthy democracies (see Takala et al., 2020, 2021).

Chantal Mouffe (2005), who is perhaps the most influential philosopher of depoliticisation, presents a critical analysis of a consensual post-political vision that relies on such fashionable notions as partisan-free democracy, dialogic democracy, cosmopolitan democracy, good governance, global civil society, cosmopolitan sovereignty and absolute democracy. For her, the advocates of post-politics long for "a world beyond left and right, beyond hegemony, beyond sovereignty and beyond antagonism" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 2). She continues, while focusing on politics as hegemony, that finally: "every order is political and based on some form of exclusion. There are always other possibilities that have been repressed and that can be reactivated" (Mouffe, 2005, p. 18).

Inspired by Mouffe, Jonas Anshelm et al. (2018) define depoliticisation as a specific form of neoliberal governance that obscures the contestable nature of governing that promotes consensus to the detriment of democratic disagreement. Based on their mining studies in Sweden, they argue that an issue may be unpoliticised without being depoliticised and, hence, speaking of a general state of postpolitics is, according to them, highly problematic. For them, depoliticisation functions as a displacement of politics that should be understood as a way of governing rather than an active process of making something that is political un-political.

Rather similarly, Luukkonen and Sirviö (2017, 2019) conclude, while analysing the candidates' statements in the Helsinki mayoral election in 2017, that the rhetoric of depoliticisation does not "constitute a post-political condition". Instead, they argue, "it is best viewed as a powerful form of political action drawing supposedly neutral criterion of economic performance and directed against the contingency of democratic politics" (Luukkonen & Sirviö, 2017, p. 114). Takala et al. (2020), in a study of depoliticisation of Finnish forestry planning in media discourses, conclude that the powerful discourses targeting a hegemonic position are determined to make their own truth normal and natural – and this is done by silencing or hiding contradictions, divisions and disagreements that would otherwise question their truth claims. Indeed, silencing and hiding thus function as a displacement of politics.

Furthermore, Anshelm and Haikola (2018, p. 585) argue for detailed empirical studies which would help refine the theorisation of postpolitics. Derived from their

case studies, they criticise those approaches that tend to construct bipolar, and antagonistic, settings where the (assumed) depoliticisation of official policy-making is challenged by the repoliticising efforts from the side of opposition (Anshelm et al., 2018, pp. 212–213). This critical stance, developed against some of the key contributions by scholars within continental and trans-Atlantic circles, is a clear sign of particular Swedish, if not Nordic, emphasis in this field of geography. As I will discuss in the next section, the argument takes shape within a particular societal and disciplinary context.

Back to Politics

Anshelm and Haikola (2018, p. 564) argue that politicisation takes place both via protests and formal channels of governance. Conflict is not the only dimension of politics, even though it is certainly an important one. In practice, Anshelm and Haikola summarise that the repoliticisation of local environmental issues often takes place through scaling-up and moving upwards beyond the strictly local puzzles (Ibid., p. 582).

On this background, Anshelm et al. (2018) criticise currently popular de/repoliticisation studies which tend to see depoliticisation in the realm of official policy-making, whereas acts of repoliticisation tend to be seen as part of civic dissent. This critique might arise from the experiences of a specific Swedish management culture that is, according to Peterson (2004), relatively open and quite adjusted to multicultural co-management. Peterson, after having compared Finnish and Swedish forest industry concepts, underlines the Swedish favouring of "careful circulation of items for comments before decision-making" (see Peterson, 2004, p. 229). Peterson maintains that Swedish executives reach decisions through dialogue, delegate responsibilities, and search for consensus. However, recent mining and forestry conflicts in Sweden have at least partially questioned Peterson's interpretation. Contemporary conflicts have become increasingly confrontational in society and in the media, and this change, if perhaps still only contingent, can be seen as an expression of repolitisisation (see Anshelm et al., 2018; Anshelm & Haikola, 2018; Andersson & Westholm, 2019; see also Lindahl et al., 2017; *Skydda skogen*, 2021).

Agonistic differences in recent resource conflicts have been broadly publicised in Sweden. In other words, in these cases solving disagreements has not been successful enough in the sphere of policy-making, before proceeding to the realm of politics. The cases show, and Anshelm et al. (2018) confirm, that strict demarcation of policy and politics is difficult, if not impossible. The question, however, remains: how agonistic can the efforts of consensus through management be in the end? Or, to put it in another way, is consensus governance in the sphere of policy-making just a means of depoliticisation – the type of governance that has been questioned in the most recent civic efforts of repoliticisation? These are the questions I'll return to at the end of this chapter.

In contrast, according to Peterson (2004), Finnish management culture favours powerful leaders who often communicate in a straightforward manner in a patriarchal atmosphere. Executives are "securely positioned, and they govern with authority and charisma" (Ibid., p. 229). This type of decision-making culture is perhaps gradually diminishing in Finland but, especially in the forest industry, changes are slow and contain drawbacks (see Raitio, 2008; Takala et al., 2019, 2022). For example, in their study of the key contradictions of the Finnish bioeconomy in the 2010s, Ahlqvist and Sirviö (2020) specify the role of the state in homogenising its territory through the manipulation of space and time. Certain urban cores are according to this view serving as state's strategic command centres, others acting as production units, and some parcels functioning as resource peripheries (Ibid., p. 398–399). Hence, state space is regarded as the platform for the material manifestation of the bioeconomy. Frontier-making is, according to Ahlqvist and Sirviö, "a constitutive spatial moment of capitalism to unlock the potential of endless accumulation" (Ibid., p. 400). This type of accumulation policy further deepens capitalism in and through nature, especially through the appropriation of "cheap nature". Ahlqvist and Sirviö, inspired by Jason W. Moore (2015), conclude that capitalism is, among many other things, a way of organising nature.

Interestingly, Ahlqvist and Sirviö (2020) include an ideological element of frontier mentality in their analysis which refers to a kind of collective will, or a "civic religion" (Ibid., p. 404), which motivates and legitimises the taming of nature through hard work for the national benefit and the leading export industry. This was and is, according to them, "consensual domestic imperialism" that became manifested in the expansive colonisation of Finland's forests and waterways (Ibid., p. 404). In this way the entire state space turned into a unified economic entity (Ibid., p. 406). Consequently, Ahlqvist and Sirviö argue, politicisation takes place wherever and whenever we, while proceeding with the taming of domestic nature, open spaces for novel ways of valorising natural resources, reviving local economies, rescaling production technologies and by integrating research orientations with resource orientations (Ibid., p. 408).

As witnessed, the Swedish management model is far from perfect, and sometimes it is unsuccessful, as the study of Ojnareskogen in Gotland by Anshelm et al. (2018) exemplifies. However, the conflict gradually grew into an important learning process. As Anshelm et al. (2018) specify, the mining resistance unfolded various effective ways of (re)politicising the areas of society that were depoliticised under Swedish management culture and through neoliberal environmental governance (Ibid., p. 207). According to them, environmental politicisation takes place by reframing the local conflict setting through actor alliances, discourse coalitions and juridical processes. Actor alliances proceed through horizontal links with other resistance groups and vertical links with related translocal actors. Consequently, discourse coalitions emerge by co-linking different but related agendas, world views and ideologies when there is "frame resonance" with, for example, NGO's, government agencies and university researchers. Juridical processes can, finally, take the form of court appeals and, hence, employ national and supranational frameworks (Ibid., p. 211).

Takala et al. (2020), on the other hand, emphasise the role of mass media in (re) politicising forest management by offering visibility to subordinate discourses. According to their study, the political of forest issues was virtually absent from the Finnish print media during the late twentieth century, but a clear change took place in the early 2000s. In addition to hegemonic extraction-oriented media articles, subordinate socially and environmentally oriented contributions gained wider publicity. Their media research showed that mass media can greatly modify the debates and narrations of forest policy and, what is of central importance, the media is potentially less interested in consensus than presenting alternative perspectives and open disagreement.

To summarise, what role does agonism have, and can have, in supporting and forwarding (re)politicisation? Could it help unlock the political vacuums of contemporary environmental governance? Advocates of agonistic politics emphasise that tensions and conflicts should not be regarded as troublesome nuisances. Instead, they should be seen as elementary features of decision-making. Contradictory preferences and contrasting arguments are highly valued in societies that endure and favour open dissension and inconsistencies. Participation in democratic settings can respect pluralistic and polyphonic decision-making which proceeds through disagreement and puzzles that cannot be solved. Open disagreement can become emancipatory if only giving up the motives of a shared value base – if only relaxing from the strive toward common ground (Häkli & Kallio, 2017). This condensation nicely resonates with Chantal Mouffe's argument for an agonistic pluralism in her *The Return of the Political*, initially published in 1993: "[T]he political…must be conceived as a dimension that is inherent to every human society and that determines our very ontological condition" (Mouffe, 1993/2020, p. 3).

Agonistic pluralism resonates well with the conceptualisation of 'pluriverse', which refers to "a rainbow of cosmologies, knowledges and vital worlds" (Paulson, 2018, p. 90). Pluriversal thinking, which celebrates "multiple ways of being and knowing that have co-evolved in relations to power and difference" (Ibid., p. 90, see also Kothari et al., 2019), affords an inspiring imaginary to the promoters of agonistic participation. Pluriversal agonism emerges, in my view, from within the acts of (re)politicisation taking shape through the multitude. The multitude of pluriverse is then, if leaning on Thomas Hobbes (1651/1991, pp. 117–121) and Hardt and Negri (2000, pp. xv–xvi), made of the geography of alternatives emerging from within the creative forces of democratisation and emancipation (Lehtinen, 2006, p. 88).

Pluriversal agonism, or agonistic pluralism, relies on general and contextual analyses of knowledge and power. It therefore evolves via the updating by critical studies on, for example, the conditions of consensus, thresholds of participation, unjust hierarchies (of position and truth), existence of divergences and events of non-communication (Häkli & Kallio, 2017; Kaakinen & Lehtinen, 2016). Studies of agonistic pluralism often focus on components and edges that accentuate dissenting positions and therefore increase the inability of actors to understand and communicate with one another. In some cases, the existence of divergences has turned into something that cannot be cured via, for example, intensified collaboration.

Value differences can, instead, be regarded as the foundation and means of (re) politicisation (Kaakinen & Lehtinen, 2016, p. 107).

Matthew Sawatzky (2013, 2017), a Canadian geographer who completed his doctoral thesis on Manitoban forest use at the University of Eastern Finland, underlines that the problem actually begins with contrasting and clashing perceptions of forests – thus, under the contested and partially non-communicating practices of claiming and placing nature. The degree of dissonance depends on what we think a forest is and how we should use it. Sawatzky, while inspired by the philosophy of Maurice Merleau-Ponty (1945/2006), clarifies the forestry puzzle in Manitoba with the concept of chiasm. Chiasm is, for him, a place of convergence and divergence, where we and our perceptions meet. Chiasm is therefore, according to Sawatzky, "an inherently geographic concept – a gap or space in which we simultaneously engage with the world and others" (Sawatzky, 2017, p. 19). Chiasm is the *topos* where the acts of depoliticisation and (re)politicisation meet; where the acts of socio-spatial repression and withdrawal become manifested – and moreover, wherefrom to start studying the continuous restructuring of the contemporary tendencies of socio-spatial inclusion and exclusion.

The scholars of Nordic politics of nature have, as witnessed above, thoroughly examined the socio-spatial constitution of what Sawatzky terms chiasms. This has taken place both in the analyses of resource conflicts and in the studies of urban and regional planning issues. They have identified the differing motives and procedures of defining nature by scrutinising the variation of routes and routines in nature's placing. In addition, they have joined those critical actors who have warned about the risk of ignoring ecological constraints and uncontrollable feedback that are due to extraction practices. Moreover, Nordic scholars have participated in the debates where the necessities and stages of societal transition have been developed.

In other words, Nordic geographers have supported the processes of (re)politicising nature, that is: unveiling the socio-spatial forces, moves and motives behind the production of chiasmatic settings. Accordingly, they have also shown the techniques of postpolitics and risks of depolitisation in those governance cultures that favour consensual and technocratic decision-making. Finally, Nordic scholars have also shown the existence of unpolitical vacuums in decision-making attached to resource extraction and urban planning. These vacuums have been treated as expressions of traditions where decision-making culture is still loaded by patrimonial administrative routines, as is the case in certain areas of forestry planning and urban development in Finland (see Lehtinen, 2018a; Raitio, 2008; Takala et al., 2019, 2022). According to these studies, politicisation takes place when and where (apparently) unpolitical patrimonialism occupies a hegemonic position, whereas acts of repoliticisation turn against the purposeful acts of depoliticisation.

To summarise, Nordic scholarship in this field of socio-spatial studies has most innovatively contributed to the geographical conceptualisation of "plural natures". Already since the 1980s, this has been associated with formulations of "social natures" (see Lehtinen, 1991; Seppänen, 1986). The particular Nordic 'content' of this has most clearly taken shape in studies dealing with socio-spatial tensions and their resolution linked both to particular urban socio-environmentalism and resource

conflicts related to forestry and mining and, to a certain extent, oil-based development. Interestingly, similar progress took place within the trans-Atlantic circles of critical geography, both in connection to socio-environmental justice issues (Harvey, 1996) and as part of the introductory launches of social nature (Braun & Castree, 1998).

Nordic Landings

The above summary of some Nordic contributions on the depoliticisation and (re) politicisation of nature demonstrates how country-specific contexts affect research emphases and orientations. In general, issues related to forestry and mining are favoured in Finland and Sweden whereas oil-based development has gained primary concern in Norway. As was also witnessed, resource management cultures slightly vary between the countries and this has affected research compositions. In addition, *samhällsgeografi* has been developed from within a bit differing angles in the Nordic countries (Lehtinen & Simonsen, 2022).

Therefore, accordingly, inspiration from wider international research circles is as a rule received and further developed in relation to each researcher's scholarly location in national research networks (Christiansen et al., 1999; Mertz et al., 2018; Widgren et al., 2011). In Norway, as the case studies referred to above exemplify (see especially Haarstad, 2016), the dynamics and constraints of carbonscapes have served as an arena whereupon the folding and unfolding of the politics of nature are examined. This focusing is rather unavoidable, almost necessary, keeping in mind the central economic role of oil and gas production in the country. However, it also reveals the strategic confusion, if not decoupling, characterising the Norwegian politics of nature: carbon dependencies are contrasted and, in a way, balanced with the forceful investments in post-fossil reorganisation of city regions.

At the same time, however, climate change research in general seems to have gradually shaken off its critical and regulative orientation and, instead, become more committed to the fabrication of adaptation techniques (see O'Brien, 2012, pp. 668–669, 2015). As part of this trend, descriptive methods have become increasingly popular in Norwegian geography research on climate issues, and it is today rare to find contributions linked to the needs of regulating the core areas of the country's economy (Lehtinen, 2018b, c). This is a rather significant change, especially when assessing it against the tradition of Norwegian human geography as a critical social science (Åquist, 1994; Asheim, 1979, 1985; Sæther, 1999). The question of financing and governing research on climate-related issues is highly political, of course, as the country is committed to expanding oil and gas production in those Arctic Sea areas that are under its control.

In Sweden, as the cases above exemplify, the tradition of seeking political agreements as part of administrative duties has been challenged in some of the most recent resource conflicts. According to these case studies, no clear division of labour between policy and politics can always be identified. The type of managing of

concerns and claims, which to a certain degree has characterised the more general Scandinavian model of governance (see Donner-Amnell, 2001; Peterson, 2004; Sæther, 2004), has prioritised high ambitions and demand for administrative preparation. The most recent signs of repoliticisation in resource conflicts refer to growing civic pressure for change in this model. The concern has been raised about the consequences of transparency gaps in the type of governance cultures that aim at strategic and political solutions already in the phase of administrative preparation. What if this well-established and highly appreciated form of consensus management only serves as a central bearer of depoliticisation? These worries, ardently brought up in the currently heated forestry and mining conflicts (see Anshelm et al., 2018; Anshelm & Haikola, 2018; *Skydda skogen*, 2021) perhaps serve as expressions of an ongoing turning of the tide. As Lindahl et al. (2017, p. 54) concluded from their detailed analysis of the Swedish forestry model, "[t]here is a need for broad public debate, not only about the role of forest in future society but also about the understanding and operationalisation of sustainable development."

On the other hand, the Finnish decision-making model differs in many respects from its Scandinavian counterparts (see Ahlqvist & Sirviö, 2020; Humalisto, 2014; Peterson, 2004). It is not rare to find characterisations of the Finnish decision-making culture on nature-use as strikingly straightforward and, I would suggest, prepolitical (see Raitio, 2008). Tendencies of repoliticisation do exist but, in places, practices from the patrimonial past run the scene. Both the patrons of leading companies and professional experts in public administration have, by tradition, a powerful role in decisions of public interest. In forest sector practices, moreover, the tradition of authoritarian programming has continued in the 2010s, under the post-political banner of bioeconomy expansion (Takala et al., 2020). In fact, as is argued by Kellokumpu and Sirviö (2022) in their analysis of the relations between the Finnish forest industry and the state administration, definitions of public interest often serve as means of depolitisation. This is run by powerful extra-parliamentary actors aiming at broadening their respective regime spaces.

The partial return to the old habits of hegemony in Finland (see Lehtinen, 1991) has reintroduced earlier antagonisms between forest industry, nature conservation and non-timber branches of the forest economy. The documented decoupling between the marketing of multi-objective forestry ideals and the actual highly intensive forestry practices has left the debate arena in a confusing setting. Bioeconomy critics find it difficult to participate in the debate run by the marketing motives of the forest sector. Concentrating on the details of branding politics, for example, is deemed a waste of time – when there are more serious and acute questions to be solved in the sphere of actual forest use (see *Meidän metsämme*, 2021). Proof of biodiversity losses and diminishing carbon sinks, for example, need to be gathered by the critics themselves, and they are often working on a voluntary basis. Distrust and antagonism appear to be growing, and shadowing the agonistic options of open and constructive disagreement (see Säynäjäkangas & Kellokumpu, 2020; Hyvärinen, 2020, pp. 26–27; Takala et al., 2021).

The few inter-Nordic comparisons I could found for my analysis (see Donner-Amnell, 2001; Humalisto, 2014; Peterson, 2004) much confirm the above-identified

differentiation of resource management models. Peterson (2004) compared the Swedish and Finnish models of decision-making in the forest industry and found a clear differentiation between Finnish strive for technological competence and Swedish ambitions for market expansion. Niko Humalisto (2014) compared the Swedish and Finnish strategies for promoting biofuel assembling, and his observations further specified Peterson's remarks: Finnish biofuel development is highly dependent on the operative motives of leading forest and energy companies. In Sweden, on the contrary, regional variation and flexibility is favoured and this has led to a more effective utilisation of development options.

These views support Jakob Donner-Amnell's (2001) comparative cross-country reflection derived from his detailed analyses of Nordic forest companies. According to him, Swedish success in forest sector development is due to a rather "liberal" model of decision-making which has carefully reflected upon the concerns of the forest industry as a whole, including medium- and small-sized companies. In contrast, according to Donner-Amnell (2001, pp. 110–113), the Finnish model is characterised by a "productionist" approach which is dominated by the country's leading companies performing like "isolated hierarchies". In addition, his analysis of Norway underlines the features of the underdevelopment of the forest sector as a whole, suffering from low esteem – conditions which did not, however, prevent the international success of Norske Skog at the turn of the century (see also Sæther, 2004).

In conclusions I will shortly deal with the consequences of the Nordic differentiation in research orientations (in this field of research). I will in general consider the inter-Nordic bearing of geography under the contemporary pressures of academic productivity contests and evaluations.

Conclusions

The discussion of Nordic contributions on the politicisation of nature in this chapter demonstrates the significant influence of continental and trans-Atlantic advancements. These linkages have widely enriched the epistemological rethinking in Nordic research communities and this renewal has taken advantage of local and country-specific circumstances (Mertz et al., 2018; Widgren et al., 2011). However, local and country-specific re-working of continental and trans-Atlantic advances has resulted in partial voids in inter-Nordic cross-inspiration. Nordic geographers do still meet in their biannual conferences as well as in specific project gatherings, but it is not often that they meet in their research publications. Cross-country references are rare in Nordic contributions on the politicisation of nature.

This state of affairs is, foremostly, an outcome of general changes in the politics and practices of scientific publishing and funding. But it is also due to our choices as individual scholars and research groups. Striving for visibility in the most highly ranked journals, published by the "Big Five" (Kallio, 2017), certainly affects the order of preferences in our references. Especially, the practices of peer-reviewing tend to guide us to the global anglophone "core" (Paasi, 2013), often at the cost of

more pluriversal assembling. However, I cannot see any unequivocal obstacles to develop and employ more effectively inter-Nordic reciprocity in research and publishing efforts. It could even broaden our understanding of the interrelations of the geographies near and far – and it could also slightly tone down the current trans-Atlantic hegemony.

The strengthening of inter-Nordic reciprocity could also enrich methodological reflections. The above scanning of the politicisation of nature literature unveiled a varied arsenal of approaches and conceptual clarifications. The epistemological move toward plural natures took place in the 1980s, as part of the more general constructionist-lingual turn in human geography and neighbouring social sciences. Critical and constructionist approaches were developed jointly, and much of this took place in the pages of the journal *Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift*. The type of continuation and co-enrichment was then a characteristically Nordic phenomenon. We did not get stuck in an antagonism between social theory and cultural studies, as was then the case in trans-Atlantic anglophone geography (Lehtinen & Simonsen, 2022). The agonistic attitude perhaps also eased the later linking of critical historical materialist and neomaterialist approaches, a connection which has been forcefully elaborated by Finnish scholars. In this respect, the decades-long co-advancement of *yhteiskuntamaantiede*, the Finnish equivalent to the Swedish *samhällsgeografi* (societal geography), has gained a firm hold in the country, extending from initial formulations by Perttu Vartiainen (1979, 1984, 1986, 1987) and subsequently enriched (see Ahlqvist & Sirviö, 2020; Alhojärvi, 2021; Humalisto, 2014; Hyvärinen, 2020; Kellokumpu, 2021; Kellokumpu & Sirviö, 2022; Luukkonen & Sirviö, 2019; Moisio, 2011, 2018; Säynäjäkangas & Kellokumpu, 2020).

In the Nordic setting, however, the vigour of epistemological co-enrichment has diminished. According to the case studies cited above, the socio-spatial re-conceptualisations of oil assemblages, manners of (de)politicisation, displacement of politics, regime contests, frontiers of extraction, cheap natures, traps of provincialism, spaces of non-communication, chiasmatic relations and politics of pluriversal agonism have been developed in connection to 'local' renewals within continental and trans-Atlantic circles. Nordic geographies of the 2020s will undoubtedly continue this integration in the wider currents of geography's disciplinary and post-disciplinary reorientation. Scaling-up is important and necessary, especially when attached to corresponding sensitivity: reciprocal learning across scales upwards and downwards – and across borders between neighbouring countries. For example, a highly radical experiment of this type of border-crossing is the book length study (527 pp.) of Kent, the famous indie band from Sweden, by Hannu Linkola, a Finnish geographer. The book (Linkola, 2017) provides an eye-opening view of Eskilstuna, and the whole of Sweden.

My closing conclusion is consequently related to the outcomes of weakening "Nordicity" in geographical imagination. Distancing from our nearest neighbours, if it continues, might easily result in geographical narrowing. It could easily lock us into a provincial position where scholarly rethinking is increasingly impelled by trends afforded by the trans-Atlantic centres of geography renewal. Provincialism, as I have argued elsewhere (Lehtinen, 2006, pp. 200–201), is fuelled by the

atmosphere of submission and opportunism under the imperial pressure of neoliberal displacement. Instead, the optional co-imagination gained while leaning on colleagues in the neighbourhood could strengthen our sense of pluriversal and polyglot geographies. It could lead us to recognise the potential of the multitude within the plurality of spaces. It could, in other words, help us to unfold the options of concerted action and activities (Wekerle & Classens, 2021). In addition, the verve of these activities necessarily extends down to the geographies of our lived everyday. Concerted action is, by definition, political in nature. It evolves as part of the practices of involvement and activism. In an era of planetary emergencies, the societal relevance of our geographies should be ranked high in our preference lists. We would be wise to remember that *samhällsgeografi* initially was radical (e.g. Buch-Hansen et al., 1975; Axelsson et al., 1980; Rouhinen, 1981; in this book, see also Jakobsen and Larsen, 2022). Today, under the pressure of the deep socio-environmental crises in which we are embedded, such a radical temper would be more than welcome.

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Chapter 7
In Search of Nordic Landscape Geography: Tensions, Combinations and Relations

Tomas Germundsson, Erik Jönsson, and Gunhild Setten

Introduction

Landscape is a key concept in geography, as well as within a number of related disciplines. It is also a concept that has meant, and continues to mean, different things to different scholars working within different research traditions (e.g. Setten et al., 2012; Howard et al., 2018). Consequently, there are literatures that demonstrate its (sometimes frustrating) complexity, while also underlining that such complexity is needed, engaging, and even fun (e.g. Henderson, 2003; Olwig, 2019). In this chapter we engage with the shaping of this influential concept and idea, centring on how it has been developed and put to use by scholars within a Nordic context.

When Don Mitchell (2008, p. 47, emphasis in original) held that landscape is not only "really […] *everything* we see when we go outside [but also] everything that we do not see", he critically reminded the 'landscape community' to stay alert to how landscape is always more complex than its morphology or material reality implies (Mitchell, 2012; Setten, 2020). By implication, he warned against a prominent trait of much landscape research; that 'reading' the landscape, i.e. to let the visual evidence of culture speak for itself, enables drawing conclusions about its making and meaning. We concur with Mitchell. There is nothing self-evident about

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physical landscapes. Landscapes are produced and constructed by multiple processes, of which some are readily visible (e.g. mining or agriculture) while other equally impactful processes remain more opaque (e.g. high finance or legal frameworks). In short, landscape is “a symbol of the values, the governing ideas, the underlying philosophies of culture”, as Meinig (1979, p. 42) once put it. Furthermore, since the mid-1980s it has been generally maintained, and on the whole accepted, that however landscape is represented, it represents forms of power and ideology, both physical and symbolic (e.g. Cosgrove, 1984; Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988). Through unravelling ideological underpinnings and political-economic processes we can critically investigate how the landscape works to obscure, naturalise or make invisible its (re)production. Hence, the premise for this chapter is not only that any landscape is composed of what lies before our eyes as well as what lies within our heads, to paraphrase Meinig (1979, p. 34), but crucially, also that any landscape is subject(ed) to contestation and control.

Our ambition in this chapter is to discuss a set of prominent landscape-geographical traditions in a way that is fruitful for those familiar with such traditions, as well as comprehensible to readers beyond landscape geography. In approaching landscape from a ‘Nordic’ perspective, we are singling out a certain conceptual legacy that can be rightly justified, but also ultimately simplistic. *Norden* has never been a unified intellectual environment, nor an isolated one. Hence, in scrutinising a ‘Nordic’ landscape geography, we are facing numerous challenges and tensions, including tensions within ‘the Nordic’ itself. We approach these divergencies and tensions as a productive lens on the ways a ‘Nordic’ landscape has been conceptualised and normatively put to use. This is not possible without discussing how a ‘Nordic’ landscape concept has been in conversation, in particular with what can crudely be termed an Anglo-American concept. Furthermore, understandings and conceptualisations of ‘landscape’ emerge through constant conversation with other key concepts in geography (and beyond), primarily those of nature, place, region, space and environment. Even though we centre most explicitly on the former discussion, we cannot escape the latter. Therefore, our intention is not to present the essential meaning of (a Nordic) landscape (concept), but to demonstrate how the temporal, spatial and, by implication, political, are fundamental for landscape as a historically shifting notion.

The chapter proceeds as follows: In the next section, and in order to point at some key conditions for an emerging Nordic landscape geography, we narrate historical meanings of landscape within, and beyond, geography as a university discipline. In the section thereafter we identify and critically discuss three strands of Nordic landscape research that put landscape on the wider scholarly agenda. The fourth section explores a recent social science turn towards relationality, and critically scrutinises this turn from a landscape perspective. In the conclusions we return to landscape’s shifting meanings and tensions within Nordic landscape geography to discuss what our exploration could mean for what is at stake in landscape studies as well as for future directions in Nordic landscape geography.

An Emerging Nordic Landscape Geography

Early Meanings and Uses of 'Landscape'

Like any concept or theory, 'landscape' is only possible to grasp in "the place and the time out of which it emerges as part of that time, working in and for it, responding to it" (Said, 1983, p. 174; see also Williams, 1983). Throughout history, landscape has been loaded with shifting meanings depending on historical conditions, including its interpenetration with political, cultural and scientific processes. Its origin has been subject to much debate, and different academic trajectories is evidence of its versatility (e.g. Howard et al., 2018). This section offers a sweep through historical-political developments crucial to both later conceptualisations of landscape, and the subsequent formalisation of geography as a university discipline in Norden.

Historically, there is within the North Germanic languages an intertwined meaning of landscape as province or region, and landscape as physical terrain. In times long before the era of the nation states, landscapes denoted provinces characterised by self-government and their own legal frameworks (Olwig, 1996; Sporrong, 2008). At a time when the Nordic states as we know them today were yet to solidify, landscape laws such as *Upplandslagen* (Sweden), *Skånske lov* (Denmark), or *Gulatingsloven* (Norway) pertained to particular regionally based polities. However, from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century these regional laws and the bodies upholding them were gradually replaced by national legal frameworks as the Scandinavian countries increasingly became centrally governed states (Sporrong, 2008; Strandsbjerg, 2010).

With the stabilisation and centralization of Scandinavian state power, landscapes as self-governing provinces were replaced by a more 'top-down' division into counties, while political interest turned to mapping landscape as physical terrain. For example, Jones (2004) explores how sixteenth century Danish Astronomer Tycho Brahe through mapping his island fief of Hven introduced the technique of triangulation to Scandinavia, while Swedish botanist Carl Linnaeus some two centuries later "preached the value of local area and field-based research as prelude not only to natural science, but also to economics" (Buttimer & Mels, 2006, pp. 17–22). However, even as political interest turned to mapping and exploring terrain, earlier conceptualisations of landscape never completely disappeared. Linnaeus' Swedish travels were for example framed as explorations of the old landscapes rather than the newer counties, which were established in the 1630s. He travelled to *Skåne* (Scania) for his 1749 *Skånska resa*, rather than to the province's then administrative units, Malmöhus County and Kristianstad County.

As the Nordic countries from the mid-nineteenth century underwent an often rapid industrialisation and urbanisation, this was followed by critique of modern civilization. A subsequent rise of a romantic and often nationalist movement that feared the vanishing of a 'natural' and 'harmonious' way of life, resulted (Löfgren et al., 1992). Thereby, landscape was rediscovered and revived, both as terrain and

province. Historical landscapes were given a renewed meaning referring to long-term territorially based social cohesion, both regionally and nationally. Lingering historical elements in the cultural landscape were hailed as symbols of the past as well as serving as concrete correctives to urbanised living: meadows, pastures, idyllic smallness and, not least, nature, became the symbol and romanticised representation of cohesive regions, not to say the nation itself (e.g. Edling, 1996; Paasi, 1997; Mels, 1999; Raivo, 2002).

A well-known example of how the historical regional landscapes became part of building the image of a varied but cohesive nation is Swedish author and Nobel laureate Selma Lagerlöf's geography reader, *Nils Holgerssons underbara resa genom Sverige* (published in English as *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils*). This children's story followed Nils Holgersson, a lazy and mischievous boy that was turned into a pixie (*pyssling*) and forced to travel Sweden on a goose's back. Published in two parts in 1906–1907, Lagerlöf's work was inspired by both Rudyard Kipling's anthropomorphic animals (in *The Jungle Book*) and the interest in folk culture and heritage sparked by turn-of-the-century nationalism (Palm, 2019). Her ambition was that the two volumes would allow youths to "gain knowledge of their own country and learn to love and understand it, as well as gain some insights into its resources (*hjälpkällor*) and possibilities for development" and that "our landscapes' peculiarities shall appear more clearly to the viewer, and maybe that people should gain more of a longing to see the nature populated by animals" (cited in Palm, 2019, p. 370, p. 396, our translation).

As Crang (1999) remarks, Lagerlöf's book illuminates a partial shift from a mediaeval notion of landscape to an emerging sense of landscape as a mode of viewing. Thus, the book "blends the old sense of province and that of panorama provided for an outsider by seating the protagonist on a magical goose's back to behold each region in turn" (Crang, 1999, p. 450; cf. Olwig, 2017). Furthermore, in Lagerlöf's book landscapes do not only figure as the sceneries viewed from above or in the sense of defined territories and locational markers. In the chapter *Sagan om Uppland*, a tale is for example told where this landscape becomes an actual active subject, as an initially poor landscape begging other landscapes for resources and features eventually amassed to enrichen Uppland (Lagerlöf, 1962 [1906–1907]).

The Landscape Concept in Landscape Geography

When geography during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century became a formal university discipline in the Nordic countries, 'landscape' thus held a plethora of meanings and connotations that go beyond its primary meaning in the English language, i.e. as scenery or vista. In the early twentieth century, Nordic landscape research was characterised by, on the one hand, a descriptive regional geographical approach and, on the other, the mapping of the older agricultural landscape as this was represented in the historical cadastral map material (e.g. Enequist, 1937; Moberg, 1938).

To illustrate, Swedish geographer Helge Nelson's ambition was for his doctoral students to describe different Swedish provinces (Buttimer & Mels, 2006). For Nelson, who held the chair in geography at Lund University (1916–1947), studying one's home area (*hembygd*) was furthermore of explicit political and moral value:

> [A]s one begins to know it, then it usually grows in value, it has received a richer content and greater importance for oneself. Thus increased knowledge of the home area will strengthen feelings for it, rendering it warmer and richer. Enhanced knowledge will also widen perspectives, letting the home area emerge as a small part in a larger whole, in fatherland. Then the love of home area can grow to include all our land and people (Nelson, translated in Buttimer & Mels, 2006, pp. 37–38).

A key task for geographers thus became to study particular regions in order to illuminate connections between *hembygd* and fatherland.

Even though Nelson's scholarship entailed an ambition to study landscapes, he did not formulate an adequate methodology for such studies. This was later noted by one of his most influential students, Torsten Hägerstrand (1979). Contemporaneous with Nelson, a much more rigorous attempt to determine the methodological framework of landscape studies is instead found in Finnish regional geography, pioneered by Johannes Gabriel Granö in his ground-breaking *Reine Geografie* (1929). Therein Granö developed a methodology for grasping environments that connects to much later conceptual developments within geography (for a discussion of these connections, see Granö & Paasi, 1997). Firstly, geographers were not only to record visible phenomena, but also auditory, olfactory, and tactile phenomena, in a search for a complete grasp of their surroundings. Secondly, research was about researchers' personal environment. Granö thus underlined how an "examination starts from a purely anthropocentric standpoint, that is, what a person, forming the center of his perceived environment, can observe at various distances" (Granö, 1997, p. 18).

However, though the landscape concept figured prominently in J. G. Granö's methodological framework the study object was analytically divided "into two major parts on the basis of distances in the field of vision, that is, the proximity which we perceive with all our senses, and farther away the landscape, which extends to the horizon and which we perceive by sight alone" (Granö, 1997, p. 19). While his methodological philosophy underlined multi-sensory explorations, landscape nonetheless remained a distant vista. Granö's approach came to influence some geographers, such as the Estonian Edgar Kant, but the landscape in focus for research in the pre-war era primarily remained in line with the traditional regional approach of thematically mapping physical features in the landscape, including for instance geology, settlement patterns and agricultural land use (e.g. Dahl, 1942). Hence, a theoretical development of the landscape concept, and landscape studies, were only partially occurring within the discipline in Norden at the time.

After the Second World War, the geography discipline was increasingly characterized by an emphasis on quantitative methods and a positivistic research agenda. Within Nordic landscape geography the traditional regional approach was complemented by more methodologically coherent landscape research that mainly studied historical agrarian landscapes influenced by the general quantitative approach. To a large extent, methodological influences came from Germany and inspired new

research on the rich Scandinavian source material in the form of historical maps, but also field studies (e.g. Hannerberg, 1958: Helmfrid, 1962; Hansen, 1964; Sporrong, 1968, 1971; Rønneseth, 1974). These new trends were arguably strongest in Sweden, while for instance in Norway, historical landscape studies mainly took place within other disciplines (Widgren, 2015). Subsequently, a fruitful encounter arose between landscape geography and archaeology, not least in historical-geographical studies where the earliest maps could be triangulated with archaeological finds and results (Widgren, 1983; Riddersporre, 1995). More broadly, and elaborated on elsewhere (Jansson et al., 2004), there was a pronounced strive for coupling landscape research from different disciplines, including the natural sciences. This development meant that particular regional landscapes became more pronounced departure points for developing interdisciplinary empirical research (e.g. Berglund, 1991; Grau Møller, 1990).

However, what landscape signified as a concept was hardly discussed within this work. This changed during the 1980s and 1990s. As Widgren (2015) has shown, the development is complex, but two main features can be identified. First, there was an influence – and an interest – from international human geography, where 'landscape' had developed into a concept with a multifaceted meaning different from what was developed in the Nordic countries (Mels, 1999; Saltzman, 2001; Setten, 2004). Second, contemporary landscape research in the Nordic countries, which was largely driven by interdisciplinary developments, came to have an explicit aim to both analyse and inform policy (e.g. Jones & Daugstad, 1997; Waage & Benediktsson, 2010; Primdahl, 2014). The latter can most closely be linked to urbanisation processes, the effects of modern agriculture on landscapes and the measures that could be developed to protect environmental or cultural values in the landscape. The insights of much historical landscape research thus became a normative corrective to contemporary developments. The political and administrative bodies that, based on these developments, put landscape on the agenda, existed at both national and European level. These bodies, ranging from national environmental protection agencies to the The Council of Europe, heavily influenced the contacts and networks of a wide range of landscape researchers. In such cross-fertilisation it soon became clear that questions about landscape histories and values, including conceptualisations, are neither self-evident, nor neutral (Jones & Daugstad, 1997). Thus, Nordic landscape research faced an era of exciting turmoil.

'Nordic Landscape Geography' in the New Millennium

Today, Nordic landscape geography is characterised by a breadth in terms of methods used and theoretical inspirations. Beyond the developments outlined above, the field is to a significant degree shaped by developments over the last three to four decades elsewhere, including an increasing shift from German to Anglo-American influences (Jansson et al., 2004). A so-called 'new cultural geography' developed among British based geographers in the 1980s (e.g. Duncan, 1980; Cosgrove, 1984),

followed by a more critical cultural geography developed among North American geographers (e.g. Jackson, 1989; Mitchell, 2008). These developments were taken up in Nordic landscape geography and sparked a renewal of historically based landscape geography. Crucially, the works of particularly Duncan (1980), Cosgrove (1984), and Cosgrove and Daniels (1988) heavily influenced a re-thinking of the concept of landscape itself, materialising primarily in Kenneth Olwig's (1996) *Recovering the substantive nature of landscape*. Out of this publication came a self-declared 'Nordic' landscape concept (Olwig, 2003, 2019) that for many years came to play a central role in international landscape geography. We return to this concept in more detail below.

The timing of this 'recovery' is no coincidence. Within the context of the cultural turn, a key moment for landscape was the critical scrutiny of Carl Sauer's (1925) notion of the cultural landscape as shaped by culture as an agent with the natural area as the medium. Theorising landscape against the then widespread environmental determinism in American geography (Solot, 1986), Sauer's culture concept held that culture itself does things that can be observed and mapped in the physical landscape. When James Duncan (1980) published his attack on what he termed "The superorganic in American cultural geography", he argued that the 'traditional' cultural geography that Sauer helped establish, was marked by a lack of attention paid to the complexities of the social world and that it failed to account for any human agency. Therefore it also failed to explain more pressing issues related to politics, social relations and identity formation. Where Sauer studied culture as that which is expressed through the morphology of landscape, 'new' cultural geographers were much more interested in landscape as representation and its ideological underpinnings, i.e. that which the landscape hides, normalises and subsequently naturalises. Heavily influenced by French post-structural currents, landscape was increasingly seen and read as text, discourse and power politics (e.g. Cosgrove, 1984; Daniels, 1989). Interestingly, 'new' cultural geography was thus to a large extent driven by research that effectively placed landscape – as representation – at the centre of the discipline as a whole. However, and despite the fundamental tensions between 'traditional' and 'new' cultural geographers, they united over a prominent weight placed on the visual and scenic, yet abstract, power of landscape. This is critical as it provided a window of opportunity for developments within a Nordic context.

Against this backdrop, we move on to discuss three closely related strands of thought and practice in Nordic landscape geography that became influential, hence sparking much debate: First, an etymologically and philologically driven conceptual strand that sought to uncover the meanings and implications of a 'Nordic' landscape concept; second, a policy-driven strand closely connected to the establishment of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) (Council of Europe, 2000); and third, a philosophically and politically driven strand set on developing a landscape concept that responds to rapid environmental transformation and (most often) degradation.

'The Substantive Nature of Landscape'

Set within an approach to the discipline of geography as the study of the physical world, over time reshaped by the imprint of natural and human factors, and interwoven with analyses of the production, meaning and power of the representations of this physical world, the first strand revolved around Olwig's (1996) notion of "the substantive nature of landscape". As Olwig (2019, p. 18) writes himself he, while working in Sweden, discovered that among Swedes the term landscape (*landskap*) referred "to an historical place, often their home region [and that] made me curious about the origin, meaning, and history of the meaning of landscape as place and region". It was such everyday discoveries that eventually led him to argue for a "substantive meaning of landscape as a place of human habitation and environmental interaction" (1996, p. 630). Beyond, and against, more established notions of landscape as "a restricted piece of land", "the appearance of land as we perceive it", or as "a flickering text" (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988, p. 8), Olwig (1996) stressed that landscape can also be understood as that which connects community, justice, environmental equity and nature. With special reference to mediaeval Scandinavia, usages of the concept landscape thus appeared to pertain to "a judicially defined polity, not a spatially defined area" (Olwig, 2002, p. 19). Understandings of landscapes as *lived in and of place,* rather than exclusively understood as *abstract space*, resonated with numerous landscape scholars in Norden (see e.g. Lehtinen, 2000; Setten, 2004). From the turn of the millennium, a 'substantive' landscape concept thus emerged from explorations of Nordic history and North Germanic etymology, and inspired by contemporary Scandinavian vernacular, it managed to establish itself as a forceful approach for studying both the physical and symbolic power of landscape.

For Olwig, conceptualisations of landscape, were of more than merely historical or academic interest. Resembling the kind of critique of state rationalities and modernist planning later made famous by James C. Scott (1998), Olwig (1996, p. 638) argued that land surveying had "created a geometrical, divisible, and hence saleable space by making parcels of property out of lands that had previously been defined according to rights of custom and demarcated by landmarks and topographical features", and that "[t]hese ideas, which were foreign to Northern Europe, lent legitimacy to the ideological transformation of land into private property". As Germundsson (2008, pp. 178–186) elaborates, decision-makers and land-owners could, steeped in such 'foreign' ideas, for instance initiate the well-known nineteenth century enclosure reforms throughout Scandinavia.

