

News of the Other

Tracing Identity in Scandinavian Constructions
of the Eastern Baltic Region



Kristina Riegert (ed.)

NORDICOM

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Editor: Kristina Riegert

Northern Perspectives 6
(*Nordiska medieforskare reflekterar 6*)

Series editor: Ulla Carlsson

© Editorial matters and selections, the editors; articles, individual contributors; Nordicom

ISSN 1650-5131

ISBN 91-89471-26-1

Published by:
Nordicom
Göteborg University
Box 713
SE 405 30 GÖTEBORG
Sweden

Cover by: Roger Palmqvist

Cover Photo: © Joachim Koester. Photo taken from the series, *The Kant Walk*, C-print, 2003

Printed by: Grafikerna Livréna i Kungälv AB, Sweden, 2004

Contents

Foreword	7
<i>Kristina Riegert</i>	
Introduction	9
I. Identity in a Globalizing World	
<i>Ullamaija Kivikuru</i>	
Identities. An Apparatus for Re-membering and Dis-membering	19
<i>Jan Ekecrantz</i>	
In Other Worlds. Mainstream Imagery of Eastern Neighbors	43
<i>Kristina Riegert & Patrik Åker</i>	
Knowing Me, Knowing You. Mediated Identities in the Eastern Baltic Sea Region	71
II. Mediated Definitions of the Other: Then and Now	
<i>Madeleine Hurd</i>	
Placing Good and Evil. Revolutionaries, Streets, and Carnival in German and Swedish Newspapers, 1918-1919	93
<i>Kristina Riegert</i>	
Swedish and Danish Television News of their Baltic Neighbors 1995–2000	125
<i>Pentti Raittila</i>	
Representations of Otherness in Finnish Culture. Media Images of Russians and Estonians	151
III. Mechanisms of Identity	
<i>Anker Brink Lund</i>	
The Mass-Mediated “We” in Danish Journalism	169
<i>Patrik Åker</i>	
Newspapers’ Picture of the World. The Domestic Family of Man	185
<i>Merja Ellefson & Eva Kingsepp</i>	
The Good, the Bad and the Ugly. Stereotyping Russia, the Western Way	203
<i>Maja Horst & Mette Lolk</i>	
The Dramaturgical Need for Closure. Mass-Mediated Stories of Risk	223
The Authors	241

Foreword

This book is the result of a multinational research project that has surveyed and analysed identity mechanisms in journalistic constructions of the Other over time and between different countries in the Baltic Sea Region.

It deals not only with the ways in which news stories and images reflect the societies reported on, but more often than not with how such stories reflect the societies *doing* the reporting. The principle mechanism that accomplishes this involves invoking various aspects of identity – local, regional, ethnic, national or transnational identities – to make unfamiliar societies familiar to the ‘ideal’ viewer. The project traces and compares the manner in which identity finds expression in Scandinavian television news coverage of their Eastern Baltic Sea neighbours after the end of the Cold War. Foreign news is one site where national identity mechanisms have been most manifest in the media, where a government’s actions represent the nation, acting and reacting to events and issues on the international stage. However, in an increasingly globalized world, it is no longer a given that identity is national or local. The boundaries of identity are not static, but must be continuously negotiated and legitimized in different historical periods. Indeed, changes in popular perceptions of ‘national characteristics’, in what are considered key historical events or in who are defined as Others are typical responses to civil unrest, the collapse of multi-ethnic states, war or major changes in the international system. For this reason, it is important to study where and how the boundaries are drawn between Us and Others in times of transition.

Let me conclude by thanking Dr. Kristina Riebert and all the contributors who have made this book possible. Thanks, also, to the Nordic Council of Ministers without whose financial support the book would never have seen the light of the day. The Nordic Council of Ministers prioritizes questions concerning identity and the multicultural society as well as questions concerning the relation between Scandinavia and the Baltic States. It is our hope that this book will be of value in increasing our understanding of identity and the media.