However, and as pointed out in our introduction, there is not *one* linguistic or conceptual legacy within the Nordic realm. Waage (2012) has shown how the Icelandic concept of *landsleg*, as it appears in the fourteenth century sagas, corresponds to 'the lie of the land', and thus in a sense lies closer to (and predates) its English meaning. Waage further illustrates how the Icelandic conceptualisation describes a visual perception of morphological features, often associated with aesthetic appreciation. Similarly, underscoring the emphasis on visual characteristics

in the Icelandic *landslag* (i.e. the modern spelling of *landsleg*), Benediktsson (2007, p. 207) has reminded geographers to also acknowledge that the "everyday understanding of the landscape concept […] tend[s] to emphasize the scenic aspect". Thus, critical geographers should, according to Benediktsson (2007, p. 211), acknowledge the importance of the scenic and be ready to argue for the value of landscapes "in the halls of political and economic power". An emphasis on the visual qualities of the environment also holds for the Finnish landscape concept *maisema* (Raivo, 2002; Paasi, 2008). Or rather, as Paasi (2008, p. 513) elaborates, in Finnish the landscape concept is divided into *maisema*¸ which typically denotes landscapes' visual dimension, and *maakunta*, which "points to the areal, vernacular, and administrative dimension". These concepts can furthermore be combined into *maisemakunta* (landscape province) to refer to "the products of scientists by which they aim at spatial classification of the visual elements of nature and culture" (Paasi, 2008, p. 513).

The substantive weight placed on the ways that culture, community, law, morality and custom shape people's lives in much Nordic geography, should also be critically considered as it has been pointed out how landscape often invokes what Wylie (2016) has termed 'homeland thinking' (see also Crang, 1999). Mels (2002, p. 138) shows, for example, how the Swedish notion of *hembygd* (comparable to homeland) in the early twentieth century "was at once confirmed and incorporated in a wider discourse of national coherence during a period of political turmoil, proletarization, and intense commodification of urban and rural spaces". Wylie (2016) argues that 'homeland' epistemologies and presumptions cause difficulties for a wide set of understandings and uses of landscape, including across different branches of landscape research, because landscape invokes and naturalises attachment, sentiment and identity. These characteristics have also been alluded to in discussions around a 'substantive' notion of landscape, hence deserving of a critical questioning of its explanatory power both within research and in current society (Setten et al., 2018). However, this is not to deny that landscapes *do work* and are *set to work* as markers of 'home', belonging and identity, as elaborated on by, for example, Häyrynen (1997), Sörlin (1999), Mels (2002) and Germundsson (2005).

Landscape as Policy Term

Whereas a 'substantive' landscape concept buttresses a political-intellectual project critical of modern state power, the strand we now turn to instead utilises landscape as a concept and research object to aid in planning and policy-making. During the 1980s and 1990s agricultural restructuring, combined with ambitions to safeguard natural and cultural values in the agricultural landscape, spurred a demand for landscape evaluations (Widgren, 2015, p. 201). Lamenting the destruction and subsequent loss of historical landscape values and, in effect, identity values, became widespread, particularly among historically oriented landscape geographers as well

as in various administrative cultural heritage and nature conservation bodies (cf. Emanuelsson, 2009; Slätmo, 2017).

A concern for the future of landscapes resonated well with the rationale for the establishment of the European Landscape Convention (ELC) (Council of Europe, 2000), designed to facilitate landscape protection, management and planning. The overall aim was to establish 'a true landscape democracy' (Arler, 2008). The by now well-known ELC definition of landscape as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 3) soon sparked considerable and critical engagement among Nordic landscape researchers (e.g. Jones & Stenseke, 2011). Scholars engaging with the Convention was in close conversation with proponents of a 'substantive' understanding of landscape. This is in a sense unsurprising. Both strands are explicitly normative, i.e., they favour local participation, and by implication are (implicitly) loaded with notions of morality, social justice and what has been of particular interest among landscape scholars, the right to public participation in decision-making concerning our everyday landscapes (e.g. Jones, 2011). In short, the interest in landscapes in the wake of the effects of international agricultural policy, including the emergence of the ELC, both directly and indirectly constituted a fertile ground for Nordic landscape geography.

However, as Setten et al. (2018, p. 421) have pointed out, seeing substantive landscapes as lived spaces that are "morally constituted by people, polity and place offers some radical insight, but has only to a limited extent been demonstrated or radically theorised". For example, there is a frequent favouring of local agency, yet without critically thinking about how this creates or sustains exclusions of its own. Hence, it remains unclear how 'local landscapes' fit with issues of justice and morality at larger scales. It has been argued that the motivation for embracing the ELC is straight-forwardly that local landscapes are best managed and evaluated locally (Setten et al., 2018). There is, in other words, a tendency to equate localised decision-making, and the local scale, with something inherently good. Much of the landscape literature concerned with notions of justice is characterised by a frequent conflation of local with 'good' democracy, echoing what Purcell (2006) conceptualised as the 'local trap'. However, public participation in landscape management does not necessarily lead to more just landscapes. By implication, there is nothing inherently democratic about local landscapes. Rather, 'landscape democracy' is always struggled over, and does not simply exist. Hence, we are once again reminded of Wylie's (2016) unease with a presumed association between 'landscape' and 'homeland'. Landscape (research) has a long tradition of being concerned with dwelling, settlement and inhabitation. These are arguably controversial features of much landscape research (Setten et al., 2018), as there is a tendency that the combination of existence and location assumes that "certain peoples and certain landscapes belong together and are made for each other, […] at least historically in a deep sense" (Wylie, 2016, p. 409). The ELC serves as a case in point: Europeanness or Eurocentrism is embedded in the Convention, and the Convention's preamble confirms that its aim is to consolidate European identity (Widgren, 2015). Landscape, it states, "contributes to the formation of local cultures and […] is a basic

component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity" (Council of Europe, 2000, p.1). Beyond such potentially rather problematic identity-affirming work, landscape here functions as a policy term and tool that enables connecting different, and often opposing, interests. Yet, and to a significant degree, it remains a tool of agricultural and heritage interests to secure their landscape values, and to buttress attempts to secure funding for such landscape-preservational work.

Landscapes and/of Environmental Change

The third strand, conceptualisations of landscapes in light of broader environmental concerns, is, to be clear, neither new nor fully removed from the European Landscape Convention's framing, concerned as it is with achieving "sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment" (Council of Europe, 2000, p.1). It is in an important sense wrong to place environmentalism as a recent turn (see e.g. Olwig (2003), on Danish botanist Joakim Frederik Schouw (1789–1852) as an early environmentalist). Ingold (2011) for example characterises Hägerstrand's 1970s work on the interaction between society and nature as 'prophetic' in foreseeing the collapse of the 'great divide' between nature and society (see Stenseke, 2020, for a longer discussion). Searching for how geographers could contribute at a time when environmental questions had become prominent on the academic and political agenda, Hägerstrand (1976, p. 331) emphasised an integrative role for geographers as knowers of landscapes and regions when "landscape evolution as a wholesale problem [was] beginning to force itself unto the political arena".

However, rather than arguing for a return to traditional regional geography's 'chorological descriptivism' (Buttimer & Mels, 2006, p. 72), Hägerstrand drew on his model-builder background in search of "a deeper insight into the *principles of togetherness* where-ever it occurs" (Hägerstrand, 1976, p. 332, emphasis in original). His phrasing in this does indeed resemble later attempts to emphasise socio-ecological entanglements or relations. Germundsson and Sanglert (2019) have thus argued that Hägerstrand's explorations of the landscape concept opened fruitful ways forward for landscape studies through hinting at both phenomenology and the kinds of equating of 'society' and 'nature' that later became prominent within actor-network theory. As Hägerstrand himself states:

> Togetherness is not just *resting* together. It is also *movement* and *encounter*. By using such very general terms we would be able to look upon Nature and Society under one perspective because what is all the time resting, moving and encountering is not just humans or natural items in between themselves but humans, plants, animals and things all at once (Hägerstrand, 1976, p. 332, emphasis in original).

Casting Hägerstrand as an environmentally concerned landscape theorist has recently been advocated by some landscape researchers (e.g. Qviström & Wästfelt,

2020; Stenseke, 2020), but his position within the field nonetheless remains relatively marginal. As Stenseke (2020) comments, conceptualisations of landscape are parts of Hägerstrand's works that has never attracted research communities the way his more famous time-geography did. Much of his writings on landscape are published in Swedish, and Hägerstrand explicitly instructed that one of his key texts, *Tillvaroväven* (2009), should not be translated (Stenseke, 2020).[1] However, and notably, Hägerstrand's way of approaching landscapes as movement and encounter, and as a kind of continuously shifting interspecies togetherness, predates a turn towards 'more-than-human'(Whatmore, 2006) inquiries within landscape geography (and cultural geography more broadly), which is perhaps mostly made prominent through anthropologist Tim Ingold's (2000, 2011) extensive contributions to landscape research.

In later arguing for precisely such a turn, Whatmore (2006, p. 603) criticised both 'old' and 'new' cultural geography for casting "the making of landscapes (whether worked or represented) as an exclusively human achievement in which the stuff of the world is so much putty in our hands". Numerous landscape geographers have since then striven to further develop and apply frameworks for conceptualising landscapes as socio-ecological relations. To illustrate, Qvenild et al. (2014) and Frihammar et al. (2020) have researched the politics of invasive alien plant species and the position of the simultaneously cherished and invasive garden lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*) in Norway and Sweden respectively. For Qvenild et al. (2014) this allows honing in on how gardeners themselves make sense of alien or invasive as categories, and how they engage with plants such as the garden lupine in their gardening. Qvenild et al. (2014, p. 25, emphasis in original) draw on Ingold (2000) as well as Whatmore's (2006) critique in order to acknowledge "human experiences and knowledge […] as always already embedded within dwelt-in worlds of continuous encounters between all living things, and consequently not *given* by humans alone". In another gardening study, Saltzman and Sjöholm (2018) are similarly inspired by Ingold, drawing on his insistence of viewing all living things as biosocial becomings (see also Ingold & Pálsson, 2013). Frihammar et al. (2020), on their part, instead draw on heritage scholarship to underscore how debates about the garden lupine's spread throughout Sweden illuminates the political nature of boundary-making and how invasive species threatens a particular landscape-as-image, *landskapsbild,* perceived as an important cultural heritage. Between the lines, the 'landscape' they are concerned with is conceptualised as an image carrying particular connotations that is 'written' in weeds and flowers, yet not reducible to a text (cf. Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988). These studies underline and illustrate how landscape cannot be understood as an "exclusively human achievement" (Whatmore, 2006, p. 603). Toudal Jessen (2021), for example, in a recent study of two local 'everyday' periurban landscapes in Denmark, uses a relational approach to dissolve the thematic categorization of nature- and culture-driven processes. In her analysis she

[1] However, see Germundsson and Riddersporre (1996) for an attempt to critically discuss the preservation of historical landscapes based on Hägerstrand's notion of the 'processual landscape' (*förloppslandskapet*).

traces the development of the physical landscape in light of the history of Danish planning and governance both before and during the rise of the modern welfare state.

Others have combined political ecology with landscape geography, underscoring realised and as yet unrealised areas of crossover between these research traditions (Widgren, 2015). As Widgren (2015) argues, a landscape geography centring on the contemporary resource rush as well as on the relations between farming landscapes and labour could build important bridges to political ecology. Meanwhile Jönsson (2015, 2016) has scrutinised the production of high-end golf landscapes, and the conflicts surrounding these, drawing on both landscape geography and political ecology.

Recent efforts to centre on landscape as co-constitutions of the natural and the social is crucial also to debates on environmental (in)justice (Mels, 2016, 2021). With resource extraction on Gotland as his case study, Mels (2021) explores how a dialogue between environmental justice and landscape ecology can be initiated, stating that "environmental justice is historically entangled with a contested material and discursive process of landscape production. By extension, therefore, this moves scholarly engagement with environmental justice to the deep historical geography and ecology of landscape change" (Mels, 2021, p. 12). Particularly drawing on Pellow and Brulle's (2005) 'critical environmental justice', a form of environmental justice that moves beyond local scales of inquiry and extends analysis over longer time periods, Mels traces the way that Gotland, from the mid-nineteenth century, was remade through injections of foreign capital, as mires were drained, and as 40 ships of lumber yearly left for England. In the conflicts surrounding such transformations he holds that "peasant claims to the right to the landscape as a customary, everyday place of use value were claims to environmental justice" (Mels, 2021, p. 8). Landscape and landscape transformation should hence be the concern both of landscape geographers, and of those studying and striving for environmental justice. Mels' explorations of Gotland's transformation thereby not only offer an example of how concerns over (current and historical) environmental transformation is increasingly moving to the centre of Nordic landscape geography. It also underscores how 'new' combinations of different research traditions, developed within different contexts and changing epistemologies, can reinvigorate landscape research in the broader sense. In this particular case, Mels (2021) is aided by environmental justice scholarship in underscoring the necessity of developing a landscape theory that accounts for injustices inherent to the capitalist production of nature (see Smith, 1984).

Towards New Landscape Relations?

Throughout this chapter, we have illuminated important tensions in how landscape is conceptualized within both Nordic geography and landscape geography more broadly. On the one hand, landscape as both concept and reality is, at least historically, heavily invested in cultivation, dwelling and settlement (e.g. Bender & Winer,

2001; Wylie, 2016). But such preoccupation with stability, coherence and fixity is increasingly under attack from scholars arguing for a landscape concept that must be much more open and sensitive to multi-scalar forces and spatial dynamism, including critical questions concerning dislocation, alienation and (in)justice (Wylie, 2016; Mitchell, 2017; Setten, 2020; Mels, 2021). Although coming from different positions, these scholars argue that landscape is fundamentally relational, which is to say that humans and nature are co-producers, or co-agents, of landscapes (e.g. Mitchell, 2017; Stenseke, 2018), though this does certainly not mean that there is an agreement on what it could or should mean to claim co-production. During the last two decades this view has been further buttressed by a 'relational turn' within the social sciences that, simply put, aims to shift the focus from specific objects to networks, relations and entanglements (Allen, 2011; Jones, 2009). Though we should be wary of over-simplistically summarising what this means for socio-spatial theory, it is safe to say that relational thinking spurs researchers to scrutinise geographical study objects as internalising, and thus constituted by, the interplay of different processes (Harvey, 1996; Massey, 2005).

As we have seen, a relational approach to landscape is indeed something that several Nordic scholars have emphasised, frequently with reference to the kind of geography necessitated by the increasing prominence of environmental problems in academia and policy circles alike. But at the same time, it is important to critically scrutinise what various framings of relationality do to how landscape is conceptualised. Rather than emphasise abstract relationality per se, we need to ask ourselves what kind of relationality for what kind of landscape scholarship. This is a question of both intellectual and political importance.

Returning to Hägerstrand (1992), his concept of a *förloppslandskap* (processual landscape) was inspired by Sörlin's (1990) writings on a 'natural contract' (*naturkontrakt*). Hägerstrand argued that landscape should refer "to not only what one can see around oneself, but to all that is present within the decided geographical boundary, including everything that moves in and out over the boundary during the time-period one has delimited" (Hägerstrand, 1992, p. 10–11, our translation). In emphasising movement and the relations between places, Hägerstrand (1992) conceptualised landscape as a never stable configuration. This has allowed Sanglert (2013) to use Hägerstrand's conceptual apparatus for opening up possible connections to the ontological stratigraphy of critical realism as a basis for landscape studies. Yet, at the same time, the processes accounted for in Hägerstrand's framework are placed at a rather high level of abstraction. He is concerned with the relationship (still phrased within a dualist framework) between 'society' and 'nature' rather than with exploring the intricacies of power within such a relationship. Hägerstrand hence falls short of accounting for the fundamental power relations that any landscape holds.

Both in Widgren's (2015) attempt to combine political ecology and landscape geography, and in Mels' (2021) engagements with environmental justice, the ambition to hone in on power relations is more central, while the identified root problem is a tendency within landscape geography to not fully analyse the multi-scalar

relations that make and remake the landscapes studied (see also Setten, 2020). As Widgren (2015, p. 202) remarks, research that "explicitly addresses the global links of European agriculture does not often figure within the landscape framework, despite the fact that European landscapes in the past and in the present are the clear outcome of such links". It is in light of such under-acknowledgement that Widgren sees potential in linking political ecology and landscape geography, countering both the relative lack of interaction between these research fields, and a historical tendency for landscape geography to centre on Europe and political ecology to centre on the Global South. More to the point, Widgren (2015, p. 200) invokes one of the most prominent tools of 1980s political ecology, Piers Blaikie's (1985) chain of explanation, to illuminate how "many of the most cherished 'traditional' landscapes in Europe […] are the products of an early modern world system and rising capitalism in the 17th to 19th centuries, rather than reflecting subsistence and inertia, as much of the dominant landscape preservation narrative argues". This evidently becomes a conceptual framework for elaborating on landscapes as not that which draws us 'in', 'home' or 'back', but that which can become a starting point for pondering often deeply unequal forms of multi-scalar connectivity.

Conclusions

In this chapter we have sought to emphasise that 'landscape' in a Nordic context is a notion that has a rich history within as well as beyond geography, spanning almost a millennium from the landscape laws and the Icelandic sagas onwards. It is a complex, productive and engaging concept which both historically and today carry multifarious meanings. Depending on the language we take as our starting point, it can refer to visual characteristics (as with the Icelandic *landsleg* or *landslag*, or Finnish *maisema*), a polity (as with the Danish *landskab* or Swedish *landskap*), or a historical province (as in one of the meanings in Swedish and Norwegian). As a political act, studying landscapes can, as with Nelson or Linnaeus, be a way to strengthen state power and overall feelings for the *fatherland.* But landscape can also be a way to emphasise political possibilities beyond modern state rationalities (Olwig, 1996), as well as a way to scrutinize issues of power, exploitation, and environmental justice in contested landscapes (Widgren, 2015; Setten, 2020; Mels, 2021).

Meanwhile, landscape can be a common-sensical concept that remains implicit in research, or a concept at the very heart of methodological frameworks (Granö, 1997). It can be used to highlight human actions and perceptions, or (increasingly with current environmental concern) a concept utilised to highlight the fundamental entanglements between human beings and the rest of the world (Stenseke, 2018). Importantly, there is little use in searching for a true meaning beyond these various utilisations. Here we again rely on Said's (1983) insistence on acknowledging the

historical and political situatedness of theory. Landscape, as we begun this chapter by stating, is a complex concept, and to a significant degree this is precisely because the concept has meant so many different things throughout history.

What these shifting meanings underscore is that, like all influential concepts, landscape requires that researchers and students scrutinise just what we think of and refer to, and what we are ignoring or writing out when utilising a particular spatial vocabulary. Though all three of this chapter's authors engage with landscape in our research, we are not completely mesmerised by the concept. As we have emphasised, there are good reasons to question key traits of influential strands of landscape geography, and perhaps particularly to scrutinise what we believe is an over-emphasis on 'the local' as an inherently moral good. The task, it seems, is to move beyond this scale to render landscape geography more sensitive to various kinds of relationality, while also staying attuned to the ways that an analysis of landscape remains an analysis of the geographies of power.

For a concept that has been somewhat analytically stagnating for some time (Setten, 2020), explorations of landscapes need to become more tailored to understandings of relationality. However, the point is not merely to account for connectivity or fluidity per se. Rather, the point (again) is to critically scrutinise *which* relations for which kind of fluidities and relative (in)permanences can teach us more about the works that landscapes do and are set to do. There are multiple sources of inspiration that can be turned to that, no doubt, will produce a multitude of landscape relations. Employing a phenomenological 'dwelling perspective' (e.g. Qvenild et al., 2014 or Burlingame, 2020) will lead to a different kind of study and the unveiling of other landscape relations than one leaning on Hägerstrand's *förloppslandskap* (Germundsson & Riddersporre, 1996). Similarly, Stenseke's (2018) call for connecting relational landscape approaches to the introduction of 'relational values' in sustainability science, surely will lead to other 'landscapes' than Löfgren's (2020) analysis of how landscapes can be known in spatial planning.

Lastly, but crucially, the way that Nordic landscape geographers have already striven to develop ways to approach landscapes in relational terms, has not been possible without being immersed in relations beyond the 'Nordic', be they of conceptual, material and/or social nature. Moreover, inspirations have continuously spurred traffic between landscape geography and other academic fields. In his introduction to political ecology, Bryant (2015, p. 19) underlines the significance of 'part-time' political ecologists, who "often bring novel insights to political ecology from research done in other areas". Underlining the permeable nature of disciplinary boundaries and the fact that many scholars have an interest in multiple academic fields in multiple places at the same time, Bryant points to a facet that is just as prominent in landscape geography. In finding future ways of fruitfully grasping landscapes emphasising such a 'part-time' feature, and thus the continual traffic between various academic discourses, sub-fields and institutions, seems to become ever more important.

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Chapter 8
Trends and Challenges in Nordic Gender Geography

Gunnel Forsberg and Susanne Stenbacka

Introduction

Gender is a social category that in geography has been the subject of a variety of studies, with the aim of applying and developing theories of socio-spatial relations. But what does this really mean? In her article about a mining community in northern Norway, Halldis Valestrand (2018) tells the story about what happens when economic transformation alters traditional gender relations in one specific spatial context. The mine was closed in 1996, with major consequences for the inhabitants. Jobs that were traditionally labelled as male were lost and a more diversified labour market developed. Together with an increased strengthening of welfare measures such as kindergartens and maternity rights, this new situation was phrased a 'feminization of the municipality' (p. 1121). Several years later, the mine re-opened with a rapid inflow of migrating and commuting skilled male workers. Accordingly, the labour market went through a re-masculinisation process with a new understanding of what it was to be a man. With her detailed analysis, Valestrand gives an illustrative example of an analysis of the relation between gender and space. With its focus on locality, provision of welfare and labour market, this study also illustrates the socio-spatial contextual approach to gender geography in the Nordic countries. As shown in this example, such an approach means that places shape gender relations, but also that gender relations shape places.

Gender geography is both a sub-discipline in itself and a perspective in other geographical sub-disciplines. To analyse socio-spatial trends and challenges in Nordic gender geography, we conducted a review of the research carried out in this field,

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including dissertations, journal articles and reports from almost a hundred researchers in the Nordic countries. In the following, we will exemplify some of these, with a special focus on gender geography as a sub-discipline. We discuss gender geography as one strand of research where socio-spatial theorising has developed and where researchers have been dedicated to the task of adding new and gender related empirical knowledge and in-depth theoretical discussions to the discipline.

The Nordic Countries – A Gender Geography Community?

Feminist and gender geography had a rather late start in the Nordic countries. Buttimer and Mels (2006) explain this as a result of male-dominated institutional structures in the early 1980s. The first Nordic symposium on gender geography (or women's geography) was held in the spring of 1983 in Roskilde, Denmark, with over 40 participants from all Nordic countries. The prehistory of the meeting can be traced back to one of the Nordic symposia on critical human geography held in Røros, Norway, the year before. The female geographers found difficulties in getting a serious discussion about their research topics, and a frustration arose about the way they themselves and their papers were met by their male colleagues. This problem had already been addressed by Halldis Valestrand in an article in 1982, where she investigated the geography discipline's inability to acknowledge women's legitimate role in research design (Valestrand, 1982). Thus, the female geographers decided to organise conferences of their own to discuss the possibilities of establishing a women's perspective in the geographical research fields. This meeting in Roskilde was followed by meetings in Bergen, Uppsala and Tampere, where a broad range of topics were discussed, both empirical studies and more theoretical oriented themes on economic, social and political geography.

In the following, we discuss the ways in which Nordic gender geography has developed since these first meetings and scrutinise some of the challenges that this field of research encounters. We will present the topics developed and unpack similarities and dissimilarities in how Nordic gender geographers have tried to elaborate on the socio-spatial dimensions with their versatile empirical work, and we will illuminate the variety and depth of Nordic gender geography research. Common research topics have been related to scrutinising dichotomies such as public/private, production/reproduction, nature/culture and we/them. The underlying motivation was twofold: the first was to introduce gender aspects in human geography, and the second was to challenge the all-embracing gender theory by introducing space to the analysis. The gender-geographical discipline has developed along different strands, but the spatial contextualisation and the relation to the welfare state has been a common baseline in all the Nordic countries.

To the extent that a discipline develops within collective clusters of researchers with a common scholarly interest, the development of such clusters is of significance in analysing the various strands of gender geography that have developed in the Nordic countries. The development in Sweden can serve as an example of the

contextual character of such development. At the Department of Human Geography at Lund University, the strong tradition in time geography had implications for the department's first feminist-geographical studies of everyday life from a time geography perspective (Friberg, 1990; Åquist, 1992). Similarly, the economic-geographical orientation of the department at Uppsala University, resulted in gender-oriented studies on labour market and economic restructuring (Gonäs, 1989; Forsberg, 1989). In Stockholm, in a department which has a strong tradition of doing fieldwork on the African continent, the gender-geographical questions were raised in studies on female labour in Nigeria (Andrae, 1997). At Umeå University, many geographers were specialised in quantitative migration analysis, and it was in the field of migration that gender-geographical studies developed (Tollefsen Altamirano, 2000). Likewise, the tradition of regional development studies can be traced in gender-geographical studies on regional policy in Karlstad (Grip, 2010). Over the years, at each university department, gender geography has come to include a variety of themes and conceptual approaches. In her overview of Swedish feminist geography, Sircar (2019) argues that the last few decades have been marked by a stronger focus on intersectionality where issues of class, race and gender dominate.

The situation in the other Nordic countries has partly developed in other ways. Although the first conference was held in Roskilde, Denmark, the establishment of gender research has taken on quite different expressions there. In their article, *The challenge of feminist geography,* Simonsen and Vedel (1989) explain the situation in the late 1980s. Their conclusion is that the subject developed in Denmark in a cross-disciplinary way, with a special focus on power relations. This situation has prevailed, resulting in relatively few disciplinary gender geography contributions, and instead continued along cross-disciplinary approaches. A similar situation can be found in Finland, with important exceptions, such as Sireni's (2008) studies on rural female identities in relation to the welfare state, Koskela's (1997) studies on urban geographies of fear, and Hottola's (1999) analysis of embodied intercultural adaptation in tourism. In Iceland, the gender perspective in geography is developed in collaborations between anthropologists and geographers (Júlíusdóttir et al., 2013). In Norway, gender geography is most explicitly practised in Tromsø and Trondheim (Gerrard, 2013; Valestrand, 2018; Gunnerud Berg, 2004), but examples are also found in Bergen (Overå, 2007; Grimsrud, 2011) and at the University of South-Eastern Norway (Birkeland, 2002). Generally, studies on Norwegian feminist geography have focused on gender constructions and practices, in relation to migration, rurality and landscape.

The Meaning of a Scientific and Political Context

As shown in the overview above, the importance of a supporting scientific milieu should not be underestimated. It can be found in the formal structure, but informal milieus can be just as important. There must be some safe spaces where gender

geography is not only allowed and tolerated but also respected. However, this is not always the case (See Webster & Angela Caretta, 2019). Works that can add knowledge to the way scientific theorising develops in relation to researchers' personal lives and their scientific communities are biographies and autobiographies. Such documentations, written by and about Nordic female geographers (even if they are comparatively few), contribute to the development of the discipline in the Nordic countries, thus enriching and nuancing the writing of the history of geography (see, for example, Simonsen, 1999; Forsberg, 2010, 2021; Friberg, 2010; Jones, 2014). We would appreciate more of such writings, since it would shed further light on the different histories of gender geography in the Nordic countries.

Gender research is not an easy assignment. From the early start, it has been disputed and challenged (Niskanen & Florin, 2010). The scientific credibility and justification were initially questioned, and the studies' results were met with suspicion due to an assumed connection and proximity to feminist political movements. This was partly also true; the pioneers were women who were engaged in feminist politics. The feminist movement developed along various strands in the Nordic counties (Dahlerup, 2001), but regardless of the differences, the aim of gender geography was emancipatory. In all countries, the focus was on situations where women were especially affected and vulnerable. In many ways, this situation has prevailed. With a normative approach, quite a few researchers are looking for restoration. Some of the studies even have an explicit or implicit character of action research.

The development of Nordic geographical gender research can be traced back to an interest in the welfare state, the labour market structure and female participation in the labour force, initially in close connection with the political (left-wing) feminist movement. This led to a further interest in gender inequalities in work and everyday life, as well as in formal institutions and power structures. Theoretically, one of the first important influences was the American sociologist Joan Acker (1990), who in the late 1980s formulated her own theory of how patriarchal power structures constitute the backbone in organisational constructions. The political focus on gender equality and shared responsibilities has led research to embrace themes that explain and critically investigate material and discursive realities.

Structure and Agency – A Starting and Prevailing Point of Departure

The structure and agency approach constitutes a relevant framing for our presentation. Gender specific practices occur at an individual level – between and among men and women – as well as on a structural level, where it is possible to discern general patterns and conditions. Gender researchers had an early interest in how spatial inequalities were created within the capitalist and globalised economy. They emphasised the local level, including social and political contexts, which gradually gave rise to a shift from studies focusing on big firms, structural transformations and consequences for employees, to a growing interest in the conditions for female

self-employed entrepreneurs in small firms, where the interaction of structure and action became especially evident. As an alternative to more aggregated analysis, the orientation was on women as social agents, rather than the gender-neutral human concept traditionally used in economic geography. A major source of inspiration was the 1984 paper 'A women's place' by Doreen Massey and Linda McDowell (1984), which became one of the cornerstones for Nordic feminist geography. Their work showed the importance of taking the relation between gender and space seriously and how the two concepts made a successful relational pair for analytical and empirical analysis. It challenged human geography's traditional universal claim and provided the discipline with new narratives.

In the following, we will discuss how gender has been addressed, analysed and questioned in some sub-disciplines within geography, especially economic, social and planning geography.

Re-defining Economic Geography

Gender geography has constituted a continuous element in the subject of economic geographical research. With the help of detailed micro studies, the specific life forms of women in contemporary Nordic welfare state societies have been exposed. Constant changes in the economy affected the subjects of study, such as the period of major structural transformations, resulting in redundancies and closures in the beginning of the 1980s, when the consequences turned out to be very different for men and women respectively. Women had greater difficulties getting a new job and they more often became stuck in a situation of permanent contingency (Forsberg, 1989; Gonäs, 2006). These studies broadened the understanding of economic restructuring (Johansson, 2000). The effects of the industrial closures were furthermore dependent on the local geographical context. Regardless of place and branch, the consequences for female workers turned out to be more severe than for the male workers (Forsberg, 1989). Due to the strong dependence on primary and secondary production, the masculinities and femininities in sectors like food, fishery, forestry and mining became of interest for local gender analysis (Dale, 2002; Frangoudes & Gerrard, 2019). Changes in the relative attractiveness of primary resources, such as timber and minerals, and the following transformations of traditional masculinities and femininities were targets for analysis. As alternatives to more structural labour market analysis, questions of gender identities and performativity were elaborated and analysed (Heldt Cassel & Pettersson, 2015; Laszlo Ambjörnsson, 2021), together with an intersectional understanding of immigrant women and their attachment to the labour market (Júlíusdóttir et al., 2013; Zampoukos, 2021).

Whereas the studies on the Nordic labour market have a focus on the women's subordinated situation, the corresponding studies from the Global South have, to a greater extent, focused on the strength of women and their empowerment (Hannan, 2000). Their capabilities and survivability have been stressed, both as entrepreneurs and as head of households. The close relationship between a transforming primary

sector and its effects on household gender relations is exposed (Lindeborg, 2012). These studies show an ambition to give a voice and visibility to such overlooked aspects within mainstream economic geography.

An increased focus on entrepreneurship offers illustrative examples of how identity and ideology of hegemonic masculinity are imbued into the definition of (successful) entrepreneurship (Pettersson, 2002; Pettersson et al., 2017). Female entrepreneurship is shown to be closely connected to family situations, not least in rural locations (Lindqvist Scholten, 2003; Gunnerud Berg, 1997; Hedfeldt, 2008). To start a business is a strategy for women to support themselves and their family members, in Nordic as well as in other geographical contexts (Förte, 2013; Westermark, 2003). For immigrant women, especially those living in a rural community, to start their own business could be the opportunity to earn their own income (Webster, 2016). Equally important is the ambition to become a successful entrepreneur, including innovative and economic aspects. The driving force behind earning money, experiencing demands and appreciation might be just as important for female entrepreneurs as for male (Stenbacka, 2017).

With the use of critical social theories, discourse analysis, performativity and post-feminist theories, contemporary gender studies have managed to broaden the definition of economic geography and have contributed to the discourse with new discoveries about entrepreneurship in a spatial context (Hinchliffe, 2019). The masculine connotation of entrepreneurship, which made female entrepreneurs invisible, has been questioned, as it negatively affects the understanding of innovation and prosperous (successful) ideas.

To summarise, gender studies on economy and labour market have shown the importance of broadening traditional economic geography to include the situation of the female workforce, women dominated sectors and female entrepreneurs in the analysis. They challenge socio-spatial attributes such as urban-rural, migrant-native and masculine-feminine; in so doing, they have explored actor-structure relationships and their interdependence. Furthermore, they have shown how the gendered labour market and gendered discourses about entrepreneurship constitute important aspects of the economy.

Expanding the Definition of Spatial Identities and Migration

The intersection of space and gender promotes analyses that expose the production of contextual identities as either confirming or transforming certain power structures, which will be discussed in this section. The spatial approach in investigating gender identities is a particular form of intersectional analysis, recognising 'the significance of space in processes of subject formation' (Valentine, 2007). Nordic gender researchers have obtained their empirical data from diverse social contexts and from different parts of the world, thereby contributing with several spectra of methodological and theoretical insights. In Global South studies, the spatial context is analysed to understand fully the place-specific character of discrimination and

power relations (Lindell, 2011). When war and displacement constitute the focus of the study, it is shown how female actors use their social locations attained before the war. War and displacement are not only about the relationship between ethnic groups. Gender and class need to be considered when working for peace and sustainability (Brun, 2005).

Identity and migration are two closely related themes, and the gender perspective has increasingly become implemented as an important dimension of migration research. The demographic composition entailed a growing interest in young people's migration patterns. It was found that women tended to leave more sparsely populated areas for urban areas, and that women's and men's future visions differed increasingly; specifically, young males remained in their home region to a greater degree, partly because of greater possibilities to relate to local role models (Dahlström, 1996). Gender differences concerning the monetary outcome means that men, generally, benefit more from migration compared to women (Nilsson, 2001). These findings opened up for studies on migration and non-migration, male coping strategies in relation to unemployment versus women's migration practices in relation to education and the entering of alternative sectors (Stenbacka, 2008; Karlsdóttir, 2009). The concept 'spatial capital' functions as an analytical tool in explaining a decision to migrate or stay and needs to be understood in relation to gender and the overall composition of different forms of capital. Privileged positions and the possession of a symbolic capital influence what future horizons are visible and desirable for young individuals (Forsberg, 2019).

In several studies, individual narratives have been interpreted and analysed in relation to spatial power relations, such as hegemonic constructions of rural versus urban gender norms. However, while migration is often viewed as a means to avoid these predetermined roles, young people who remain might also contribute to changes. Young individuals are increasingly seen as agents in, rather than victims of, urbanisation processes and transformations of traditional gender norms (Stenbacka et al., 2017).

The threefold model of space, introduced by Lefebvre (1991) and developed by Halfacree (2006), has inspired Norwegian research on internal migration and how these migration streams relate to preservation and transformation of local gender relations or gender contracts. This model for interrogation of rural change highlights the way in which migration interacts with place, and that migration is an outcome of the spatiality of the destination and the intentions of the in-migrants (Grimsrud, 2011). Female migration both sustains and challenges spatial traditional gender contracts (Munkejord, 2009).

The statement in gender studies that sexual identities cause specific migration patterns has been investigated from a geographical perspective by Wimark (2014). His study on migration patterns among gay men in Sweden and Turkey contradicts this hypothesis. He found that the migration patterns are more linked to life processes and patterns, similar to those of heterosexuals, and less to the sexual identity per se. Thereby, he challenges existing notions on rural-urban migration streams among homosexuals.

Local and global restructuring, including an intersectional approach, inspires several studies on migration and labour market processes. A study by Júlíusdóttir et al. (2013) on Icelandic migration constitutes an example, where the social and spatial mobility among women is analysed as intersecting with ethnicity and class. Labour market transformation gives rise to internal and international migration streams; immigrant women have taken over low-strata jobs. Migration among male Icelanders, on the other hand, initiated by the ups and downs of the construction industry, recruited for skilled jobs in peripheral regions in Norway, is probably merely filling gaps in regional labour markets in a similar way as immigrants in Iceland. Such processes, also understood as socio-spatial mobility, contribute to geographies of labour, by paying attention to a segmented and segregated labour market where gendered coded work involves categories of race and class (Zampoukos, 2015). These studies contribute theoretically to an understanding of how national and international migration streams are closely connected and that migration streams need to be analysed as parts of a wider web of diverse streams, rather than a link between two destinations.

Internationalisation of the workforce has increasingly become a theme in studies on international migration and gender. Studies on female labour migration, in relation to motherhood and living conditions for children left behind, contribute with intergenerational perspectives. Global power relations, leaning on economic and political relationships, are revealed (Aragao-Lagergren, 2010). An intersectional approach illuminates the way gender, class and nationality/ethnicity interact, inform and reproduce spatialised domination and labour exploitation (Hierofani, 2016). Such geographical power asymmetries are present in the bodies of individuals and have an impact on the sending as well as the receiving countries (Webster, 2016).

Studies on rural masculinities contribute with knowledge on intra-gender relations associated with spatial urban-rural tensions, which in some contexts might appear stronger than inter-gender conflicts (Bye, 2010). Emphasising discursive elements of rural masculinities, such as traditional and backwards, reveals the presence of hegemonic urban ideals and othering processes (Stenbacka, 2011). The construction of spatial rural identities from 'the inside' demonstrates the prevalence of non-hegemonic masculinities. Contrary to emphasising 'macho' traits (Aure & Munkejord, 2015), masculinities are explored as factors structuring a broader understanding of spatial identities.

It is relatively uncommon for gender geographers to rely on historical data, but there are some. One example is Gräslund Berg (2011) who in her analysis of medieval maps identified hidden traces of female activities. Another example is Loftsdóttir (2008, 2015) who scrutinises the Icelandic nationality and explores an Icelandic struggle with 'otherness' at different times in history: one in 1905, and the other in 2008. Her analysis reveals that Icelandic nationality is normalised as male, and it identifies Icelandic anxieties about being classified with the 'wrong' people – since this could disturb the attempt to situate themselves within the 'civilised' part of the world. However, the historic association with the exotic and its gendered manifestations is, today, viewed as an asset in branding the nation within the context

of the tourist and state industries. Thus, the author illuminates how gender identities and constructions are made into commodities.

A micro-perspective on space is represented by studies on the body as a site, where power is played out. A combination of urban theories and intersectional approaches has inspired studies on the gendered body, being in and out of place. The nation-race-sexuality relationship, including post-colonial theory, is developed by Molina (2007) in her study on home and homelessness and the problematic racialised female body. This refers to the women's strong private disjunction, the exclusion from the home and the connotation as 'stranger'.

Summarised, these studies can be characterised as analysing geopolitical processes 'on the ground' (Jacobsen, 2019). Studies on spatial identities, based on empirical material including narratives and observations, effectively illuminate gendered spatial power geometries of dominance and subordination. Entering a particular room or space implicates for example to be in one or the other position. The gender-geographical analyses are per se devoted to intersectional perspectives, and in addition to gender and space, they often also include social categories such as race and class. The gender-geographical research field consists of empirical contributions that stretch across regional, national and international scales. Political geographical processes are made visible through field studies on regional and international gender relations of power. Migrants' sense-making and migration biographies are central, as are individuals' perceptions of how gender identities are shaped in relation to space. As such, these studies exemplify how gender geography studies elaborate on the theoretical socio-spatial arena.

Highlighting the Mutual Interdependence of Gender and Planning

Prevailing gender relations impact how planning takes shape. This relation also works the other way around, i.e. how the society is planned will affect how gender is experienced and practised. This section comprises works on planning and power balances in public spaces. However, the intersection with private spaces and arenas included in everyday lives is explicit. By using feminist theorisation and planning theory, planners' conceptions of gender and the manner in which they incorporate a gender perspective into comprehensive physical planning is scrutinised. Planners themselves, as gendered actors, are sometimes the subject of studies. Dichotomies, private and public space, everyday life and networks, are examples of central concepts used to expose gendered planning processes.

Control over space, the right to mobility and accessibility to urban spaces are all gendered aspects of planning, which are analysed in studies using concepts such as social production of space, empowerment, post-colonialism and intersectionality. The production of urban space as processes that exclude women engages several geographers within the Nordic countries. One subject of analysis is fear in relation

to public urban space. Koskela (1997), for example, sees fear as both a consequence of the unequal status of women, and a preserver of the same inequalities. Women's relations to space involve exclusion, following from the risk of violence and incidents of sexual harassment. Spatial consequences are traced from events infused with such social and emotional aspects. By scrutinising media discourses of fear and crime, it is shown that these representations of cities 'in fear' become part of the description of urban places and create generalised patterns of gendered and racialised fear of violence in public space (Sandberg, 2020).

Also, how planning practices have been influenced by the changing ethnic composition of the population is analysed from a gender perspective. Integration policy is interpreted as a practise of difference, rather than fulfilling the goals of the integration policy expressed in terms of similarity and equality (Grip, 2010). Analysis of bodily aspects within urban public spaces shows the intersection with global political processes. Sexist and racist violence is interpreted as linked to the global geopolitical context, as well as to national contexts of political processes and the local urban context where life is lived (Listerborn, 2016).

Analysis of regional planning from a gender perspective spans from a variety of aspects. One example is identity politics and culture as a regional resource, another is planning of transport corridors at the European level and a third example is consequences of regional enlargement (Friberg, 2008). Within the European Union, policy aims to enhance regional learning and increase gender equality; intentions that are challenged but also enriched by regional variations. Political concepts and visions might be shared, while local gender relations complicate the implementation (Stenbacka, 2015). Conceptual tools such as homosocial networks and hegemonic masculinity add to an understanding of the informal character of regional planning and a multi-spatial local and global networking (Forsberg & Lindgren, 2010). Politicising gendered power relations is also scrutinised by investigating the goal of creating a gender equal city (Sandberg & Rönnblom, 2016).

Transport and mobility studies, sub-fields within urban and regional planning, have contributed to theoretical and empirical conquests. Commuting, a practice that affects social life, is investigated in relation to work, housing and the consequences for everyday life and the relationship between family and work life. Applying a time-geographical framework and method of analysis, with its specific conceptual apparatus, contributes to an increased understanding of the gendered aspects of commuting (Lindqvist Scholten et al., 2014). Gender based transport research account for diverse aspects shaping the work trip, and recent research confirm earlier identified inequalities and attached balances of power, with regard to women having less spatial reach and access to the labour market (Gil Solá, 2013; Friberg, 2008). Transport planning, for many years affected by a masculine gender code, is being challenged by researchers who add alternative, often qualitative, methods to the understanding of transport systems and their users. Applying qualitative and critical epistemologies brings increased knowledge to the transport planning research field (Joelsson & Scholten, 2019). The diversity of social positions, such as gender, age and ableism, is key to understanding the planning practices regarding equity and accessibility; transport planning is an explicit political practice.

To sum up, the mutual interdependence of gender and planning has engaged geographers since the introduction of gender geography. As a result, planning has been enriched by theoretical perspectives and empirical investigations that connect planning to challenges in everyday life. Interestingly, quite a few have used the theoretical framework of time geography in planning research from a gender perspective. Along the way, it has become evident to add a gender perspective in exploring the concept of commuting and women's everyday lives. In studies on segregation and displacement, the intersectional aspects of space, race and gender have contributed to wider understandings of power and exposure, threats in public spaces and methods for planning at local and regional levels. Theoretical understanding of gendered socio-spatial relations intersects with planning practices in gender-geographical research.

Emphasising Nordic Distinctiveness – A Synthesis

A significant part of Nordic gender geography has been inspired by theories developed by Anglophone feminist scholars. In some fields, the theories have been applied to studies in a Nordic context and have been useful in explaining and analysing certain features. However, in other fields, these theories have generated research that question its validity. Feminist researchers from countries outside the Anglo-American world have increasingly come to examine how so-called international research is biased, as a majority of published studies come from the United States and England (García Ramon et al., 2006), and several studies have highlighted a need to reformulate theories that have arisen in the Anglo-American part of the world and formulated new theories with a solid base in empirical research in different contexts. Setten (2003, p. 134), for example, pays attention to competing notions of landscape. Moreover, with her study in southern Norway, she explores 'the often taken for granted idea of the visual, scenic nature of landscape and what by leading Anglophonic feminist landscape scholars is seen to be a penetrating masculine gaze inherent in the visual', and landscape as 'the material manifestation of a polity and its body of customs and practices'. Landscape as scenery is contrasted with landscape as customary practice in place. If researchers are to engage critically in both landscape discourses, she argues, the dynamism of lived lives needs to be included. Along the same strand, Forsberg and Gunnerud Berg (2003) challenge the theory of 'the rural idyll' – including a traditional gender arrangement – as the driving force for counter-urbanisation migration. With empirical examples from Sweden and Norway, the authors found quite different results. The migrating families were much more well-informed about the living conditions in the countryside and the rural landscape than just relying on old-fashioned and stereotypical myths. The decision to move to a rural environment could not be traced to purposes related to traditional gender practices.

Contextual Gender Theorising

Within Nordic gender geography, there has thematically been a shift from an empirical focus on women, to structural-relational analysis and an actor perspective, and from one single gender theory to a range of various gender theories, along with a pronounced increased interest in intersectionality. A specific characteristic is the use of both quantitative and qualitative analysis. Nevertheless, the qualitative methodologies have had a significant and growing precedence in relation to quantitative methods. This is more so in contemporary studies, where questions of gender identity and performance are gaining ground in feminist geographical studies.

Some female researchers have made important contributions to formulating alternative socio-spatial gender theories. Ann-Catrine Åquist (1992), from Sweden, specifically oriented her research towards a critical assessment of a geographical theory, namely time geography, first developed by Torsten Hägerstrand (1985). She did this by analysing the theory through the lens of women's everyday lives. Inger Birkeland in Norway (2002) challenged the geographical theory of the nature/culture relation through interpreting interviews by female travellers to Nordkap using the French philosopher Luce Irigary and the French feminist non-dualistic understanding of gender. In Denmark, Kirsten Simonsen (2007) developed a space-specific practice theory that has been applied in several Nordic gender studies. Her body-oriented spatial approach has likewise been of inspiration to many (Simonsen & Koefoed, 2020).

With her path-breaking book *Gender Trouble* (1990), the philosopher Judith Butler has made an impressive impact on gender research worldwide. Her linguistic oriented theory effectively articulates how gender is produced in social processes, and that gender is socially constructed. She took this standpoint further and challenged the heterosexual assumption in traditional feminist theory and questioned the sex/gender dichotomy. For her, gender is performance, and identities do not pre-exist their performance (Gregson & Rose, 2000, 438). Her analysis has influenced feminist research in essential ways, and she has also been cited in gender geography works. However, her psychoanalytically inspired analysis has some constraints for spatial gender analysis. Nelson (1999) articulated the limitations with Butler's approach by stating that it means 'a subject abstracted from personal, lived experience as well as from its historical and geographical embeddedness' (Nelson, 1999, 332). In addition, she argues, performativity 'provides no space for conscious reflexivity, negotiation or agency in the doing of identity' (Nelson, 1999, 332). We believe that Nordic gender geographers' interest in subjects, actors and the materiality of places has led them to extend the search towards other theoretical approaches. Most importantly, the acknowledgement of individuals' gendered biographies – biographies that are constructed within one's culture – means that space and time are crucial dimensions and that the subject pre-exists the performance (Brickell, 2003). The strength of geographical analysis is the ability to identify and challenge both structural and material circumstances as well as the identities, biographies, performances and intentions of gendered actors.

Among attempts to develop gender-geographical theory, we will exemplify by presenting the local gender contract analysis and the 'going gender' approach. The intersectional analysis has gained much attention as it problematises the simple dichotomy of gender in traditional gender theory, inspiring deeper examinations of other influential attributes such as age, sexual identity, ethnicity – and space. By applying the concept of a local gender contract as an analytical tool, it is possible to explain how, seemingly contradictory, gender relations can appear simultaneously, and that individuals' or groups' own reflections may arise from pre-existing perceptions of space (Forsberg, 2001; Forsberg & Stenbacka, 2017). In our view, the concept of local gender contract acknowledges the complexity of spatial scales, enabling studies on micro-, meso- and macro-level; it adds the spatial aspect to the intersectional approach. It is an attempt to develop a gender-geographical theory as it lends itself to analyses of spatial variations and explores gender relations as developing from the intersection of structures and actors. It enables a possibility to break the tendency to homogenise gender relations through visualising the importance of spatial particularities. With this concept, it is possible to distinguish and analyse gender relations in different spatial contexts within different scales, rather than striving for 'order' or spatial generalisations. Early influences on this came from Nordic philosophers and historians such as Hanne Haavind (1985) from Norway and Yvonne Hirdman (1990) from Sweden, who, from different perspectives, contributed to an understanding of the relativity of female subordination. This was, in many works, transferred to geography by introducing space, in order to explain the variety of local gender relations and of how they were negotiated and re-negotiated.

A gender contract concerns the formal, as well as informal, mechanisms that affect the way men and women relate to and confront each other, on both a structural and a personal level. Men and women shape and reshape these contracts by acting in line with, or in opposition, to them. Gender contracts are, in spite of its formal connotations, informal negotiations on what behaviour is expected from men and women, respectively. These contracts work at the metaphysical level, including cultural myths and representations; the concrete and institutional level, for example, in employment and politics; and the individual level, among men and women at home, and in relationships. The contracts are rigid and solid but not fixed, and they provide some scope for negotiation, albeit not on equal terms. Embedded in the contracts are significant power relations based upon male superiority (Hirdman, 1990).

The local context is active in reproducing and maintaining, as well as transforming, gender relations and thereby reshaping the gender contract. Changes in the local labour market will affect how men and women relate to each other, as we saw in the Norwegian example that introduced this chapter. In addition, spatial variations in gender contracts at local and regional levels will affect, and be affected by, other activities and outcomes from policy and planning. Thus, this concept, embracing a space-sensitive approach, is developed to strengthen analysis in research as well as in development of policy.

A further analysis along this line is the going gender approach. 'Going gender' is a spatial activity that involves agency and structure (Stenbacka & Forsberg, 2020). Our main argument is that gendered practices are in motion because of individuals'

struggle to perform according to diverse and sometimes conflicting gender contracts in various places and milieus. 'Going-gender' analysis focuses specifically on the instability of gender practices. People can 'go gender' in different ways and to varying degrees, depending on their gender, age, sexuality, biographical and geographical background. These demanding gender practices may be intentional and involve negotiation. For example, when people move or migrate between places, they have to handle the intersections and dilemmas of diverse gender contracts by applying a 'going gender' practice. This emphasises the transfigurative character of 'doing gender' and, most importantly, acknowledges the reflexive attitudes and strategic approaches of individuals.

Conclusion

From our analysis of Nordic gendered geographies, we identify a potential for a significant contribution to gender theory and to socio-spatial analysis of power. Regardless of dissimilarities in research topics, methods and theoretical concepts, gender geography can contribute to a contextual gender theory, emphasising space as both a designer and an interpreter of gender relations. Socio-spatial gender theorising can modify the idea of universal and all-embracing theoretical explanation of how gender is constructed. Gender geography explains how gender relations are produced, reproduced and re-negotiated in everyday lives at the local level; in such analysis, there are implicit spatial and material aspects. Regional and local gender relations become a player in the structure-agency relationship. Thus, a socio-spatial power analysis benefits from a contextual understanding of gender.

Even though the number of female geographers is steadily increasing, the future brings some challenges. Webster and Angela Caretta (2019) exemplified some of the difficulties that young female geographers still encounter in their way into the present neoliberal academy, where the present workplace cultures and power relations may act in a preventive way. They testify to an increasing precariousness of academic jobs and growing managerialism together with new demands for entering the contemporary academic job market. Another challenge is that Nordic feminist geography has failed to make a notable impact on overall gender studies, and gender geography has not become an obvious and respected sub-discipline in geographical teaching and research. Still, mainstream teaching takes the supposed gender neutral 'man-and-environment' perspective as its point of departure, and gender research seldom appears as representing successful research at the departments' websites.

Furthermore, there are still traces of suspicion, more so after some right wings' public attacks on gender research and its supposed political infiltration. Even if there is considerable gender research going on, as we have shown, we are still waiting for a gender turn in spatial research in the Nordic geography departments. There is a vibrant development in contemporary gender theory, waiting to be integrated into geographical research. A final challenge is to engage more male researchers to

adopt a gender perspective in their studies. There is a potential for exciting new orientations and theoretical improvements with engagements by the next generation of geographers.

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Chapter 9
Economic Geography of Innovation and Regional Development

Bjørn T. Asheim, Høgni Kalsø Hansen, and Arne Isaksen

Introduction: Situating the Authors

The chapter focuses on economic geography in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. It deals with the individual three countries as part of the overall structure, which takes as the point of departure the foreign influences that in different periods shaped the dominant approaches in economic geography in Scandinavia. The chapter discusses how key foreign contributions and approaches were employed on empirical cases in the Scandinavian countries and adapted to specific aspects of Scandinavian society. For example, empirical cases often include engineering and work-to-order manufacturing industries and resource-based industries, operating in a coordinated market economy with a larger role of public policy and with more trust-based cooperation than in contexts in which many key contributions emerged, such as in the US and UK. The chapter highlights regional strongholds and influential individuals that had a role in advancing economic geography of innovation and regional development in the Scandinavian countries. The selection will of course to a certain extent reflect the experiences of the authors. Asheim has been an active participant in Nordic geography from the mid-1970s, while Isaksen and Hansen entered later. Thus, it is the situatedness of the authors that to a large extent has determined the structure and content of the chapter. The chapter covers development trends in Scandinavian economic geography of innovation and regions in the period 1980–2020. It will not

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explicitly deal with Marxist economic geography, which had a stronghold in Denmark in the 1970s (in this book, see Jakobsen & Larsen, 2022). However, it describes the connection and influence of Marxist inspired economic geography, which Asheim was acquainted with during his time working in Denmark at the end of the 1970s and beginning of the 1980s.

Asheim graduated with a Master's degree from the Norwegian School of Economics in Bergen in 1971, with economic geography as a minor subject. After working some years in a governmental study about the level of living in Norway, where he was responsible for the study of regional inequalities in level of living that would later be his PhD thesis, he moved to Lund University as a PhD fellow at the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) in Bergen to pursue PhD studies under the supervision of Torsten Hägerstrand. He defended his PhD in May 1979. After a shorter stay at Roskilde University as an external lecturer and at Aarhus University as an associate professor (1978–1981), he moved back to Norway to become associate professor in human geography at the University of Oslo in 1981, where he became full professor from 1993 until 1999, when he moved his chair to the newly established Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture (TIK) at the Social Science Faculty at the University of Oslo. He stayed at TIK until he became professor in economic geography at Lund University in 2001, and from July 2004 also professor at the newly established Centre for Innovation, Research and Competence in the Learning Economy (Circle), where he was deputy director 2004–2011 and director 2011–2013. He moved to the University of Stavanger in the autumn of 2013, where he was full professor in economic geography and innovation theory at the Business School until his retirement in September 2020. Asheim is still affiliated with the Business School at University of Stavanger and Circle at Lund University. Thus, his career started at a business school and ended at a business school, demonstrating also a gradually changed focus from economic geography to innovation studies, but he is still keeping a strong link with economic geography through the continued focus on regional innovation. In connection with Asheim's seventieth birthday in 2018, Arne Isaksen, Roman Martin and Michaela Trippl published a Festschrift (Isaksen et al., 2018).

Isaksen graduated with a Master's degree in human geography from the University of Oslo in 1982 with a thesis on the historical development of the manufacturing industry in the Oslo region. After a few years in the public Labour Market Agency, he worked as a researcher at the applied research institute Agder Research from 1985 to 1995. Here he used results from several Research Council projects in his PhD thesis on regional industrial development and the growth of regional clusters. Using a critical realist approach focusing on theoretically informed empirical studies, three regional cases from Norway were applied as examples of industrial sectors that, according to Scott (1988), introduced flexible production methods and developed different types of new industrial spaces; that is, high-tech industries, craft and design intensive industries, and producer services. Isaksen joined the research institute STEP (Studies in Technology, Innovation and Economic Policy) from 1995 to 2000, and then, together with Asheim and Heidi Wiig, performed empirical studies of regional innovation systems (RISs) and analysed regional innovation policy.

He started in 2000 at the University College of Agder, which became the University of Agder in 2007, and continued studies of regional industrial development and restructuring in many types of regions and industries, often with an evolutionary approach.

Hansen graduated as a geographer specialising in socioeconomic geography from University of Copenhagen in 2001 with a thesis on the relation between knowledge creation and acquisitions within the agricultural machinery production industry in Denmark. In 2008 Hansen got his PhD in economic geography from Lund University on a thesis on knowledge creation, skills, labour mobility and urban and regional development. After being a postdoc at Circle and the Department of Social and Economic Geography in Lund, working on similar issues, Hansen became associate professor in human geography at Department of Geoscience and Natural Resource Management at University of Copenhagen in 2011, primarily occupied with labour market dynamics, firm location, innovation, human capital and migration.

Asheim has worked in all three Scandinavian countries, Hansen in Sweden and Denmark, and Isaksen in Norway, all three with a well-developed network with economic geographers in all Scandinavian countries. Thus, this concrete situatedness represents the pragmatic reasons for the delimitation of topics, places and people in the chapter, but the delimitation is also informed by theoretical and history of ideas arguments.

The size and impact of human geography varies between the three Scandinavian countries. Human geography, not least economic geography, is much bigger in Sweden than in the other two Scandinavian countries, and the academic and societal impact is also biggest in Sweden. This has partly to do with the institutionalisation of chairs in economic geography at the two oldest Swedish universities (Uppsala and Lund) in 1953, when the geography departments were split between physical geography, which joined the Faculty of Science, and human geography which joined the Social Science Faculty. Before the separation, geography departments in Sweden had two chairs, one in human and one in physical geography. When splitting up, human geographers took an initiative and argued that human geography should continue to have two chairs, one in human geography and one in economic geography. Sweden has six geography departments that teach and research economic geography, Lund, Gothenburg, Uppsala, Stockholm, Umeå and Karlstad universities.[1] In addition, one finds research in economic geography at the Stockholm School of Economics as well as in research groups such as Circle at Lund University. Due to its size and impact, one also finds internationally leading researchers in Swedish human and economic geography earlier than in the other Scandinavian countries. The most famous name is of course Torsten Hägerstrand, who worked at Lund University. He was, however, not an economic geographer, but a broader human geographer, who also did research of great relevance to economic

[1] The department of Human Geography at Gothenburg University was split up between economic geography, which remained in the Business School, and the rest of human geography that formed a separate department with other topics at the Social Science Faculty.

geography, e.g. in his studies of innovation diffusion. An economic geographer worth mentioning in this context, is Gunnar Törnquist, who was professor and chair in economic geography for 35 years, 1966–2001. Törnquist was a very innovative researcher contributing to a renewal of traditional location theory by taking into consideration the importance of information flows and non-physical communication networks for the locational patterns of economic activity. In this research he already in the mid-1960s in many ways anticipated the role of virtual networks, we observe today. He also worked on the changing economic geography of Europe as a result of economic and political integration, and on the geography of creativity, developed independent of Richard Florida's work, emphasizing the role of top universities and star scientists for regional development (Törnqvist, 2011; Asheim, 1987).

In Norway there are three geography departments at the Universities of Oslo,[2] Bergen and Trondheim that teach economic geography. In addition, economic geographical research (and some teaching) is carried out by a strong research group at University of Agder and now also at the Mohn Centre for innovation and regional development at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences in Bergen. This has moved the gravity point of economic geographic research in Bergen from the University of Bergen to the Applied University, as well as nationally to a growing research group at the Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences in Lillehammer and to the Centre for Innovation Research at the University of Stavanger. All of these research groups have, as a strategy of development, engaged leading international researchers in II-er (20%) positions. Contributing to the weakening of economic geography at the University of Bergen was the closure of the joint geography department with the Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) in 2004.[3]

In Denmark geography programmes are taught at three universities: Copenhagen, Roskilde and Aalborg. Geography as a master degree is being closed down from the autumn 2022 at Roskilde University. It will still be possible to take a bachelor degree in geography but always in combination with another subject. Moreover, no department of geography can be found any more in Denmark. University of Copenhagen at Department of Geosciences and Natural Resource Management has a Section for Geography, similar to the former Department of Geography that is dedicated to research and teaching within GIS, physical and human geography. At both Roskilde and Aalborg geography is the taught by staff from departments with a broader scientific scope. There used to be a department of human geography at Aarhus University, but it was closed in the mid-1980s. Economic geography in Denmark is strongest at Section for Geography at the Department of Geosciences

[2] Human geography at University of Oslo was originally at the Art Faculty and formed a Department of Geography with Physical Geography from the Science Faculty. In 1994 (when Asheim was Head of Department) Human Geography moved to the Social Science Faculty and joined sociology in a common department.

[3] The joint department was established in 1964, when geography became a topic at the University of Bergen. Economic geography was taught from the start of NHH in 1936 until 1999, when economic geography was integrated with economics at NHH.

and Natural Resource Management at Copenhagen University where geography is traditionally organised by containing both physical and human geography.

The Socio-Spatial Theorisation in (of) Human (Economic) Geography

Asheim started his career by doing research in what internationally become known as welfare geography. This was part of the liberal, non-Marxist reaction to the dominating positivist spatial analysis tradition of the quantitative revolution, which focused on the general trends of spatial structures and spatial processes in societies and left history to historians and society to social scientists. In the late 1960s and beginning of 1970s an increasing demand for social relevance in human geography rose increasingly louder and one manifestation was the growth of welfare geography, which took social problems, not spatial phenomenon, as its point of departure. Thus, the sole dominance of space in human geographic research from the spatial analysis tradition was challenged.

One of the solutions to this problem was to talk about socio-spatial relations, introducing the social as an equal dimension to the spatial in geographic research. This idea was also taken up by Marxist geographers, such as Soja (1980) talking about the socio-spatial dialectic. However, this did not solve the basic problem, as a dialectic relation still consists of two separate objects, and space was in reality often approached in ways similar to the spatial analysis tradition, i.e., as something external to social relations as was conceptualises by the relative concept of space. The solution to this problem was supplied by Harvey in *Social Justice and the City* from 1973 (Harvey, 1973). He introduced the concept of relational space, where space is defined as an intrinsic property of the object studied, which eliminated the distinction between the spatial and the non-spatial. The relational concept of space corresponds to a perception that geography should undertake contextual analysis as opposed to compositional analysis (Hägerstrand, 1974). This perception is basically rooted in the ontological position of geography, following Kant, as a synthetic discipline of a physically defined science (understood as chorology) in opposition to analytical sciences based on their respective objects of study. The ambition of the spatial analysis school was to turn geography into an analytical, nomothetic science by focusing on space as its object of study, in an attempt of making it scientific, in contrast to the earlier dominating, ideographic and descriptive regional geography (Schaefer, 1953). Thus, our position on the question of the socio-spatial theorisation of economic geography, is that we argue that economic geography should do contextual analysis, where space is an analytical, un-separately property of the studied object (Asheim, 2006, 2020; Asheim & Haraldsen, 1991).[4] One implication of this

[4]Asheim used this view on the development of human geography to structure his teaching of history of geographic ideas and philosophy of science at University of Oslo and Lund University in the 1990s and 2000s.

view was that the theoretical work in economic geography became focused on societal objects studied (in context) and not on socio-spatial relationships as such.

From Marxist Economic Geography to Industrial Districts and New Industrial Spaces

This section considers the developments from Marxist economic geography to studies of industrial districts, regional clusters, and new industrial spaces, which represented a departure from a strict Marxist perspective to a broader radical, structural perspective, building on Massey's (1979, 1984, 1985) theoretical critique and Sayer's (1984) critical realism. Key points in these writings were Massey's criticism of the lack of contextual analysis in Marxist economic geography, and Sayer's contribution to solve the contradiction of ideographic vs. nomothetic approaches by applying the realist distinction between abstract and concrete research.

Asheim was inspired by the version of Marxism that informed students at Roskilde University working on their master theses, which he supervised as an external lecturer. This was a version developed in Germany that represented a re-reading of Marx through the glasses of Hegel, influenced also by the old Frankfurt school of Adorno and Horkheimer. This new version of Marxism was called 'West-European left Marxism' and in Denmark (somewhat confusingly) 'Kapitallogik' (Capital logic), pioneered by the historian of ideas at Aarhus University, Hans-Jørgen Schanz. This variant of Marxism is clearly different from the rather orthodox historical materialist interpretation of the territorial structure geography, then practiced at the Department of Geography at Copenhagen University. The 'West-European left Marxism' represents a non-deductive and non-reductionist approach by emphasizing that the abstract theoretical level of the critique of the political economy (*Grundrisse* and *Capital*) represents a specific level of Marxist analysis, which cannot be used in a deductive way to explain concrete societal phenomena (Asheim, 2006). This opens for contextual economic geography studies of concrete regional problems, inspired by abstract Marxist theory but further informed by social science theories of relevance to the problems studied.

This distinction between an abstract and a concrete theoretical level, which epistemologically in many ways parallels the nomothetic and ideographic distinction, represented methodological challenges, which Marx could not offer much solution to. In this situation, the publication of Sayer's book in 1984 on critical realism was extremely helpful. First, the distinction between abstract and concrete research transcends the distinction between nomothetic and idiographic approaches. Second, in a parallel way to 'West-European left-Marxism', it argues that in an ontologically stratified world – critical realism's distinction between the real, the actual and the empirical – one level cannot be reduced to the next. Third, it argues that space can only be theorised in concrete research and then represent an explanatory factor (Asheim, 2006). Sayer underlines that 'even though concrete studies may not be

interested in spatial form per se, it must be taken into account if the contingencies of the concrete and the differences they make to outcomes are to be understood' (Sayer, 1992, p. 150). This position is consistent with an understanding of economic geographical analysis as contextual. However, it is important to underline that Sayer's position on space, which we used to qualify Harvey's relational concept of space, does not imply that space is wholly reducible to the constituent objects, as Harvey himself has been doing with his ambition of formulating an abstract, general theory of the capitalist space economy (Harvey, 1982). This position makes it 'impossible to see how space make a difference' (Sayer, 1992, p. 148).

This critique of Harvey and others was also raised by Doreen Massey, who argued that '"geography" was underestimated; it was underestimated as distance, and it was underestimated in terms of local variation and uniqueness' (Massey, 1985, p. 12). This and other contributions promoted what was called the 'new' regional geography, which came close to solving the problems of geography basically being a synthetic discipline, but with theoretical ambitions of providing causal explanations by applying a realist approach of combining abstract and concrete research in theoretically informed case studies as contextual analysis (Asheim, 2006).

In addition to Massey and Sayer, who both visited Scandinavia several times, another major source of inspiration for this new research orientation was Piore and Sabel's (1984) *The Second Industrial Divide*, Scott's (1988) *New Industrial Spaces* and Italian researchers' studies of industrial districts in the so-called Third Italy (Becattini, 1990; Brusco, 1990). This was expanded by Porter's (1990) book on clusters, as well as Saxenian's (1994) *Regional Advantage*. This inspired work at the Geography Department in Oslo by students supervised by Asheim. Arne Isaksen and Knut Onsager were two of these students, who later worked as researchers in applied research institutes on research inspired by the cluster-type literature, before defending their PhDs in 1995 and 1998. Stig-Erik Jakobsen (with a PhD from University of Bergen in 1997) had a parallel research career in Bergen, focusing on studies as well as evaluations of cluster policy.

Two researchers who have had great international impact on the theoretical understanding of regional clusters are Peter Maskell and Anders Malmberg. Peter Maskell, who has a master in geography from University of Copenhagen and a PhD and a dr.merc. degree from Copenhagen Business School, studied the geography of reindustrialisation, and how this process led to relocation of industrial production away from the larger cities in Denmark to the more peripheral located towns (e.g. Maskell, 1986). Anders Malmberg defended his PhD in 1988 at Uppsala University and did research on agglomeration and reindustrialisation. Especially Maskell and Malmberg's conceptualisation of localised learning and ubiquitous and localised resources when analysing firm location and competitiveness (Maskell & Malmberg, 1999a, b) was an inspiration for many research environments, not only in Scandinavia but also in the Anglo-American economic geography community. Their book with colleagues from Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway, *Competitiveness, Localised Learning and Regional Development*, provided a thorough introduction to theoretical approaches and was illustrated with examples from industries in the Nordic countries (Maskell et al., 1998). Malmberg and Maskell contributed much to the

conceptual development related to clusters and regional economic development (Malmberg & Maskell, 2002). They focused early on the role of knowledge and localised learning for spatial clustering and helped to clarify the cluster concept, for example in a chapter about 'True clusters' by Malmberg and Power (2006). They also contributed to an increased attention to the importance of global networks for cluster and regional economic development, popularised (together with Harald Bathelt) through the concepts of local buzz and global pipelines (Bathelt et al., 2004).

Another important inspiration for studies of regional development by many Scandinavian economic geographers were the transition from Fordism to Post-Fordism, conceptualised and popularised amongst others by Piore and Sabel (1984). The transition represented a re-focus on the importance of agglomerations of networked small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) based on a flexible production system through vertical disintegration, originally observed by Alfred Marshall. These agglomerated systems of SMEs were, following Marshall, in Italy called industrial districts, which produced specialised, semi-customised products replacing the standardised mass production of vertical integrated large firms of the Fordist period. These changes in production and consumption are all about contingencies, for example in relation to technology, market trends and consumer preferences. This increased importance of networking and cooperation also highlights other contingencies in the form of non-economic factors such as culture, social capital and formal and informal institutions (Asheim, 2006). The importance of such factors helps to explain why the research on industrial districts, regional clusters and similar phenomena was met with great interest among economic geographers in Scandinavia, which were and are societies with comparatively high trust and cooperation between actors in the business sector and other parts of society.

Asheim's own interests in industrial districts as a paradigmatic example of post-Fordist new economic spaces started in the early 1980s, after his move to Oslo, where it inspired several students to study regional networks of SMEs. Asheim spent some months in Rome in 1983–84, travelling around in the Third Italy and met with researchers of industrial districts such as Garofoli in Pavia and Brusco in Modena. This resulted in several comparative research projects of industrial districts in Italy and the Nordic countries, as well as of districts within the Nordic countries (Asheim, 1992, 1994). The theoretical work focused on developing a concise conceptualisation of industrial districts that distinguished them from other forms of territorial agglomerations such as clusters and growth poles (Asheim, 2000, 2006). The empirical analysis turned his interest towards the innovative capacity of industrial districts, questioning if they had the capacity of moving beyond incremental innovations. The original rationale of industrial districts was the creation of external economies of scale of the systems of firms. Thus, it was the productivity of the system of firms and not the innovative capacity that represented the competitive advantage of industrial districts. One of the constraining structural factors of industrial districts with respect to its innovative capacity was the fierce competition between a large number of small subcontractors specialising in the same products or phases of production, and vertically linked to the leading firms. This structure promotes cost efficiency but does not represent a very innovative

milieu, especially if the majority of the small firms are capacity subcontractors and not specialised suppliers (Asheim, 1996, 2000, 2006).

In a Nordic comparative study of the industrial districts of Jæren, south of Stavanger, and Gnosjö in Småland, published in a book edited by Isaksen (1993), Asheim observed differences in the innovative capacity between the districts. While Jæren for many years had demonstrated a rather impressive innovative capacity (including radical innovations), especially in the area of robot technology, Gnosjö had shown a low capacity for moving beyond incremental innovations. These differences in innovative capacity were related to the competence basis of the firms in the districts, with a much higher share of engineers in Jæren, and consequently a higher absorptive capacity, than in Gnosjö, which again was due to the different industrial history of the two districts (Asheim, 1993, 1994, 2006). In Denmark, Mark Lorenzen, who did his PhD under supervision of Maskell, studied localised learning in the furniture industry in Northern Jutland and found that the ability to adapt to a changing market and the cooperation between local firms made the industry innovative and competitive (Lorenzen, 1999).

Different industrial histories and different industrial and regional contexts are also evident in a comparative study from 1999 of innovation activity and interactive learning in ten regional industrial milieus in Norway (Isaksen, 1999). It is striking that the study was largely carried out by researchers from applied research institutes.[5] They are researchers who worked in cross-disciplinary milieus, who were concerned with, and accustomed to, performing socially and policy relevant studies, but not involved in discussions of the relevance of their research for the theorisation of geography and territory.

The regional industrial milieus were different in many ways but included three main types: (i) research-intensive industrial milieus, (ii) mechanical engineering milieus, and (iii) industrial milieus in the food industry. The study revealed that many firms increasingly applied extra-regional resources in their innovation activity. This included extensive cooperation with national and to some extent international R&D-institutes, with key customers, and with research departments and other firms in the owner companies. This finding opposed, as regards to Norway, the view of industrial districts of SMEs as co-located production networks supported by regional ‘business centres’. The study was carried out for the Research Council of Norway as a background for policy development and contributed to several research programs and policy initiatives that aimed at increasing innovation collaboration between industry (and subsequently the public sector) and regional knowledge organisations such as universities and university colleges.

A second main conclusion from the ten cases were that specific regional resources stimulate firms’ innovation activity, and that regional innovation cooperation were increasing. The regional resources included unique combinations of knowledge and skills in the workforce and in many specialised firms, and local learning were

[5] These were Nordland Research (Asbjørn Karlsen and Åge Mariussen), NIBR (Knut Omsager) and the STEP group (Arne Isaksen and also Bjørn Asheim).

backed by geographical, social and institutional proximity and by formal collaborative organisations. Studies of clusters and similar phenomena in Scandinavia have shown the importance of historical and contextual conditions for understanding regions' industrial development, but also that regions are 'open' and that their industries are influenced by a number of national and international conditions, such as political decisions, market and technological development.

Regional Innovation Systems

The focus on the innovative capacity of industrial districts, regional clusters and innovative milieus was subsequently, in the Scandinavian research environment, complemented with studies of regional innovation systems and learning regions focusing on mechanisms for upgrading the innovative capacity of SMEs as well as of districts and clusters – linking economic geography and innovation studies. This was relatively easy to do in economic geography, as two of the pioneers of the regional innovation system approach, Phil Cooke and Bjørn Asheim, both are economic geographers. This stream of research overlaps with the previous one. Maskell and Malmberg continued with cluster research and linked this more explicitly with innovation research. Later Dominic Power in Uppsala, now at Stockholm University, and Mark Lorenzen at Copenhagen Business School, joined and started focusing on creative industries. Power undertook studies on cultural and creative industries and the cultural economy (Power & Scott, 2004), while Lorenzen researched relationships between innovation and economic organisation in networks, projects and clusters with a special attention to the creative industries (Lorenzen, 2018).

Regional innovation studies and cluster research were also carried out in Norway by Isaksen at the University of Agder, Stig-Erik Jakobsen and colleagues at the Mohn centre in Bergen, Asbjørn Karlsen at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) in Trondheim and Heidi Wiig at BI – Norwegian Business School; researchers who collaborated in several projects and with co-publications. In Denmark this research was, as mentioned, mostly carried out by Maskell and Lorenzen at the Copenhagen Business School, although the late Chris Jensen-Butler and Lars Winther in Copenhagen made a few contributions to this literature.

The interests in regional innovation systems (RIS) and learning regions started to increase around the mid-1990s. A RIS is defined as a long term and systemic interaction between an explorative, knowledge generating (university and research organisations) and an exploitative (firms in regional clusters) subsystem in a region supported by an organisational and institutional framework, and linked to non-regional actors, organisations and knowledge flows. A RIS is not identical to a cluster, as a RIS normally supports more than one cluster (Asheim et al., 2019). The first publication on RIS came in 1992 by Philip Cooke (1992), while Asheim was central to the application of the concept in Scandinavian, and also in international, research on regional industrial development and policymaking. The first time Asheim used the concept was in 1995 (Asheim, 1995). Another early contribution was an article

by Asheim and Isaksen (1997). The article distinguishes two different types of RIS; (i) territorially embedded, regional innovation systems, which support localised learning processes, and (ii) regionalized national innovation systems based on the linear model of innovation. This distinction again reflects knowledge about the organisation of innovation processes in Norwegian industry, influenced by a few strong national research actors. A territorially embedded RIS was exemplified by the mechanical engineering industry in Jæren where the organisation TESA (Technical Cooperation) as a 'Business Service Centre' was the core of the system. The electronics industry in Horten (south of Oslo), on the other hand, was part of a national, and to some extent an international, innovation system. Later this typology was extended with a third type, networked regional innovation systems, which was seen as the ideal type of a RIS (Asheim & Isaksen, 2002).

Asheim's own studies of RIS were initiated when he (in addition to being professor at University of Oslo) was associated with the STEP Group in Oslo as a part-time senior researcher and scientific advisor. At this time Isaksen worked as a senior researcher at STEP, which was an independent 'think tank', established in 1993. The STEP Group built up research on regional innovation systems, clusters and innovation policy towards SMEs resulting in many large national and one EU funded project running from 1998 to 2000. This project, 'SME Policy and the Regional Dimension of Innovation' (SMEPOL), conducted a comparative analysis of innovation policies for SMEs in eight European countries in cooperation with researchers from Norway, Austria, Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and UK (Asheim et al., 2003). The project identified five main types of innovation policy tools and discussed good practice in different kinds of regions, which points to the focus on policy relevant research. The RIS research continued when Asheim moved his chair to the newly established Centre for Technology, Innovation and Culture in 1999, and finally when he moved to Lund in 2001. After moving to Lund, he got a large Nordic research project on SME and regional innovation systems, where Lars Coenen, who was just recruited as a PhD student, was the principal investigator (Asheim & Coenen, 2005).

In this research project the idea of knowledge bases emerged. Asheim was puzzled why RIS seemed to operate differently according to the type of industry which was the focus of the RIS. In incumbent, engineering-based industries, such as various manufacturing industries (automotive, shipbuilding, food production etc.), RIS developed in an organic way, often in connection with firms' need to upgrade from being only dependent on experienced based knowledge to also needing access to research based knowledge to increase their competitiveness. This required a closer cooperation with universities and research organisations, which is the main function of a RIS. Contrary to this was new emerging industries, often established as spin-offs from university research or by university graduates with science degrees. Examples of such firms can be found within ICT, biotech and nanotech. Such firms needed, after often being born in incubators and science parks, to be supported by a RIS for their continued growth. Thus, what was to be called 'the differentiated knowledge base approach' represented a further development of the RIS concept, and qualified partly the relationships between different specialised industrial

clusters and a RIS, and partly added nuances to the importance of the heterogeneity between firms that goes beyond the sectoral dimension. Originally a distinction was drawn between analytical, science based and synthetic, engineering-based knowledge (Asheim & Coenen, 2005; Asheim & Gertler, 2005), and later symbolic, art-based knowledge was added, to cater for the growing importance of creative and cultural industries, where intangible knowledge is key to understanding the competitive edge of firms in these industries (Asheim, 2007). The key idea is that determined by the knowledge base, firms innovate in different ways and need different forms of support, but that all types of industries can be innovative, not only science-based industries. The importance of proximity and geography varies also between the knowledge bases depending on the share of tacit knowledge in the respective knowledge base, with analytical knowledge being more ‘placeless’ than synthetic and symbolic (Martin & Moodysson, 2012). Research informed by the knowledge base approach also becomes more sensitive to local contingencies and place-specific conditions (Gong & Hassink, 2020), thus being more well-suited for doing contextual analysis. Later the knowledge base approach was further developed to investigate how knowledge bases combine in various industries over time (Asheim et al., 2017).

This research on knowledge bases was, after its establishment in 2004, concentrated at Circle, where the group in regional innovation research, organised by Asheim, developed to become one of the strongest in Europe. Other core members of this group were Lars Coenen (now Western Norway University of Applied Sciences and University of Oslo), Jerker Moodysson (now Jönköping International Business School), Høgni Kalsø Hansen, Jan Vang (now Southern Denmark University) and Roman Martin (now Gothenburg University), all of them PhD students at Circle, Lund University with Asheim as supervisor. These individual careers illustrate how research on knowledge bases and related topics have diffused from the strong research milieu at Circle into research environments elsewhere in Scandinavia.

Constructing Regional Advantage

The research on RISs and on knowledge bases exemplifies that economic geographers in Scandinavia not only acquire and adapt theoretical ideas, concepts and approaches from other countries, but also influence the subject internationally, the research by Malmberg and Maskell being another example. One important step in the development of the knowledge base approach and its relevance for informing regional innovation policy was Asheim’s participation in a DG Research initiated expert group in EU on ‘Constructing Regional Advantage’ (CRA) (Asheim et al., 2011). This was a forerunner for EU’s new policy for regional development, ‘Smart Specialisation’ (Boschma, 2014). The CRA approach advocates an active role of policy and a broad-based innovation policy to promote innovation-based, new regional path development. The knowledge base approach was a key analytical

dimension in this study used to argue that innovation can take place in all kinds of industries in all types of regions (Asheim et al., 2011).

The idea of constructed regional advantage was taken further in a European comparative research project 'Constructed Regional Advantage: Towards State-of-the-Art Regional Innovation System Policies in Europe?', funded by the European Science Foundation (ESF) in the years 2007–2010, and with Asheim as the coordinator. In addition to a core group of researchers from Lund and Circle (Asheim, Lars Coenen and Jerker Moodysson) the project included Finland (Markuu Sotarauta), Norway (Isaksen and James Karlsen), in addition to Austria, Check Republic, the Netherlands, and Turkey, which demonstrate how these concepts travelled beyond its core research milieu.[6] The comparative approach meant that the highly developed innovation systems of Finland, Norway and Sweden could be seen in relation to other 'coordinated' economies (in the Variety of Capitalism approach) of the Netherland and Austria, the transformation economy of the Czech Republic and emerging economy of Turkey (Tödtling et al., 2013). A key dimension in organising the comparative study was the knowledge base approach, looking at industries belonging to the three knowledge bases in seven countries to analyse their innovativeness and competitiveness. These regional cases revealed that the combination of knowledge bases of industries and the institutional and organisational contexts of the RISs could explain much of the distinct pattern of knowledge sourcing and innovation processes in various regions. The findings demonstrated that firms use a variety of knowledge sources while one type of knowledge base is often necessary for conducting innovation activity. Geographical proximity turned out to be most relevant for industries based on synthetic (experienced based) and symbolic (cultural based) knowledge, while industries building on analytical (scientific) knowledge had the most global knowledge interactions.

Another comparative research project, also coordinated by Asheim investigated the relevance of Richard Florida's (2002) creative class ideas in Europe (2004–2006).[7] In this project the knowledge base approach was also applied (Asheim & Hansen, 2009). One aspect of this project analysed to what extent the creative class approach is applicable in the Nordic context, drawing on comparative studies in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden (Andersen et al., 2010a, b). The approach originates from studies in USA with about 50 cities with more than one million people, which means that similar jobs are most often available in many places, making 'people climate' an important factor in choosing where to move and stay. The Nordic countries have comparatively small cities and regions. Nevertheless, the Nordic study found people climate of importance to explaining the migration pattern for creative workers and partly for people working within professions based on analytical

[6] Results from the project were reported in a special issue of European Planning Studies (No. 7, Vol. 19) in 2011 and a special issue of European Urban and Regional Studies (No. 2, Vol. 20) in 2013.

[7] In addition to the four Nordic countries, the UK, Germany, Netherlands and Switzerland took part in the study. Results from the study were reported in a special issue of Economic Geography (No. 4, Vol. 85) in 2009.

knowledge (e.g. researchers) as well as for economic development, but mostly as regards the Nordic capital regions that often compete when it comes to recruiting creative people. People climate was seen as secondary compared to business climate to explain regional industrial development in the Nordic countries, which also implies that for people with a synthetic knowledge base (e.g. engineers) an interesting job was more important than people climate of the place (Asheim, 2009; Hansen & Niedomysl, 2009; Eriksson et al., 2014). These results demonstrate that theoretical reasoning, empirical results, and policy implication regarding regional development cannot be transferred to a Scandinavian context without further modifications.

An important vehicle for studies of regional innovation systems and policy in Norway was the Research Council Norway funded program on 'Policy for regional research and innovation' (VRI in Norwegian). It was a large program running from 2007 to 2016, focusing on the building of regional innovation systems in Norwegian regions to strengthen the innovativeness and competitiveness of their industry. The program underlines again the vitality of RIS as a policy concept, the importance of contextual analyses and adaptation of RIS policy to different regional contexts.[8] A VRI-project led by Asheim ('Exploring the role of VRI in regional innovation system formation and new path development') found that, apart from the Agder region, it was difficult to find examples of well-functioning (networked) RIS in Norway. This is partly due to the dual structure in the Norwegian economy of decentralised industry and centralised HEIs, with the universities in Trondheim and Oslo as strongholds, and partly due to the fact that the economic support for firm oriented research programs, which mostly go to the large, incumbent firms, by far outstrips the funding for building RISs.

The VRI projects organised by Isaksen were carried out in cooperation between several research institutes. An important aspect was to broaden the view on innovation activity from the linear model focused on the STI (Science, Technology, Innovation) mode to the interactive model more focused on the experienced based DUI (Doing, Using, Interacting) innovation mode, and to discuss with policy makers what this changed view could mean for knowledge brooking and innovation policy. Moreover, research in the VRI-program focused on regional industrial restructuring in Norway, building on the regional industrial path development view. Results revealed that regional conditions often support industrial path extensions as Norway has some strong industries and (national) innovation systems that attract a lot of resources. The analyses demonstrated that many regional networks, entrepreneurial activities and activities by the financial sector are strengthening existing, strong regional industries rather than stimulating growth of new regional industries. These results point to some general lessons for policy for restructuring and renewal of regional industry: there is a need for both private entrepreneurs, innovative firms,

[8] Isaksen lead projects in the two last phases (2010–2016) and Asheim a project in the last phase 2014–16, after his move to Stavanger.

development of regional innovation systems, new educational programs, and support adapted to emerging industries.

Evolutionary Economic Geography

In the beginning of the 2000s, Evolutionary Economic Geography (EEG), developed in Utrecht by Ron Boschma and colleagues as well as in Cambridge by Ron Martin and economic geographers at Newcastle University at CURDS (Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies), entered and influenced economic geography research in Scandinavia. The strongest single environment was located at the Geography Department at Umeå University with Urban Lindgren and Rikard Eriksson as the leading researchers, but also research by Lars Olof Olander, Karl-Johan Lundquist and Martin Henning at the Geography Department in Lund developed in this direction, in particular the research undertaken by Henning who later moved to Gothenburg, in close cooperation with researchers from Utrecht (Boschma and Neffke) and Umeå. Malmberg and Maskell also made early contribution to EEG regarding cluster development (Maskell & Malmberg, 2007) and localised learning (Malmberg & Maskell, 2010).