Göteborg in November 2004

Ulla Carlsson

Director
Nordicom

Introduction

Kristina Riebert

As this book goes to press, celebrations are taking place all over Europe over the addition of ten mainly eastern European countries to the European Union.¹ From Tallinn to Dublin, and from Berlin to Nicosia, May 1st, 2004 is said to be an historic day, the end of “fifty years of economic separation” between East and West. Aside from covering these joyous media events, many journalists are taking this opportunity to introduce the new countries to audiences in the existing member states. The reports exude an enthusiasm typical of what Jan Ekecrantz calls “fertile meetings” between cultures, where increased trade, mutually beneficial contacts, and economic growth lead to hopes of a brighter future for all parties involved.

It might well seem possible that the changes of the past fifteen years have now once and for all altered Cold War frameworks, Orientalist stereotypes, and the attendant spot news of threats and crises from the East. On the basis of the research presented in this volume, however, this is not very likely. Despite the fundamental changes that have been taking place in the Baltic Sea Region since 1989, Scandinavian media continue to depict our eastern Baltic neighbors as fundamentally different from us and “backward”, as the chapters in this book demonstrate. Thus, it may not be surprising to discover that such stereotypes are little different from those found in Swedish news coverage 80 years ago, long before 1989. Whether the Other is seen as threatening (as in the case of Russia) or simply lesser developed than we are (as in the case of Estonia) is perhaps less crucial than the fact that these countries are in fact our neighbors, and not distant places with which we’ve had little contact. While it is a truism that identities are distinguished by defining who “we” are in contrast to those we are not, there still is value in studying how our neighbors are “othered” by the media – that is, *how* they are defined as “those we are not”. We thereby not only learn about the presumptions of those actually doing the reporting (perhaps more than the events and people reported on); but we also chart the articulation and the legitimization of the boundaries of identity in these different countries, in different time pe-

riods, something which is not simply valuable as case material for the theoretical explorations of the book, but which is interesting in itself.

The focus in this volume is on describing, analyzing and comparing the manner in which identity is constructed in Scandinavian journalism from, and about, the Baltic Sea Region. We also attempt to demonstrate how political, social, and cultural contexts impinge on, interact with, and form the basis for these journalistic constructions. The underlying assumption here is that identity processes in modern societies are largely shaped by, through, or in relation to the media. The media provide the symbolic spaces for identity formation, they play a key role in the production and circulation of ideas, and they cultivate a community's sense of itself through versions of a common "collective" memory. Especially in times of political change, the role of the media in the reconstitution of local, national, and transnational communities is a key site of investigation.

While recognizing that collective identities can be local, ethnic, or professional, the focus for most of the chapters has been on national identity, simply because the nation-state has been intimately associated with the development of journalism. This does not mean that, in this increasingly globalized world, the identities the media purvey and cultivate are national only. Events and issues originating in a specific geographic place can be re-contextualized to cover broader national or international geographic spaces, as happens with international issues when they become part of local contexts (Becker, Ekecrantz and Olsson, 2000: 13). In fact, the permeability of these contexts is the rule, to the extent that it is seldom the case that local media are merely local, be it because of influences on format or content, or because of their being a part of regional or international conglomerates. In this way, changes in media routines, format, genre, and audiences cannot be discussed without taking the global media landscape into account (Hjarvard, 2000).

Since globalization forms the backdrop to any study of the news media, several of the chapters deal with the interrelated concepts of universalization, domestication and Westernization, and how these relate to various news genres in the different countries. Among the dichotomies that recur most often in the globalization literature is that between, on the one hand, Anglo-American cultural imperialism, which results in global homogenization of media content and formats, and, on the other hand, national/local "resistance" – either via the domestic framing of media content, or in audiences' polysemic interpretations of media texts. While a number of examples of both sides of this dichotomy can be found in the pages that follow, the dichotomy itself is found to be too limiting. Globalization processes can also include the interaction between both sides of this dichotomy, and a focus on just one side of globalization excludes the richness of the stratification of the local, regional, and international media flows. Ekecrantz finds, for example, that local news stories about Estonia differ radically from national news discourse, the former emphasizing people-to-people contacts, common projects and mutually beneficial cultural exchanges, whereas national news stories are more remi-