One of the major stepping stones in the development of evolutionary economic geography in Scandinavia has been a detailed and rich register data setup by the national statistical bureaus. In a study from 2009 Boschma, Eriksson and Lindgren used register data to examine linkages between composition of skills at firm level and labour mobility and plant performance in Sweden in a long-term perspective. They found that a portfolio of related competences at the plant level did increase productivity growth of plants. Moreover, the study found that inflows of skills that was related to the existing knowledge base of the plant had a positive effect on plant performance, while the inflow of new employees with skills that were already present in the plant had a negative impact (Boschma et al., 2009). Similar detailed data allowed Neffke et al. (2011) to study technological relatedness of firms in the manufacturing industries in 70 Swedish regions from 1969 to 2002. The analyses demonstrated that the long-term evolution of the economic landscape in Sweden is subject to strong path dependencies.

In the early 1980s, Chris Jensen-Butler was one of the first economic geographers in Denmark to perform regional analysis on the Danish regional economy using register data. Following this lead, Winther (1996) provided an early attempt to understand industrial and technological change in Denmark in an evolutionary framework using detailed register data from Statistics Denmark. At this point, in 1994, Michael Storper received a Fulbright grant and had a stay at the geography department in Copenhagen, where he among other things was writing on chapters that later were included in his famous book, *The Regional World* (Storper, 1997). Winther continued working on the economic geography of Denmark exploring the evolution of technological change in the food industry together with Essletzbichler (Essletzbichler & Winther, 1999) and a study on the evolution variety of

manufacturing in Copenhagen in 2001 (Winther, 2001). Access to micro data had also contributed to creating a strong milieu around Einar Holm and colleagues in Umeå. Here economic geographers developed leading skills in micro simulation of regional development by looking at firm data, employment data and population data. Particularly in Sweden, but also in Denmark and Norway, economic geographers pioneered the use of microdata to analyse regional development dynamics allowing for longitudinal analysis of economic shifts and changes and how this has affected the regional level. With a significant development in statistical software over the last decades possibilities of exploring data have just increased, leading to a large volume of studies benefitting from the rich time series of data that has allowed for very detailed long circle studies, for instance of obsolete industries (Henning et al., 2016) or of economic restructuring and urban development (Hansen & Winther, 2007, 2010, 2012). In Norway, EEG approaches were mostly integrated in ongoing studies of regional economic development, for example in the previous mentioned projects in the Research Council Norway program on 'Policy for regional R&D and innovation'. Projects which were led by Asheim and Isaksen, included researchers with an EEG approach, such as Stig-Erik Jakobsen and Rune Njøs at the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences in Bergen. Their studies focused particularly on types of new path development in different regions (Isaksen, 2014; Njøs et al., 2020). Asheim also undertook such studies, in cooperation with Markus Grillitsch and Sverre Herstad, and additionally inspired by neo-Schumpeterian thinking of Chris Freeman investigated the potential of unrelated diversification (Grillitsch et al., 2018; Asheim & Herstad, 2021).

Other researchers in Norway have followed a broader approach of regional industrial development and restructuring inspired by the EEG approach, focusing on, for example, old industrial towns, resource based rural areas, growth of the oil and gas supplier industry, the importance of non-local relations for firm innovation and labour market mobility and innovation. Such studies were carried out by amongst others Asbjørn Karlsen at the NTNU in Trondheim, Bjørnar Sæther and Sverre Herstad at the University of Oslo, Eirik Vatne at NHH in Bergen, and Rune Dahl Fitjar at University of Stavanger.

During the last 10 years sustainable transition research has gradually made a noticeable impact also on research in economic geography, where especially Lars Coenen pioneered the regional dimension of this research (Coenen et al., 2012). This research has expanded the understanding that regional economic development consists of the development of all parts of a region (and society in large), including informal institutions in terms of norms and attitudes. There is an understanding, that also exists in the RIS approach, that a region's industry is embedded in historically created structures and institutions in a region. Coenen was originally part of the regional innovation research group at Circle. After a 3 years' stint at University of Melbourne, he moved back to Scandinavia to the Western Norway University of Applied Sciences in Bergen. Markus Steen and Asbjørn Karlsen in Trondheim has also studied the geography of sustainable transition, focusing particularly on development of offshore wind. Moreover, Teis Hansen with a PhD in Geography from University of Copenhagen, who was affiliated with Circle and the Department of

Human Geography at Lund University for 8 years, and now is professor at Department of Food and Resource Economics at University of Copenhagen, has worked on the geography of innovation and sustainable transformation (Hansen & Coenen, 2015).

The latest developments in Scandinavian economic geography are the beginning of a turn away from structural approaches to a stronger focus on actors and agencies in regional development, for example represented by Markus Grillitsch in Lund and Markku Sotarauta in Tampere (Grillitsch & Sotarauta, 2020), and a somewhat comparable approach in Agder with Isaksen and colleagues (Isaksen et al., 2019). From focusing on cities and economic growth in the 2000s in the last half decade economic geography research has begun addressing (challenged) peripheral regions in the Nordic countries and their economic potential (Hansen & Aner, 2017; Rekers & Stihl, 2021; Grillitsch et al., 2021).

Conclusion: Impacts on Innovation and Regional Development

Economic geography research in Scandinavia on clusters and regional innovation systems has had a strong impact on policy development nationally and partly on the EU-level as well as on research internationally. Research by Malmberg and Maskell on clusters has already been mentioned, as has research on regional innovation systems by Asheim and Isaksen. Also some of the EEG research by people such as Henning and Eriksson has got international attention. The same is the case with Coenen and T. Hansen's works on sustainable transitions. Another manifestation of the collective breadth and depth of Scandinavian economic geography is the participation at international conferences. One example would be the Regional Innovation Policy conferences, where participants from Scandinavia not only have had a strong presence but where almost 1/3 of these conferences, originally established in 2006, has been organised in Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

The raison d'etre for research in social science is to contribute to understanding and solving societal problems. This has specifically been the case for economic geography. The discipline has had significant societal impact due to its theoretical informed and empirical based contextual analysis. Economic geography research has developed in close interaction with regional and societal challenges, and the research has to a large extend been integrated into local and regional development policies. This is strengthened by economic geographic research, in Norway in particular, being carried out in applied, cross disciplinary research institutes. Examples of policy relevant research has been mentioned in the chapter, such as the CRA project, which had its origin in policy research for the EU. A lot of the research undertaken at Circle was funded by Vinnova, the Swedish agency for innovation, through two 6 years Centre of Excellence grants. In Norway a couple of examples would be the research project organised by Isaksen in 1999 on innovation activity and interactive learning in regions, which became part of the theoretical foundation of the 10 years Research Council project on Regional Research and Innovation,

which also worked closely with regional policy makers and other stakeholders. Economic geography as an academic field is co-evolving with the most present issues and challenges in our society. Research on deindustrialisation, clusters, industrial restructuring, labour market dynamics, sustainable transition and innovation processes has always mirrored contemporary societal challenges and political agendas. Theoretical development and empirical studies are based on an ambition to understand contemporary trends in society and seek to find answers to how local, regional, national and international government levels can develop and underpin policies to react to contemporary economic and societal problems. This demonstrates that the often claimed conflict and contradiction between scientific excellence and societal relevance is a myth, and that it is possible to combine these aims and achieve important results in both dimensions. At least Scandinavian economic geography on innovation and regional development has demonstrated that.

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Chapter 10
The Socio-Spatial Articulations of Tourism Studies in Nordic Geography

Edward H. Huijbens and Dieter K. Müller

Introduction

This chapter will focus on geographical contributions to tourism studies in Nordic scholarship. The chapter provides a thematised overview of the ways in which tourism dynamics and developments have been understood and researched by Nordic geographers, drawn from a bibliometric analysis arranged around the key geographical concepts of place, space and time. The analysis is of works published since the year 2010, thereby slightly overlapping Saarinen's (2013) explication of 'Nordic Tourism Geographies' and framing the most recent emerging thematic areas. This introduction will explain the object of study and provide the scaffolding of the chapter.

Tourism, much like other aspects of the complex socio-ecological systems composing our society, needs to be understood through an interdisciplinary mode of inquiry. The 'knowledge system' of tourism as explained by Tribe and Liburd (2016) is thereby comprised of the 'disciplines of tourism', wherein geography is to be found, and 'extra disciplinary' knowledge. The former disciplinary field is dominated by business studies and social sciences. These in turn dominate academic tourism knowledge production, focused on understanding the phenomena from a range of disciplinary perspectives, much like geography. This multi-disciplinary range and the prominence of business studies has led to the diffusion of tourism geographers into dedicated tourism departments and/or business schools (Müller, 2014, 2019b). Furthermore, these loose disciplinary boundaries of tourism allow

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researchers from related disciplines, such as economic history, anthropology or sociology, to address tourism. The latter disciplinary field is about problem centred knowledge creation, focusing on highly contextual practical issues of the tourism industry and providing solutions to these. When it comes to common knowledge about tourism and general public discourse, this extra disciplinary focus dominates as lamented in an editorial of the first issue of the journal *Tourist Studies*. The editors Franklin and Crang (2001) state that;

> ... tourist studies has been dominated by policy led and industry sponsored work so the analysis tends to internalize industry led priorities and perspectives. (p. 5)

From the disciplinary perspective these priorities and perspectives include vocational areas of operation for tourism, such as marketing, finance, human resource management, service management, destination planning, ICT and innovation (see Tribe & Liburd, 2016). Contradicting this lamentation around the same time is the opening editorial of the by now well-established journal *Tourism Geographies* which stated that geographers dominated tourism studies (Lew, 1999). Lew (1999) was most likely referring to the academic side, yet these somewhat contradicting sentiments indicate the fluidity of what constitutes tourist/m studies. On the most general level though, within academia this field of study is split between the departments of business and management and geography at universities worldwide.

Gibson (2008, p. 407) in his three part progress report on geographies of tourism sees strength in the loose disciplinary boundaries of tourism and views it as an emerging "important point of intersection within geography ... gel[ing] critical, integrative and imperative research". Müller (2019b, p. 19) in his edited volume on the research agenda for tourism geographies shows how until the compilation of his edited volume, these geographies of tourism 'gelled' around notions of,

- Protected areas and sustainability
- The impacts of tourism on people, places, climate and the environment
- Primary industry diversification and land use valuing
- Rural areas and access
- Economic restructuring and particular industry dynamics
- Heritage, image and identity

Müller (2019b) concludes his review stating that "tourism geographies seems to be in a state of rapid globalization and inclusion" (p. 20). On this international arena the emerging research agenda draws on geographers' expertise knowledge of transport, mobilities, spatially articulated economic development, diffusion and the dynamic relation between people and their physical environment; life and land in the context of visitors and people's expectations thereto. Mediating thereby between the geographical perspective and the phenomena of tourism, constructs knowledges of considerable paradigmatic plurality.

The question to be explicitly addressed in this chapter is what makes for a Nordic tourism geography and what spatial conceptualisations prevail therein? Framing tourism studies from a Nordic perspective is the explicit agenda of the journal *Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism*. Albeit not a geography journal,

it has been published since 2001 in relation to the annual Nordic Symposium on Tourism and Hospitality Research. It provides an outlet for Nordic-specific tourism research and explications of the "Nordic context" for researchers, managers, decision makers and politicians (Mykletun & Haukeland, 2001, p. 1). In the published articles of that journal the split field of study already outlined is very clear, whilst what constitutes a specifically Nordic context, apart from being about places there, remains much vaguer. Avoiding to "leave ourselves open to the seduction of proximity, nostalgia, or protectionism, engaging in a reductive strategy of triage..." (Ruddick, 2017, p. 120), this "Nordic context" needs to be conceptually interrogated through the key constituent parts of geographic thought, that of place, space and time. The ways in which Nordic geographers do so makes for the Nordic context in our view.

Hence, this chapter will engage in such an interrogation and proceed in four parts. First and following this introduction is an explication of the methods employed for this study and a more general framing of the topics of tourism studies and tourism geographies. Thereafter we will focus on the ways in which Nordic tourism geographies have made sense of the fact that tourism is part and parcel of social processes that get articulated and maintained in certain places. The place-based specificities of tourism geographies notwithstanding the spatial stretch and duration of the links that make for a place also needs to be considered and thereby how Nordic tourism geographies have been spatially articulated is the subject of the third part. The fourth and last part before some conclusions will be drawn deals with Nordic tourism geographies through and with time and what the future might hold. Only partly intended as a historical overview of approaches, this part explicitly thinks through how processes of change and development for the future are conceptualised and worked with.

Methodology and Framing of the Study

Based on the overview of tourism geographies provided by Hall and Page (2009) and complemented by Gibson's already mentioned three-part progress reports for human geography, Table 10.1 shows the themes emerging as fields of inquiry for tourism geographers globally. Gibson (2008) sees all studies of tourism geographies as either looking at *development* or *encounters*. The development side picks up all manners in which tourism is a specific nexus of globalised flows transforming places. Thereby research emerges which focus on tourism as part of the capitalist system of production and consumption, whilst the flow of people most certainly predates that potent driving force (Gibson, 2009). When it comes to encounters framing these global mobilities, the focus is on the live worlds and livelihoods of people. Evoking multisensory, affectual and embodied ways we make for connections with spaces, places and people and the power geometries which play at this micro geographical scale of analysis (Gibson, 2010).

Table 10.1 Framing Nordic tourism geographies

Topic/field	Explication	Abbr.
Development		
GIS/spatial analysis	All manner of employing technologies of spatial analysis to understand tourism. New and emerging field with big data in particular, but heavily applied	GIS
Tourism Area Life Cycle (TALC) models	Using TALC and studies focused on the development of destinations through time and the processed by which places become tourism destinations	TALC
The tourism system	Studies premised on the ways in which tourism is an instantiation of globalised flows and how it relates to the superstructure of capitalism. Mobility, migration and globalisation come together here. Herein are also studies of tourism as a force for global change	TS
Commodity chain analysis	Economic geography perspectives tying together the elements of production and consumption in a spatial manner	CC
Planning and tourism impacts	Studies focused on how to plan and manage tourism be it in an urban, rural or wilderness setting	P
Tourism as a tool for development and change	Studies focused on the transformative power of tourism. Local empowerment, economic diversification and livelihood creation.	TD
Tourism and climate change	Studies with a particular focus on the role of tourism in global climate change	
Regional studies	Studies of clustering and industry agglomeration, innovation diffusion and studies focused on the different spaces of tourism (e.g. rural, urban, wilderness)	RS
Encounter		
Host/guest encounters	Focus on the multisensory, embodied and affective dimensions of tourism. The ethics of hospitality and the entanglement of people, places and identities	HG
Everyday setting of tourism	Connections made with spaces and places of tourism, materiality and power play	ET
Work in tourism	The live worlds and livelihoods of those in the industry or impacted thereby	WT

Nordic themes of tourism geographies already identified in these framing articles have to do with tourism in wilderness settings, second home tourism and lifestyle mobilities (Hall & Page, 2009, p. 8), along with a strong focus on tourism as a tool for regional development in the Nordic periphery (see Grenier & Müller, 2011; Müller & Jansson, 2007) and the specificities of nature-based tourism (see Fredman & Haukeland, 2021). These specificities of the Nordic agenda are confirmed by Müller (2019b) although adding that the scale of these issues ranges from local to the global.

The Methods Used

Defining tourism geographies is indeed a delicate undertaking, particularly considering the sometimes 'post-disciplinary' characteristics of tourism research (Coles et al., 2006). To try and get a more detailed handle on the most current geographical contributions to tourism studies in the Nordic realm a number of search queries were used combining tourism and geography-related terms to identify potential Nordic tourism geographers in the Scopus publication database. A minimum of three contributions were required in order to be classified as a tourism geographer. Applying our joint knowledge and considering publication profiles of the initial sample, we could add some additional names not captured in the original search queries. Altogether this resulted in a list of 96 researchers.[1] For being qualified an inclusion in the Scopus database has been mandatory, implying publications in English and in recognized journals and book series. Hence, some tourism geographers may have been neglected.

What emerged was that Nordic tourism geographies are not primarily published in geography journals (Table 10.2). Among the 10 journals presenting most of Nordic tourism geographies, only three are self-identified geography journals (marked with *), while seven identify as tourism journals. Beyond the previously discussed split field of study, this mirrors how tourism geographies remain marginal from the mother discipline, prompting e.g. Ioannides (2006) to urge tourism geographers to disseminate their knowledge also through generic geography journals.

Table 10.2 Top 10 journals in relation to Nordic tourism geographies, 2010–2019

Journal	Nordic articles
Scandinavian Journal of Hospitality and Tourism	49
Tourism Geographies*	38
Journal of Sustainable Tourism	30
Annals of Tourism Research	19
Current Issues in Tourism	17
Tourism Management	14
Polar Geography*	9
Fennia*	8
Sustainability	8
Tourist Studies	8

Source: SciVal

[1] We decided to exclude guest researchers who have a major affiliation outside the Nordic realm. This refers mainly to C. Michael Hall, University of Canterbury, who is also affiliated with the universities in Oulu, Lund and Linnaeus University. Otherwise Halls publication output would be 37, significantly affecting the overall pattern.

Of course, for some geographers tourism is just one among many themes researched and not all of the identified researchers have their career entirely in the Nordic countries. In the sample generated for this study 50 researchers were located in geography departments, while 46 were outside these. Distinct national patterns of tourism geographies emerge partly due to their embeddedness in the geography departments (Table 10.3). Analysing the publications of the scholars identified, it seems that publications originating from geography departments have a higher field-weighted citation impact than those from other departments. An exception is the Swedish situation, where this pattern is inverse. This is explained by a single researcher, Stefan Gössling at Linnaeus University's School of Business and Economics, who authored 58 of those publications with a field-weighted impact of 4.44.

However, as mentioned above, tourism geographies are mostly not found in geography journals and the same diffusion is taking place away from geography departments (Müller, 2014). A closer look at the geography departments reveals that most of the publications can be related to a couple of departments in every country (Table 10.4). In fact, three out of four publications are published at three universities, i.e. Oulu, Umeå and the University of Iceland, which together form the core of tourism geographies in the Nordic countries.

Examples of tourism geographies done outside geography departments can be found at Aalborg University (14 items), the University of Akureyri (19), UiT The Arctic University of Norway (12), Lund University (51), Linnaeus University (49),[2] Mid-Sweden University (46) and Dalarna University (20).

Table 10.3 Tourism geographers at Nordic universities

	Geography departments			Other departments		
Country	Researchers	Output 2010–19	Field-weighted impact	Researchers	Output 2010–19	Field weighted impact
Denmark	2	13	2,29	5	35	2,09
Finland	21	121	1,61	5	28	1,27
Iceland	5	56	1,69	2	20	1,51
Norway	2	7	1,74	11	36	1,55
Sweden	20	90	1,81	23	157	2,73
Total	50	283[a]	1,73	46	268[a]	2,28

Source: Scopus & SciVal

[a]The total is not equal the sum of the countries, since some items are co-authored from authors from two of the included countries

[2]There is a significant overlap for publications recorded for Linnaeus University and Lund University. For 37 publications the author, Stefan Gössling who is not a resident of any Nordic country, reports both affiliations Lund and Linnaeus University. In addition, a significant share of his publications mentions Western Norway Research Institute as a third affiliation.

Table 10.4 Publications by Nordic geographers at Nordic universities with geography departments with significant research into tourism geographies, 2010–2019

Universities	Publications	Field-weighted Impact
Oulu University	97	1,39
Umeå University	61	1,94
University of Iceland	55	1,68
University of Eastern Finland	19	2,13
Roskilde University	12	2,38
Karlstad University	18	1,64
NTNU	6	1,36

Source: Scopus & SciVal

In order to discern publications on tourism geography and provide a thematic overview of topics, we used a search string "touris*" in title, abstract or keywords in combination with each of the 96 researchers included in the final publication database. Thematic topics are automatically created by SciVal based on more than a billion citation links between roughly 50 million Scopus entries published since 1996. The SciVal method employs a cluster analysis to split the data into approximately 96,000 topics, based upon direct citations. Where there is a weak citation link, there is a break and a new topic is formed. Analysing the selected dataset reveals that Nordic tourism geographies stretch over 166 topics. From these we selected those most frequent, vary of the dominance of a limited number of geographers implying a thematic concentration. Thereby seven topics emerge with more than 10 entries of the 520 emerging academic outputs from 2010 to 19. The following sections present these topics within the conceptual framing of place, space and time and highlights therein some key contributions.

The Place of Tourism

Encounters need to take place and the live worlds and livelihoods of people are articulated through relations constituting places (Gibson, 2008). Adopting the eclectic openness to place that is the hallmark of geography, Lew (1999) claims that understanding place is an intrinsic element of tourism research complimenting studies of marketing and business. Coles and Hall (2006) in their editorial to a *Current Issues in Tourism* theme issue, in an epanalepsis outcry of the concomitant demise and long life of tourism geographies, argue that tourism cannot be left to geographers alone, as tourism per se is as eclectically open as a place. This section is not about espousing the Nordic realm as a particular place worthy of particular findings, but to understand how Nordic tourism geographies have dealt with the notion of place through the articles gleaned from the research employed for this chapter. Two distinct topics emerge.

Tourism Experiences and Social Relations

The first topic to emerge from the bibliometric analysis we see as articulating places and encounters, focuses on experiences and social relations. This topic comprises 45 publications in the period 2010–2019, and although Nordic universities are well represented, it is dominated by sociological and anthropological research rather than geography. Hence, in contrast to the other topics presented in this chapter, Nordic geographers play a less dominant role, although Bærenholt at Roskilde University is among the 20 most productive contributors to this topic globally.

The topic contains one of the most cited Nordic contributions to the international tourism literature. *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (2011) is an updated edition of a classic work by British sociologist John Urry, now co-authored with Jonas Larsen, Roskilde University. This work is about the touristic consumption of places. Beyond that; topics of touristic co-production of experiences and destination development and the material and more-than-human play a role in the constitution of places (Larsen & Meged, 2013; Thulemark, 2017; Jóhannesson & Lund, 2018; Huijbens & Johannesson, 2019). In this context rare contributions on mass tourism can be found (Vainikka, 2013, 2016; Wall-Reinius et al., 2019). Furthermore, the role of technology for tourism experiences is assessed (Bohlin & Brandt, 2014; Varnajot, 2020), the role of authenticity for tourist consumption (Daugstad & Kirchengast, 2013; Frisvoll, 2013; Prince, 2017b) and semantic interpretations of images (and branding) and literary landscapes can be found.

Overall, the topic is far more theoretically oriented than most of the other presented topics in this chapter. The topic provides approaches inspired by actor-network theory (Van der Duim et al., 2012), performance theory and embodiment (Larsen & Urry, 2011), non-representational theories (Larsen, 2019; Prince, 2019) and theories of practice (James et al., 2018). In these articles a place is predominantly understood as an emergent relational construct, albeit primarily socially constructed and performed, rather than being a physical container for human action as evidenced in the strong focus on social practices and the ways in which these animate consumption and production; travel and the everyday; governance and policy; technology and the social (James et al., 2018).

The Tourism Industry

Another topic we could easily relate to the articulations of place and encounters is focused on destination-specific industry development dynamics. This topic is not dominated by any specific Nordic geographer, and although Nordic universities are active, they are so mainly within management research.

Most frequently cited among those are studies by Brouder and Eriksson (2013a, b) on firm survival within the tourism industry. Otherwise, contributions on innovation and product development dominate the list of contributions (Konu et al., 2010;

Halkier, 2014; Ioannides et al., 2014; Hjalager et al., 2016). Beyond the thematic topic identified via SciVal articles in the overall database, articles about industry agglomerations and clustering for innovation and knowledge diffusion along with interfirm linkages, path dependencies and tourism enclave dynamics can be discerned (in this book, see also Asheim et al., 2022). Herein studies integrating issues of work in the industry and the role of migrants can be found. What characterises all these publications is an emphasis on place based empirical insights from the tourism industry. As such the contributions to this topic are not particularly concerned with place dynamics, although it is understood as important container of properties that make the success of destination development more or less likely. So, whilst these studies are rich in empirical detail, they are not critically engaging with conceptualisations of place and are more akin to descriptive economic geographies trying to identify success factors in spatial arrangements of people and industry.

Tourism is but one of many particular frames for the converging relations that make for a place. As tourism hinges on access and thereby transport infrastructure, these need to be considered as key drivers of tourism and be carefully negotiated as they open gateways of global flows into societies, nature areas and communities that need to be prepared and involved. This focus on the critical role of transport and access is distinctly missing in Nordic tourism geographies, which is surprising seeing the price placed on tourism as a tool for economic and regional development of the Nordic periphery.

The Space of Tourism

Tourism needs to be conceived as part and parcel of a myriad of processes that converge upon and make for places in an ever increasingly globalised world. Tourism involves a plurality of actors and stretches from the local to the global through all kinds of practices whereby recreation and leisure have become an integral part of the everyday life world of people across the planet since WWII. Tourism is thereby a particular way of framing the development of every aspect of our lives and is fundamentally relationally enacted (Darbellay & Stock, 2012). A place becoming a destination is thereby not a simple point on a map, or a place to 'go to', but a complex amalgam of situational factors and relations, some of which are of global stretch and duration (Massey, 2005). As stated, transport and mobilities infrastructure are typical of these relations. The ways in which these converge upon and make for a place and are actively maintained and perpetuated in locally specific manners should be a key concern for geographers researching tourism. Indeed, what animates places are spaces of flow and by now globalised processes. Nordic geography scholarship on tourism can be gleaned through three particular topics in this context.

Second-Home Tourism and Lifestyle Mobilities

Second-home tourism is a particular Nordic type of consumption-led mobility. Indeed, Nordic researchers are leading globally in this field and particularly Umeå University is the epicentre for this research (Müller, 2021) along with the University of Eastern Finland/LUKE.

Two kinds of perspectives govern Nordic second-home research. A significant fraction focuses on how second homes and related mobilities affect and change places (Overvåg, 2010; Müller, 2011; Müller & Marjavaara, 2012; Hiltunen & Rehunen, 2014; Back & Marjavaara, 2017; Larsson & Müller, 2019). In this context it has been argued that second-home owners are integrated parts of rural communities that frequently are disregarded by planning and social science (Nordin & Marjavaara, 2012; Hannonen et al., 2015). The other perspective is concerned with experiences of mobility (Vepsäläinen & Pitkänen, 2010; Pitkänen, 2011; Tjørve et al., 2013; Åkerlund & Sandberg, 2015; Cohen et al., 2015). In this context the role of lifestyle migration and the role of immigrants for rural tourism development are analysed (Carson & Carson, 2018; Eimermann et al., 2019).

A source of inspiration for this research has doubtless been the mobility turn in the social sciences (Cresswell, 2006; Hannam et al., 2006). The interpretation of such inspiration has been divergent. While the Umeå environment firmly remained in a spatial analysis tradition analysing large data sets and aiming at mapping mobilities and their impacts, the Joensuu geographers are more concerned with the role of second homes for identity work and representational geographies. In this tradition social constructions of rural places are discussed in relation to spatial contestation of rural traditions. However, some publications also address second homes in relation to the environment and as consumers of resources (Adamiak et al., 2016). However, they share a commitment to critique sedentarist approaches in the social sciences by questioning stereotypic understandings of home and away, a topic also recently addressed by Nilsson and Tesfahuney (2019). What emerges thereby is a reconfiguration of what is perceived as centre and periphery and a distinct reframing of national and supra national spaces through valuing distinct areas through leisure.

Tourism, Wilderness and Landscape

Understanding spaces of tourism from the perspective of general global debates around wilderness and landscapes is a topic with a stronghold at the University of Iceland. Particularly Sæþórsdóttir with 11 contributions, but also Ólafsdóttir and Benediktsson are among the top five contributors to this topic. However, it can be noted that the prominence of this topic, i.e. the scope of citations, is low in comparison. The number of Nordic contributions to this field 2010–2019 is 18.

The wilderness topic is dominated by publications assessing how wilderness is perceived and socially constructed (Benediktsson et al., 2011; Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2011; Wall-Reinius, 2012; Sæþórsdóttir & Saarinen, 2016) and how these feed into

spatial and participatory planning processes and control devices (Sæþórsdóttir, 2010, 2012). Attempts to classify and quantify wilderness using GIS are also present (Ólafsdóttir & Runnström, 2011; Ólafsdóttir et al., 2016). The topic of wilderness can also be related to the particularities of rights of access and Nordic traditions of *friluftsliv* (outdoor recreation), which translate into research on well-being and health by nature (Puhakka et al., 2017) as well as the emphasis on wildlife, in particular marine mammals, in the Nordic realm (Huijbens & Einarsson, 2018). Herein also competing land use claims and more broadly issues of the Arctic as a wilderness frontier being penetrated by tourism, in particular by cruise tourism, can be discerned.

Theoretically, the topic is particularly influenced by physical geography and a materialist view of landscape as politically contested in terms of meaning making and valuing. A crucial component to this politicisation is the globalised flows of tourist coming to particular places with images and ideas globally mediated about what a wilderness could and should be. A limitation of these studies is how wilderness is mostly seen as socially constructed and embedded in cultural perceptions and complex competing land use contexts. Something Huijbens (2021) explicitly moves away from with emphasis on earthly attachments in the Anthropocene.

Indigenous Tourism and Ethical Perspectives

Another culturally oriented way of understanding spaces of tourism from the perspective of global debates is focused on issues of indigeneity and ethics. The SciVal analysis pools ethical perspectives on tourism and indigenous tourism in one topic. This mirrors an overall concern for cultural impacts of tourism present in much of the indigenous tourism literature. In Nordic geography, the indigenous Sami are the focus.

Nordic tourism geographers have addressed indigenous tourism from a livelihood perspective, highlighting tourism as an opportunity to make a living in a periphery but also identifying challenges to such coping strategies (Leu & Müller, 2016; Müller & Hoppstadius, 2017; Leu et al., 2018). Additionally, Nordic geographers have presented research on representations of indigenous peoples (Niskala & Ridanpää, 2016; Pashkevich & Keskitalo, 2017). However, the most frequently cited contribution here is somewhat deviant. It addresses the earthly boundaries of tourism development and, thus, concerns another kind of ethical dimension of tourism, aspiring to earth-led priorities and perspectives (Gren & Huijbens, 2012).

The above themes and contributions employ various spatial conceptualizations, but generally see tourism as an emergent property of globalised flows of people, ideas and investment. While materialist understandings dominate the work on tourism as a livelihood strategy and understanding wilderness, ideas of uneven social representations dominate the other fraction of indigenous tourism research and a relational processual understanding of space is dominant although primarily concerned with socio-cultural aspects thereof and articulations of perceptions in the political arena of land-use contestations.

Tourism Research Through Time

According to Darbellay and Stock (2012), tourism emerged as a particular focus area within geography in the 1970s, although examples of research exist as far back as the 1930s along with several initiatives in German academia of applied research focused on travel and tourism from the dawn of the twentieth century (see also Gibson, 2008; Smith, 1978; Spode, 2009). In the Nordic context Lillehammer University College in Norway was the first to offer a comprehensive tourism study programme in 1973. Sweden followed suit shortly after and in 1978 set up tourism colleges in Borlänge, Östersund and Kalmar. These four are well known tourism regions and the education was focused on industry skills training. Tourism as part of a full university degree programme emerged later in Sweden and then as part of a human geography degree, business studies degree or sociology. In Denmark tourism originally emerged as a last year specialisation in geography from the Copenhagen Business School, similar to the University of Iceland where tourism is embedded in geography. Holar University College in Iceland and Finland originally followed the Swedish and Lillehammer model, but morphed into tourism academic degrees (Nilsson, 2012). In these budding places of tourism scholarship the geography angle revolved around planning, policy and above all the notion of 'destination' as a way of framing place almost solely as a social construct and subject to tourism consumption.

Saarinen (2013) provides a detailed account of the development of Nordic Tourism Geographies through time. His point of departure is the history of tourism and travel to the Nordic realm, characterised by the search for authentic wilderness, the edge of Europe and unravelling the myths of the hyperboreans, spawning a wealth of travelogues and accounts that have to date sustained some of the allure associated with the Nordic realm in the minds of those living further south (Ísleifsson & Chartier, 2011). But beyond these Saarinen (2013, p. 36) emphasises that "systematic research beyond descriptions and individual experiences was mainly missing till the second part of the twentieth century." What follows is neatly summarised by Saarinen in Table 10.5.

Table 10.5 generally outlines five phases of theoretical frameworks applied to Nordic tourism geographies. The first phase is mainly in the spirit of regional descriptions, inventorying resources and describing places and spaces of tourism in the Nordic realm. As such these harken explicitly to the Vidalian and Annales school of regional geography. The second phase is where the impact of the quantitative revolution in spatial theory starts to be felt. Nordic tourism geographies start to model flows and analyse the tourism system, as proposed by Leiper (1979). Thereby areal differentiation began to matter and the relationship between the different places and the relational transformations wrought as places became destinations. The third phase is then characterised by the further augmenting of quantitative techniques, whereby behaviour modelling and preference gauging rule the day. The fourth phase is where Nordic tourism geography adds a focus on management and policy relevance and how tourism is defined and has measurable impacts on places

Table 10.5 Specific theoretical frameworks related to Nordic tourism geographies through time

Period	Theory
1950s	Regionalism, regional description
1960s	Regionalism, regional description, and areal differentiation
1970s	Regionalism and spatial modelling, regional description, economy, and areal differentiation
1980s	Spatial modelling and regional economy, supply-demand, and growth of cautionary approaches
1990s	Critical and adaptive studies, rise of sustainable tourism
2000s	Diversification of tourism geographies
Present	Diversification of tourism geographies

Source: Saarinen (2013, p. 36)

as they become destinations. Herein the debates surrounding sustainability and carrying capacity play a large role. The fifth phase can then roughly be equated with the cultural turn in spatial theory whereby diverse approaches come together to address tourism as a socio-ecological system of some complexity. Throughout these phases and their characterising epistemologies there are cross-cutting themes of Nordic tourism geography directed by the characteristics of the Nordic realm, i.e. its sparsely populated regions, wilderness frontiers, issues of regional socio-economic development, rurality, welfare provisions and distinctive Nordic traditions such as keeping and having a second-home, *friluftsliv* and the presence and geopolitical implications of indigenous communities in the Nordic realm. Beyond these concerns, one theme in particular is gaining recognition and that is the fact that actually most of Nordic tourism takes place in the urban context, i.e. that of the bigger cities in the region (see e.g. Müller et al., 2020).

Although the periodization presented by Saarinen proves to be a nice heuristic devise, it should be cautioned that the approaches identified therein and more generally in this chapter do not represent clear breaks from past traditions. In the last instance under the general rubric of diversification we see for example the resurfacing of travelogues and detailed accounts of individual experiences, yet framed with a variety of theoretical lenses. Birkeland's (2005) feminist *choragraphy* of people seeking orientation in their lives through finding 'true north' represents a neat blending of travel accounts of old laced with regional descriptions with a critical bend. Building on these traditions and into the future we see two distinct themes of particular relevance for Nordic tourism geographies.

Destination Development and Sustainability

Altogether 59 publications gather under the umbrella of destination development and sustainability in lieu with Saarinen's fourth phase. Two different foci can be distinguished. The more prominent of those relates to the geographical conceptualization of sustainability.

A substantial part of publications within this topic addresses a development context, where issues of cultural relations and representations (Saarinen, 2011) as well as the role of tourism for community development are central questions (Biddulph, 2015, 2017; Kavita & Saarinen, 2016; Manwa et al., 2017; Saarinen & Lenao, 2014) with case studies from the Nordic realm (Førde, 2014; Hultman & Hall, 2012; Prince, 2017a). In this context the role of wilderness and nature are scrutinized as well (Haraldsson & Ólafsdóttir, 2018; Puhakka et al., 2014). Another variety under the destination development umbrella is related to evolutionary economic geography and its explanatory value for destinations (Brouder & Eriksson, 2013a, b; Brouder & Ioannides, 2014; Halkier et al., 2019; Petridou et al., 2019) as well as to the role of local networks (Kulusjärvi, 2016), governance and policy.

A common though not exclusive denominator for those studies is a rootedness in understanding how destinations change and who and what plays a role. Wedding thereby insights from business and geography, places transform from being lived spaces of the everyday to become value-added experiences whereby tourism is addressed as a global economic-political force bringing about change to local community and nature (Fredman & Haukeland, 2021). However, local socio-economic and cultural structures and ecological preconditions provide important constraints for this development and sometimes trigger resistance and alternative development practices. Hence, theoretically many of the studies under this umbrella are to be found in a political economy and even political ecology traditions. Critical engagements with space and spatialities are thereby rendered moot and the time dimension as such is mainly around the mapping of a development trajectory either accepting normatively established goals or problematising these.

Tourism and Climate Change

An equally important topic for Nordic tourism geography into the future relates to the topic of climate change. The output within this topic is to a high degree moulded by the work of Gössling who has been an author of 38 out of the 59 publications.

Besides attempts to measure the impact of tourism on climate change (e.g. Gössling & Peeters, 2015), much of the work targets issues related to perceptions of climate change and consumer behaviour (Gössling et al., 2012; Hibbert et al., 2013; Tervo-Kankare et al., 2013) and mitigation and adaptation activities not least at the destination level (Gössling et al., 2010; Kaján & Saarinen, 2013). Furthermore, policy responses to climate change are discussed from various angles (Scott et al., 2010, 2016) and what the future of tourism might look like under various scenarios (Peeters et al., 2019). Recently, particular interest has been directed to tourism and the availability of snow and water (Brouder & Lundmark, 2011; Demiroglu et al., 2018, 2020).

Research on tourism and climate change is conducted in a rather descriptive and empirical fashion, acknowledging the science tradition of gauging the material characteristics of climate change and its impacts. Similarly in a behavioural

geography tradition human responses to environmental change are quantitatively addressed. In both instances time is addressed through a relatively straightforward historiography. A significant deviation to this tradition can be discerned in the work of Gren and Huijbens (2016) in their focus on tourism and the Anthropocene and Huijbens (2021) in addressing issues of climate change through earthly attachments, whereby earthly and ecological processes are made explicit in making for us and tourism at the same time. As Gren and Huijbens (2016, p. 3) state;

> … in the Anthropocene the Earth may become both a subject which underpins and makes for the Anthropos, and, at the same time, an object which is before it and may be set against its earthly undertakings. Integral to understanding the Anthropocene is thus a realization of the objective and subjective geo-agency of the Earth System, or Gaia, attuned to the way it "talks back", and communicating this among disciplines.

Through time, Nordic tourism geographies have evolved somewhat in tandem with geography globally adopting the tools and focus areas of study to tourism dynamics. Significant overlap can be discerned through time where descriptive regionalism, spatial modelling and empirically informed specific interventions all hold sway whilst ever more theory is being brought into play. Yet at the same time tourism geographies of the Nordic realm struggle to balance imperatives of the industry and economic development with a more encompassing view of tourism as part and parcel of the complex socio-ecological systems that compose our society. Addressing the objective and subjective nature of tourism as emerging in tandem can pave the way to such critical engagements.

Concluding Points

We concur with Lew (1999) that there is no need to set up a particular disciplinary frame for tourism, be it for the Nordic realm or more generally. Similarly tourism geographies, residing at the margins of geography and tourist studies, need to be seen as a particular and distinct perspective beyond the narrow borders of tourism and the tourism industry (see also Müller, 2019a), whereby primacy is placed on emergent relational properties of spaces and places in the context of global power geometries skewed to the benefits of capital and boundless growth. A geographically differentiated perspective is therefore necessary to understand how places and spaces negotiate demands for growth, ever accelerating consumption and the ever more pervasive monetisation of social relations and the everyday and how these are spear headed by tourism (Harvey, 2017).

At the outset we posed the question what makes for a Nordic tourism geography and what spatial conceptualisations prevail therein. Revisiting the frame produced in Table 10.1, what becomes evident is that regional studies and empirical studies of tourism as a tool for planning, development and change are prevalent Nordic topics at the most general level, while tourism and climate change is a strong emerging topic area. More specifically this study confirms what Hall and Page (2009) and Müller (2019b) state about the Nordic scholarly focus when it comes to tourism

geographies as summed in the introduction. What we have highlighted is that over and beyond thematic topic listings, these can be scrutinised in terms of their socio-spatial articulations. Through the topics we show how a place gets transformed into a destination through tapping into the myriad networks of global stretch and duration that make up the tourism phenomena. Places as emerging, developed or mature destinations are the framing device of Nordic tourism geographers yet too often leading to highly applied and empirical studies dominating the field from the perspective of social constructivism. Thereby place is largely understood as a material setting lending itself all too frequently to becoming a resource, tallied and accounted for in the consumptive practice of tourism and/or how these are transformed by tourism practices. In most studies, time and space are taken at face value, as containers wherein development trajectories or even tourist trajectories can be traced and tracked. Here a more hardnosed science approach is needed, e.g. analysing and modelling holistic spatial dynamics from the perspective of complex socio-ecological systems, even using big data. But for that an explicit concern with spatial theory and more fundamental questions about the prevailing onto-epistemological stance adopted by Nordic tourism geographers need to be addressed. Some promising signs of a more substantive and explorative theoretical engagements can be seen in Nordic tourism geographies making for the simultaneously objective and subjective emergent properties of space, e.g. through notions of topology (see Ek, 2016; Ek & Tesfahuney, 2019), addressing the prevalent growth paradigm (see Hall et al., 2021) and bringing tourism to bear on how we relate to the planet (see Huijbens, 2021). We would like to see Nordic tourism geography furthermore explore 'the radical possibilities of ontological politics in tourism research' (Tribe & Liburd, 2016, p. 59), recognising how tourism has mobilized places and spaces primarily in the service of capital and highlighting that these mobilisations are not constructed locally but in complex global power geometries of scapes and flows.

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Chapter 11
The Spatialities of the Nordic Compact City

Per Gunnar Røe, Kristin Edith Abrahamsen Kjærås, and Håvard Haarstad

Introduction

Developing socio-spatial theory on cities from a vantage point of the Nordic countries presents some particular challenges. Although "the Nordic" is a somewhat unclear category, there are several ideas circulating about what "the Nordic" represents. And there is often an interest in research and policy circles about the assumed uniqueness of the region (Bergh & Bjørnskov, 2011). This uniqueness is typically associated with policies and developments within the sphere of socioeconomics, labour and welfare, and has arguably spread into other experiences and perspectives in spheres like gender equality, education, day care, prisons, design, food and culture (Byrkjeflod et al., 2021). The sense of uniqueness is not as marked in the field of city planning, which has been highly influenced by international planning ideas and models (Hall, 2015). But some retain that the welfare state context and intra-Nordic communication and collaboration has created a Nordic Planning Model (Hall, 1991).

Despite this interest, the question is whether theorizing from the Nordic experience based on this assumed uniqueness can lead to *generalizable insights*. As many scholars working in an international sphere of research have experienced, cases from Nordic cities and city planning are often seen as outliers, as Hall (2015) describes in the case of the "Stockholm alternative" of the 1950s and 1960s based on coordinated Social Democratic Planning. There are no easy ways to theory-building based on the uniqueness of Nordic cities, but there are arguably

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exceptional planning models or projects in the region that may be analysed for the purpose of theory building. Such theory constructions may serve as alternatives to the Anglo-American dominance in urban theory, voiced for example by Smart and Smart (2017) on gentrification, Hassink et al. (2019) on economic geography, and Robinson (2016) on urban studies in general.

There is also another way of thinking about such theory building, and this can contribute to a wider debate about what it means to develop socio-spatial theory in and from the Nordics. In our work within urban studies, often building on relational approaches to space developed in human geography, we see Nordic cities as developed in negotiation, dialogue and exchange with global and transnational governance spheres.

The generalized models for "good" urbanism (for example liveable and green cities) are typically shaped by the particularities of cities, and governance in particular cities cannot be understood as separate from the circulation of general and universal ideas of what good urbanism is. This is also the case for explanatory models of urbanism, like the Chicago School and the Los Angeles School models for socio-spatial patterns and developments (Dear, 2002), where empirical research and theorizing based on two major cities were promoted as generic models for urban processes in general. The discussion of the global city thesis (Sassen, 2001) and its replicability is another example indicating that generic models should be avoided. So in this way of theorizing, the key question is not whether the experiences of Nordic urbanism can be generalized, but rather how the uniqueness of Nordic experiences is "in dialogue" with the general understandings of urban governance and planning in their wider circulation.

In this chapter we explore how this way of researching in between the particular and the general could work, emphasizing the relational production of Nordic compact urbanism. Overall, the chapter contributes with a critique of existing socio-spatial perspectives on the Nordic compact city, while also adding to this literature through relational theorization, emphasizing the particular geographies Nordic compact urbanism engender. By re-contextualizing the spatiality of 'the compact city', we question whether there is an avenue for a re-contextualized, relational and grounded compact city model. We focus on the larger Nordic city, thereby excluding smaller cities and towns lacking the scale and size needed for example to provide effective and sustainable public transport. Whilst we situate this chapter within the field of urbanism, researching *in between* is relevant also in a broader sense, to the question of what socio-spatial theory means in Nordic geography.

We have chosen to examine the compact city model, which over the last decades has become the dominant idea for urban sustainability governance (Breheny, 1992; Næss, 2006). Given the rapid rates of urbanization globally, policy has been oriented towards curbing sprawl, stimulating transit-oriented development and preserving agricultural lands from urban encroachment. These policy objectives are written into the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Habitat and the Global Commission on the Economy and the Climate, as well as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

At the same time, the compact city model has a particular trajectory in the Nordic countries, as it has been shaped by the governance context of a welfare state and planning traditions. The neoliberal turn in urban planning has during the rise of the compact city strategy set its mark on Nordic cities (Hanssen, 2018; Andersen & Røe, 2017; Bruns-Berentelg et al., 2022; Holgersen, 2015), fuelling the emergence of a public-private regime for urban development.

In the following, we scrutinize the spatialities of the compact city model and examine how the compact city model has played out in the Nordic context, focusing in particular on Oslo. We discuss whether there is such a thing as a Nordic compact city model, and point to some of its political, social and cultural implications.

The Emergence and Spread of Compact City Policy

The ideal of the compact city, which is now arguably hegemonic in international urban governance debates, has a long history. Its modern origins can be traced back to the planning reformers of the nineteenth century (Hall, 2015), who proposed various models to preserve urban qualities from the pressures of industrialization. Ebenezer Howard's "Garden City" is one example of this, as it combined small and relatively dense communities with public transport infrastructure (similar to current models' transit-oriented development) and strict limits on encroachment onto the countryside. Another example is Ildefons Cerdàs grid in Barcelona, combining high population density with public and green spaces in a super-block structure. The last example is the high-rise central city of Le Courbusier, where height and density were imposed on the traditional irregular, messy and also dense traditional city, which Le Corbusier despised, in order to free up space for parks and highways (Guiton, 1981).

These models were designed as healthy and liveable alternatives to the dense industrial city. Messy density was replaced by orderly density, and a model for compactness based on organised infrastructure and public spaces. In the post-WWII era much of the urban planning in the Global North flouted ideals of compactness because of the automobilisation of these societies and their cities (Urry, 2007; Sheller & Urry, 2000), and instead allowed sprawling conurbations dependent on private car use (Kunstler, 1994; Hall, 2015).

Nordic countries also allowed for significant urban sprawl in this era (Haarstad & Oseland, 2017), although they sprawled later than in the United States because of the slower pace of automobilisation, they also developed suburban but compact housing estates outside city cores that were often connected by public transport (Røe, 2017). This may partly be explained by particularities of the Nordic context, characterized by comprehensive municipal planning, welfare-oriented public housing programs, extensive public transport infrastructures and (in the post-WWII period) lower rate of private car ownership, compared to the U.S. (in Norway car sale was regulated until 1960).

In the 1990s, as the detrimental effects of excesses of urban sprawl became evident globally, and sustainability became a political slogan, urban planning ideals increasingly returned toward compactness (Breheny, 1992; Jenks et al., 1996). Research illustrated the strong correlations between sprawl and high energy use, focusing on transport (Newman & Kenworthy, 1989) also in Nordic cities (Næss, 1995; Næss, 2006). Additionally, the revitalization of Jane Jacobs' arguments about dense and mixed communities, Jan Gehl's people-oriented planning guidelines, and the design principles of the disputed New Urbanism movement, were all part of a reviving of human-centric urbanism as part of the post-industrial back-to-the-city-movement starting in the 1980s. Gehl's urban design consultancy has had a marked influence on Nordic city planning, through the development of principles guiding design of buildings and outdoor spaces (Gehl, 2013; Sim, 2019), and in specific projects in urban areas transformed as part of compact city projects. In Oslo, Gehl's consultancy has had an important role in the making of public spaces in the new waterfront redevelopment projects in Bjørvika (Andersen & Røe, 2017).

At present, the ideals of compact urbanism, understood as putting limits on urban sprawl, managing car use, densifying urban cores, and connecting urban nodes with public transit, are arguably hegemonic ideals in urban governance discourses (Banister, 2005; Sultana et al., 2018). The ideal has been strengthened by the international commitment to climate change mitigation and bolstered by attention towards the social implications of compact city developments, especially gentrification, social exclusion and social polarization between urban cores and suburban hinterlands (Anguelovski et al., 2018; Keil, 2018).

While this ideal of compactness circulates widely, actual planning decisions in specific cities are of course results of complex and conflictual processes. The compact city ideal is never implemented 'as is' anywhere, but mutates and transforms as urban planners and other decision-makers and actors struggle over road projects, bicycle lanes, private property rights, building heights and so on. International policy regimes and hegemonic ideas are always confronted by local policy regimes and existing infrastructures (Robinson, 2015; Haarstad, 2016), as well as other path dependencies. So compact urbanism means different things in the different cities and regions that work with and seek to implement this idea.

Conversely, the particularities of implementation shape the abstract idea of the compact city, since cities are horizontally exchanging knowledge and experiences of implementation in concrete projects (Wood, 2015). In other words, Nordic cities need to be seen as developed in negotiation, dialogue and exchange with the compact city ideal in global and transnational governance spheres, such as URBACT (EU's territorial cooperation programme aiming to foster sustainable integrated urban development in cities across Europe), ICLEI (a network of local governments for sustainability) or C40 (network of mayors of nearly 100 cities) (see e.g. Kjærås, 2021; Grandin & Haarstad, 2021.

International ideals of compactness, however, are also shaped by the particular projects and experiences of compact cities and city districts around the world, which represents actually existing compactness. Not that all cities or regions of the world contribute equally, there are certainly power geometries involved in terms of which

cities and forms of compactness receive the label of "best practice" (Bulkeley, 2006). But there is some evidence that the compact city model of the Nordic countries has wide appeal. The Nordic countries are viewed to have been relatively successful in reconciling economic efficiency with social equality (Lister, 2009), and the Nordic cities are frequently branded as best practice in terms of sustainability (Hult, 2015). Below, we discuss the particularities of the Nordic compact city model, using the example of Oslo in particular.

The Compact City as Spatial Theory

Dominant approaches to compact city theory can be described as adhering to an Euclidian spatial approach, which emphasize the city as a territorially bounded urban form; in the conception of Harvey (2006), the compact city is typically approached as an "absolute space". Arguments for the sustainability of compacting cities are made in reference to this logic. For example, compact cities are often viewed as optimizing human life, through physical proximity and by efficiently utilizing space within the boundary of the city. Urban sprawl, on the other hand, is viewed as utilizing an extended amount of space affording inefficiency and excessive consumption.

Since Newman and Kenworthy (1989) identified the correlation between urban density and energy use, compact city research has taken a pronounced role within debates on urban sustainability. The location of housing and public transport in close proximity within a dense urban fabric is shown to reduce transport demand and energy use (VandeWeghe & Kennedy, 2007). Densely built cities with a diversity of uses and functions are similarly shown to be advantageous for social sustainability (Mouratidis, 2021), although this is disputed because of the associated rise in housing prices and social exclusion associated with compact and attractive cities and city districts (Sheller, 2018; Andersen & Røe, 2017).

While this research holds significance for global discussions of urban sustainability it has legitimized an eco-spatial consensus within planning where ecological and economic efficiency can be achieved through centralization and densification (Knudsen, 2018). In Norway, Knudsen (2018, p. 67) argues that this "new spatial discourse […] highlights the need to economize with space". By placing people and amenities in close proximity, this discourse emphasizes the possibility to preserve land and optimize infrastructural and housing needs through co-location. The discourse represents a shift within Norwegian politics where distributional policies – physically and economically – have been an important part of the Norwegian welfare model.

There are several issues with the understanding of compact urbanism as a territorially bounded urban form that we, from the standpoint of relational and critical human geography, problematize. Relational geography, drawing in particular on the work of Massey (2005), but also on assemblage thinking, emphasizes the interconnectedness of entities that may appear discrete and separated spatially. Thinking

relationally compels us to think about how places are constructed in relationships with 'multiple elsewheres' (Grandin & Haarstad, 2021). In turn, we have elsewhere argued that the dominant renderings of the compact city overlook the multi-scalar and relational nature of urban sustainability (Kjærås, 2021; Haarstad et al., in press). For example, compact urbanism tends to ignore social, economic and ecological factors that are fundamental to sustainability, such as affordability, segregation, urban metabolism and urban financialization.

This means, firstly, that compact city models commonly refrain from engaging with the urban metabolism that compact urbanism entails. For example, the production of goods, from shoes to clothing to technology, remains essential yet typically outsourced from the compact city. These relations are not only significant for global relations of inequality and the power geometries of affluent cities (Sampson, 2017), but for the geographies of carbon emissions, making affluent urban citizens responsible for on average higher carbon footprints (Moran et al., 2018; Heinonen et al., 2013).

Secondly, the relationship between urban form and behaviour remains unclear within compact city models. While much research shows that urban form structures behaviour and therefore is significant for urban sustainability (Creutzig et al., 2016; Mouratidis, 2021; Newman & Kenworthy, 1989; Næss, 2006), the relationship between behaviour and urban form is more complex than direct correlative relations. When explored in depth, other factors such as income appear to play a more central role in guiding behaviour than compact city theory often suggests (Ewing et al., 2018). Including other factors allow for more contextually oriented approaches that emphasise how compact city strategies are embedded within a nexus of social, economic, cultural and environmental structures and politics. Overall, the interconnectedness of compact cities and the urban life that it entails suggest that the sustainability of compact urbanism should equally be viewed through a multi-scalar and relational approach.

The Compact City Model in the Nordic Countries

Nordic cities are often seen as being in the forefront in sustainable development policies, especially concerning policy agendas and technology implementation. All Nordic capitals have set carbon-neutrality targets, and Nordic national capitals are ranked high in sustainability indexes compared to cities elsewhere. The 2018 Arcadis Sustainable Cities Index, for example, list both Stockholm and Oslo amongst its top ten cities, while Copenhagen hovers just below at place 11 (Arcadis, 2018). The Nordic countries are widely seen to be leading in the implementation and up-scaling of innovative and green technologies, like energy systems, although the track records differ (Kester et al., 2018).

However, when looking at urban planning, the image is more blurred, and the current quest for developing compact cities must be seen in a historical and geographical context. Compared to large European cities, such as Barcelona or Paris,

the Nordic capitals have lower population densities and are less compact. But they have over the last decades enforced densification and compact city policies, combined with investments in public transport and infrastructure for cycling and walking, promoting a shift towards sustainable transport modes (Næss, 2006; Luccarelli & Røe, 2012). The surge of research on land use, transport, energy use and sustainability, and the subsequent policy developments, have been influential in the Nordic cities as well as in many cities globally.

Despite the dominant position of the compact city model there may be existing path dependencies and functionally disconnected exurban developments that linger and may contradict the dominant policy shift, for example existing and planned highways within the city region. Another challenge for pursuing a comprehensive compact city strategy is that urban sustainability policies mainly have been directed at the core areas of city regions and within the administrative boundaries of city municipalities, also as part of strategies to promote the city in an increasing interurban competition to attract attention, people and capital (Luccarelli & Røe, 2012). Although the city in many ways is inseparable from its suburban and peri-urban hinterland, the larger city region or the metabolism of cities (the flow of people, goods and substances crossing administrative borders in the city region) has to a little extent been included in urban sustainability policies. Rather there may be contradicting policies coming from the city government and the surrounding suburban governments. On one hand, Nordic city authorities' promotion and implementation of the compact and sustainable city may be in stark contrast with the policies of suburban municipalities surrounding these cities, with local politicians adhering to their constituency (Keil, 2018). On the other hand, the same city authorities may not have taken into consideration or account the environmental consequences for the larger region, caused by for example transport of people and goods, waste treatment, mass deposits, etc.

The institutional-geographical context characteristic for Nordic city regions is also of importance. In the Nordic countries numerous and relatively small municipalities have, according to the national planning legislations, great powers to decide on their own legally binding plans for land use, the built environment and transport infrastructure, which are the building blocks of compact city regions. Although national and regional authorities have the opportunity to protest, conflicts have often been avoided, and soft measures (dissemination of knowledge, collaboration, guidelines and co-creation) have been prioritized (Ringholm et al., 2018). This is especially challenging in functional city regions spanning several municipalities, with conflicting interests. One example is the dispute around financing public transport systems crossing municipal borders. Another example is divergence in policies for car restrictions, where suburban municipalities tend to be more reluctant than central city governments.

At last, in a global context there are few large cities in the Nordic countries. In the Nordic region compact strategies are implemented not only in the larger capital cities (with approximately 1 million inhabitants), but also in medium-sized and small cities and towns. The broad variety of city-scales compact urbanism is operationalized within, from megacities to small communities, suggest widely different

types of cities. Because there is bias towards large cities in developing the compact city model, its imaginations and strategies, the implementation of such generic normative theories pose challenges for these smaller cities. According to Gever (2019) smaller urban settlements may fail in attempts to implement compact policies, because of a lack of understanding of small-scale settlements and how the scale of small, remote settlements uniquely influences many aspects of compact urbanism (density, mixed land use, and non-car dependency). This is related to the incapability of generalised urban theory to take into account the complexity of scale, relational aspects of space and the unique contexts of places in the study of the material and social dimensions in specific cities and towns. We now turn to the specific case of Oslo, chosen because of the city's reputation for pursuing urban sustainability policies, including compact and transit-oriented development, and because of the authors' long running experience in research on this city.

The Compact City Model in Oslo

As in other Nordic cities, compact urbanism became the dominant model for urban development in Oslo after the previously mentioned surge of research in the 1980s and 1990s. Particularly in Oslo, a key research project ("NAMIT: Natur- og miljøvennlig tettstedsutvikling") based on a scenario methodology provided the knowledge base for setting up a national policy (Næss et al., 1992). In the early 1990s state planning authorities published white papers, developed guidelines and changed legislation, in order to prepare for the turn to compact city development. Especially important were the national guidelines for land use and transport ("Rikspolitiske retningslinjer for arealbruk og transport") adopted in 1993, and several state sponsored pilot projects for environmental urban development (Thorén & Nyhuus, 1994).

Since then, compact city policies have been sought through a strict urban containment policy and spatially differentiated urban densification strategies aiming at urban development in the direction from the inner to the outer city and near public transport hubs, in order to keep development within walking distance to trains, buses, trams and the metro (Oslo Municipality, 2018). Near transport hubs or nodes, building densities and heights are to be higher than in the surrounding city, which in Oslo is mainly of medium density and low rise, signified by the frequently used metaphor "carpet city" (e.g. Oslo Municipality, 2020). This strategy resembles the widely known principles of transit-oriented development (TOD), and has, because of its adoption amongst spatial planners, architects and politicians, led to increased densification within the built-up area of the city and the suburban transport hubs surrounding the city core, as well as massive investments in public transport systems.

Partly as a result of this, as well as the transformation of former industrial spaces in the city and the rise of a new urban culture amplified through gentrification, the share of everyday travel trips made by car decreased from 35,7% in 2009 to 29% in 2019, while the share of public transport increased from 28,3% to 36,8% (Oslo

Municipality, 2021). Meanwhile, the share of walking and cycling was reduced (from 30,7% to 28,3%). Compared with Copenhagen, car traffic in Oslo has been significantly smaller relative to economic growth (Næss et al., 2011). Overall, Oslo's population density has increased by 38%, from 27.0 to 37.3 persons per hectare between 1985 and 2018 (Tiitu et al., 2021, p. 1099).

The implementation of the compact city model in Oslo is not only a result of a turn in the planning discourse, influencing the implementation of plans adopted by public agencies. Although all legally binding plans must be politically adopted, most of the development plans (after a change in the national planning law in 1985) are made and implemented by private real estate developers and builders. The shift in who the dominant actors in urban development are, as well as increased financialization (Orderud, 2006), has infused city building with business strategies, investment returns, competition and place promotion. Since the 1990s Oslo has experienced increases in economic growth, inequality and population growth (Wessel, 2013).

The compact city model has increasingly been coupled with massive, large scale and spectacular development projects in the city and around public transport nodes in the suburban hinterland, of which the Fjord City development (a spatial and social transformation of Oslo's waterfront) and Hovinbyen (the building of a new urban district with 60–80,000 inhabitants and 50–100,000 work places) are the largest. Especially the developments in the Fjord City and Bjørvika, the former harbour and working class area of the inner east, with its spectacular waterfront projects, have been praised and disputed (Ellefsen, 2017). Andersen and Røe (2017) concluded in their investigation of the planning and design of the Barcode, an iconic row of high-rise buildings in Bjørvika, that it represented more than an 'aesthetic break' with, or a 'physical barrier' to the city behind it. Being located adjacent to the traditional working-class and the ethnically mixed East End, Barcode also became a visible manifestation of the socio-economic elite inhabiting the apartments and offices in the city, contributing to on-going gentrification (Turner & Wessel, 2013) and socio-spatial segregation (Wessel, 2015). Arguably this pronounced architectural expression of the compact city model is also part of the newly designed socio-economic enclave in Oslo's inner east, an observation supported by recent studies focusing on housing prices (Cavicchia, 2021) and the role of architectural competitions (Bern, 2018).

In Hovinbyen the high-speed planning and construction of high-density housing projects have fuelled debates on architectural qualities and the social sustainability of the transformed city spaces. The conflicts between social sustainability and compact urbanism have been noted by several researchers in Oslo (Cavicchis & Cucca, 2020; Andersen & Røe, 2017; Schmidt, 2014), highlighting its potential effects on gentrification, social mix and segregation. With respect to environmental sustainability, Holden and Norland (2005) have, moreover, suggested that compact urbanism may not encourage shifts towards low-carbon urban lifestyles.

These transformed and compact new spaces and built forms, which may be coined new-build gentrification (Davidson & Lees, 2010), are not only scrutinized because of architectural facades, but increasingly also because of their contribution

to the creation of up-market smart city nodes and socially exclusive enclaves (Andersen & Røe, 2017), as well as secluded urban spaces and privately owned of public spaces (Bjerkeset & Aspen, 2017). Truly public spaces, without the regulations and restrictions often orchestrated by private actors, are of importance both for the possibility for social gathering and inter-group mingling, as well as representing the city's ideology of openness towards diversity. Arguably, the important role of architectural competitions in developing the new and transformed spaces contributes to a focus on singular projects and built form design, rather than the social structure and the wider urban context (Bern, 2018). These brownfield transformations of harbour areas adjacent to former working class districts, that have come to signify the compact (and green) city model, is arguably part of a generalised process of gentrification found in several Nordic cities, like Gothenburg (Borggren & Ström, 2014), Malmø (Holgersen & Malm, 2016), Copenhagen (Larsen & Lund Hansen, 2008) and Helsinki (Sairinen & Kumpulainen, 2020).

In short, Oslo has adopted the ideals of compact city development, pointing to both social and environmental benefits, and restricted new land use outside strict boundaries. At the same time, the architectural projects built in central locations cater to high-end residents and businesses, while the sustainability footprint is unclear. The question is whether these social implications of compact city developments are the result of the current private-public governance regime and the product of the political economy of urban development, or if the current understanding of the sustainability nexus and the theoretical conception of the compact city as a space are equally important. Compact city development in Oslo is a result of a particular relational geography of urban development and architecture trends that render specific local planning regimes and planning practices legible and justified.

Conclusion: Re-contextualizing the Compact City

With reference to the Nordic countries, compact city development is contextualized and made particular, while also mirroring more general shifts in urban governance and planning. As a traveling model within global policy circuits, it is relevant to discuss the ways in which the 'compact city' is not given but relies on a continuous re-contextualization within specific places. Tonkiss (2013, p. 40) states that the "benefits of compactness [lie] not only in land use, efficiency, energy and emissions, but also in the densities of social interaction…". This means that the context is of critical importance. The possible benefits of density and compactness in newly transformed city districts are not easily assessed based on the generic aspects of the compact city model, but depend on a variety of factors related to the socio-spatial structure, demography, socio-cultural composition, governance regime and political economy of city development.

Moving towards a relational and multi-scalar approach to the compact city inspired by Massey (2005), then, provides a compelling agenda for a Nordic geography of compact urbanism. Here critical insight can be drawn across the

similarities and differences that matters to urban sustainability. The socioeconomic history of Nordic countries with strong labour and welfare systems plays a particular role in the compact city policies that have been developed in Nordic cities. Yet, as the context of development has changed towards entrepreneurial governance approaches, so has the geographies of compact city development, also in diverging directions. For example, today the Nordic countries have very different housing systems and immigration policies, which matters to the types of challenges compact city development assemble. The relevance of Nordic compact cities should as such not only be viewed through the common aspirations for human-centred and rather small-scale urbanised development, but through the diverging choices that are being made and their effects on urban sustainability.

In closing, we want to suggest that it is precisely such a re-contextualization that provides an avenue for a relational and grounded compact city model. If we are to re-conceptualize the compact city in relational terms, compact urbanism is not only enmeshed within a multi-scalar nexus of social, economic and ecological politics, but is made and produced in relations – in and between cities across contexts. This also means that compact city strategies can be adjusted and differentiated. Fixed models, architectural renderings and schematic illustrations, which often represent the traveling imagery of compact urbanism, downplay the role of public interrogation, participation and local knowledges (Graham & Healey, 1999; Sandercock, 2003).

At the same time, such plans are also in many cases based on generic conceptualisations and models of how the reorganisation of physical spaces will result in changing social practices, resembling Lefebvre's (1991) representational spaces and architectural determinism (Richards, 2012), where the role and force of physical design and architecture on social structures and processes are (over-)emphasized. This is a recurring theme in the history of planning (Hall, 2015), but which also are marked in today's urban planning and design.

A relational re-conceptualisation and contextualisation of compact city strategies (see Haarstad et al., in press), based on the recent theorisations of relational spatialities within the discipline of geography, may provide knowledges and tools to relate formerly decontextualized compact city strategies to contextual and local systems, structures and practices. Such theorisations may also inform the ambition to create compact city strategies that takes into account the wider geographical, regional and global relations and interconnections, for example in transport of people and goods. As noted in the beginning, the contribution of Nordic geography to wider efforts at theory-building may not necessarily be generalization of particular case studies set in the Nordic context.

The contribution of Nordic geography to socio-spatial theory depends, in our view, not on whether we as Nordic geographers manage to generalize the Nordic experience. Centner (2021) argues that there is "something special about Nordic cities, that despite their variations they have come from a unique set of histories, and even amid changing social formations in the present, there is this overarching effort to create visions for livable futures […]". Accordingly, in the case of our chapter, the contribution may rather be to an increased understanding how the particular policy regimes of Nordic cities negotiate with the general ideals of compact

urbanism. This can provide valuable insights into how global ideals are shaped, what actors take part in shaping them, and the scope for negotiating these ideals 'on the ground'.

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Chapter 12
Struggling with Conceptual Framings to Understand Swedish Displacement Processes

Carina Listerborn and Guy Baeten

Introduction

As a consequence of the increasing marketization and financialization of the Nordic housing market there is a growing concern about displacement pressures in larger cities due to intensified gentrification, shortage of affordable housing and so-called renoviction processes. In a Swedish context, an emerging housing debate which engages both scholars and activists, has shed light on the lack of active national housing politics during the last decades, leaving housing provision almost entirely to private actors (Hedin et al., 2012; Polanska et al., 2019; Listerborn et al., 2020). The housing question and the risk of displacement is concrete, material and an everyday matter, but it also triggers scientific theoretical and methodological challenges as these struggles do not look the same all over the world and therefor they need to be understood in their respective socio-spatial context. This chapter aims to illustrate the complexities and spatialities of urban and housing research, with a main focus on urban renewal processes in Sweden. Our aim is to highlight the importance of theorizing socio-spatial processes, such as displacement, contextually. Displacement research in a Nordic context differs from other spatial contexts, and has to be theorized accordingly within its local situation. At the same time, the differences may be lesser if we take a closer look at the underlying – often global – processes.

There are significant differences amongst the national housing markets that together constitute the Nordic region, but generally speaking it could be argued that, in spite of far-reaching privatization, Nordic tenants benefits from relatively high protection levels because of historical reasons. Tenants are historically well-organised, in Sweden through the national Tenants Union (formed in 1923), which has given them considerable political influence. This historical level of tenant

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protection stands in the way of outright evictions, but also of larger plans of both real estate owners and municipal governments to pursue gentrification aims or municipal desires to alter the existing social-demographic fabric of the city, such as attracting high-income earners, diminishing the number of inhabitants on benefits, or both. Displacement, whether followed by gentrification or not, takes place not through evictions but through a bundle of stealth tactics or indirect maneuvers, as we shall see later. It also follows that displacement processes, since they are indirect, are generally significantly slower in a Nordic context. The slow pace of displacement can even be a deliberate tactic of housing owners since they exhaust the tenant who may simply decide to move. Further, research attention for displacement in an Anglo-American context is intimately linked to gentrification research originating in New York in the 1970s and 1980s (for example Hartman, 1982). Again, gentrification processes in the Nordic region are certainly widespread but they are, generally speaking, more subtle, indirect, slower; they are, as Larsen and Lund Hansen (2008) call it based on observations in Copenhagen, more 'gentle' or what Catharina Thörn (2011) called 'soft policies of exclusion', even though consequences for individuals can be substantial in the long run.

The peculiar conditions under which displacement occurs in a Nordic context as for example that housing owners and municipal authorities are forced into indirect, slow and sophisticated tactics that exploit legal weaknesses, challenges our taken-for-granted theoretical and methodological parameters. Theoretically, displacement should in the first place be understood as a process, rather than an actual outcome whereby a person is removed from one point to another in a Euclidian space. The process may lead to actual displacement but often results in the persons in question deciding to leave themselves, which may theoretically not be regarded as displacement but is de facto indirect displacement. In a Nordic context, it is important to grasp these cumbersome, confusing and almost invisible processes of displacement. This also implies a serious methodological challenge, since these processes can not be grasped in statistics, and the slow nature of displacement makes it difficult to identify who is actually affected by displacement process and what the process actually *does* to people in the absence of direct eviction. In a study of displacement in the city of Uppsala, Pull (2020) has tried to solve this challenge through a longitudinal study of victims of displacement processes that capture the social and emotional difficulties displaces are facing even if they are not de facto displaced.

Housing markets are at the same time local and global, on the one hand clearly path-dependent and embedded in historically defined housing regimes (Bengtsson & Ruonavaara, 2010), and on the other hand shaped by global financial processes (Aalbers, 2015), which could lead to rapid changes on the housing market. Even though the Nordic countries share similar welfare ambitions, there are well documented differences between the Nordic housing markets (Bengtsson et al., 2013). The Nordic housing markets, like in other parts of the world, have been increasingly challenged by neoliberal planning paradigms, globalisation and the dismantling of the welfare state. Not the least, the universal welfare model that promises housing for all is regarded as expensive, bureaucratic and inefficient. Housing markets have on the one hand been deregulated resulting in for example the abolition of subsides,

while on the other hand they have been reregulated to facilitate 'market forces' to provide housing (Ruonavaara & Bengtsson, 2013). In the Nordic context, no other country than Sweden has installed a more far-reaching market-led housing system (see for example Lind and Lundström (2007). In this chapter we will focus on research conducted on Swedish displacement processes, while the conclusions are relevant for all Nordic countries and beyond.

The background of the local context and particularities of the Swedish housing market is essential to theorize the socio-spatial power relations between tenants and landlords, but what are the theoretical considerations we may ignore through imported concepts that do not fit the local muddy social examples? And how could we develop a theoretical framework relevant to the Nordic context?

In the following, a historical overview of Swedish displacement pressure to bring forward the importance of how theorizations are constitutive of how we understand socio-spatial relations. By arguing that the theoretical framework limits or directs the object of research in a specific way, we want to highlight the importance of theoretical tools that do not exclude place-specific situations. If we only are to look for actual displacement and evictions, we may miss out on the more complex processes of 'situated' displacement pressure and struggles to fight housing insecurity. The conclusion reflects on the challenges and benefits of 'translating' concepts and trying to adjust them to specific socio-spatial contexts.

Swedish Displacement Trajectories

Research on displacement has a long trajectory in Western geography and urban studies.

Learning from empirical research in Sweden, the Nordic experiences differ from the Anglo-American context, and provide basis for a theoretical discussion on how to understand the specificities of displacement processes in previously established welfare societies. The conceptual framework developed in the Anglo-American context may provide an understanding for global political-economic processes, but to a lesser degree assists in analyzing the complexity of local policies and practices. Housing regimes and welfare policies are place-specific and path-dependent, and 'interfere' with market paradigms.

Geographical differences are commonly discussed within housing studies, in particular in relation to comparative housing studies, but are to a lesser degree integrated in displacement research. In this chapter, we initially investigate some Swedish manifestations of displacement that cannot easily be grasped by conceptual apparatuses often developed in an Anglo-American context.

In Sweden, three large waves of displacement can be discerned in modern times. The largest wave of displacement took place during the 1960s and 1970s as part of the so-called Million Program that sought to add one million new dwellings to the existing housing stock during a period of 10 years. In order to provide the Swedish population at large with modern, well-equipped and affordable homes, significant

parts of the existing inner-city housing stock had to be demolished. Precise statistics are not available but around 125,000 dwellings were demolished between 1959 and 1975. With an average household size of 2.8 in 1975, this means that approximately 350,000 persons faced housing displacement in that period (Pull, 2020). Most literature of that period focuses on the economic and technical aspects of the Million Program efforts; hardly any systematic research on the social fall-out of the large-scale demolition processes was carried out. But some studies offered descriptions of the anxieties and broken-down social networks people were facing (e.g., Björnberg et al., 1979; Egerö et al., 1965; Selander, 1975; see also Pull, 2020).

The second major wave of displacement took place in the wake of the renewal policies starting in 1983. Due to an increasing dislike and a decreasing demand for Million Program dwellings, the so-called ROT program – 'Reparation, Ombyggnad, Tillbyggnad', or 'Repair, Rebuild, Extend' – now focused on the renewal of the older housing stock and the early dwellings of the Million Program: the aim was to renew 425,000 housing units in a period of 10 years. Not only the physical state of housing had to be renewed but also the social fabric: the existing population of dwellings in poor condition was regarded as part of the problem and had to be removed (Salonen, 1997). Again, statistics are not available but a study by Wiktorin (1989) revealed that around two thirds of the original population had moved after renovation works.

A third wave of displacement is currently taking place in the wake of large-scale renovation processes of the now half-a-century old Million Program housing stock which started in the 2010s. A survey amongst 119 landlords owning 12% of this housing stock indicates that around half of it (471,000 of 922,000 units) is in need of renovation. Cost estimates of this massive renovation undertaking vary 300–500 billion Swedish Kronor (45-75bn USD) (Boverket, 2014), 215 billion Swedish Kronor (38bn USD) (TMF, 2013) to 300–900 billion (45-135bn USD) (Industrifakta, 2013). The majority of landlords seek to finance these major renovations through rent increases, according to a survey amongst 51 landlords owning Million Program housing stock (Jacobsson, 2013).

The processes of displacement in a Swedish (Nordic) context are often more indirect and slower than what some displacement literature from other parts in the world indicates, but its eventual outcomes can have similar damaging effects on its victims. The worries of not being able to pay the rent and spending time searching for an alternative apartment are not only time-consuming, they also generate stress. The threat of homelessness makes tenants prioritize rent before food and other essentials (Pull & Richard, 2019). Leaving behind a neighborhood with attachments, friends and support systems can have devastating effects, not the least for families with children (Samzelius, 2020; Davidson, 2009). These very 'private' consequences are of course difficult to research and document and will not be easily covered by quantitative surveys.

In 2014, Boverket (The Swedish National Board for Housing, Building and Planning) was commissioned to report on 'renovictions' in Sweden – movement patterns due to extensive renovations. The report is based on register data from Statistics Sweden where individuals were followed two years before renovation to

three years after the renovation. It showed that major renovations lead to increases in movement up to 80%, or that twenty five percent of the tenants are likely to move due to renovations. These movements also correlate with income levels and demonstrate that people on low income are more likely to move than the households with higher incomes. In particular families with children tend to move. The groups that move out tend to move to areas where the rents are lower, which indicates reinforced residualization and segregation (Boverket, 2014).

In addition to the displacement pressure through renovation schemes of rental housing, it should also be clarified that there is a shortage of affordable housing in Sweden, leading to long queues for housing in larger cities, and a growing sublet market where the new housing precariat ends up (Listerborn, 2021). Since the so-called system shift in Swedish politics in the early 1990s, where Swedish housing policies turned neoliberal (Hedin et al., 2012), a large amount of rental housing has been turned into tenant-owner occupation, rendering even less housing to the rental sector and affordability.

In the first report in Sweden on renovictions, Westin (2011) illustrates how different tenants react to planned major renovations. Some actively seek to influence the plans while others feel powerless and paralyzed. Others do not worry and trust that things will be fine. Taking an active stance can lead to positive emotions, if tenants are heard, but negative emotions can be amplified if they are not heard. The possibilities to influence the process is often limited (Boverket, 2014), but there is an emerging housing movement against renovictions in Sweden today, organized mainly outside the Tenants Union (Gustafsson et al., 2019; Listerborn et al., 2020). These movements partly aim to call the politicians' attention to this problem, but their main purpose is to learn about the tenant's rights within the existing legal framework. Scholar activists have written handbooks on how to fight renoviction (Krusell et al., 2016; Polanska et al., 2019).

The rental sector is protected through housing security policies – a direct result from housing struggles in the first half of the twentieth century and the strong position of the Swedish Union of Tenants. Within this socio-spatial context there is it still some kind of trust for the existing institutions to engage with the problems and to get financial support if threatened by displacement. However, the emerging social movements may indicate that this trust is not intact and that the threat of displacement is real, which is confirmed by Boverket's, 2014 report. As part of the 1991 housing policy reform, the 'system shift', the municipality's social service would step in if displacement would occur. Today only individuals with obvious social problems (addiction or mental illness) are prioritized to get support from the social services in the larger cities (Sahlin, 2013). Recent research confirms that the displacement pressure is a real threat (Westin, 2011; Pull, 2020).

Displacement in the City of Landskrona

Understanding displacement processes needs a spatially localized conceptual and methodological toolbox. One emblematic case of how displacement processes may look like in Sweden today, is the case of Landskrona. Similar processes are known from other municipalities, often referred to as 'social dumping', or as the municipal government labels it, "actively contributing to relocation to another municipality" (aktiv medverkan till bosättning i annan kommun) (Statskontoret, 2020). This is a way for municipalities to avoid residents depending on social benefits to settle down in their municipality. Either the municipality makes it very difficult for such households to move to the city, or they actively help them to find housing in another municipality – often small rural municipalities with available housing but a weak labor market. This practice is in the legal grey zone but still happens.

In the case of Landskrona, which we have described in length elsewhere (Baeten & Listerborn, 2015, 2021; Listerborn & Baeten, 2016), a new policy called the Crossroad Plan was developed in 2012 to change the social composition of residents. The process caught attention when the Mayor declared in the local newspaper: 'My message to all welfare benefit recipients is: do not move to Landskrona. If you have a problem, then please ask elsewhere where you are more likely to get attention' (Lönnaeus, 2012). In the same interview, he stated that 'we have a city center characterized by social benefit dependency'. Furthermore, one of the architects of the Crossroads Plan stated in a newspaper interview that the city has allowed in 'a category of people we do not want' and that these 'unserious' tenants should be 'returned to the municipalities where they come from' (Brant, 2011).

Since there is no legal possibility to evict tenants if they have a first-hand contract and pay their rent, the municipality had to develop other plans to get at these people 'they do not want'. The strategy involved targeting the landlords and property owners. With the aim to change the social composition within the inner city, the municipality wanted to gain control over the housing market to influence immigration and emigration plans that would allegedly result in positive outcomes for the tax base level, social benefit dependency, school results, criminality, unemployment and activity rates. Through developing a common rental policy within the inner city, private landlords were forced to follow these new stricter rental policies. The CEO of Landskrona Stadsutveckling AB, a municipal company, declared in an interview,

> There are some property owners who are not interested. We try to identify those who do not care, and we will mobilize the authorities [such as environmental inspection and fire safety control]. If you only want a property as a cash-cow, then that should cost; that should not be fun. We will use all means possible to force property owners to jump on the development bandwagon. (Petterson 2013)

In 2017, twenty-three landlords officially subscribed to the city's rental policy, covering 75% of the total rental housing stock (Landskrona Stadsutveckling, 2017), leading to a reduction in both the volume of the housing stock available to the poor as well as the number of 'unserious landlords' (those who do not follow the municipality's rental policy). The municipality thus developed its own bundle of tactics

(Blomley, 2004) to indirectly influence the social composition of Landskrona's inhabitants by putting pressure on landlords. In that way, the city gains the power to indirectly ban low-income people from the local housing stock, without enforcement or eviction, or without even addressing low-income people directly. The result is a slow, fragmented and piecemeal displacement process without clear, measurable outcomes; it is a set of displacement tactics 'by stealth' that can hardly be held accountable for its consequences since no institution is directly in charge of banning low-income groups from the city.

Five years after the implementation of the plan, Landskrona's tax base has not improved, but the number of people on social benefits has decreased. However, those figures follow national levels and could be due to national policies. Decreasing social expenditures reveal nothing about the amount of poor people in the city or the number of people on social benefits: it can simply be the result of austerity policies or stricter admission policies. In fact, the share of inhabitants on low income – the main group potentially in need of social benefits – has remained stable over the past few years in Landskrona, from 14.3% in 2014 to 14.4 % in 2016 (Socialstyrelsen, 2018). The only 'success' of the policy is that the migratory movements of benefit-dependent people have decreased; before the rental policy in 2012, 898 benefit-dependent persons moved to Landskrona; in 2020, that figure had decreased to 687 (Landskrona Stadsutveckling AB, 2020). But it remains unclear whether this is a direct result of the rental policy that disencourages landlords from renting out to benefit-dependent persons or whether this is a result of the continuous verbal violence against poor people by local politicians, which would discourage poor people to move to Landskrona in the first place.

The aggregated effect was small but the local press reported on several cases where these measures had drastic effects on individual households who were left with no place to go after the rental restrictions had expelled them effectively from reasonable access to housing. Others are under pressure from anxiety, and temporality as an outcome of their precarious position on the housing market (Baeten & Listerborn, 2021). This reluctance to accept citizens on low income or benefits may lead to the emergence of 'city-less citizens': those who have nowhere to go or are being pushed around between municipalities.

As the Swedish housing market is built upon an idea of tenure neutrality and universal welfare provision with no specific support for low-income households besides housing allowances, there is no safety net when there is a shortage of affordable housing. When housing costs increase and income rates are lagging behind, while welfare systems simultaneously are being dismantled, the unequal Swedish housing market triggers specific challenges and many households and individuals find it hard to enter the 'regular' housing market. So how then, do we theoretically and empirically capture these vague, slow and ambivalent practices on the housing market, but with possible long-term consequences?

Conclusion: Displacement, Concepts and Nordic Peculiarities

By arguing that the theoretical framework limits or directs the object of research in a specific way, we want to highlight the importance of theoretical tools that do not exclude place-specific situations. If we only are to look for actual displacement and evictions, we may miss out on the more complex processes of 'situated' displacement pressure and struggles to fight housing insecurity. Displacement is clearly spatial (Davidsson, 2009), however, and belongs to the most urgent urban issues (Marcuse, 1985). It is important to disentangle displacement from gentrification research, as gentrification by definition is always preceded by displacement, but local empirical evidence as discussed in this chapter demonstrates how displacement can occur without subsequent gentrification. The treatment of gentrification and displacement as two sides of the same coin has its origins in early gentrification research in a specific Anglo-American context (Baeten et al., 2021) and it is therefore important to not uncritically copy this established conceptual twin if we are to understand the particularities of displacement in a Swedish and Nordic context.

We tried develop a theoretical lens that captures a broader repertoire of displacement tactics – a 'bundle of tactics' – based in a specific socio-spatial context. If the displacements preceding the construction of the Million Program housing stock in the 1960s could be understood as 'traditional' displacement, the physical removal of bodies from A to B in a Euclidian space, then contemporary forms of displacement in a Nordic context are more complex and more difficult to grasp with specific concepts. Displacement now takes place through a repertoire of removal tactics that together constitute a bundle that can be mobilized to a greater or lesser extent by authorities and private actors alike in an attempt to change the social fabric of the city or to increase profit, as we have illustrated by the Landskrona case. Unlike the physical displacement of bodies to make place for urban renewal projects, contemporary displacement tactics do not necessarily have the desired effect of immediately removing 'undesired' bodies; rather, such tactics put pressure on the unwanted that may eventually result in 'self-imposed' displacement. It makes the displacement process cumbersome, confusing and not easy to observe as it is not clear whether persons are actually 'displaced' or have given in to the lasting displacement pressure and decide to move themselves. Thus, the current displacement repertoire has another temporality than 'traditional' displacement (Persdotter et al., 2021); displacement can be significantly stretched out in time today (see, e.g., Pull, 2020) longitudinal study of displacement processes in the Swedish city of Uppsala), and it can be followed by gentrification – or not. In order to grasp such geographical varieties, we have conceptualized displacement starting from our empirical observations and material on the ground, rather than taking as a starting point already established hypotheses and concepts developed in different empirical contexts. In sum, the contemporary proliferation of displacement tools and tactics specifically in a Nordic context obliges us more than ever to shy away from the uncritical import of a conceptual apparatus that grew of other socio-spatial context and develop particular understandings of displacement based on Nordic empirical observations.

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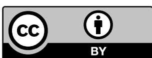

Chapter 13
Spatial Justice and Social Reproduction in the Nordic Periphery

Madeleine Eriksson and Aina Tollefsen

Introduction

Our reflection on socio-spatial theory in Nordic geography locates the case of the Nordic periphery in a wider context of scholarly work on social reproduction and processes of geographical uneven development. Our understanding of social reproduction is that paid work and the rest of life are impossible to separate, and that it may be understood in both individual and collective terms (Bhattacharya, 2017). Social reproduction has become privatized as states withdraw from social provisions, also increasingly the Nordic welfare states (e.g., Listerborn, 2020). The consequences have been that some households and places become more vulnerable than others, as government investments in public social reproductive capacity through welfare provision, health care, education, public space, and the environment are differently eroded in different places.