niscent of “the Western media’s stereotypical description of Other nations” in terms of the problems of “post-Communist” transition. Another example of shifting mass-mediated “we” constructions that blur the boundaries between the transnational and local contexts is found in Anker Brink Lund’s analysis of Danish journalism. This is particularly clear in relation to the news about European Union: complicated transnational EU problems are regularly “translated” and polarized according to domestic debates, yet there is a concomitant tendency to blame controversial domestic decisions on the EU. Even more important, he says, are the changes to the national “we” prompted by immigration and cultural pluralism. If the “we” is no longer defined by common political, geographic and cultural unity, then journalists’ use of “us” and “them” is simply reiterating past prejudices, alienating significant sections of the population. In short, globalization has loosened the ties between journalism and the nation-state, and the social and cultural context on which journalism was based is changing.

Any discussion of globalization leads us to the notion of “time-space” compression, i.e. the rapid development of communication technologies bringing different parts of the world closer together and lessening the importance of time and space. Different authors here address notions of time and space in relation to identity processes. Ekecrantz does so in relation to the development of journalism through the 20th century, Riegert & Åker distinguish place and collective memory as core aspects of identity formation and describe how these are processed through the media. And, as Kivikuru points out, despite the nomadic qualities of such “imagined communities” created through shared mediated experiences on the Internet or through television, identification takes place through a sense of belonging, and this is tied to geographic place. Despite the relative stability of identifications already made, the changes brought about by globalization have been perceived by some as threatening, prompting a resurgence in nostalgic political movements advocating a return to the safety of the known community and excluding those who don’t “belong”. This serves to remind us that the politics of identity is not always a positive development.

Strategies of Othering

The dark side of collective identity processes – whether they be national or not – has to do with the relationship of these processes to colonialism, nationalism, racism and xenophobia, where “our” uniqueness is deemed superior to that of Others. This does not, however, mean that collective identities are tolerant within the group, since those with definitional power will mobilize some characteristics as typical for the group, marginalizing others as deviant (calling something or someone, “un-American” for instance). But it does mean that group members experience an identification and a sense

of safety via belonging, and that certain characteristics are flagged and celebrated through mundane activities bound to norms, values, and collective memory. Kivikuru, Raittila, and Ellefson & Kingsepp trace the roots of Western identity formation to colonialism and to an attendant racism. Here, Others are differentiated by their physical and cultural features; Western cultural symbols are associated with “whiteness”, modernization, civilization and individualism, in contrast to that which is irrational, threatening and uncivilized – all of which is associated with the East. Whiteness has long been used in Christian imagery to symbolize good, purity and cleanliness, in contrast with the darker hues representing sin. Media representations continue to follow this imagery in depicting villains as those with darker hair, darker clothes and darker skin. These representations of Western superiority are closely linked with what a number of authors refer to as a variant of Edward Said’s concept of *Orientalism* to describe frameworks in Scandinavian journalism that depict our Eastern Baltic neighbors as backward, unstable and less enlightened than “we” are.

One of the ways in which this is accomplished is through the genre of travel journalism. Using material from the early part of the 20th century, Hurd and Ekecrantz each analyze eyewitness accounts of revolutionary events and everyday life on the other side of the Baltic Sea. Travel journalism attempts to open the eyes of ideal readers to sights and sounds, and to the events and people in foreign countries. The genre has both documentary and literary claims (Ekecrantz, 1994), but what is common to both is that the experience is interpreted through the eyes of the author – most often a European speaking to other implied Europeans.

In the research on foreign news coverage, there is seldom any mention of travel journalism. This is of course surprising, given how closely these genres are in fact related. Clearly, while the two have different purposes – the latter relating facts and background about a current situation, and the former attempting to give readers a sense of what it is like to actually “be there” – the blurring of the boundaries between information and entertainment, between fact and fiction, between hard news and human interest stories has become so common that this avenue of inquiry has become an urgent issue that should be seen as highly relevant to the study of foreign news. This subject of course deserves its own volume. Here, what foreign news and travel journalism are shown to have in common are truth claims about what it is like “over there”, what it is to meet with and experience the Other.