In this chapter we identify a tradition of empirically based geographical research on material conditions and changing socio-spatial forms of production and consumption, which suggests a socio-spatial theory useful in an era of crisis and increased privatization of nature and social reproduction in welfare societies. Feminist scholars have argued that Nordic peripheries offer a powerful lens on "peripherality" in a globalizing world economy, given the perception of the region as affluent, stable and with high levels of social equality (Thidemann Faber & Priested Nielsen, 2015). The Nordic welfare state has been celebrated as a model for targeting uneven social and geographical development produced by economic modernization (Knudsen, 2020). Regional policies have to different degrees compensated people and places "left behind" in national peripheries with transfers, state investments and/or promoted/subsidized capital investments to mediate spatial divisions. The extent to which this has been effective at all varies between the Nordic

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countries, with the Swedish case often seen as the "extreme" in terms of rapid rural depopulation, post-war industrialization, urbanization, and modernization of the economy (Buttimer & Mels, 2006; Knudsen, 2020). This while at the same time much empirical and theoretical work testifies to the Nordic countries' built-in "blind spots" of nationalism and ethnic, race, class, and gender differences (Thidemann Faber & Priested Nielsen, 2015). The ways these differences play out spatially within the nations, especially during welfare state retrenchment, have received less scholarly attention (but see Forsberg & Stenbacka, 2017; Eriksson et al., 2015; Andersen et al., 2017; Baeten et al., 2015; Dahlgren, 2018; Enlund, 2020).

Rather than accepting the consequences of modernization and economic growth as inevitable, Nordic politicians, local activists and scholars have contested centralizing forces, but to very different degrees and with varying outcomes. For instance, the political and intellectual influence of Norwegian academics such as Brox (1966, 1984) and Galtung (1971) fundamentally contested the modernization project. This stands in contrast to many Swedish researchers', including geographers, compliance with the modernization project. Even though the modernization project was pursued on the premises of its combination with a strong welfare state and functional regional policy during the 1950s and 1960s, which aimed to secure rights to social reproduction and to cushion centralizing forces (Löfgren, 2017). Yet, subsequent welfare state crises and neoliberalisation policies from the 1980s and onwards point perhaps to the end of the "exceptionalism" of the Nordic welfare state models (Schierup & Ålund, 2011; OECD, 2017).

Nonetheless the situated knowledge production of early Nordic geographical research has left an important legacy to build on in order to make sense of contemporary uneven geographies, and the exploitation of natural resources, workers, and local communities today. It may also contribute to analyses of Nordic peripheries as part of a more politically charged regional history, in which battles around social reproduction are articulated. Our research on the (re)production of a Northern periphery (Eriksson, 2010), the production of Northern rural landscapes, and on the labor producing these landscapes (Eriksson & Tollefsen, 2018), extends earlier theorizing by integrating critical socio-spatial theory (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991; Smith, 2010; Tsing, 2009) to analyze uneven geographical developments and the production of "peripherality" in a Nordic context.

The next few pages discuss theoretical considerations regarding the uneven geographical developments and the production of "peripherality" in a Nordic context, we thereafter move on to show examples of enduring mobilization around social reproduction in the Swedish north. We conclude by addressing the significance of battles around social reproduction and spatial justice.

(Re)Producing the Nordic Periphery

The earliest geographical imaginations of the North were those of peripheries. Imaginations of the North and Scandinavia in science and fiction have been traced from the end of the 1000's and were commonly made up of extraordinary nature, and imaginary animals, but also speculation over what natural resources might be hidden in this terra incognita (see e.g., Olaus Magnus' Carta Marina a sixteenth century map over the Nordic countries; Loeffler, 2005).

To be 'far away North', became important for the Nordic self-image at the beginning of the nineteenth century and forward, as it came to contrast the colonial representation of people in the tropics (in the very South). The nature, and the virtues of the people, were constructed as superior to other people and other parts of the world (Loftsdóttir & Jensen, 2016).

Characteristic for the Nordic countries is their sparsely populated areas (except for Denmark) with a relative population density that roughly amounts to one tenth of the core West European countries (Gløersen, 2013). But this sparsity is not uniform, in general the population density increases southwards, with proximity to the coast and major cities. A small and relatively declining part of the population inhabits vast areas that tend to be northern inland, peripheral to major urban centers. Nevertheless, this settlement pattern bears immense symbolic importance for the national identity in all the Nordic countries, for instance, large areas of nature in the rural North were set aside to become national parks, symbolizing the bonds between the people and the homeland (Mels, 1999; Knudsen, 2018). The sparse distribution of population is hence a source of political attention and measures, but also of controversies and conflicts (Lorentzen, 2012; Winther & Svendsen, 2012).

Earlier geographical research on the Nordic periphery went at great length to empirically document spatial changes over time in northern resource exploitation, population patterns and economic and business structures. Detailing forms of adaptations by local populations, including the Sami, to new industries and demands on land and resources (Gren et al., 2003). Geographers based at universities founded outside the metropolitan areas in the north established a materially oriented school of research focusing on the sparsely populated Nordic landscape (Bylund, 1956, 1962, 1969; Arell, 1977; Layton, 1981). However, much of this geographical research never critically analyzed the workings of uneven geographical development and its wider implications for social reproduction and spatial justice. Also, the Nordic geographical tradition of empirically based research developed in a different way from what was seen during the Anglo-American linguistic/cultural turn in academia from the 1990s (see Simonsen, 2003).

During the 1960s and 70s, scholars and debaters inspired by the core-periphery theory, drew parallels between the exploitation of the North's natural resources and the exploitation of other colonies around the world, for example Balgård (1970), Bäärnhielm (1976) and Lundmark (1971) on Sweden, Brox (1966) on Norway, Granö (1951) on Finland, and Viemose (1977) on Denmark and Greenland. The core-periphery theory was initially a way to analyze the uneven development

between nations and was theorized by Marxist-inspired scholars such as Frank (1967), Amin (1974) and Wallerstein (1974). Drawing from these researchers, as well as from Karl Polanyi's (1944) critique of the market economic system, the Norwegian scholar Brox's (1966) research addressed how the uneven rural-urban development was produced by the Norwegian postwar public planning regimes. Johan Galtung (1971) lifted Brox's critique on a global scale and addressed early on the simultaneous processes of uneven development within nations and beyond (see Knudsen, 2020). While many theorists maintained that these occurrences of degradation will be overcome by spread effects or "trickle down effects" (Gaile, 1980). The backdrop to Galtung's *structural theory of imperialism* has recently become reformulated by Thomas Piketty (2013), who argues that while the international inequalities in economic distribution have decreased substantially over the last decades, the opposite has been the case for the development within the nations of the OECD realm (Knudsen, 2020).

As documented in much Nordic and international geographical research, economic restructuring, which has led to migration to urban areas, has produced a transfer of social capital from rural areas to urban areas, where rural and small municipalities pay for much of the social wage of people who then gravitate towards urban areas with better possible futures (e.g., Mattsson, 2011; Karlsdóttir & Ingólfsdóttir, 2011; Bærenholdt, 2018). The contemporary legacies of work and mobility in the peripheral North are linked to these historical patterns of dis/investment and dispossession. With new rounds of investments and disinvestments, new patters of mobility and work emerge, which have changed the social fabric of many local communities. Recent studies show how labor migrations to Nordic rural areas are increasing taking place under harsh conditions, often to low-paid and manual work tasks in the green industries (Rye & Scott, 2018; Tollefsen et al., 2020; Eriksson et al., 2019; O'Reilly & Rye, 2020). Working for low wages and long hours in peripheral areas, undermines battles around social reproduction. Ultimately, people's life situation, health, education, and broader social contexts are neglected and their lives both at work and beyond the workplace made invisible.

In the European Union (EU), regional divergence between metropolitan regions and the rest, in terms of incomes and employment, has been increasing over the last 20 years (Iammarino et al., 2019). Sparsely populated areas have steadily been lagging due to the fact that new service activities have not replaced manufacturing as has been the case in the larger city-regions (Eriksson & Hane-Weijman, 2017). As such, the sparsity phenomenon merits its own classification in the EU structural policy system. This was one of the claims made by Finland, Norway, and Sweden in their negotiations with the EU prior to the 1995 access of Finland and Sweden (Méndez et al. 2006). It was also the negative response towards the solidity of these measures, alongside other periphery-driven arguments, that made the Norwegian referendum turn out to reject EU membership in 1994 (Sejerstad, 2014).

In the contemporary public debate, these lagging-behind Nordic regions, the northern areas, are often characterized as places in need of financial support and incapable of managing on their own (in contrast to developing and thus capable regions). But also, in some national contexts, as deprived of its assets by way of

neocolonial strategies, by way of resource extraction and/or state-led centralization (e.g., the current debate on the increased interest for natural resources due to mega-investments in northern Scandinavia Steinvall, 2021; Eriksson, 2010; Knudsen, 2020). Issues of regional income distribution, regional subsidies and dependency on allowances are frequently raised among debaters and policy makers (Müller, 2020). The representations of northern areas in media and popular culture also contribute to this picture. Eriksson (2008, 2017), Paulgaard (2008) and Ridanpää (2007) have for example argued that representations of northern Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and Finland in popular culture become enmeshed with representations in the news media and politics, which conflates geography and class by way of positioning representations of the modern middle class in urban spaces and the obsolete white working class in rural spaces. Something that, Rodríguez-Pose (2018) argues, produces a new geography of discontent in the wake of the urban bias in last decades theorizing on regional development. Despite institutional differences, certain geographical configurations contribute to the exploitation, as shown in research on peripheral landscapes elsewhere (Mitchell, 2002). Peripheral regions all over Europe struggle to become attractive in the eyes of investors and companies and to keep what is left of job opportunities, this particular strategy is theorized by Florida et al. (2017), also in the Swedish context. Knudsen (2020) shows how the Nordic regional policies since the 1990's have turned away from the theories of Polanyi, Brox and Galtung, resulting in regional policies not apt to deal with unequal conditions, such as the regional policies of smart specialization, which favors already successful places (see also Rodríguez-Pose, 2018).

Nordic researchers have criticized the regional policies and tax system's structure, for systemically rendering rural areas' contributions to the national economy invisible. Instead, these areas have been represented among politicians, in media, and popular culture, as drawing from the reserves and as an "internal spatial other", not really part of the modern nation (Eriksson, 2010; Nilsson & Lundgren, 2015; Thidemann Faber & Priested Nielsen, 2015). Contemporary representations of the Nordic peripheries thus tend to obscure and hide economic conflicts and power relations connected to resource exploitation and corporate concentration, neglecting workers and local communities. However, these developments have been contested over time and met with resistance in various forms, most recently as opposition to austerity policies and welfare state retrenchment and with demands for spatial justice.

Resistance in the Swedish Northern Periphery – Mobilizing Around Social Reproduction

In the 1960s and 1970s, a movement mushroomed in the spirit of non-capitalism and non-rationalism, its campaigners opposed to the industries' demand for a mobile workforce, which left people no choice but to move to urban areas and

rejected the strict economic rationality articulated by politicians and businesspeople. Some of these ideas were articulated by Nordic debaters both within the realms of academia (Brox, 1966; Galtung, 1971) and among cultural workers, writers and grassroot organizations.

The work of Swedish author Sara Lidman deserves to be looked at a little closer. Some of her most famous books, *Tjärdalen* (The Tar Valley) from 1953 and *Hjortronlandet* (The Land of Cloudberries) from 1955, made visible the poor and hard-working farmers in Norrland during the nineteenth century. She also examined the effects of modernization and industrialization on the lives of people in the county of Västerbotten. Moreover, Lidman became engaged early-on in the criticism of colonialism and the Vietnam War. Her work on Vietnam's behalf influenced public opinion both in Sweden and abroad. Like scholars employing the core-periphery theory at home, Lidman realized that oppression was not merely something that happened in other countries. She brought the treatment of the miners of Svappavaara and Kiruna to light in *Gruva* (Mine) from 1968. According to Holm (1998), Lidman's book contributed to one of Sweden's most famous twentieth century's strikes, the wildcat 1969 Kiruna miners' strike, and concrete improvements of the protection of workers.

In the 1970s and onward, criticism of the Swedish government came to concern its inability to stop the out-migration from rural north. This criticism materialized in campaigns such as 'Hela Sverige ska leva' (The whole of Sweden shall live) in the 1980s and 'Vi flytt int' (We're not movin') in the 1960s, but also by way of organizations promoting Norrland such as the Glesbygdsdelegationen in 1977 and Norrlandsförbundet in 1952. Norrlandsförbundet is known for initiating the 'Vi flytt int' campaign, which was a protest to the political current toward urbanization and a mobile labor force.

The above mentioned are protests over the expropriation of natural resources, marketization of social reproduction, and the growing gap between wealthy and poor regions and people. The analyses of Marxist geographers such as Harvey have influenced Nordic researchers in studies of the workings of dispossession, alienation and, thus, opposition. However, the close readings of Harvey and the legitimate call for the "right to the city" may also have obscured the conceptualizing of rural areas and the disregard of rural resistance and opposition among critical Nordic geographers. Likewise, Neil Smith's (1984, 2010) concept of uneven geographical development when translated to Nordic welfare state building must take into consideration the specific institutional conditions of political ambitions of earlier social democratic governments. Recently many scholars have argued that rural areas are important fields of study as they still are significant arenas for dispossession, alienation and, hence, opposition.

Over the last decade, several conflicts have flared up in places outside urban areas. Local people, including Sámi people, have marched together, and protested against mining exploration, deforestation, expansions of hydropower, as well as the closure of hospitals and health care centers. But these conflicts have also divided communities as the preservation of nature may come to pass at the expense of job opportunities. There have also been more general protests where the life outside

major urban centers ultimately unite many protesters. Many of the protesters narrate how they have been abandoned both by capital and institutions and the state, and that they now are left to fend for themselves (Lundgren, 2020; Lundgren & Sjöstedt, 2020). Disinvestments in typical rural industries, such as forestry and food industries, are understood in relation to all the investments targeting urban areas and industries (Eriksson & Tollefsen, 2018). Hence, the arena for resistance in the Nordic "peripheries" is in different ways construing an urban-rural binary conflict and is sparked by specific disinvestments in people's livelihoods and, thus, their chances for social reproduction.

Our previous research analyzed the difficulty of resistance in the wild berry industry during a strike among migrant berry-pickers in Northern Sweden in 2013, a struggle that was lost by the migrant workers and had high costs (Eriksson & Tollefsen, 2018). The strike illustrated the potentials and limitations with mobilizing around the work contract under current neoliberalized labor market policies. Migrant workers were not seen as part of Swedish labor history and did not get sufficient support from neither trade unions nor the municipality. Local people, however, showed support, an example of the need to align with struggles around social reproduction in place, access to a living wage and access to health.

Rural protesters may be framed, for example based on a position as a farmer, rural resident, indigenous population, or citizen. In line with that, much of the resistance in rural areas, like urban areas, build on the assertion of individual rights or identity politics. Nordic geographers make a case about the development of 'alternative rural lifestyles', suggesting that the ongoing rural crisis may open up the potential for new ways of organizing everyday life (Carson, 2018). Nevertheless, Patrik Cras (2017), Anna Sofia Lundgren (2020) and Desirée Enlund (2020) have written about the development where civil society is taking over more and more of rural services and infrastructure. Cras argues that rural policy includes a norm which implies that people in rural areas should "fend for themselves by acting for others in their immediate environment". This norm rewards a specific form of communal citizenship, and opposition in which people are made dependent of each other, and "it will be difficult to opt out of the interests of the collective" (Cras, 2017, p. 207).

The Centrality of Battles Around Social Reproduction and Spatial Justice

These collective protests in Nordic contexts are often based on demands for *more* government involvement, not less. This seems to differ from urban oppositional movements of the United States and the United Kingdom, which often are described by urban geographers as more or less buying into the neoliberal ideas animated by a deep distrust of the state (e.g., Harvey, 2005, 2012; Barker & Lavalette, 2015). Swedish research on social movements around social reproduction shows how the specific institutional conditions of earlier welfare state policies are not articulated as

a distrust of the state, rather, Swedish rural social movements articulate a discontent regarding state retrenchment and the lack of government involvement, as well as a distrust towards urban elites (Lundgren, 2020). Rodriguez-Pose argues that this mistrust paves the way for populism. With evidence from EU-countries, populism is according to Dijkstra et al. (2020) unmistakably linked to spatial inequalities. However, mistaking the Nordic EU-resistance of the leftist party and the Swedish feminist party in northern rural regions for nationalism and political populism, Rodriguez-Pose neglects the political mobilization brought about by the threat of austerity politics and the welfare retrenchment EU represented (Eriksson, 2010). Like many mainstream Nordic economic geographers, Rodriguez-Pose simplifies the complex topography of dispossession and opposition by dividing space into dynamic metropolitan areas, and the dispossessed rest (places that don't matter) (Dijkstra et al., 2020). By doing this we may risk simplifying spatial relations to an urban-rural divide, disregarding the grave poverty in many wealthy cities and the relative well-being in many poor rural areas. But also disregarding the dispossession that takes place all over the world for a few people and places to thrive.

Demands for "more state intervention" and spatial justice are articulated in struggles around social reproduction in Nordic welfare states, stressing the potential – and previously stronger – role of the state and municipalities in providing protection and securing welfare rights. This both in urban areas and with regards to migrants and local populations in peripheral areas. Local municipality politicians across the political spectrum, and leftist politicians nationally, join in progressive demands for state intervention, redistribution, and rights to housing, health, education, and social security in local municipalities, regardless of migrant status (Hansen, 2021).

As shown by Nordic geographers on segregation and racism (Molina, 1997; Listerborn, 2020) and regional development (Faber & Nielsen, 2015; Eriksson & Tollefsen, 2018), dispossession is happening everywhere. And this is primarily targeting groups most vulnerable to disinvestment in social reproduction such as unemployed, women, children, immigrants and racialized groups, no matter where they live. Hence, by way of recognizing the materiality of both economic, cultural, and social difference we may theorize the unfolding of geographies of connection to help mobilize solidarities across space. This means a socio-spatial theory that is not homogenizing or dichotomizing but accounts for how resources and profits are extracted in, and between, different geographies, and how costs for social reproduction are allocated.

Conclusions: A Socio-Spatial Theory in an Era of Crisis

Recent research highlights how resistance today mobilizes around spatial justice and social reproduction as articulated in demands for service, education and health provisions and just access to, and protection, of natural resources across Nordic peripheries. Contemporary Nordic geographical research has contributed with studies on both urban and rural contexts, while generally rewarding the modern urban

context as a specific place of growth, meaning making and hub for democracy and resistance and thus contributed to reproducing the urban/rural dichotomy.

The dispossession of rural populations, and disinvestments in previous social formations in peripheral parts of the countries have taken place in all Nordic welfare states, but in different ways and with different speed and consequences. Nevertheless, in all Nordic countries the sparsely populated areas and their populations matter in discourses on national identity, regardless of how they are neglected materially and politically. The way these processes are politicized also differ between the countries, with a general upsurge in political debates around uneven development and spatial divisions and deprivation during the 2010s.

The Nordic geographical tradition of empirically based research on material conditions and changing socio-spatial forms of production and consumption in Nordic peripheries developed differently from what was seen during the Anglo-American linguistic/cultural turn in academia since the 1990s (see Simonsen, 2003). Key theoretical frameworks for critical spatial analyses on the northern periphery were rather interconnected with literatures on the material and discursive neoliberal processes of labor, growth, and mobility, and on the ideologies of class, race, and gender. In this, influence came both from critical geographers such as David Harvey, Neil Smith, Doreen Massey, and Cindi Katz, but importantly also from the legacy of earlier geographical research on material conditions in Northern peripheries; research being sensitive to the specific institutional conditions of political ambitions of earlier welfare state policies. Hence, battles around social reproduction concern people's possibilities to live dignified lives, something which is increasingly difficult for low-income households everywhere. By not ignoring the presence and importance of social reproduction, in its broadest sense, we may depict future social movements that unite through shared experiences of dispossession making up new geographies of connection that could open for struggle and change. Critical scholars and social movements argue for spatial justice in taking responsibility for social reproduction – that is, the right to environmental security, work, food, housing, healthcare, education, a meaningful and dignified life in both urban deprived areas and in the peripheries, also stressing the significance of collective action and resistance in the Nordic peripheries.

Challenges in the 2020s of climate change, increased inequalities and segregation, and pandemics, together with recent initiatives by politicians to renationalize food production, pursue national natural energy and resource exploitation, as well as promote regional development in peripheries through facilitating global capital investments in energy-intensive lines of businesses, are new trends affecting conditions for social reproduction in Nordic peripheries. Hence, there is an urgent need for Nordic geographical scholars to conduct material, historical and scalarly analyses of processes of uneven development. This research must necessarily continue unfolding new geographies of connection and its social movements.

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Chapter 14
Nordic Geographies of Nation and Nationhood

Jouni Häkli and Mette Strømsø

Introduction

Nation, national identity and nationalism are a family of concepts that address some of the most deep-seated aspects of modern social organization globally. They all point at fundamental structures of inclusion, belonging and solidarity, chiasmatically entangled with the production of difference, exclusion and alterity. The concept of nation captures the generic belief that the world is universally organized into discrete nations to which everyone belongs, and in this sense is the precondition for national identity and nationalism. The latter two concepts express this belief in cultural and political terms respectively. While national identity responds to the question of what makes each nation culturally specific and how this is experienced as meaningful, nationalism has more to do with affective positioning vis-à-vis alterity, and how this is enacted in political praxis and rhetoric. Yet, the difference between national identity and nationalism gets ever more blurred the closer we come to the experience of nationhood in everyday life.

Michael Billig (1995) termed this intermingling 'banal nationalism' in his seminal study on the ways in which the nation is taken for granted in people's mundane practices. While Billig's insistence on focusing attention to the quiet and routinized forms of nationalism remains salient, the resurgence of 'hot' nationalisms (Billig's antithesis to 'banal') in all Nordic countries, and the rest of Europe, has shown that the nation is far from being an outcast in the junkyard of modernity. On the contrary, the last decade has shown the stunning capability of nationalism to reinstate and

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reinvent itself in new contexts and guises, ranging from responses to climate change that serve national ends, all the way to the unashamedly nation-centered hoarding of masks and vaccinations during the covid-19 pandemic (Karlsson, 2017; Bollyky & Bown, 2020).

Influential sociological, anthropological and historical theories trace the 'blueprint' of nationhood as a rising transnational phenomenon since the late eighteenth century, giving due attention to how cultural contexts have shaped the processes (e.g. Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990; Smith, 1995). Geographers' key contribution to theories of nation and nationalism is sensitivity to their geographies, that is, the important ways in which space is implicated in them as their context, medium and substance. In this chapter we explore the development of Nordic socio-spatial theories on nation, nationalism, and national identities. As with many research themes, Nordic scholarship on nationalism and cognate phenomena is dispersed across authors and institutions. Compared to topics like regional development or urban planning, nationalism has never been a voluminous area of socio-spatial theorization. However, it is possible to identify some main lines of development that, while not building into a coherent Nordic intellectual history, nevertheless help in situating nation and nationalism as research topics within the Nordic human geography.

In the next section we provide an overview of the body of theoretical work on nation by Nordic scholars, with attention to key authors, their main theoretical positions, and methodological orientations. We intend to show how the research area emerged by the early 1990s as a minor theme in Nordic human geography, but then developed and intensified in the subsequent decades, along with the rise of the subfield of political geography in some Nordic countries and Finland in particular. We also describe how the research field transformed in the 2000s, along with the growing interest in globalization, transnationalization and migration. After this we move into reflections on nation and nationalism arising from our own research trajectories and how they link with and build on the Nordic theoretical traditions. This discussion will situate our chapter both through our own work as Nordic scholars, and through empirical illustrations from Finland and Norway. We conclude by outlining current challenges and new horizons in Nordic theoretical work on nation and nationalism.

Theories of the Nation in Nordic Scholarship

In the Nordic countries, as elsewhere, interest in nationhood first emerged in the early twentieth century, as a part of geographical scholarship implicated in the (geo) political consolidation of the nation-state system. Before the Second World War, Rudolf Kjellén's (1916) ideas of the inextricable bond between state and nation were influential in articulating an organicist conception of the nation-state as a form of life that has a dynamically evolving spatiality. In this vein, nation-states were seen as 'organisms' geopolitically competing for the finite living space of the one and only globe (Holdar, 1992; Björk & Lundén, 2021; in this book, see also Larsen

& Marklund, 2022). Paasi (1990) describes how these ideas, influenced by German idealism and the works of geographers Karl Ritter and Friedrich Ratzel, were quickly adopted by Finnish geographers Ragnar Numelin, Iivari Leiviskä and Väinö Auer. In the spirit of envisioning a ‘Greater Finland’, potentially achievable should Germany defeat the Soviet Union in the Second World War, many geographers in Finland sought to provide science-based justification for extending the Finnish territory toward the east to cover “*Finnland’s Lebensraum*” (Auer & Jutikkala, 1941). In a radically different Nordic context, questions of ‘living space’ was also pursued by Gudmund Hatt in Denmark (Larsen, 2011).

Kjellén’s geopolitics had fewer followers in the other Nordic countries, Sweden included (Haggman, 1998). While his idea of the state as a people’s home (*folkhemmet*) certainly had an impact on how the nation was seen as an integrative category in Nordic welfare societies (Stråth, 2012), explicit interest in Kjellén’s thinking waned after the Second World War. In Finland, like elsewhere in the Nordic Region, the subfield of political geography receded into the “moribund backwater” to which Brian Berry had assigned it in the late 1960s (Johnston, 2001, p. 677). With this, nation was sidelined as a research theme in Nordic scholarship, and there were few, if any, attempts before the 1990s to build theories on phenomena related to nationalism or national identity.

It is difficult to draw a precise timeline on how the nation gradually took on as a research theme in Nordic geography during the 1990s. In what cannot pretend to be an exhaustive assessment, we briefly discuss a number of key authors and their main theoretical positions in the study of nationhood. In our assessment we include human geographers who work in the Nordic countries independently of their personal trajectories, citizenship, or ethnicity.

In the Nordic intellectual landscape, the rise of the nation as a theoretical question largely coincides with two interrelated developments, neither of which had its origin in the Nordic countries per se. First, by the 1980s a self-conscious interest in social theory had emerged among human geographers who argued that geography can, and should, be a field that contributes to the development of social theory, instead of just appropriating theories built in other social science disciplines (e.g., Soja, 1980; Gregory, 1984; Massey & Allen, 1984). Second, the reverberations of this “social-theory-and-geography movement” (Cox, 1991, p. 5) were strongly felt also within the subfield of political geography with the consequence of theoretical work on nationalism gaining new ground and novel approaches (Agnew, 1984; Mac Laughlìn, 1986).

In the Nordic countries the onset of interest in theorizing the nation was relatively slow and uneven. Among the early scholars to develop original theoretical contributions to this research area are Kenneth Olwig, who, through his personal trajectory of having held academic positions in Denmark, Norway and Sweden, is a veritable epitome of ‘Nordicness’. Throughout his career Olwig has employed landscape as a prism through which to address the politics and complex historical intermingling of material environment, cultural praxis, and systems of meaning (Olwig, 1984, 2005, 2018). This work has resulted in a rich oeuvre that looks historically into how the geographically embedded shaping of land (*landskap*) has carried

social, material and ideological transformations that are traceable from the modern institutional orders that link society and nature. These include cultural formations like the nation, and nationalism as its expression, but also political formations such as the nation-state and its legal tradition (Olwig, 1996, 2002). Working at the intersection of humanistic geography, literary studies, and art history, his method exposes interlinkages between conceptual etymology and development, representative practices, and material conditions to show how nature, land, nation, custom, community, law, and polity, coalesce in the 'substantive landscape' (Olwig, 1996, 2019). Therein meet words and worlds, language and landscape – not as a relation between unfulfilled representation and reality but as an inextricable bond where, as Olwig (2002, p. 55) points out, "the word nature [...] has the same root as nativity, native, and nation" (in this book, see also Germundsson et al., 2022).

At the intersection of cultural and political geography, Anssi Paasi's longstanding research on the institutionalization of regions has built theory on the emergence of collective identities in parallel with the consolidation of territorial units on multiple scales (Paasi, 1991, 2001, 2016; in this book, see also Paasi, 2022). His early work dealt mainly with the historical emergence of sub-national regional divisions (Paasi, 1986), but from the early 1990s onwards he begun to address the relationship between processes of identification and nation-state territoriality through the prism of boundaries and how these are discursively construed as part of us/them distinctions (Paasi, 1996). Methodologically Paasi's work stems largely from social constructionist approaches to social phenomena, but these are always understood as geographically embedded. Hence, for Paasi the construction of nationhood is a historically and geographically contingent process that employs boundaries as discursive realities through which fundamental distinctions between inside and outside, us and them, can be built. More than simple physical dividers on the ground, or lines on maps, which they also are, boundaries are ongoing processes of classification and negotiation of difference that are dispersed across the society in both space and time (Paasi, 1996). As discursive realities, boundaries are part and parcel of nationhood reproduced both through institutionalized practices, such as education and mass media, but also people's everyday praxis that is intimately linked with these institutional realms (Paasi, 1999). This is how the nation becomes sedimented in everyday life in a process that Paasi (1996) terms spatial socialization: "the process through which actors become members of territorial entities and internalize narratives and memories related to collective identities and shared traditions" (Paasi, 1996, p. 8).

Paasi's and Olwig's work to theorize the nation has been influential in Nordic scholarship on nationhood and national identity. Olwig's ideas of the nation embodied in representations and substantive enactments of landscape and nature has found reverberations in the works by Tom Mels (1999, 2002), who has studied the relationships between landscaping and the constitution of Swedish nationhood through "naturalization and nationalization of park spaces" (Mels, 2002, p. 136). Others have studied the roles that landscape and landscaping have had in nation building and the formation of cultural identity, cultural narratives on ethics and aesthetics of the environment, justice and tradition, and notions of wilderness (Lehtinen, 1991;

Jones, 2006; Germundsson, 2008; Kymäläinen & Lehtinen, 2010; Sæþórsdóttir et al., 2011; Lehtinen, 2012; Häyrynen, 2014). Methodologically, Olwig's insistence on the significance of etymology has inspired scholarship attuned to the local and national spatialization of rule, identification and praxis (e.g., Häkli, 1996, 1999; Setten, 2003, 2006).

Paasi's perceptive theoretical work has inspired a range of Nordic scholarship on nationhood with diverse conceptual orientations and empirical foci (e.g., Sörlin, 1999; Lundén & Zalamans, 2001; Kjæret & Stokke, 2003; Hellström, 2003; Kallio, 2016; Erdal, 2019; Andersen & Prokkola, 2021). However, Paasi's works has been particularly resonant in the context of the Finnish revival of political geography since the early 1990s – a movement that Paasi's own work certainly contributed to (e.g., Häkli, 1994, 1998a; Moisio, 1998, 2002; Kosonen, 1999). In two decades, a number of young scholars were drawn into the field of political geography in Finland, many of whom were interested in developing constructionist approaches to nationhood, identities, boundaries, and power (e.g., Virkkunen, 1999; Tervo, 2001; Jukarainen, 2002; Raento & Brunn, 2005; Moisio & Leppänen, 2007; Kuusisto-Arponen, 2009; Prokkola, 2010; Jokela & Linkola, 2013; Ahlqvist & Moisio, 2014; Kallio, 2018). When considering the volume of research channeled to this research area, it is clear that the rise of political geography had a great impact on the overall development of Nordic socio-spatial theories on the nation.

While our discussion so far might seem to offer a clear-cut timeline and narrative on key figures' impact on theoretical research on nationhood, the intellectual history of this research area is obviously more complex than this. For example, Allan Pred's (1984, 1986) work to theorize place as a historically contingent process certainly contributed to subsequent attempts to understand the spatialities of region building, nationalism and state formation (e.g. Paasi, 1986; Häkli, 1994). Moreover, his later interest in racism and nationalism (Pred, 2000) has opened up important avenues for Nordic scholarship (e.g., Molina, 2004; Haldrup et al., 2006; Koefoed & Simonsen, 2011; Malmberg et al., 2013; Jansson, 2018). At this juncture, Kirsten Simonsen has pursued an original research trajectory with focus on the everyday, the body, emotions, and encounters as key aspects of experienced nationhood, belonging and alterity (Simonsen, 2004, 2010, 2015; Koefoed & Simonsen, 2007; Simonsen & Koefoed, 2020; in this book, see also Simonsen, 2022). This phenomenologically oriented work has inspired further scholarship on banal and everyday nationalisms in Norway and beyond (Cele, 2013; Listerborn, 2015; Erdal, 2019; Erdal & Strømsø, 2021).

In a similar vein, Sami Moisio's long-standing research on transforming state spatialities has contributed to Nordic socio-spatial theorization of the nation and nationalism. His geopolitically attuned critical work has, for example, sought to understand the discursive positioning of Finland in the context of EU membership debates, showing how competing interpretations of national history, geographical affiliation, and national interests became rhetorical resources for political elites (Moisio, 2008a, b). More recently, in an attempt to overcome the analytical divide between geopolitical and geoeconomic approaches, he has advocated a link between critical geopolitics and cultural political economy approaches to unravel the

constitution of knowledge-intensive capitalism (Moisio, 2019). To this end, he has also analyzed processes of geopolitical subject formation to serve national strategic ends, thus showing how the geopolitics of global competition operates through practices of higher education (Moisio, 2018).

Interest in the nation and nationalism took a new turn during the 2010s, partly in response to growing globalization, mobility and transnational migration. The approaches that previously emphasized the longue durée construction of the nation and the discursive practices of national identification were complemented by interest in theorizing how the nation is implicated in the everyday and particularly in encounters across otherness and alterity (e.g., Haldrup et al., 2006; Johansson, 2013; Koefoed, 2015; Prokkola, 2020; Hansson & Jansson, 2021; Häkli & Kallio, 2021; Erdal & Strømsø, 2021). Focus on migration and transnational connectivities has foregrounded practices of bordering and securitization, and sustained sensitivity to methodological nationalism – the assumption that society can unproblematically be equated with the nation-state (Häkli, 2001a; Martin & Paasi, 2016; Erdal et al., 2018). Increasing attention has also been given to the colonial histories and subordination of Sami in the negotiation of nationhood in Nordic countries (Lehtinen, 2012; Wråkberg & Granqvist, 2014; Jansson, 2018; Saarinen, 2019). To gain access to everyday narratives and negotiations of (non)belonging, these culturally attuned bodies of research have employed multiple methods of ethnographic research and qualitative analysis, thus expanding the methodological approaches of Nordic scholarship on the nation. In this regard a key driver has been the need to gain an in-depth understanding of mundane and everyday aspects of experienced nationhood (Johansson, 2013; Raento, 2014; Strømsø, 2019a, b, c).

Socio-Spatial Constructions of Nation in Finland

This section presents Nordic theorization of the nationhood as seen through the prism of Jouni Häkli's personal research trajectory on nation and nationalism. The discussion will focus on the concepts of territory, knowledge, landscape and borders, and explicate how these build upon a specific socio-spatial constructionism as a theoretical and methodological position. Similar reflections by Mette Strømsø, with focus on migration and everyday encounters, are presented in the next section. These two autobiographically attuned sections will also demonstrate how the geographies of nationhood outlined above are reflected in the actual work by two Nordic scholars differently situated in the timeline of this broader theoretical development.

For me (Häkli), the question of nationhood first emerged as a theoretical problem in the context of an ambitious attempt to unravel the longue durée genesis of territoriality as a process in which certain understandings of space emerge historically from specific governmental practices. To be able to discuss territoriality at the intersection of spaces as meaning, knowledge and practice, I developed a methodological stance that I named spatial constructionism with which to study "the material practices that in historical contexts stand behind the cultural realities of region and

especially region as territory" (Häkli, 1994, p. 25). My work was inspired by Paasi's (1986) insightful research on the institutionalization of regions, to which I wanted to add more emphasis on the consolidation and operations of state power as a driver of territoriality. Approaching the state in socio-spatial constructionist vein meant focusing on the historical development of practices and technologies for organizing and controlling space, rather than linking the state with territory as a given notion. I asked, what makes it possible to conceive of and control space as territory and ended up with an understanding that it is any practices that have historically increased the reach of states' governmental power, including technologies of mapping, statistical data collection, and the codification of law. In theorizing territoriality, I distinguished between the consolidation of states' capacity to administer space (system integration) and the deepening of experienced unity among the population (national integration), which together account for the rise of modern nation-state as a tightly knit territorial formation (Häkli, 1994).

In some further works I went on to detail my theoretical account of the production of territoriality both as a new kind of reality (understanding of space), and a material outcome of capacity to govern (Häkli, 1998a). This work gained new directions from studies of science, technology, and society (STS), particularly Bruno Latour's (1986) thought on the material ramifications of cognition, as well as from the emerging 'school' of critical geopolitics with its insistence on the representational and discursive constitution of the geopolitical world (O' Tuathail, 1996; Häkli, 1998b). At this juncture, I developed 'the political geography of knowledge' approach to study the epistemic question of how social sciences in general understand the society as a socio-spatial entity (Häkli, 2000, 2001a). In agreement with Simonsen's (1996) call for more precision on how the space is understood in social theory, I argued that in mainstream social science "the common assumption is still that the state territory adequately describes the spatiality of 'society'" (Häkli, 2001a, p. 417). Examples range from explicitly nationalistic historiography to fully implicit ways in which the national application of non-territorial GIS-based knowledge leads to its reterritorialization. These hidden geographies of society not only tend towards methodological nationalism, but also link much social scientific knowledge discursively to the state through a shared perspective from which the social world is seen – an academic equivalent to everyday or banal nationalism (Calhoun, 2017).

In attempt to theorize how the nation-state formation unfolded in Finland, I coined the notion of 'discursive landscape' to capture the various ways in which geography is involved in the evolution of national identities. In response to Olwig's (1996) call for attention to the substantive nature of landscape, I approached territory "both as a political reality and an image or symbol in the shaping of the Finnish identity" (Häkli, 1999, p. 123). For me 'landscape' provided a conceptual avenue for studying the ways in which things and events are systematically drawn to signify nationality, and nationhood, with the key idea that "[n]ational landscape is not only read off from nature and culture, it is also written therein" (Häkli, 1999, p. 124). This interest paralleled Paasi's (1996) approach to nation-building as the construction of socio-spatial consciousness that gradually 'fills' the nationalizing state

space, but placed more emphasis on how national identity is differently appropriated and reproduced and sometimes contested by different groups, especially the recognized national minorities of Swedish-speaking Finns and Sámi (Häkli, 1999).

My attempt to understand and theorize Finnishness continued in a study of how the idea of Finnish nationhood has survived under pressures coming from globalization and increasing transnational connectivity. To describe such resilience in the ever-changing forms of national identification, I employed the idea of nation as a 'root metaphor' – an interpretative framework within which nationhood is unreflexively lived through in the everyday: "as a root metaphor nation has seized to be an idea and become reality in itself" (Häkli, 2004, p. 18). This work culminated in attempt to link my earlier interest in the territorialization of the state space with later ideas on the cultural processes of nation-building. To this end, I revisited the STS-oriented thought by Annemarie Mol and John Law (1994) on regions, networks and fluids as different spatial types, and argued that nation-building and state-formation could be usefully theorized as constituted by, and constitutive of, these different spatialities (Häkli, 2009). This topological analysis scrutinizes territoriality as a performed (Euclidean) state spatiality, accomplished by means of time-space compressing networked spatiality, and cemented through the ever-changing processes of national identification in fluid space. In theoretical terms, working with these unconformable but related spatial types allows the "meaningful juxtaposition of seemingly unrelated, dispersed and episodic events and processes" taking place both 'within' and 'outside' the Finnish territory (Häkli, 2009, p. 18). This also helps in assessing how different geographical scales (or micro- and macro-level processes) are involved in nation-state building.

Border studies is another major context for my theoretical considerations of nationhood. From early on, I was interested in how borders link with the experience of national identities in much the same way as in Paasi's (1996) work on the Finnish-Russian border. However, my focus was on the roles that national identification play in cross-border regionalization and reterritorialization that I studied empirically in Catalonia and Tornio River Valley. In the former context I studied the tensions between different groups of actors with differing ideas on how Catalonia should be conceived of nationally and territorially (Häkli, 1998c, 2002, 2004). I assessed these tensions in terms of 'politics of belonging', based on what Castells (1997) had termed 'legitimizing', 'project' and 'resistance identities' as alternative and partly contradictory bases for national identification (Häkli, 2001b).

The manifestations of cultural and institutional divisions at international borderlands, despite cultural and linguistic affinities, reveal the power of the nation as a socio-spatial reality that is deeply rooted in state-based processes of national socialization as well as in people's experience of their lived spaces and landscapes (Olwig, 2005). In a study that explored a project to build a transnational center for the Haparanda-Tornio twin city, I approached these national divisions as a challenge of social trust that the project would need to overcome to achieve its ambitious ends (Häkli, 2009). To understand what facilitated complex and demanding transnational cooperation in the project, I looked into how the Tornio River took on a dual role of being both a natural boundary that divides, and a 'boundary object' that unites the

project's actors who work under distinct nationally embedded systems of meaning and ways of doing things. Developed by Star and Griesemer (1989) in their STS-oriented study of cooperation under circumstances of heterogeneity and diversity, the notion of 'boundary objects' provided interesting new avenues for understanding how the nation is implicated in cross-border interactions (see also Häkli, 2012, 2015).

In the 2010s my theoretical work increasingly became concerned with subjectivity as the basis for political agency in connection with various sources of vulnerability, and in this context the question of nationhood appeared less central (Häkli & Kallio, 2014, 2018). However, as part of a broader Nordic scholarly response to increasing transnational migration (Haldrup et al., 2006; Simonsen, 2010; Koefoed & Simonsen, 2011), I was drawn to questions of citizenship (Häkli, 2018; Kallio et al., 2020), as well as the study of asylum seeking and experienced refugeeness, and at this juncture also encounters between asylum seekers and Finns as members of the host society (Häkli et al., 2017; Häkli & Kallio, 2021). In these encounters, and particularly in anti-immigrant responses to asylum seeking, nationalist sentiments have started to figure ever more strongly. In times of rising populist nationalism across Europe, and beyond, it is clear that nationhood is far from being the defunct relic of the twentieth century that some analysts were willing to believe at the heyday of discourses on globalization. Nationhood may go largely unnoticed as imbricated into myriad everyday practices, but as the rise of explicit nationalist sentiments and actions indisputably shows, it is alive and well, and ready to be awakened in the right circumstances.

Everyday Nation and Encounters with Otherness in Norway

My (Strømsø) personal research trajectory on nation and nationalism is substantially shorter than Häkli's, and links closely with the more recent changes occurring in the field. Since the mid-2010s, I have investigated negotiations over the nation in everyday life in light of increased ethnic and religious diversity in Norway (Strømsø, 2019a). The point of departure for this endeavor was inspired by scholarship on transnationalism that started to pay attention to the territorial settings of transnational migrant living (Gielis, 2009). I was interested in questions of living together in diversity that engaged with power-relations associated with formal and informal structures of national belonging in the receiving societies, but without treating belonging as a zero-sum game (Erdal et al., 2017).

These discussions coincided in time with the upsurge of populist nationalism reproducing an understanding of the nation as an exclusive socio-spatial entity in Europe and beyond. For instance, data for my study was collected only four years after the 22 July 2011 terror attacks (at Utøya island and the central government buildings in Oslo) which were ideologically motivated and reasoned to defend a Norwegian nation against heterogenization. Another significant backdrop to this study, the sitting government was a conservative-led coalition that included the

populist Progress Party and the Liberal Party. It was a government that reflected the international policy trend of foregrounding border control and reducing immigration flows. It is within this historical and spatial context that my research on everyday nationhood is situated, and it is from this academic conversation that I engage with this volume's emphasis on socio-spatial theorization in Nordic geography. I start with a discussion on theories of nation and how it relates to migration-related diversity, before I continue with a discussion of theories of nation through the conceptual foci of everyday life, scale and boundaries, and encounters with otherness.

My entry point into these discussions has been methodological and guided by the following question: who are 'the masses' of the mass-phenomenon of nationalism? With the implicit assumption that nationalism is a mass-phenomenon, the masses have for the most part unwittingly been left out of the analysis (Whitmeyer, 2002). The cultural and discursive turn in research on nations and nationalism brought the idea of masses in through the work of Benedict Anderson (1983) and Michael Billig (1995), albeit treating them as an 'undifferentiated' group of ordinary people (Smith, 2008). The significance of this omission is reflected in the established narrative that nation and migration-related diversity (i.e., ethnic and religious diversity) cannot coexist (Antonsich & Matejskova, 2015). This narrative reproduces conceptualizations of the nation as built on socio-spatial homogeneity, which echoes prevailing conceptions of nationalism. By contrast, immigration, and thus immigrants as the assumed carriers of diversity, is thought to weaken a sense of national solidarity (Kymlicka, 2015). Consider, for instance, how this narrative in many ways is reproduced in established sampling strategies in the study of nation and nationalism as well as migrant integration. Boundaries of national belonging are treated as taken-for-granted with the implication that nationals are assumed to belong unconditionally, whereas ethnic and national minorities, as well as immigrants, are considered as more or less belonging as the element of diversity in the supposedly homogenous national culture (Triandafyllidou, 1998, 2013). In consequence, certain boundaries of nationhood may be reproduced and upheld if the premises of who are the masses are not reflected upon.

To move beyond these potential pitfalls of methodological nationalism, also addressed by Häkli above, I have looked to current work on superdiversity for inspiration (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015). The concept of superdiversity was first introduced to encompass the changing demographic compositions and unprecedented complexity in urban areas characterized by migration (Vertovec, 2007). Since then, it has been interpreted in three main directions: theoretical, methodological, and policy-oriented (Meissner & Vertovec, 2015). My work is inspired by the methodological direction as it calls for an acknowledgment of how contemporary societies are diverse in multiple and intersecting ways, and underscores that questions of belonging cannot a priori be confined to one particular national space (Erdal, 2017; Meissner & Vertovec, 2015). To not reproduce taken-for-granted conceptualizations of national belonging, such as citizenship, birth, ancestry, or race, I have sought research participants who reflected a diversification of diversity among individuals living within a shared national space, here Norway (Bauböck, 2002; Strømsø, 2019a). Their self-identifications with various intersecting and unique combinations

of identity markers, such as age, gender, socio-economic, ethnic, religious, and political affiliation, and their oral representations of perceptions and experiences of belonging, have been a central element in my study.

To not place emphasis on certain identities in favor of others, I started by looking at ordinary individual's everyday lives (Fox & Jones, 2013). However, individuals are not necessarily aware of how they help produce and reproduce nationhood and its boundaries in their mundane lives. Therefore, starting with everyday life as the 'domain of enquiry' allows for an exploration of when, where, and how the nation emerges as meaningful, and in which social contexts it is actively lived and (re) produced by ordinary people (Antonsich, 2016; Fox & Miller-Idriss, 2008; Thompson, 2001). Where the nation traditionally had been considered an omnipresent and overriding identity-marker (Millard, 2014; Skey, 2009), within the everyday nationhood tradition the nation is understood as contingent in time and space, as an identity marker that sometimes 'crystallizes as an event' – referred to as nationness (Brubaker, 1994, p. 8).

Engaging with nationness in everyday life contrasts with the more established research on nationalism where the nation is commonly approached as a phenomenon on the national scale (Moore, 2008). A similar approach is found in much of the research on, for instance, cosmopolitanism and everyday multiculturalism, where the nation is commonly conceptualized building on Benedict Anderson' (1983) idea of the nation as an imagined community. Hence, the nation is relegated as an abstract phenomenon without taking into consideration Anderson's contribution that complements macro-structural approaches to the nation by placing emphasis on how nationhood is reproduced in individuals' everyday lives. These research traditions are important to mention because they have dominated much of the debates on social interaction in everyday life and encounters with difference since the 2000s (e.g., Wise & Velayutham, 2009). As a result, the nation is often reduced to a static backdrop and overlooked in analysis of diversity, while other geographical scales, such as the local and the urban, are understood as lived and experienced. More critical, still, is how the nation is conceptualized as a homogenous and exclusive socio-spatial entity and for these reasons rejected on normative grounds (Antonsich, 2018; Antonsich & Matejskova, 2015). Again, the local and the urban are, by contrast, understood as inclusive (Koefoed & Simonsen, 2011; Wise & Velayutham, 2009).

The scholarship on everyday nationhood is mainly traced to Anglophone geography but related discussions are found in Nordic geography, such as in the work of Haldrup et al. (2006) and Koefoed and Simonsen (2011). Their contributions on the everyday experiences of nationhood have been an inspiration in my work related to embodied encounters with difference, as already indicated by Häkli. However, I have sought to develop further an understanding of the nation as a multi-scalar and contextually lived phenomenon, thus contending that everyday life does not have a fixed spatiality (e.g., Strømsø, 2019b, 2019c).

By shifting the focus from a conceptualization of the nation as a container of singular belonging to one that allows scope for diversity as an integral part of the nation, does not entail that living together is without friction (Erdal & Strømsø, 2021; Strømsø, 2019b). Through my endeavor to investigate negotiations over the

nation in everyday life, I identify – to no surprise – boundaries. Boundaries are here approached as socio-spatial processes. Having sampled participants without a predefined notion of nationhood, insights from my study unveil how individuals living in Norway – regardless of background and whether they identify as Norwegian or not – draw upon different symbolic resources at different times and spaces to help (re)produce boundaries of nationhood. When (re)produced, boundaries are themselves clear, or rather, free from ambiguity. Yet, there is a lack of consistency between individuals' national imaginaries and their everyday experiences, which I argue help demonstrate how boundaries of nationhood in everyday life are blurred (Strømsø, 2019a). These insights challenge the preconceived notions of a fixed and stable boundary demarcating Norwegian nationhood.

From a different vantage point, in a study among pupils in upper-secondary schools across Norway, we find that first impressions, as situated and unpredictable encounters with otherness, can also be conceptualized as boundaries of the everyday nation (Erdal & Strømsø, 2021). Boundary-making through first impressions (often) involves interpersonal encounters, which are both embodied and involve emotional dimensions. Our analysis revolves around visibility and race, as we expose how first impressions trigger automatic reactions or conscious reflections based on taken-for-granted imaginaries of who 'naturally' belongs within a national context and preconceived ideas of otherness. Still, these boundaries are not fixed but characterized by heteronomy and multiplicity (Andersen et al., 2012; Sohn, 2016). In other words, first impressions mean different things to different people, and we contend that the production or non-production of boundaries in this encounter depends on both the onlooker and the observed. Insisting on their agency in these encounters, the youth in our study elaborated on how they managed first impressions – or not – in everyday life. Furthermore, they reflected on normative aspects of the nation, where the 'what is' might be at odds with what they think it 'ought to be', in particular as the 'what is' might exclude their friends. Thus, the everyday nation can be understood as both a site of boundary-making and as being constituted by this very boundary-making.

Conducting a study on nation and migration-related diversity in the midst of a populist upsurge in Norway, where questions such as 'who is (not) a Norwegian' and 'who is (not) entitled to welfare services' are often raised in media, makes for a particular historical and spatial context. Starting with the everyday lives of ordinary people, and by taking seriously the ways in which nationhood are reproduced in taken-for-granted manners, the study not only helps challenge fixed and biased conceptualizations of the nation by offering a more nuanced picture than the one created in public debate. More importantly, it also unveils how focus on everyday life helps make space for different conceptualizations of the nation, where also diversity beyond the salient markers of migration-related diversity, is envisioned as an integral, but not frictionless, part (Erdal & Strømsø, 2016).

Conclusion

In this chapter we have charted the development of Nordic geographical theories of nationhood and nationalism from the early twentieth century up to the present day. We have deliberately limited our assessment to works that explicitly discuss the nation in theoretical terms. This means that we have not highlighted some important but latent forms of academic enactments of nationhood such as the racializing science of 'lappology' that from the sixteenth century onwards sought to build an ethnically homogeneous image of the Swedish nation through categorical distinctions from the Sami called 'Lapps'. These forms of colonizing knowledge production were deeply entangled with the rise of the Nordic nation-states as the dominant geopolitical order in the European north. However, instead of providing theoretical understanding of nationhood as a socio-cultural and socio-spatial phenomenon, they served as a direct academic contribution to nation-building in Nordic countries (Mattson, 2014).

By instead following the trajectories of Nordic theorization of the nation and nationalism we have sought to trace a body of work that reflects the socio-historical and intellectual contexts, in which it has evolved. We have done this in full realization that social sciences have always been a transnational endeavor and that it is, therefore, difficult to distil a specifically Nordic approach to the study of nationhood. However, we offer our interpretation of some aspects of an intellectual tradition that could be seen as characteristic of Nordic socio-spatial theorization. One such common thread is keen awareness of the nation as a socially, culturally, and geographically constructed reality (e.g., Stokke, 1999; Engelstoft & Larsen, 2013). Whether emphasizing more its material entanglements with the physical environment, seen through the prism of landscape, or its semiotic structurations in identity narratives, texts and images, nationalism is understood and analyzed as an historical-geographical construction beyond any idea of primordial nationhood.

Another common aspect is the relative similarity of political development in the Nordic countries. As democratic welfare societies they form an intellectual context with particular architectures of inclusiveness across class differences and potential exclusiveness in terms of cultural identity and belonging. Arguably, Nordic scholarship is particularly cognizant of the Janus-faced character of nationhood as, at once, a basis of solidarity among 'us' who belong 'here', and division towards 'them' who now live 'here' while they actually belong 'there' (Paasi, 1996).

Conversely, the different geopolitical positionings across the Nordic countries before and after the Second World War might account at least for some of the variation between scholarly traditions, with political geography attracting interest early on in Finland much more than elsewhere in the Nordic countries. Perhaps the blunt proximity of the Soviet Union and Russia as a great power, combined with the tradition of troublesome Russo-Finnish relations, actually boosted Finnish geographers' engagement with border studies and nationalism in the way authors such as Paasi (1990) and Moisio and Harle (2010) have hinted at. Be that as it may, it is evident that within Nordic geographies of nationhood there are considerable differences in

terms of volume and emphasis that are difficult to account for with an exclusive focus on individual scholars and their academic networks.

In view of all this, it is hardly an overstatement to say that Nordic scholarship has been building, rather than just following, the theoretical state of the art in this research area. We hope to have shown this through our assessment of Nordic socio-spatial theorization, which we complemented with our partly autobiographical reflections on how the research field has changed during the past decades. Instead of attempting to reiterate it, we use the remaining part of this concluding section to discuss the continued relevance of this work in understanding the social and political changes that over the past decade or so have brought populist and right-wing nationalism on the public agenda throughout Europe, the Nordic countries included.

In a way hardly conceivable in the late 1990s when discourses on the 'borderless world' were popular, after the turn of the millennium nationalism re-entered forcefully the political scene in the form of openly nationalist rhetoric and the popular support gained by parties with a nationalistic political agenda. While to some extent this has been a response to social polarization and precarization caused by neoliberal globalization, especially in the aftermath of the European 'refugee crisis' of 2015, nationalist sentiments have revolved around debates on immigration. More recently still, the idea of 'us' being different from 'them' has shifted into a rhetoric highlighting 'our' interests before 'others', like in the national brokering over access to vaccines and other medical supplies in the context of the covid-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, in 2021, the political landscape in the Nordic countries is still dominated by this trend, where the Finns Party in Finland, Center Party in Norway, and Sweden Democrats in Sweden are competing for the position of largest political party in polls. While somewhat smaller, in Denmark the Danish People's Party has for at least two decades been setting the agenda on immigration and refugee policy by making other parties to toughen their policies.

The situation calls for continued attempts to understand nationalism as a persistent political phenomenon. To quote Matejskova and Antonsich (2015, p. 206), the nation is often understood as "in the hands of [the] xenophobic" in public and academic debate. Hence, much scholarly attention is paid to these political sentiments and responses. However, as emphasized in Strømsø's section above, the everyday nationhood literature has highlighted how the nation matters to individuals regardless of its political articulations on the public agenda. While less conflict-oriented and more open for diversity as an integral part of the nation, everyday realities of nationhood are nevertheless entangled with the hotter forms of nationalism (Jones & Merriman, 2009; Erdal, 2019). To analyze the contemporary nationalist populism as a political force it is, therefore, important to build theoretical understanding of the ways in which the nation exists in the everyday.

One avenue for future research on nation and nationalism in Nordic geography might be to take up the role of technology, and in particular the impact of algorithmic dissemination of social media contents, which tend to reinforce the sentiments and affects of similarly-minded media users. Such 'echo chamber' effects are likely to play a role in the everyday reproduction of nationalism as at once banal and hot. At this juncture the question of emotions and affects in the nationhood certainly

merit further attention, along with the non-intentional and pre-reflexive aspects of identification that may give rise to mundane political agencies with the potential of "maintaining, challenging, and transforming the conditions from which they spring" (Häkli & Kallio, 2018, p. 71; also Bille & Simonsen, 2021; Erdal & Strømsø, 2021).

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Chapter 15
Urban Space and Everyday Life: A Personal Theoretical Trajectory Within Nordic Social and Cultural Geography

Kirsten Simonsen

Introduction

In this chapter, I will take an autobiographical approach providing a short presentation of my own theoretical trajectory from the 1970s until 2021 in the crossover and intertwining of 'Nordic' and 'international' currents. I hope in the same move to show how Danish (and Nordic) geography is developed in a situation of 'in-betweenness' in both a geographical and linguistic sense. It means that in the socio-spatial theorization, 'local' knowledges are intertwined with both German, French and Anglo-Saxon sources of inspiration.

Three issues have been guidelines throughout my intellectual trajectory: (1) a fascination with cities and a general interest in urban everyday life, (2) persistent attempts to overcome theoretical oppositions between objectivism and subjectivism or structure and agency, and (3) an interest in time-space; general theorizations and modalities of spatial concepts; space, place, scales, and borders. The trajectory is cross-inspired by international currents as well as continuous Nordic discussions performed first in the annual Nordic Symposia of Critical Human Geography (from 1979 to 1999) and later in the biannual Nordic Geographers Meetings. For earlier publications coming out of these networks, see Häften för kritiske studier (1979), contributions to *Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift*, Öhman (1994), Öhman and Simonsen (2003) and Jones and Olwig (2008).

In the following, I shall present first what I consider Nordic predecessors that rather early legitimized everyday life as a research issue within geography. After that, I will represent my own theoretical development by identifying three periods and approaches developed in conversation with Nordic and 'international' currents and around my own (theoretical and empirical) questions.

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Some Nordic Predecessors

As an early inspiration to address issues of everyday life and the lived space – issues that at that time did not have much room in Danish geography – one can mention two lines of thought within the Nordic countries. I consider both of them somehow grounded in a Nordic context and the Nordic welfare states. One came from analyses of living conditions and modes of life in the Nordic welfare states, the other (connected) inspiration came from time-geography, which put the question of day-to-day activities at the heart of the subject.

In the late 1960s and the early 1970s quite a few geographers in the Nordic countries were involved in surveys and statistical analysis measuring living conditions and the distribution of welfare amongst the Nordic populations, often conducted as a knowledge base for the politics of redistribution of the growing welfare states. However, the policies and the analyses also provoked criticism, often from the margins of the Nordic countries. Most powerfully, the Norwegian sociologist Ottar Brox (1966) mounted a severe attack on the homogenizing discourse involved in the social-democratic welfare project. On the basis on a regional analysis in Northern Norway, he exposed deep-lying conflicts between planning performed by the Norwegian state and the needs, values and systems of meaning within the local populations, thus giving voice to a 'central state/local culture' opposition. These discussions situated the question of cultural difference right into the centre of the planning discussion and gained a wide influence in the social sciences throughout the Nordic countries. In particular, an approach formulated by the Danish ethnologist Thomas Højrup (1983) became influential, first in Danish geography, later also in the other Nordic countries. With a point of departure in Althusserian Marxism, he developed a concept of *life-mode* as a system of mutually dependent practices and ideologies, all assigning meaning to one another. The result was a specification of different life-modes beginning from modes of production and the meaning of work, thus suggesting that the question of cultural difference not only had a dimension of place, but also one of class. While the approach was based on rather economistic arguments and a gender-biased analysis (Simonsen, 1993), it did put cultural identity on the agenda and did so from a conception of culture related to social practice (as I shall return to later).

The other line of thought was time-geography, as it was formulated by Torsten Hägerstrand and associates at University of Lund, initiated by his seminal text 'What about people in Regional Science?' (1970). Time-geography was developed in intensive involvement with Swedish planning (in this book, see also Wikman & Mohall, 2022). It was not supposed to be a theory, but rather an ontological contribution focusing on how different phenomena are mutually modified because they co-exist in time and space. Hägerstrand attributed a certain naturalism to the approach, characterizing it as a 'topoecology' designated to grasp a society-nature-technology constellation. He admitted some affinity with phenomenology, but stuck to a physical approach to the social world (Hägerstrand, 1982). The basic elements of the approach are connections between continuous trajectories of individual

entities (or people) in time-space. From these, descriptive concepts were developed, such as paths, stations, projects, prisms, time-space bundles and time-space domains. They concern the capabilities of bodies, their means of mobility and communication, and their paths through everyday life and life-cycles – that is, bodies understood as projects and paths in time-space contexts. In this way, the routinized character of daily life became the core of the effort, and Hägerstrand's well-known time-space diagrams can be seen as a geographic vocabulary aiming to describe what cannot be written, namely the possible movements and copings of everyday life.

While time-geography's representational potential is widely acknowledged, its metaphysical basis has been severely criticised. Two streams of criticism have prevailed. One points to a problematic relationship to social theory and particularly how the naturalism or 'physicalism' of the approach leads to a deceptive conception of human thought-and-action and erodes the possibility of developing a social understanding of time-space (Giddens, 1984; Gregory, 1985). In order to mend this problem, some geographers have sought to develop more socialized versions of time-geography (Pred, 1984; Åquist, 1992). The other line of criticism charges time-geography with 'masculinism' (Rose, 1993). It regards time-geography as a visual strategy that renders space objective and transparent, and the moving bodies become 'imaginary bodies', 'universal' and deprived of social markings of race, gender and sexuality. Nevertheless, time-geography has since long remained a weighty element in Swedish feminist geography as a method to describe possibilities and restriction in women's daily programs and mobility projects (Mårtensson, 1979; Friberg, 1990; Åquist, 2003; Friberg et al., 2012; in this book, see also Forsberg & Stenbacka, 2022).

What this retrospective exploration shows is that working with everyday life and cultural identity is not a new endeavour within Nordic geography, even if the degree and the character of their treatment have varied between countries and institutions. So, even if I shall not draw directly on these traditions in the following, they are part of the backdrop of my work.

The First Approximation: A Non-deterministic Social Ecology

The notion of human ecology had a seductive appeal within geography as far back as the beginning of the twentieth century. The American geographer Harlan H. Barrows defined geography as 'the science of human ecology' concerned with 'the relationships existing between natural environments and the distribution and activities of man' (1923, p. 3). The appeal obviously attaches to the wish to synthesize the different subdisciplines of geography (in this book, see Holt-Jensen, 2022). Within Danish geography, human ecology had a strong position far into the twentieth century (Christiansen, 1967). Therefore, it is not surprising that the first theorizations within urban geography took inspiration from the Chicago School of Sociology where Robert E. Park defined human ecology as '… an attempt to apply

to the interrelations of human beings a type of analysis previously applied to the interrelations of plants and animals' (1936, p. 1). This is of course not just a Danish phenomenon; the Chicago School had great influence on the urban geography provided in textbooks all over the Western world. But human ecology carried a 'baggage' of functionalism and positivism, and there was Social Darwinism buried in in its metaphors transferred from biology, such as natural competition, dominance, invasion, succession and natural areas, which naturalized social and economic processes.

The 1970s, when I wrote my PhD thesis, were a period of theoretical showdowns and critique of positivism. Geography at University of Copenhagen, where I was based, made changes in both organization, curricula and scholarly orientations. Among the human geographers, three main directions were differentiated: One group generally stuck to human ecology. A second one developed a Marxist radical geography (Folke, 1972; Buch-Hansen & Nielsen, 1977; in this book, see also Jakobsen & Larsen, 2022). The third group was more based in urban geography and oriented towards planning.

Personally, somehow situated at the borderline between the second and third group at the department, I found my way out the Social Darwinism of the Chicago School by adopting a *Neo-Weberian approach* in analyses of residential choices and segregation in middle sized Danish towns. The inspiration came most of all from the British sociologist Ray Pahl (1970), who argued for an alternative socio-ecological approach to urban analysis. He criticized the limited attention to power in human ecology, and with a focus on urban planning and state intervention he was wondering if post-war urban planning was contributing to greater social justice in the city. The question was: who controls scarce urban resources, under what circumstances, and with what socio-spatial consequences? For me, Pahl and other neo-Weberian authors provided me with some theoretical tools that I at this stage felt had a broader critical edge than the contemporary Marxist attempts.

First of all, they directly focused on the *constraints* affecting people's access to urban resources and their life chances in urban areas. It was about social constraints connected to economic classes formed by the labour market as well as *housing classes* connected to conflicts over housing on local housing markets (Rex & More, 1967). Secondly, as theories developed in the 1960s, a period with growing welfare states in many European (and not least Nordic) countries, they emphasized the role of *urban managers* as mediators of the constraints. The managers could be many – planners, landowners, developers, estate agents, local authorities, social workers and pressure groups of all kinds – representing power in different ways. Finally, they opened for a stronger connection to everyday life by (like time geography) including the issue of spatial constraints in the access to facilities, in this way putting focus on interaction between everyday social activities and spatial structures.

This was the thinking behind the creation of an analytical model of segregation processes in my PhD-thesis on processes of segregation in smaller Danish cities, including an analysis of residential patterns and everyday activity chances (Simonsen, 1976). For me, it became the first small step into a critical geography by

taking a socio-ecological approach to the connection between urban structure, access to housing and everyday life.

The Second Approximation: Towards a Theory of Practice

My thinking in this second period, from around 1980 to the publication of my habitation-thesis in 1993, was partially formed through participation in three different intellectual networks. First, the above mentioned Nordic Symposia of Critical Human Geography, which in the beginning were encounters between quite different strains of critical thinking: The Danes came with a discussion of a Marxist grounded radical geography; the Norwegians mostly came with a strong local community paradigm, influenced by the above mentioned work of Ottar Brox; the Swedes were more connected to regional planning, but also brought in a practice of action research in cooperation with local labour unions; the Finns also came with Marxism, but in a form that tried to fuse the economic thinking with a more humanistic one. The first years the discussions mostly developed around production and regional development, but eventually other subjects appeared such as urban conflicts, society-nature relations and not least feminist geography (in this book, see Forsberg & Stenbacka, 2022).

At the same time, however, what might be the most profound critique of positivist thinking within Nordic geography came from a different angle. The Swedish geographer Gunnar Olsson (1980) emphasized while conventional reasoning only knew the either-or distinction of the excluded middle, reality knows the both-this-and-that of dialectics. This recognition took him on a travel through the philosophy of internal relations exploring how thought, language and action are inevitable internally related and folded into each other.

My second network was a Danish and an international cross-disciplinary one on urban studies connected to Research Committee 21 within the International Association of Sociology. It evolved around the simultaneous development of critical urban theory initiated by amongst others David Harvey (1973) and Manuel Castells (1977) (for contributions to the Danish debate, see the edited collections by Tonboe, 1985, 1988). And the third one was a small European network in feminist geography developed within the ERASMUS program. It was a teaching network, but it also initiated personal networks and research collaborations.

On the personal level, this period involved some changes in affiliation. The first move was to *Nordplan*, a Nordic institution based in Stockholm offering supplementary teaching and postgraduate teaching within planning. I consider this move the most important one in my career. Coming from the somewhat insular Department of Geography in Copenhagen to an institution that was both cross-disciplinary and cross-Nordic, I felt an extreme extension of my horizons – not least due to the inspiring contact with Gunnar Olsson (Professor at Nordplan). The following moves went to Geography at Aarhus University, where I worked as associate professor for 3 years, to the Danish Ministry of Environment, where I worked with urban and

regional planning, and, finally, to a position as associate professor in geography at Roskilde University in 1986. I consider the experiences from these different affiliations important for my following development.

Theoretically, the period started with an increasing engagement within the critical urban theory of the 1980s, in particular valuing Henri Lefebvre as an author that was given too little attention in the 'international' debate at that time. (An exception was a small group of architects and sociologists in Sweden, for example Peter Eriksson and Sten Gromark, who already in 1982 published a Swedish translation of his *Le droit à la ville* [1976] (Lefebvre, 1982)). My work initially concentrated on two themes. The first one developed around questions of urban conflict and *social movements*; about their base in collective consumption, about their mainly local character and subsequently orientation towards the local state, and about the contradictory forces at play when it comes to evaluate the political perspectives of the movements (Jensen & Simonsen, 1981; Simonsen et al., 1982). The second theme was the question of *gender* and the city, for example the gendered character of urban segregation and planning (Simonsen, 1990), and later with Vaiou, where we took a starting point in women's lives and experiences and explored their role in the construction of urban spaces in Copenhagen and Athens (Simonsen & Vaiou, 1996). This was also my more general aim during this period. From a critique of the contemporary critical urban theory for mainly adopting a structural approach, I wanted to develop an understanding of the city making room for everyday life and social practice. That work was connected to a group of researchers and PhD-theses within Danish social geography (Baerentholdt et al., 1990) and had connections to more humanist-oriented geographers in Finland (Karjalainnen, 1986; Paasi, 1986; Vartiainen, 1986). In the following, I will present my efforts in three steps, as it was conducted in my habitation-thesis on urban theory and everyday practices (Simonsen, 1993).

'Mode de Vie'

Earlier, I mentioned the Danish theory of mode of life developed from structural Marxism (Højrup, 1983). For my purpose, I found more inspiration from a group of French urban sociologists whom I visited on a sabbatical. They had a very different approach to the concept, as they temporarily left a priori theories in favour of big empirically based analyses of practices and modes of life. Their aim was to find a way between voluntarist micro-sociology and structuralist reductions of everyday life. I will in particular point to two of their contributions: First, they by way of the concept of *mobilization* expressed a dialectic between how individuals and families actively mobilize (materially, financially, morally and affectively) to organize their lives and give meaning to them, and how they, on the other hand, are mobilized by structural processes involving institutions and social groups on a large scale (Godard, 1983). Secondly, their methodological-empirical program introduced a *biographical approach* to the analysis of 'modes of life'. They collected biographies

of individuals and families throughout three generations, including mobilization around education, employment, settlement, consumption and political activity. Focus was on events in their live span and intersections with histories of labour markets, localities, cities and nations (Bertaux, 1980).

A Social Ontology of Practice

One big discussion within the social sciences of the 1980s, which inspired me as well as many others in Nordic human geography, was the one of structure/agency or objectivism/subjectivism. I wanted to apply it in my urban research but also to look behind it seeking its philosophical base. Two very different philosophies offered useful contributions. The first one was Wittgenstein's ordinary language philosophy. The sentence 'Here the term 'language-*game*' is meant to bring into prominence that the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or a form of life' (Wittgenstein, 1953) is sending two messages: first that no pregiven, independent phenomena (structure, consciousness, language) can exist ahead of human beings in their carrying out of specific activities; secondly, that speaking a language is a collective endeavour, part of language-games or modes of life. The other basic contribution was Heidegger's existential phenomenology forwarding an understanding of 'being-in-the-world' as a practical, directional, everyday involvement in the environment (Heidegger, 1962).

On another level, to develop an understanding of social practice, I took inspiration from a range of social theorists from different intellectual milieus, who all contributed to the structure-agency question: the most important ones came from Britain (Giddens, 1984), Germany (Habermas, 1984) and France (Lefebvre, 1984; Bourdieu, 1977). This combined inspiration provided me with a social ontology of *practice*, which, simply said, is an approach claiming that nothing in the social world is prior to human doings or practice; not consciousness, ideas or meaning; not structures or mechanisms; and not discourses, assemblages or networks. More concretely, this made me construct a triad of concepts for analysing everyday life and social practices, consisting of (1) *routinization* (both as a concept of alienation and of ontological security); (2) *mobilization*, life strategies, reflexivity; and (3) *communication* – the group (Simonsen, 1993).

Time-Space and Contextuality

However, having reached an understanding of social practice did not satisfy my request for one of contextuality. Basically, it is about the situated character of social life, involving coexistence, connections and togetherness as a series of associations and entanglements in time-space. Already Hägerstrand (1974) used the concept when he in the development of the epistemological basis of time-geography

Space \ Time	Longue durée	Dasein	Durée of daily life
Institutional spatial practice	**Socio-spatial development (Historical Geography)**	Life strategies in spatial context	Geographical conditioning of daily routines
Place	Local history, culture and tradition	**Biography in time and space. Spatial identity**	Spatially based 'natural attitudes'
Individual spatial practice	Historical conditioning of spatial practices	Relation between life strategies and spatial practices	**Daily time-space routines (Time-geography)**

Fig. 15.1 Contextuality of modes of life

distinguished between *compositional* and *contextual* approaches. However, my endeavour was strictly social, exploring the role of social temporality and social spatiality in the mediation between structure and agency. Again, the inspirations were manifold, involving particularly Heidegger (1962), Sartre (1963), Lefebvre (1974), Lefebvre and Regulier (1985), Giddens (1984) and, from geography, Thrift (1983). A concentrated illustration of the approach is shown in Fig. 15.1.

My starting point was that all social practice is formed in social, temporal and spatial contexts and that practices and context are inseparable and mutually constitutive. I tried, through an analytical differentiation of social temporality and social spatiality in their institutional, existential and practical dimensions, to develop an analytical scheme for the study of mode of life (Simonsen, 1991). In the heart of the diagram stands individuals' biographies in time and space. It is here that the concrete production of social individuals take place, and it is here that the complex texture of daily temporal-spatial routines is organized. Thus, the interest in biographical analysis is focused not upon single actions but upon sequences of action getting meaning within larger projects. The *situated life story* becomes the point of intersection of the mediating categories time and space.

I put the approach into play in a case study using biographical interviews – inspired by the above discussed 'mode de vie' group as well as Sartre's (1963) ideas of *progressive-regressive method*, where he in writing biographies argued for movements to-and-fro between life story and epoch. The analysis was conducted in the lives of four generations of women in a Copenhagen neighbourhood (Simonsen, 1993). As I see it retrospectively, what I did during this period was to construct an understanding of geography that at the same time changed my theoretical approach and added to my former work. Shortly summarized, it was an adoption of the structure-agency thinking into urban theory, a development of a theory (or

ontology) of social practice, and a development of my understanding of time-space. The approach was not very well received in the more traditionalist parts of Danish geography, but I think more welcomed in the younger generation.

In the transition from this period to the next one, a new intellectual network emerged. It was formed around the ICCG's (International Conferences of Critical Geography), inaugurating in Vancouver 1997. Here, initiated by Lawrence Berg (1997), started a discussion about power relations and Anglocentrism in 'international' publishing. With two feminist geographers from England and Greece, I took up the challenge and wrote about both the power geometry of journals and the experiences of writing 'across' Europe (Gregson et al., 2003; for other Nordic contributions on this topic, see Paasi, 2005; Setten, 2008). On the personal level, I got a professorship at Roskilde University in 1996, alongside a 20% guest professorships at Oslo University (for 3 years) and later at Tromsø University (for 5 years), and I was very happy to receive a degree as honorary doctor at Stockholm University in 2010.

The Third Approximation: Towards a Critical Phenomenology

I have never totally left the idea of a social ontology having its starting point in *practice*. Much of the theoretical work since my habitation has been elaborations of the practice approach described above, but along the road I have made so many extensions and changes that it ends up different from what is mostly called practice theory. The end point, so far, is what Lasse Koefoed and I term *Critical Phenomenology* (Simonsen & Koefoed, 2020). Let me describe these steps.

The Body

One important characteristic of lived, everyday practices is that they are intrinsically corporeal. However, even if it was acknowledged, most practice theory did not develop that point. To mend that was the first point of my extensions (Simonsen, 2000, 2007). For me, attention to the body first came through feminism. Some of the most important inspirations here came from Iris Marion Young, including her iconic essay *Throwing like a girl* (Young, 1990), and the Norwegian philosopher Toril Moi (1999). Moi, following Simone de Beauvoir, forwarded a concept of the body as a *situation* – a situation amongst other social ones, but fundamental in the sense that it will always be part of our lived experience and our coping with the environment.

Seeking the philosophical background, I turned to Merleau-Ponty's embodied phenomenology (1962, 1968). Already his well-known 'slogan', 'Consciousness is in the first place not a matter of "I think that" but of "I can"' (1962, p. 137), shows his affinity to practice. The practically oriented body continuously weaves meaning throughout its life course, and its own capacities materialize throughout its

interactions with others and with its environment. In this way, the body is not just an object in the world, neither is it a mere assemblage or juxtaposition of its parts; it a *sensuous, lived body* that changes through interaction with an environment that it both responds to and actively structures. Later he highlights the intertwining of the body and the world – he calls this common element *the flesh* and talk about the flesh of human bodies, the flesh others (human and non-human) and the flesh of the world. The human body as self-sentient flesh becomes part of the flesh of the world but is not reducible to it (1968). The most important aspect of the flesh is its *reversibility*, a 'double sensation' by which the body-subject's practices and perceptions are connected in an interworld or 'intermundane space'. We are all visible-seers, tangible touchers, audible listeners etc., enacting an ongoing intertwinement between the flesh of the body, the flesh of others and the flesh of the world.

In this way, Merleau-Ponty also placed the body in a field of space and time. He started from the spatiality of the body and accentuated how this is not a spatiality of position, but one of *situation*. The body is situated in space and time, but it should not be seen in terms of our bodies being *in* space or *in* time – they *inhabit* space and time:

> I am not in space and time, nor do I conceive space and time; I belong to them, my body combines with them and includes them. The scope of this is the measure of that of my existence. (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p. 140)

This understanding I combined with Henri Lefebvre's stronger emphasize on the production of space and his conception of a generative and creative social body as an intrinsic part of social practice (Lefebvre, 1974; Simonsen, 2005a). In his understanding each body both *is* space and *has* its space; it produces itself in space as the same time as it produces that space. All three aspects of his well-known conceptual triad of production of space – spatial practice, representation of space and spaces of representation – involves aspects of bodies and embodiment, his theories of everyday life include temporalities (e.g. the conflict between linear time and cyclical time), and his rhythmanalysis (with Catherine Regulier) is a time-space exercise reaching from bodies to global political economy.

From this addition to practice theories, and a simultaneous recognition of practices as both bodily and narrative, both doings and sayings (Schatzki, 2002), I formed a range of open, conceptual tools for analyzing modalities of urban life. An analysis of urban life constructed from spatialities and temporalities of *the embodied city* and *the narrative city* respectively was conducted in Copenhagen and published as a Danish book on 'the multiple faces of the city' (Simonsen, 2005b).

Emotion and Affectivity

In prolongation of the focus on the body and an arising need coming out of my empirical research, my next elaboration focused on emotions. In urban studies it had for long been an issue around questions of women's fear in public space; that was

also the case in Nordic geography (e.g. Flemmen, 1999; Koskela, 1999; Listerborn, 2002, 2015a), but not much was done about a more general theorization of emotions. The time that I started this search happened to coincide with a heated discussion running in British geography between feminists emphasizing emotion and 'non-representational' theorists focusing on affect (Thien, 2005; Anderson & Harrison, 2006). During a sabbatical at Durham University, I realized that I had to find my own way through the discussion. That, of course, did not prevent an involvement later on in particular dealing with whether the critique of classical Humanism should lead to a search for a 'New humanism' or a post-humanism levelling human and non-human (Simonsen, 2013; Ash & Simpson, 2016).

This effort led me back to Merleau-Ponty and his ideas of *reversibility*. Because of the reversibility, the body is simultaneously active and passive. It is at the same time seeing and seen, creative and receptive, affecting and affective. It was and is my argument that an elaboration of this non-dichotomous approach can cut through the distinction between emotion as subjective experiences or significations, on one hand, and affect as an impersonal 'set of flows moving through the bodies of human and other beings' (Thrift, 2008, p. 236), on the other hand, and advance the debate about emotion and affect. It starts from the general phenomenological insight that we are never 'un-touched' by the world around us – we are always already attuned to it. Emotions are neither 'purely' mental nor 'purely' physical but ways of relating and interacting with the surrounding world.

This relational account can give rise to a double conception of emotional spatiality (Simonsen, 2007, 2010). One side is an *expressive space* of the body's movement, which might be seen as a *performative* element of emotion. Here, emotions are connected to the expressive and communicative body. The body, Merleau-Ponty argues, is comparable to an expressive work of art, but one that expresses emotions in the form of *living meaning*. These meanings are communicated and 'blindly' apprehended through corporeal orientations and gestures that reciprocally link one body to another. The other side of emotional spatiality is *affective space*, which is the space where we are emotionally in touch – open to the world around us. Emotions are not just actions, something that our bodies express or articulate. The other side is about the way in which we are possessed by them or swept into their grasp, for instance when experiencing a special event, a city or a landscape. It is the felt sense of having been moved emotionally, the more *passive side* of emotional experience.

A related concept with geographical relevance is *atmosphere*. It has its roots in phenomenological philosophy and architectural theory (Böhme, 1993), but came into geography during the 2000s, first in Germany (Hasse 2002) and later in the Anglophone world (McCormack, 2008; Anderson, 2009). Anderson defines atmosphere as 'spatially discharged affective qualities that are autonomous from the bodies that they emerge from, enable and perish with' (2009, p. 80). A colleague and I discuss how to mend what we find to be an overstatement of the passive side in the constitution of atmospheres and argue for a combination of practice theories, sensuous phenomenology and the theories of atmosphere in order to highlight how atmospheres are created both by materiality and through the presence and practices of people (Bille & Simonsen, 2021).

Encountering the Stranger

Rather than a theoretical problem, this extension is provoked by political and empirical problems. One trigger was an anger about the increasing Islamophobia in Denmark, for me rendering the life chances of ethnic minorities an indispensable research theme. I entered this field together with my colleague Lasse Koefoed, first with a couple of introducing publications (Haldrup et al., 2006; Koefoed & Simonsen, 2007), later in two joint projects.

The pivotal point in this work is embodied cross-cultural encounters as they pass off in different urban spaces. Through this, we wrote ourselves into a concurrent Anglophone network on 'the geography of encounters' (Valentine, 2008; Hopkins, 2011; Darling & Wilson, 2016). In line with the above-mentioned ideas of intercorporeality and reversibility, we ascribe ontological primacy to interrelations or encounters. In this move, however, encounters become more than just meetings. They are meetings involving two characteristics: surprise and time-space (Merleau-Ponty, 1968; Ahmed, 2000). Encounters involve surprise (and maybe conflict) because of their inevitable content of similarities and difference, inclusion and exclusion, or incorporation and expulsion that constitutes the boundaries of bodies and communities. Hence, the constitution of strangers involves *spatial negotiations* over mobility and home, (imagined) communities, boundaries and bridges, etcetera. 'Like bodies' and 'unlike' bodies do not precede encounters, rather likeness and unlikeness are produced in them.

In this way, encounters are about face-to-face meetings as experienced in everyday life. They are, however, also temporal and spatial through *historical-geographical mediation*. They presuppose other faces, other encounters of facing, other bodies, other spaces and other times. They reopen prior histories of encounters and geopolitical imaginations of the Other as traces of broader social relationships. That is why we had to include *postcolonial thinking*, taking off from Said's (1978) well-known analysis of Western imaginations of the Orient. More present inspirations have been Ahmed (2000, 2006) and Gregory (2004). Both authors develop the postcolonial thinking; one in relation to cross-cultural encounters in everyday life, the other one on the distorted imaginative geographies in contemporary warfare in the Middle East. The point is how the past inform the present and how 'farness' as a spatial marker of distance become embodied as a property of people and places. The Other becomes associated with the other side of the world.

Of our two joint projects, the first – *The stranger, the city and the nation* – addressed the possibility of belonging for 'strangers' in socio-spatial formations on different scales (Koefoed & Simonsen, 2010, 2012), the other – *Paradoxical spaces: cross-cultural encounters in public space* (also involving Maja de Neergaard and Mathilde Dissing Christensen) – focused on different modes of encounters, such as collective planned encounters, encounters with authorities and everyday encounters (e.g. Koefoed et al., 2017, 2020; Simonsen et al., 2020; Koefoed & Simonsen, 2021). Our primary networks in relation to this work were to be found amongst international contacts within 'geography of encounters', but also colleagues from cultural studies at Roskilde University (Christiansen et al., 2017) and people dealing

with similar issues in Sweden (Pred, 2000; Molina, 2011; Listerborn, 2015b) and Norway, for example through participation in a Norwegian project, *Cit-egration*, about more hospitable encounters with refugees and immigrants (Koefoed et al., 2021).

Critical Phenomenology

I will end this personal travel-story through the intellectual landscape of geography and related subjects by outlining the joint framework constructed together with my main co-author during the last 10 years (Simonsen & Koefoed, 2020). When we started to use the term 'critical phenomenology' about our work (Simonsen, 2013), we realized that similar terminology appeared in different circles, particularly within North American philosophy (Kerney & Semonovitch, 2011; Dolezal & Petherbridge, 2017; Weiss et al., 2020). We summarized our own take on the term in three points, which also captures where I currently am in my socio-spatial thinking.

First, critical phenomenology is a critical theory that emphasizes experience. Most critical theory focuses on inequalities and oppression as rooted in structures or systemic relations – and in many cases for good reasons. It is, however, insufficient to describe the world's general structures without also attending to the ways they are experienced from within, including the experiences of those who are suffering from the situations of oppression. This is where Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology has an invaluable role to play. It focuses on embodied, situated and affective forms of experiences, but at the same time acknowledges the way in which these experiences are already infused with layers of cultural sedimentation, saturated with habit and inertia, and interwoven with power and obfuscation.

Second, critical phenomenology is a phenomenology that is sensitive to difference. The principal figures in the phenomenological tradition (including Merleau-Ponty) have been targets of criticism for not paying adequate attention to the question of difference, not least as formulated by feminist and postcolonial literature. As regards Merleau-Ponty we would argue that the allegations are only partially true; even if he does not develop ideas specifically around difference. However, already two of his contemporaries drew on his thinking on the body to take that step – Simone de Beauvoir on gender and Franz Fanon on race – and many others have continued this effort and in this way contributed a phenomenology of alterity and difference (e.g Young, 1990; Ahmed, 2000, 2006; Alcoff, 2006).