Reassurance and Risk

One perspective taken by many of the authors in their studies of identity is the emphasis on the ritualistic dimensions of journalism. Across different media in different countries, the function of much of journalism seems to be

alerting audiences to threats or reassuring them that things are ok, despite these threats, through the rehearsal of familiar narratives. Several authors found that one of the most salient forms of reassurance is the placing of news narratives within the context of the nation. Horst & Lolk describe the ways in which mediated stories of risk are staged, and what mechanisms journalists invoke in their attempts to bring closure to these stories. In situations of perceived crisis – real or not – the news media attempt to reassure their audiences by locating the causes of threats, by predicting possible consequences, and by questioning those responsible or assigning blame.

This ritualistic function serves to reassure viewers or readers that the relevant national authorities are in control, that we can trust our governments, or that future risks and threats can be anticipated. But Horst and Lolk demonstrate that the mediation of risk is highly dependent on expert sources, who themselves are part of a political discourse regarding the nature, the acceptability, and the distribution of risk. Raitilla describes how this strategy can be terribly unfair when unconscious journalistic routines are linked to historical thought patterns associated with Finland's neighbor to the south. In the *Estonia* shipwreck, where over 800 people lost their lives, the Finnish and the Swedish media initially, almost instinctively, publicized the suspicion that the fault lay in deficient Estonian seamanship. Riegert found that a recurring proportion of news stories from the eastern Baltic region dealt with various ecological, criminal and health threats, and that Danish and Swedish news stories framed their countries as benevolent or concerned responsible parties, eager to militate against these threats.

Comparative Studies

This book is loosely organized around three broad themes, which constitute the book's three sections. The first is more theoretical: "Identity in a Globalizing World". The second, "Mediated Definitions of the Other", examines the definition of the "Other" in different historical periods. The third, "Mechanisms of Identity", looks at identity formation in different countries and across journalistic genres. Ullamaija Kivikuru opens the book with a discussion of the roots and ideological development of modern Western collective identities. She defines national and cultural identity, relating them to later forms of empowering identity spawned by the social movements of the 1960s. Finally, she locates the role of the media in the promotion of the different forms of collective identities. Jan Ekecrantz draws together the results of his work within the "Media Societies around the Baltic Sea" program in an attempt to explain the startling continuity (noted above) in Scandinavian descriptions of the Other across time and in different national contexts. Four overlapping explanations are provided: a fixed repertoire of unchanging journalistic discursive practices, the inability to reinterpret new information

and the salience of collective memory for current journalistic frameworks, the continuing significance of national security interests and the dependence of journalism on national elites, and the limitations of journalistic discourse posed by its relationship to the nation. Riegert & Åker put forward the notion of mediated identities. The “worlds of the media” consist of those people, events and issues that reach us on a daily basis and with which we are presumed either to identify with or not; whereas the “worlds of the ideal addressee” describes the way various journalistic genres attempt to universalize local experience by generalizing the particular, or domesticating the foreign, in an effort to make experiences understandable in national contexts.

Most of the chapters in Sections II and III are either comparative national studies or they draw conclusions based on comparative studies of Swedish, Danish, Finnish or German journalism about events, people and issues in the eastern Baltic Sea Region. The utility of comparative studies between media, countries or different historical periods stems, of course, from what these similarities and differences tell us. As noted above, Jan Ekecrantz’s comparison between Swedish journalism dealing with Estonia at the beginning of the 20th century, and at the end, reveals striking similarities in the ways Estonia and Estonians are described. In other words, whereas the journalism of the 1920s is barely recognizable today, the images created by journalists of our neighbors just across the Baltic Sea are essentially the same.

In Madeleine Hurd’s analysis, the comparison of the German liberal press with the Swedish liberal press during both the Russian Revolution and the short-lived German revolution of 1918-19 reveals insights which may not have come to light without the benefit of the different vantage points she describes. Journalists legitimized the German revolution in terms of rational parliamentary politics, and delegitimized it through descriptions of dangerous carnivalesque-like street manifestations with unruly mobs. Due in part to the proximity of Sweden to Germany, the Swedish press depicted the German Revolution as normal and “understandable”, whereas the Russian Revolution was described as unnatural, bizarre, and threatening. This differentiation between different types of Others, where some groups are considered more “foreign” and inferior, can also be found in Raitilla’s study, which demonstrated greater ambiguity in Finnish news of neighboring Estonians than is the case with Russians. But this was the case only if Estonians were not associated with Russians: otherwise the association with “Russianness” meant the application of stereotypes concerning criminality, poverty, rigidity and backwardness (cf. Riegert, 2002). In neither case were these images of the Other constructed through negative labeling, but by routine journalism and cultural conventions connected with daily news coverage and historical thought patterns concerning Russians.

The various case studies in Section III originated within the Time Tableaux project, which collected data from the media of a number of countries during one and the same week, November 15-21, 1999.² Certain news sto-

ries thus recur in different chapters in this section, making it possible to compare how different media in different countries reported the same event. Patrik Åker's study deals with the "intimization" of the public sphere as constructed through photographs on the front pages of morning newspapers. The similarity of the layout in Swedish, Danish, and Finnish quality dailies is part of a global design trend which represents a significant departure from photojournalism's "realism" and its criteria of "personalization, actuality, and objectivity". Instead, the ordinary people depicted in these photos serve as substitutes for an ideal reader, who is meant to identify with the problems of those depicted. The Scandinavian press photos could also be said to lead the reader into symbolic spaces that connoted specific geographic places and their national histories.

The East-West dichotomy and the prevalence of a Western perspective in the media is also evident in Merja Ellefson and Eva Kingsepp's comparison of the front pages of newspapers from 16 countries during two days. Although there were national differences, the authors found the similarities more interesting. They demonstrate how the news story of the Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe's (OSCE) summit meeting in Istanbul reproduces a classic narrative of the hero, the villain, and the victim, where "we" (the West) are the heroes, Russian leader Boris Yeltsin is the villain, and the Chechens are the victims.

Anker Brink Lund describes the coverage of this very same summit as an instance where the Danish media is at pains to portray the nation as a politically correct member of the international orchestra of states. The insecurity as to the boundaries defining the national "we" is reflected in a different way regarding domestic immigration issues, however. In spite of the political correctness of editorial policy, the We/They relationship is a theme that continues to overlay the structure of Danish journalism, despite the xenophobia journalists consciously attempt to avoid. Lund finds – in terms of the national "we" in Danish journalism – that the nation-state, while still a strong organizing principle, is in a state of flux.

Maja Horst & Mette Lolk's case study involves the perceived threat to Denmark, during the week of November 15-21, 1999, by the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania. Risks, they say, are about predications and possibilities which have not yet come to pass; the danger lies in their unpredictability. The Ignalina storyline ran from fear and helplessness to hope and control, and raised the specter of a nuclear catastrophe "from the East", close to Denmark, which in turn prompted Danish politicians, nuclear experts and authorities to react, i.e., to be seen to be "doing something". They also demonstrate how journalistic narratives about science are dependent on a small circle of experts and how assumptions from the Cold War period continue to shape news stories from the East.

Together these studies demonstrate, like Ekecrantz's findings, that the images of our eastern Baltic neighbors are still closely related to national perspectives on the world, which in turn is related to a broader Western

discourse about the Other. Despite the changes taking place in the region, these studies demonstrate, secondly, that the image of the Other is quite stable, whether the news is from Finland, Denmark, or Sweden. Historical stereotypes, especially those of Russia as a powerful and threatening Other, continue to play a major role in the news coverage, however much circumstances have changed since the late 1980s.

Notes

1. The new member states are Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Hungary.
2. The Media Societies 2000 Tableaux project studied comparative synchronic relationships between media texts and contexts in a variety of historical and contemporary situations. This particular week was chosen to represent a typical week in the news. See Media Societies Around the Baltic Sea (2001).