This leads us to our *third point: critical phenomenology involves a politics that emphasize coexistence*. Again, we could start from Merleau-Ponty. For him, politics was primarily about collective life and he rooted it in an ontology of the interworld, conceived as thick intersubjectivity or a field of forces where struggles for coexistence are performed. In continuation of that, the thinker who inspired us most was Hannah Arendt. In the shadow of totalitarianism, her reconceptualization of the political centres on the aspect of human condition that she considered destroyed,

that is, *human plurality* (Arendt, 1958). She argues that politics should centre on the spaces in which humans interact and take responsibility for the shared world. The attraction of Arendt's work is her broad concept of politics focusing on what we experience and live through and our shared capacity to act. It both gives us an approach to everyday politics and uncovers disturbing societal phenomena that we can trace again now in the first decades of the twenty-first century.

We would argue that these three elements of critical phenomenology can lead towards a 'new humanism', not as the old humanisms grounded in affirmations of the abstract human potential, but rather in a new potentialization rooted in contextuality and an ethics of alterity. With this move towards 'everyday politics', we see links to new political thinking within Finnish geography aiming at developing tools for understanding political agency and political events as they unfold contextually in everyday life (Häkli & Kallio, 2014; Kallio et al., 2021).

Retrospectively, one could argue that the understanding of social spatiality, I adopted in the former approximation, in this one has been deepened with spaces of bodies and embodiment, emotional spatialities and atmospheres, narrative spatiality and geographical imaginations, and political spaces. Important to me is also the critical focus on the liveability for ethnic minorities in the Denmark.

Concluding Remarks

In line with the story presented here, I still see my work as an approach under development, a step in a continuing intellectual travel formed by theoretical and empirical challenges and inspirations. It is a story told by a woman who during her whole academic life has felt it necessary to find her own way 'in the jungle out there' and also to fight for it. It has not always been easy in the Danish context. On the other hand, I have been so lucky to achieve a voice within discussions within Nordic and international critical geography, particularly on theorizing space and place, on practice theory, on power relations in publishing, on the body (gendered and racialized), on emotions, on encountering the other, and latest on Critical Phenomenology, a field under development in different subjects and networks.

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Chapter 16
The Institutionalization of Regions: An Autobiographic View on the Making of Socio-spatial Theory in the Nordic Periphery

Anssi Paasi

Introduction

The history of academic disciplines can be examined from several perspectives by using diverging materials as "evidence". Archives offer private materials such as personal correspondence and notes, formal and informal records, or documents of the activities of academic societies, for example. The approaches for using such materials vary from comprehensive genealogical excavations to outlining more general steps of progress in scientific action and thinking. Journal articles, edited volumes, and monographs are also important sources for academic histories, as several editions of *Geography and Geographers* (Johnston, 2004) illustrate. While much of the history writing in geography leans on published materials, this approach is not without problems and often leaves critical questions unanswered. For example, why something was (or was not) written and published, or why something was published in some particular language, for example, English.

Autobiographies are useful in mapping such motives, especially if they reveal how scholars interpret and position their work in the wider time-space matrix of power relations and in relation to events, episodes and social networks that have stimulated their work. They also express how researchers see their work as contributing to or challenging the dominant theoretical wisdom (Johnston, 2019; Moss, 2001a, b). Autobiographies are admittedly subjective and selective, so it is critical to be aware that knowledge is not just collected and neutrally reported by scholars but actively produced and often contested (cf. Purcell, 2009). Consequently, autobiographies can be problematic if authors unreflexively or even purposely misrepresent the past and combine history, memory and personal desires (Johnston, 2019). Thus, it is crucial to avoid "self-absorption", "navel-gazing" (Moss, 2001a), or

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"great man" (sic!) approaches (Purcell, 2009) and to be attentive to what is presented as evidence.

Biographies and autobiographies have a long but thin history in geography. The International Geographical Union's (IGU) History of Geographical Thought Commission launched the *Geographers: Biobibliographical Studies* series in 1977, yet the initiative had been made already in 1969. Likewise, biographies were significant in Torsten Hägerstrand's time-geographic thinking. Hägerstrand and Anne Buttimer (1988) interviewed and videoed in their *International Dialog Project* (since the late 1970s) scholars who have contributed to major transformations in geography. Allan Pred (1979) followed an autobiographic approach when reflecting on the networks influencing his work. Moss (2001b), for her part, edited a useful collection where several geographers told their stories. Autobiographies have also recently been revived in Nordic geography (Michael Jones, 2018; Holt-Jensen, 2019).

This chapter is an autobiographic reflection of my academic path, its critical episodes and the social relations that have both framed and inspired my work with socio-spatial theory. The key focus is on the *institutionalization of regions* (Paasi, 1986a), a theory that I outlined during the 1980s in the context of ongoing socio-spatial theory debates in geography. Socio-spatial theory refers here to the perpetual (re-)conceptualization of the dialectics between social and spatial relations, and, in this chapter particularly, how regions, borders and identities are socially constructed. Since "no self exist in isolation" (Purcell, 2009, p. 235), I will discuss the contexts, people and events that have influenced my theoretical work on this topic. I will use my calendars, notebooks and personal memories in shaping the time-frame for these developments. I will also lean on my correspondence with Finnish and international scholars.

The chapter is structured as follows. The first sections discuss how I became a geographer, ending up at a peripheral university and how this positionality conditioned my theoretical and empirical work. I then reflect on the influences behind my research and on becoming involved in the so-called "new regional geography". Next, I discuss the conceptions of theory that inspire my research. I then assess the "travel" of the theory of institutionalization and my subsequent theoretical work on the political geography of borders. Next, I reflect on the role of "mediators" behind the mobility of theories. Finally, in the Coda, I discuss the motives of scholars and look at recent geographical debates on Anglophone hegemony.

Geographer by Coincidence

Sociologist Erik Allardt (1995, p. 10) writes that "It is quite usual that people represent their trajectories and maybe particularly their achievements as significantly more planned and cogitated than they are in reality". He recognizes three features that influence a life course: coincidences, conventions and decisions. How life advances and is shaped, echoes these three features and their interrelations.

When thinking about academic careers, I am tempted to add a few elements to Allardt's list. First, research work demands deep commitment and work beyond ordinary working hours. Second, external and internal features of academia matter, for example, the position of geography in natural or social science, its national and local prestige among academic fields, and one's own work community as a burden or a source of inspiration. Third, being "in the right place at the right time" in relation to available jobs, grants, academic relations, and evolving theoretical prospects, i.e., the geo-historical materialization of Allardt's "coincidences". Fourth, general matters related to a life course, such as health and illness or one's social relations are crucial. Personally, being a cancer survivor for over 13 years has deeply shadowed my biography.

I became a geographer by coincidence. There were several potential subjects to study after high school. One of my high school mates told me that he was studying geography at the new University of Joensuu. Geography was fine in high school but not something I had thought of as a career. As a working-class kid my visions of academic possibilities were narrow, and the only job for a geographer I knew was a schoolteacher. Student time soon revealed that geography was a ticket to many professions. In high school we studied mainly descriptive regional geography. The book required in the entrance exam, however, was more theoretical, introduced models and patterns, thus representing a turn towards positivist spatial science in Finland. My wife-to-be and I prepared ourselves carefully for this exam. We both got accepted and were delighted to start our studies in September 1976. It was soon obvious that geography in Joensuu differed from other Finnish geography departments, which were all situated within the Faculties of Science. Joensuu's unit was small, part of the social sciences and had a motivated, young staff representing the first academic generation of their family. As a new department it did not have old traditions. There was no need to bow down to totems, there were no portraits on the walls.

Working in the Periphery

During the 1980s Joensuu University was located in a "double-periphery". It was a newly established (1969), small and marginal university in Finland. Another peripheral element relates to language: Finnish scholars need other languages to communicate with international colleagues, typically English or Finland's second official language, Swedish. During the 1980s, Nordic critical geographers communicated with a mixture of Swedish, Danish and Norwegian in their annual symposia (the predecessor to the current Nordic Geographers Meeting) and in *Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift* (launched in 1984). I attended a few annual symposia and published several articles in the journal.

Work in the periphery was easygoing in the 1980s. While scholars obviously always hope to contribute to research and have their work recognized somehow (Johnston, 2005), there were not yet "national expectations" that Finnish human

geography should be "visible" on the international scene. It was typical to publish in Finnish in Finnish forums. Pressure for "internationalization" emerged much later along with the neoliberal claims from ministries that demanded focusing on international publishing in "top" journals. This strengthened the power of the English language in Finland, as elsewhere, and paved the way for Anglophone hegemony in human geography and other social sciences. This hegemony takes perpetually new forms, as I will show in the Coda section.

I can briefly justify my autobiographic approach against this background by two retrospective remarks, one positive and one less convenient. First, while developed in the periphery and published in the Finnish journal *Fennia* (Paasi, 1986a), the theory of the institutionalization of regions has been constantly well-received in geography and in other fields. This goes against odds: scholars criticizing the Anglophone hegemony in geography have observed that theories are typically expected to be produced in the academic cores and consumed in the margins, to "flavor" peripheral case studies (Minca, 2000; Simonsen, 2004; Berg, 2004; Müller, 2021; Korf, 2021). Thus, spatial contexts and language differences condition academic communication and the production and circulation of scientific knowledge (Paasi, 2015). Scholars from linguistic peripheries have to adjust to publishing in English, to make their voices heard beyond national borders (Canagarajah, 2002; Garcia-Ramon, 2003; Gregson et al., 2003; Müller, 2021). My *Fennia* paper fulfilled this basic language criterion (Paasi, 1986a).

Second, and related to the "travel" of my theoretical work, I have often been asked puzzling questions; how and why did I start such theoretical efforts, how did I develop the idea of the institutionalization of regions in Finland or, more annoyingly, why I have remained in Finland or for 30 years stayed at Oulu University? Such inquiries hint at peripheral sites as "unfitting" for theoretical work. However, my intention has not been to formulate a "Finnish theory on regions" but a "theory on regions". Yet, as I will demonstrate, my theorization does have deeply contextual "Finnish" features that have influenced it.

Becoming Interested in Space and Regions

I finished my M.Sc. in planning geography in the spring of 1979. My subsequent licentiate thesis (1981) represented behavioral geography, focusing on the concepts of space in migration research and on the motives of migrants at various spatial scales. Simultaneously I started to problematize the idea of the region. As a tutor in a field course in 1979, I twice collected data from the same students on how they shaped Finnish sub-state regions. This analysis revealed dissimilar, vague and shifting views of such regions, not a "fixed" grid. This exercise led to my first paper in the Finnish journal *Terra* (Paasi, 1980), which presented a critique of standardized regional units that were common in so-called space-preference studies developed by Anglophone scholars in the 1960s–1970s.

I was hired as a research assistant in 1981 for a cross-disciplinary research project funded by the Academy of Finland. Unexpectedly, I was free to do whatever I viewed as important. The level of ambition was raised by Antti Eskola, an eminent Marxist Professor of Social Psychology with a scary reputation, whom the Academy nominated to the follow-up group. I focused then on literature related to notions of region and place. We had relevant new books and journals at the university's library but not old journal issues. Thus, I frequently travelled to the libraries of the geography departments at Helsinki and Turku University to study Anglophone and German geography journals and to make a list of articles dealing with regions, in theory and practice, to order copies later. I also problematized the meaning-making and consciousness related to regional and territorial spaces, scrutinized theories of stereotypes, nationalism, and categorization in psychology, social psychology, sociology and anthropology. Relatedly, I also examined the use and evolution of national, regional and racial stereotypes in Finnish school geography textbooks. This revealed how the content of teaching materials reflected national ideologies and racism, which echoed the shifting national and international political climate (Paasi, 1984a) – what Michel Foucault (1980) would characterize as the regimes of truth.

Along with my interest in geography's history and in regions, I came across the Finnish *Landschaft* geographer J.G. Granö, who had worked in Estonia and Finland in the 1920–1930s (Paasi, 1984b). My curiosity arose, since many new views on his ideas since the 1970s displayed presentism, anachronistically understanding his past thoughts through existing concepts. Respectively he was slackly labelled as a representative of phenomenology, quantitative geography, perception geography, etc. I had some disagreement with Anne Buttimer on my critical views. Granö stressed in his *Reine Geographie* the importance of all senses in the analysis of *Landschaft*-regions, i.e., not only eyesight. However, his "observer" was not just anybody but a qualified *Pure Geographer* who examined the world through a well-defined conceptual framework and who rejected emotions. My interest in this continued when I, together with academician Olavi Granö (the son of J.G. Granö), later edited an English translation of J.G.'s *Reine Geographie* (*Pure Geography* 1997) for Johns Hopkins University Press (Granö, 1997). For a young novice, J.G. Granö provided a valuable Finnish role-model for practicing novel conceptual thinking that could travel beyond national borders.

Towards the Theory and Practice of the Region

Olavi Granö focused on geography's history and science policy. He became an important mentor for my efforts, as did Bill Mead in the United Kingdom. Both had wide networks in Scandinavia and beyond, and they encouraged active international interaction. I was also in correspondence with some retired Finnish geographers, particularly academician Ilmari Hustich who examined my licentiate thesis and supported my efforts. This was crucial as social theoretical work was not encouraged within the Finnish human geographic community, which resounded mainly with

Anglophone positivist research. The local professor in Joensuu appreciated theory but mostly followed thinking á la David Harvey's *Explanation in Geography* (1969). As an active local politician in the Centre Party, critical social science, let alone Marxism, was a red cape for him. Perhaps due to his interest in methodology he tolerated dissenting PhD students at the Department. I also studied sociology, social policy, and economics, which all had instructors that supported critical thinking. In social policy, for example, we prepared essays on Ricardo's and Marx's value theories and the Frankfurt School's thoughts. In sociology of knowledge, we studied Berger and Luckmann's (1976) *The Social Construction of Reality* that came into the references in international geography only later. This inspired my evolving views on regions and my ideas of theory.

Important interdisciplinary supporters for my efforts were the social scientists and humanists at Joensuu University's Karelian Institute, but the most significant peers were my first young teachers and later colleagues. Pauli Tapani Karjalainen was a resource geographer who gradually turned to humanistic and existentialist geography and to the questions of geodiversity (Karjalainen, 1986). Perttu Vartiainen was a critical social geographer who had already published a brief monograph on geography's history and its basic concepts (Vartiainen, 1978). Our small group was passionately devoted to work with socio-spatial theory and it provided support when some Finnish geographers openly mocked our work.

I had thus already worked with the concepts of region, regionalism and territory, and preliminarily analyzed the geo-history of Finnish regions as a research assistant in the Academy. The subsequent three-year research position in the Academy enabled a full-time focus on regions. My application for this job was carefully calculated. The representative of geography in the Council for Natural Sciences (sic!) was a pragmatic professor, again deeply involved with party politics (he was later an MP for the Centre Party). He was no devotee to theoretical, let alone critical geography. The representatives of academic disciplines in the councils, nominated by the state government, made funding decisions. No external experts or international panels were used, which are currently the order of the day. My plan focused on regional identity and its potential for regional development. Knowing the practice of decision-making in the Academy, I deliberately left out critical background literature to make the plan look as "neutral" as possible, drawing mainly on behavioral and humanistic geography. In order to study the rise of provinces and regional identity, I outlined an extensive content analysis of regional newspapers, a survey of citizens living in four provinces, and a plan to also widely use other useful materials. I got the funding and promptly turned to critical theoretical ideas on regions that were evolving in geography and social theory, and brought new literature together with the old stuff on regions. I also gradually got reprints from international geographers working actively on place and region. Empirical work started in tandem with the theoretical endeavors.

Emerging "New Regional Geography"

Academic keywords may remain even if the understanding of them changes (Paasi, 2011). Correspondingly, the lexis on regions transformed during the 1960s and 1970s. Old-style concepts of the region were largely replaced by abstract spatial thinking, highlighting functional nodal regions. Traditional approaches still hovered in North American cultural geography, in the geographies of education, and in many states in continental Europe where new positivist geography was just entering the discipline (Paasi, 2011).

In the middle of the still-dominant positivist approaches and the evolving humanist and Marxist critiques, Gregory (1978, p. 171) wrote that "Ever since regional geography was declared to be dead … geographers, to their credit, have been trying to revive it in one form or other ... This is a vital task". Accordingly, the challenge was to study the constitution of regionally embedded social formations, articulations and transformations. Concurrently Massey (1978, 1984) outlined methodological approaches from a Marxist perspective and argued that the region should not be taken as pre-given, but as a dynamic entity related to the spatial divisions of labor. Regions emerged from uneven economic development and consecutive, overlaying rounds of investment and capital accumulation expressed spatially. She suggested that the analysis should start from accumulation rather than from regions or any pre-specified regionalization of space (Massey, 1978, p. 116).

I had studied Gregory's (1978) book as part of my licentiate degree in 1979. In spite of his appeal, it took years before the label 'new regional geography' was proposed by Thrift (1983). Thrift maintained that a non-functionalist critical social theory must take into account not only compositional but also the contextual determinations involved in the constitution of subjectivities. Hence, besides the focus on a compositional regional geography there was a need to advance a contextual regional geography. The region, for Thrift, was a sort of interaction structure, an "actively passive" meeting place of social structures and human agency that is made of a number different but associated settings for interaction. This idea of "stretching connections" (also Pred, 1984; Paasi, 1986a) anticipated the type of relational thinking that emerged in the 1990s, and for many still guides contemporary debates on regions (Paasi et al., 2018).

Anthony Giddens (1984) became influential in geography, perhaps partly because he leaned on Torsten Hägerstrand's time-geography, partly because he showed the value of its key concepts for general social theory. Thrift's approach had two components, locale and social action, both key elements in Giddensian thinking. As to Thrift's (1983) extensive discussion on social theory, and its role as a stimulus for theorizing structure and agency, it did not inform explicitly how to re-conceptualize the region. It thus became less dominant in regional thinking, as it became as a source for general social theorization in the field of geography. Yet, Thrift was also later interested in new regional geography, as he was the first author of the Region and Place reports in *Progress in Human Geography* in the early 1990s.

The year after, Pred (1984) theorized place (or region) as a historically contingent process. "Place" was at that time largely earmarked by humanistic geographers and social theoretical ideas of regions were still embryonic. Pred combined heterogeneous elements, such as structuration theory, time-geography, biographies, socialization, division of labor, and the Vidalian thoughts on local milieus in framing the ways of life (*genre de vie*). Pred's concrete examples focused on the historical geography of Sweden. Guelke (1985), however, soon argued that in spite of his emphasis on place and region as historically contingent process and his use of novel terminology, Pred was studying an old problem that in fact had been tackled earlier by historical geographers. Nevertheless, Pred undoubtedly tried to push forward a critical, emancipatory perspective of social theory instead of mere technical historical geographical analyses or descriptions.

Getting Involved with New Regional Geography Debates

Thrift's and Pred's work on regions in the 1980s, together with many other texts, inspired me to re-think regions. My intention was not to formulate a new version of regional geography or to prepare a "Finnish theory" of regions. Rather, I wanted to both theorize and do concrete research on the emergence of regions so that theory and concrete research would critically nourish each other and help to create relevant *conceptual invariances* that were not bound exclusively to some specific context.

These efforts were motivated by some problems or restrictions that I recognized in Pred's approach. The first was to understand region and place unreflexively as the same entity. I saw region and place as abstractions of material and symbolic entities that become realized/materialized in the relations between individual and social action and social structures. I wanted to *analytically* theorize their differences in order to demonstrate how they could display different realms of socio-spatial practice and consciousness. Respectively, individual socio-spatial experience could be best appreciated by conceptualizing place in relation to experience and identity, whereas the region should be approached as a process, a dynamic set of social institutions, discourses and practices, exemplified in social or collective consciousness and identity (narratives). Place was hence related to an individual's biography or life history and the region was a process originating from and occurring through numerous institutions – biographies may also stretch across regional borders. Secondly, Pred did not theorize where the region actually comes from. For him, the region seemed to be a terrain that is in a state of becoming, moves in time and where social processes and activities occur. This idea resonates with Hägerstrand's way of illustrating time-geography with time-space cubes that depict a plane where movements and paths occur. If the region is both a process and an "end product" of a social construction, as I saw it, it must have a beginning and an end. In this process a region becomes institutionalized but can also become finally de-institutionalized (Paasi, 1986a, b, c, 1991). This is the case with all regions and territories.

Local Stimulus

I had published on the evolution of the concepts of space, region, and place in various national traditions and reflected on the social construction of regions, especially how they are epitomized in media and novels (Paasi, 1983, 1984c). One context-bound stimulant that I identified through my theoretical exercises was Heikki Kirkinen (1927–2018), professor of history and the rector of Joensuu University. He frequently wrote in the regional newspaper *Karjalainen* on how "our" Northern Karelian community and its regional identity are significant and how "we Karelians" do this and that. Without yet being familiar with Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983), my irritation with Kirkinen's regional-cultural "propaganda", as I saw it, and his identity-building efforts forced me to think about the role of individual actors and social institutions, such as regional newspapers and other media, voluntary associations and even novels in the making of regions and regional imaginaries (Paasi, 1984c, d). Likewise, this required me to think their role in how an imagined "us" is created by producing and reproducing ideas of a (bounded) regional community or regional identity (Paasi, 1984d, e). The mobilization of an anthropomorphic, fetishized language presenting the region as an actor or "performer" seemed to be typical in the process in which regions, borders and their meanings are constructed. I later labelled such institutional territorialization of meanings as spatial socialization (Paasi, 1996, 2021).

I interviewed Kirkinen (2008) 25 years later and he told me how he became interested in regional identity. While he was visiting professor at Sorbonne in the 1960s, regions came to the fore for him when French colleagues queried about Finnish regions and culture, and particularly when he returned back to his birth region Northern Karelia to start as a professor in Joensuu. He was an important regional advocate and had a tribalist, almost primordial idea of regional or provincial cultures and identities. He saw provinces as entities rooted partly in biology/genetics. He did not regard himself as a regionalist but was interested in broader cultural evolution and depressed marginal areas.

How to Move Forward?

Thinking about media spaces and the activities of regional actors confirmed to me that regions and their structures of expectations are socio-cultural constructs evolving as part of the spatial division of labor. This required to "locate" the origins of regions in geohistorical processes, social practices and discourses that constitute the heterogeneity and dynamism of the process that a region actually is. I soon started publishing on this topic in Finnish anthropological and geographical journals and wrote a couple of monographs (Paasi, 1984a, b).

Next, I began to outline the conceptual framework and an idea for a PhD monograph that would focus empirically on the making of four selected Finnish

provinces. Again, a formative coincidence took place. Olavi Granö invited me to a conference on "mentality research" in Turku, Finland, organized by the Swedish Delegation for Long-term Motivated Research (SALFO) in June 1985. The conference brought together Finnish and Swedish historians, ethnologists and geographers. I presented the idea of the institutionalization of regions for the first time in English. Torsten Hägerstrand, the chairman of SALFO, was in the audience and suggested after my talk that I should write, in English, a proper article on my theoretical idea and expand my discussion on regions. Inspired by his encouragement, I started to outline an extended version of my paper, in parallel with my ongoing empirical work.

After finishing the draft in the autumn of 1985, I was in contact with Hägerstrand and asked if he would be interested in commenting on the text, which was now 80 pages long. He answered that he was not actually well aware of new theoretical ideas on regions, but that Allan Pred was in Stockholm and that he might be interested in reading it. Hägerstrand's encouragement lowered the threshold to contact Pred (Hägerstrand, 1986). After Pred said yes, I sent the text to Stockholm and explained my theoretical intentions. Pred shortly replied that he had several remarks, so it would be best to travel to Stockholm to discuss these with him (Pred, 1985). I did and was very pleased with his helpful attitude in a situation where a young guy from a peripheral Finnish university challenged some assumptions of his theory that had come out only one year earlier (Pred, 1984). He had some comments on the text and new literature that it might be useful to check out. This one-day event was my only real "PhD seminar". When I finally submitted the text to *Fennia*, I did not receive written comments from Finnish reviewers, only the editorial decision: accept.

The Concept of Theory

My theoretical exertions were stimulated by two books. Firstly, David and Judith Willer's (1973) book which compared empiricist to scientific concepts of science (Paasi, 1986b). Empiricist science does not reach the level of theory since its concepts (often labelled as "theory") are actually empirical categories bound to observed events. Respectively, theory is a set of propositions, or an organizational framework, that can be tested repetitively in new settings by using new data. Scientific science, they wrote, functions on a genuine theoretical level: the real basis for defining concepts are not specific empirical observations related to substances, but relations that the concepts show to each other.

A greater inspiration for me, however, was Andrew Sayer's (1984) critical realist approach, which had some parallels with Willers' approach. Sayer stresses conceptualization rather than using existing theoretical understandings as an ordering framework for empirical observations. The primary task of theorization is to conceptualize directly and indirectly observable features of an entity or an object of study. Existing theoretical wisdom is there, of course, backing theorization but not limiting it. In this vein, the study of the numerous concepts of regions created earlier

in geography and other fields provided important backgrounds for my efforts, but theorization should move beyond them. Research should be constantly theoretically informed and observations theory laden. Methodologically this approach calls for the construction of abstractions, movement from the abstract to the concrete and from the simple to the complex in the identification of a phenomenon (cf. Beel & Jones, 2020). Relevant abstractions must be conceptualized in relation to each other, not generalized from empirical phenomena in the spirit of empiricism.

The challenge, then, was to identify and conceptualize a set of abstractions that are critical of the institutionalization of regions that occurs in institutional practices and discourses (in the fields of economy, politics, culture, media, or governance) where the assemblies of domination and power, signification, meaning-making and legitimation (Giddens, 1984) structure and are structured by this process. I recognized four processual abstractions ("conceptual invariances") as critical ones, that is territorial, symbolic and institutional shaping, and the establishment of the region in the regional system and social consciousness, i.e., accomplishing an identity. Such processes occur as part of the spatial divisions of labor, in the matrix of cultural, economic, and political power relations. Contrary to a mundane understanding, regional identity must also be conceptualized by outlining relevant abstractions that can be examined empirically by using diverging materials, such as media discourses, questionnaires, novels, and data describing the diffusion of organizations and associations. The first step was an analytical distinction between the identity of a region and the regional identity of people (regional consciousness), which led to more nuanced categorizations (Paasi, 1986a), for example, to recognizing the hierarchical structure of regional consciousness, the ideal (mediated) and factual (concrete) dimensions of regional community, the internal and external images of the region or how scientists modify the images of regionality.

Correspondingly, the dimensions of regional institutionalization can be separated merely analytically (Paasi, 1986b). Borders are established in social practices in such spheres as economy, politics, governance, media and education, and rather than mere physical lines seen on maps, borders are significant as shifting social institutions, symbols and tools mobilized in social classification. Similarly, the oft-contested symbolism of regions is created in institutional practices that are critical in the reproduction of territorial and symbolic shapes. Regions, their boundaries, symbols and institutions are hence not the results of autonomous and evolutionary processes but are instead expressions of power relations and a perpetual struggle over the meanings associated with space, representation, democracy and welfare. The keyword here is practice.

Finally, in late 1986, I defended my thesis. It consisted of a synopsis, the *Fennia* article and a 350 pages long comparative analysis of the institutionalization of four Finnish provinces, written in Finnish. No more than six months after defending my thesis I applied for my current professorship in Oulu, but also soon started working as a senior assistant in Joensuu.

Reception of the Theory, Further Networking and Move to an Increasingly Competitive Work Environment

The label "new regional geography", launched by Thrift (1983), became popular two years later through Gilbert's (1988) review. For some scholars, new regional geography was a project 'coming from the left' (Sayer, 1989), but Gilbert recognized three approaches. Firstly, a 'materialist' approach, focusing on the political-economic basis of regions and the spatial organization of social processes associated with a specific mode of production. It stresses capital circulation within such processes. Secondly, the region is approached as a setting for social interaction that is critical for the production and reproduction of social relations. The social, cultural and spatial are understood as constituents and outcomes of each other, as emphasized in Gregory and Urry's (1985) collection. Thirdly, regions and places are approached as significant in cultural terms that accentuates spatial identities.

Gilbert (1988) provided the first major international response to the idea of the institutionalization of regions. She appreciated my geo-historical approach when discussing the future of regional geography. Her encouraging review came out just before I was about to travel to a conference on community studies in Edinburgh, in 1988. More important than the conference was a chance to meet some British geographers in London, Loughborough, and Newcastle before the conference.

In 1987 I participated at the Nordic Symposium on Critical Human Geography in Sweden where the keynote was given by Ray Hudson, a renowned Marxist economic geographer with a longstanding interest in the places of production and the production of places (Hudson, 2001). During my visit to UK in 1988, a letter had come from Jim Lewis (1988), who wrote that his colleague Hudson had proposed me as a session speaker to the conference of the Institute of British Geographers in January 1989. I naturally accepted and participated in a session organized by Nigel Thrift and chaired by David Sibley. The venue was packed, doubtless because of regulation theorist Alain Lipietz. The last speaker, coming from peripheral Finland, had to witness an almost theatrical loss of audience.

In the conference I met sociologist Mike Savage and geographer Simon Duncan, two emerging figures in locality studies in the United Kingdom. Such studies both theorized and scrutinized empirically industrial restructuring in selected localities, thus resonating with the new regional geography. The approach stimulated a wide theoretical discussion on the limits of locality studies, although the locality concept itself soon disappeared from geographical debates. Savage visited Joensuu later in the spring, presented in a local conference and we continued our dialogue on regions and localities. I also wrote a conceptual paper to the journal *Sosiologia* to introduce locality studies to Finnish sociologists (Paasi, 1989).

I finally started as professor at Oulu University in August 1989, after responding to seven complaints from altogether 14 applicants. Appellants criticized me for being too young and inexperienced – and for being a social scientist! The move to Oulu was a shock, because geography was located in the Faculty of Science. In research the key thing that mattered were publications classified in the *Web of*

Science (WoS) and their impact factors. According to the faculty's criteria, geography's output was pure zero. This forced geographers to pay serious attention to internationalization. Yet the faculty's policy was a nightmare until the department slowly became more "competitive". Publishing language inexorably changed into English. This situation aroused my interest in inequalities in academia and in the use of power, often by dominant fields. This theme became topical at the turn of the millennium in the debates on Anglophone hegemony in geography, which I also participated in later. I will return to this issue in Coda.

My work with socio-spatial theory continued. In the autumn of 1989, I was invited to contribute to a special issue on localities in *Environment and Planning A*, edited by Savage and Duncan. My paper *Deconstructing regions: notes on the scales of human life* further theorized the idea of regional institutionalization (Paasi, 1991). Other authors were renowned scholars, such as Doreen Massey, Andrew Sayer, Kevin Cox, Andy Pratt and Peter Jackson. Some papers aimed to contest the economism of locality studies and to outline more culturally sensitive discursive approaches. The *Deconstructing* article has since "traveled" widely across disciplinary, linguistic and national borders. Perhaps because it provided a conceptual framework for "regions" rather than localities, perhaps, because political scientists, historians and many others were just beginning to find regions interesting, or perhaps, because there was an acute need for socio-spatial theory in the critical studies of bounded spaces.

Theorizing the Political Geography of Bounded Spaces

After defending my thesis in 1986 I was, however, dissatisfied: my survey materials did not tell much about the personal place-dimension of institutionalization that I had theorized in the *Fennia*-paper. The results of my survey were too general, researcher-led and far from people's everyday experiences. In the spring of 1987, I started a new project that would study institutionalization from the viewpoint of everyday experiences and "place", with in-depth interviews, documents, novels, archive materials, etc. I focused on a small border municipality, Värtsilä. Before the Second World War, a major iron factory, the Wärtsilä Company, was in this place, which had arisen in the early nineteenth century along with the emerging spatial divisions of labor. As usual, the firm dominated local practices from work and health care to the wider social life. After the Second World War, the locality was divided by the new state border when Finland was forced to cede Karelia to the Soviet Union. Over 400.000 Karelians moved elsewhere in Finland. This context raised my interest in political geography, geopolitics and borders (Paasi, 1990).

Interviews showed that the new closed state border was a critical element in local consciousness. Generation was an important social category that divided the spatial imagination and memory of local people (cf. Mannheim, 1952). Its role was highlighted because the old community remained behind the new border. Many old people still identified emotionally with the old community and had memories of an

idealized community life. For generations born after the war the border was a geopolitical fact, often with no deeper emotional role. People's memories thus varied according to their biographies. I concluded that perhaps we should understand place not as a location-based category but rather as something related to the unique assemblages of memories and experiences that each of us develop during our life-histories in different localities and which we ultimately bring into grave when we pass away (Paasi, 1991, 1996). This interpretation aroused some interest among American psychiatrists who contacted me (Fullilove, 1996).

The significance of the Russian border took me to a survey of geographic border literature. Borders were typically seen as concrete manifestations of state sovereignty, contextuality was often understood as actual border landscapes, cultural and emotional meanings of borders were regularly disregarded, and studies were often descriptive and practical. I found more sensitive approaches in anthropology and cultural studies. I outlined an approach where borders could be theorized as processes, institutions and discourses embedded in the wider institutionalization process of territories, the socio-spatial production of space, and the spatial socialization that made them meaningful. Respectively, borders were not only "edges" but stretch widely over (and often beyond) a territory in social practices, discourses and symbolisms, and manifest themselves variedly in (national) landscapes, media, art and narratives (Paasi, 1996).

Thus, the motivation to study the institutionalization of Värtsilä as a place and a region turned into a multiscale project where the geo-history of this unit and its "becoming" was examined as part of the wider institutionalization of the Finnish state. Rather than neutral lines, I saw borders as critical spatial elements in the nation-building process, socio-spatial consciousness, collective memory and contested identity narratives, as theorized in *Territories, Boundaries and Consciousness* (Paasi, 1996). Making this book took eight years and, in the meantime, major geopolitical upheavals occurred. After the Cold War, the Soviet Union collapsed and I was fortunate to document this process through conceptual horizons and concrete materials at (and across) various scales, from daily life to a global sense of place. The timing was excellent since border studies were just arising around the world.

Several readers went through the manuscript, one being Mike Savage, who was skeptical of a book about the context of the Finnish border being of interest to publishers in the United Kingdom, perhaps implying a question concerning where theory is expected to be produced (core) and where limited case-studies should come from (peripheries). Peter Taylor (1991), however, was sympathetic to the book's geohistorical approach and eventually it was accepted and published in Wiley's Political Geography series. In his Series Editor's introduction to the book, Taylor highlighted its value for studies on nationalism. His introduction and the encouraging reviews by Agnew (1996) and several border scholars perhaps helped to recognize it also as a conceptual contribution rather than a peripheral case study.

Work on border issues continued. I had met David Newman, a UK-Israeli border scholar in a conference on borders in Basel in 1994. We shared an idea that border studies needed theoretical vigor. Soon after my book was published (1996), he came to Oulu for a week, during which we wrote the "Fences and Neighbours in the

Postmodern World"-article and submitted it to *Progress in Human Geography*. I finished my part of the revisions as a visiting scholar at UCLA, where I had an opportunity to discuss the text with Nick Entrikin and John Agnew. The paper was accepted and came out in 1998. It expanded the evolving conceptual ideas on borders into an interdisciplinary research agenda (Newman & Paasi, 1998), which conceivably explains its very widespread circulation across academic fields and national borders. With these two works I apparently got the label "political geographer" instead of earlier "new regional geographer". I soon wrote on borders, but incessantly also on regions, territory, identity and nationalism to journals and edited collections published in the fields of (critical) geopolitics, political geography, political science, and human and cultural geography, for example.

My interest in borders, regions, territories and identities has moved between several themes, but these keywords and their relations are constantly at the core. I have re-worked them towards diverse thematic and conceptual contexts (border studies, identity research, nationalism studies, planning theory). As to regional theory, a particularly stimulating task was to write three reports on region and place in *Progress in Human Geography*. This provided a good chance to reflect topically on conceptual issues related to regional worlds/words, regional identity and scale. My border research has focused on expanding our understanding and critique of the given status of state borders and how borders are mobilized in identity building and resistance. More recently ethical issues related to borders, activism and mobilities have come into focus (Paasi et al., 2019). Similarly, spatial planning, hard and soft regions and regional mergers have provided a useful context for reflecting on the meanings and functions of borders and identities at various scales (Paasi, 2013; Paasi & Zimmerbauer, 2016; Zimmerbauer & Paasi, 2020). These works confirm that "political" and "regional/territorial" are two sides of the same coin and that the key for understanding the regional and territorial modalities of space and their relations is social practice. Several tendencies around the world have shown the incessant significance of regions and regionalism: neoliberal globalization, the rise of supra-state regions, devolution, regional mergers, etc. There is a need for critical polymorphic approaches where the territorial and the relational are understood as intertwined and constantly transmuting (Paasi, 2021; Paasi & Metzger, 2017). The same need to recognize multiplicity should characterize border studies.

Reflective Interpretation: Brokers and Boundary Spanners

I commenced this chapter with an observation that the theory of institutionalization has travelled widely across national borders, even if outlined in a linguistic and academic periphery. In this section, I will discuss what is required from theories to travel from peripheries towards cores. While various indexes are today available to trace publications that have traveled widely, a human element is significant in making publications visible across borders. Seemingly, *boundary spanners* are needed in the academic landscape dominated by the Anglophone hegemony, that is, actors

who support the mobility of knowledge across national and linguistic borders and, contrary to gatekeepers, operate as knowledge brokers and transfer knowledge produced in peripheries to wider audiences and cores (Jöns & Freytag, 2016). De Pater (2019) discusses why some non-Anglophone studies have been recognized in international debates and suggests that this requires "mediators" (*bemiddelaar*). He recognizes Allan Pred as one example. Pred translated Hägerstand's *Innovationsförloppet ur korologisk synpunkt* (1953) into English (1967), which introduced the book to a wider audience, and he "updated" the keywords in the title to reflect the conceptual development in geography (term "chorological" was thus replaced with "spatial process") (Paasi, 2011). Similarly, de Pater names Pred, Thrift and Giddens as mediators of Hägerstrand's time-geography.

De Pater also discusses the wide reception of my *Fennia*-article, names Ron Johnston as a mediator and suggests that his discussion on institutionalization theory in *A Question of Place* (Johnston, 1991) led to the international discovery of this paper. This may be, but the concurrent positive commentaries by others (Gilbert, 1988; Murphy, 1991; Taylor, 1991) were undoubtedly significant too. Likewise, "Deconstructing regions" (Paasi, 1991) seemingly started its travel after Reynolds (1994) introduced it extensively in *Progress in Human Geography*. Gordon MacLeod and Martin Jones (2001), representing a new generation of British regional theorists, were also important mediators. Jones (2018, 2021) has been one of the most energetic regional theorists and has advanced socio-spatial theory and the "New, New Regional Geography". This shared interest in regions led to a cooperation between Jones, John Harrison, and myself. Harrison was a former doctoral student of Jones at Aberystwyth University, where Jones held a visiting professorial position, at the same time as he was a docent at Oulu University. We have emphasized the need for a consolidated regional geography after a long period of fragmentation (Jones & Paasi, 2015; Paasi et al., 2018). It remains to be seen whether this suggestion will find wider support from the geographical community.

As to earlier mediators in Norden, Hägerstrand was the initial broker in Lund. He asked me to send *Fennia*'s reprint to historian Sven Tägil, who used it in his *Organizing European Space* (Jönsson et al., 2000). Historian Torsten Malmberg, the author of *Human Territoriality*, soon wrote to me that Tägil introduced the *Fennia* paper to him. I soon after this received reprint requests and invitations to speak in various meetings for Nordic geographers, historians, and ethnologists. This opened the first steps to internationalization, visits to various departments and the path to interdisciplinary Nordic projects and conferences on regions, identity and regional development organized by Nordic Institute of Regional Policy Research (NordREFO), for example. *Territories, boundaries and consciousness* and "Fences and neighbors" opened connections and frequent visits beyond the Nordic context.

Coda: *Thymos* and the Need for Recognition?

Why do we do research, search for new knowledge or try to internationalize in the journeys of our careers? Science studies stress the individual and institutional motives of scholars. Institutional motives are today increasingly directed by university managers and state ministries towards "competition". These are neoliberal tendencies and are often resisted by scholars but nonetheless seem to dominate academia around the world. Individual motives intermingle with institutional ones. Scholars like Bourdieu (1975) had a very calculating view of science as a competitive social field where the activities of researchers are political investment strategies directed towards the future. Cronin (2005) writes that the growing significance of symbolic capital in academia has resulted in a "political economy of citation" (p. 5) and the "economics of fame" (p. 130), i.e., visibility. Thus, the question of *recognition*, a crucial category for current psychology, identity studies, and political science or international relations theory comes to the fore.

Already Plato had divided the "soul" into three parts: *reason*, *eros* (desire) and *thymos* (the hunger for recognition). Accordingly, *thymos* means that people want other people to recognize their or their reference group's worth (Brooks, 2006; Fukuyama, 2020). In geography, Johnston (2005, p. 2) has stressed the motive of academics to be recognized: "Along with the charisma/status of publishing in a prestigious outlet, however, there is an issue of audience. Academics want their papers to be read and then cited, to be used as exemplars in later works." Increasing individualization in the contemporary world accentuates maybe even more such desires and social media has reinforced this. As the context for academic "competition" – rankings and evaluation cultures – has gradually expanded from the local and national scales to the international scale, it is very likely that researchers' *Thymos* also adjusts to this rescaling. This may raise both individual and institutional claims for one's publications to be recognized similarly as those of peers or, echoing methodological nationalism, expectations that studies and theories published in a certain national context should also be recognized in other contexts. Articles by Jöns and Freytag (2016), Korf (2021) and Müller (2021) demonstrate that this issue is real when the pressures for internationalization characterize current academia.

Demands to publish in top (Anglophone) journals listed in the WoS have also rapidly developed in non-English speaking countries. I noted above how I faced the unequal use of tools like Web of Science when I started at Oulu University 32 years ago. This led me not only to efforts in terms of "internationalizing" my own research but also to scrutinize empirically how representative the journals in WoS are (Paasi, 2005). Only a few geography journals published outside of the Anglophone world were covered in WoS at the turn of the millennium. Since then, more non-Anglophone geography journals have been listed, making it easier to "satisfy" the claims for internationalization put forward by universities and ministries. Such external claims combined with individual ambitions probably mean that evermore often scholars aim to publish in "top journals". Consequently, non-Anglophone

scholars today publish increasingly in major Anglophone journals. But mere publishing is apparently not enough. *Thymos* is the psychological origin of political action (Brooks, 2006). Thus, requests have arisen that research and theories produced also outside of the Anglophone core should be better recognized and cited (Korf, 2021; Müller, 2021).

Simultaneously the number of researchers is mounting and numerous researchers will face the problem stated fairly arrogantly by Fuller (2002, p. 177), "the main reason most academics cannot muster the attention of their colleagues to read their works has more to do with the fact that they write too much that interests too few". This issue is highlighted because international publishing space is not homogeneous but provides uneven publishing opportunities and impacts on how publications find readers. Where you work, still makes a difference, especially in the social sciences. Fortunately, in some areas like border studies internationalization has rapidly progressed and since the English language is widely used, this makes transnational communication easier. Further, due to the mobility of scholars and the internationalization of this field, there is perhaps no need to try to "locate" cores and peripheries. Yet this does not remove structural inequalities that exist in gender, generational and ethnic relations in the evermore precarious academia.

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