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I. Identity in a Globalizing World

Identities

An Apparatus for Re-membling and Dis-membling

Ullamaija Kivikuru

When they danced, they were extremely clumsy in their movements, lacking all charm – – -. There was no variation in their posture, their faces lacked expression. They danced as seriously and earnestly as if they had toiled in the fields, earning their living. (Italian author Giuseppe Acerbi, describing Finns in his travel letter, 1799.)

Freedom is a horror for Finns. They experience it as anarchy, as a collapse of all order. (Euro Parliamentarian and lawyer Matti Wuori, in *Faustin uni*, the Dream of Faust, 1995: 65)

“Sweden is a realm, Finland is a nation”, stated the historian Panu Pulma in a book review a few years back (Pulma, 1999). As a piece of evidence for his argument, Pulma described how the funeral of Prime Minister Olof Palme was an occasion where terrified Social Democrats and their equally depressed guests met, whereas the funeral of President Urho Kekkonen was an expression of national sorrow, so indicated by various details symbolizing unity. Another historian, Henrik Stenius (Stenius, 1999) has stated that the word “citizen” (*kansalainen*) has a completely different meaning in the Finnish language than in most other European languages. In most parts of Europe, the word citizen is linked to urban living and mobility (*citizen*, *Staatsbürger*, *medborgare*), while in Finland it is linked to the earth, unity, and nationhood. In fact, an older version of the word (*kanssalainen*) means “being together”. According to epithets characterizing Finns, these togetherness-stricken people have toiled with solemn faces, avoiding enjoyment, following orders. Even such activities as a joyful minuet easily turn into hard work, as Acerbi described it in 1799.

In the following, my aim is simply to define or rather to draw the borders around the concept of identity; the concept is a complex one, and hence I have to move back and forth between history and our own time, as arbitrary as it might seem. I first elaborate on the history of identity and its relation to, on the one hand, power, and on the other, cultural phenomena such

as language and religion. One of the major problems with the concept of identity today is that it has become popular, perhaps too popular, both in research and in everyday discourse. Fashionable concepts have a tendency to become loose and ambiguous. An additional problem with identity is that the history of the concept is manifold. It has its roots in a wide range of disciplines – religion, political science, sociology, anthropology, linguistics and psychology (not to mention history). Identity as a concept is collective and its roots should be sought in the community, rather than on the individual level, although it is expressed on the individual level as well. Recently, attempts have been made to release identity from the linkage to place, to the concrete location – *No Sense Of Place*, as the title of a book by Joshua Meyrowitz (1986) expresses it. I am going to discuss this matter later, but for the theoretical perspective chosen here, the place still exists as a starting point for elaborations around collective identification poles.

The Roots of Identity

The core of the collective self is deeply contradictory. Collective identities represent the core of communitarianism. Part of what it means to be human is to partake in social activity, and if the weakest in the group has at least a tolerable life, then everybody in the group feels better. This way of thinking leads to political movements that respect values of democracy, equality and individual freedoms.

The most obvious example of such a movement is the French Revolution, with its demands for liberty, fraternity and equality. But in order to operate properly, democracy requires structures and a division of power. Since the beginning of the 19th century and the birth of the nation-state, the borders of such structures have been rooted in geography. The national self has thus been connected to place, and running such structures required by democracy requires a stable economy and stable trade, because without resources, even the most modest state cannot operate.

It is precisely this amalgam that created those features of the national self which we easily forget because they are unpleasant – the elements embedded in it that create superiority and inferiority, colonialism, patriotism, xenophobia and oppression of minorities. Some communities are clearly more expansionist than others, and they have developed their own “regimes”, legitimate and established policies of action. The rise of the nation-state and the legitimization of colonialism as a social form developed in parallel in Europe in the early 19th century. That brings together the somewhat odd bedfellows, nationalism and economic supremacy.

Researchers of national identities have stated that processes leading to nation-states have much in common with the development of religion, although religion lacks an intimate relation to place. A search for cohesion,

joint values, and a clear-cut boundary that delineates who belongs to the group and who doesn't also appears frequently in the history of religion. And religions have developed a very sophisticated rhetoric that justifies such divide-and-conquer mechanisms.

An older dimension in the collective self is the quest for cultural self-understanding, a cultural-social identity. In it, communitarianism develops on the basis of traditions, family relations, or racial or tribal characteristics. Here we talk about ethnic identities, and, increasingly, about social identities: about a gender identity, a professional identity, a sexual identity. As Stuart Hall (Hall, 1999: 42-43) has stated, various social movements in the 1960s contributed to the rise of social distinctions in identity-construction. It was then when student movements, peace movements, feminism, "third world" solidarity, and many other "new" causes swept over Europe and the United States, creating communities based on profession, gender, solidarity, and so on.

Quite often, social identities are understood as focused on an individual, although the history of these identities tends in a totally different direction. In most traditional cultures, an individual has significance only as a member of his or her community. It was first when nation-states were formed that a perception of an individual's value in the community was developed. These two modes of identity have been called *homo hierarchicus* (a self which is bound to tradition, an identity that "knows its place") and *homo aequalis* (a modern self based on individualism which has its basis in national identity) (e. g. Friedman, 1994: 33-46).

However, many researchers, for example Jonathan Friedman (1994), emphasize that the two modes of identity, the one that is bound to tradition, and the one that is bound to the nation-state and trade, should not be separated. It is dangerous to mystify the traditional mode and to simplify modern identities. They should be viewed as a continuum, as mutually contradictory as they might be. Interesting connections can be drawn between authenticity, originality, cultural purity and narcissism. All these concepts are relative and based on deliberately developed definitions, even the very understanding of what is original: what is original to one group at a particular time might not be authentic or original for others at another time. Friedman views narcissism as a mode of identity, which is typical for late modernism or postmodernism, whatever name we like to call the period. However, narcissism can also flourish around traditional cultures. Friedman notes that fair skin and making the skin fair have become a sign of "authenticity", praised also in traditional music (Friedman, 1994: 33-46, 164-193).

The combining of traditional and modern identities is documented in discussions on "empowering ethnicity", policies developed to strengthen ethnic elements in society, the idea behind this being not oppression, but utilization of the power embedded in ethnicity. It has emerged in Africa since the 1950s, during the period when colonialism was being resolved, and new power structures were being created. From time to time, parts of the continent have been thrown into chaos, as was seen in Rwanda, Burundi, Sierra

Leone and Liberia, but there also are examples of empowering ethnicity. It has been consistently used by, for example, the new holders of power in Ethiopia after the regime change in 1991. New leaders have used politicized identities in a “new” cohesion-building effort. The country has been systematically decentralized, and the “ethnic power” already at play in the country has been given far more operational space. In this way, the positive “voltage” embedded in ethnicity has been utilized by a modern nation-state. (Markatis, 1998:139-145).

However, this interesting example raises a tantalizing question: what is the difference between ethnicity and nationalism, or is it simply the case that “empowering ethnicity” is a new phrase for national identity which has lost much of its popularity in recent times? It is clear that such forms of identity heritage and the publicity needed to support it are different in Ethiopia, in Northern Ireland, in the Balkans, or in Chechnya, but the phenomenon as such might well be composed of similar ingredients to that of collective identity. What is common is the fact that political power has utilized collective identities, for the good as well as for the bad. “Hegemony creates homogeneity”, claims Friedman (1994:252).

For the average person, the limits of his culture are, if not the limits of the world, at any rate the limits of his employability, social acceptability, dignity, effective participation and citizenship. They define the limits of the use of his conceptual intuitions, access to the rules of the game, and to the intelligibility of the social world; beyond these limits, he becomes gaffe-prone, inept, subject to derision and contempt, and seriously handicapped in any endeavor. – He is not a nationalist out of atavism (quite the reverse), but rather from a perfectly sound though seldom lucid and conscious appreciation of his true interests. He needs a politically protected *Gesellschaft*, though he talks of it in the idiom of a spontaneously engendered *Gemeinschaft*. The rhetoric of nationalism is inversely related to its social reality: it speaks of *Gemeinschaft*, and is rooted in a semantically and often phonetically standardized *Gesellschaft*. (Gellner, 1994:107)

Collective identities are thus historical categories, endlessly mobile. The history of a society can be viewed as a continuum which includes “check-points”. They allow people the possibility to strengthen and/or resolve their affective alliances, to give up something and to form something new. The identity research often calls such processes as dis-membering or re-membering procedures (e. g. Grossberg et al, 1992, Turner 1974). However, the definition of the concept has not been given special attention as Philip Schlesinger (1987:258) has noted. It has been easier to leave it deliberately ambiguous, even mystic in our day just as in the 18th century when American nationalism was promoted:

It has often given me pleasure to observe that independent America was not composed of detached and distant territories, but that one connected, fertile,

widespread country was the portion of our western sons of liberty Providence has been pleased to give this one connected country to one united people – a people descended from the same ancestors, speaking the same language, professing the same religion, attached to the same principles of government, very similar in their manners and customs. (Jay 1961/1788: 38)

Identity researchers of our times see John Jay and the other Founding Fathers of the U.S. as having transferred the U.S. liberal democracy into the sphere of white men; women, the original population, and the slaves from the South were pushed away by defining the proper citizen as a “bodiless” profile so that all the characteristics fit only white men (Tacacs, 1999: 595-596). These attitudes became quite clear some 100 years later, in the 1860s and 1870s, when the U.S. tried to reduce the number of immigrants of Chinese origin. A senator argued against the “otherness” of the Chinese origin population from the standpoint of American family values. He extended Blacks the right to stay in the country just because they respected the American family. Restrictions against the Chinese were defended in the Senate with arguments such as follows:

The Asiatic cannot go on with our population and make a homogeneous element. The idea /.../ comparing European immigration with the immigration that has no regard to the family, that does not recognize the relation of husband and wife, that does not observe the tie of parent and child, that does not have the slightest degree the civilizing influences of the hearthstone and the fireside. (Tacacs, 1999:599)

The basic reason for the “threat of Asian blood” was perhaps the experience of the Chinese community closing itself off from outsiders; refusing to be part of the melting pot or accepting the sacred values of the dominant population groups. It was then that a practice was established which Tacacs calls “exclusion politics” or “alien-nation”. Today the same policy continues but is less visible due to the fact that the states use legislation and its interpretation as reasons for a particular decision. According to Tacacs, trade unions and many non-governmental organizations let their discriminatory policies remain far more visible with often quite rude arguments. Nor have they cared to become politically correct. What is important is that “aliens” are defined in more different ways on different occasions, than are the qualities of “owns”. The rhetoric changes according to the issue concerned (Tacacs, 1999: 601-611).

In most cases collective identity has been linked to nationalism and the birth of a nation-state. The pressure of industrial society to produce “large, centrally educated, culturally homogeneous units” (Gellner, 1987:35) was strong. It is true that the era of nation-states and modern colonialism – they are interlinked, whether we like it or not – really was one of the heyday periods of collective identities, but it was not the starting point for collective identities, although the identities were not always called collective identi-

ties. However, the idea of joining and dividing was already there. As John Tomlinson (1991: 79-84) has stated, national identities are, paradoxically, the cultural outcome of expanding capitalism, Western rationality, the breakdown of "tradition", and the "mediatization" of cultural experience. An American researcher, Geoffrey Bennington (1990:132), has stated that throughout history, nations have erected their particularity on the basis of uniqueness. The "inside" is always and in all dimensions better than the "outside". Thus a nation prepares for an attack from the outside, in parallel with the development of its own ideology which allows the exercise of colonialism over others.

[The nation] is imagined as a community because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately, it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries, for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings. (Anderson, 1983: 16)

Togetherness and distancing have always been strengthened by lifestyle and symbols attached to it: clothes, behavior, food and such issues as dances which Giuseppe Acerbi talked about have been means with which to draw citizen groups together and to distinguish them from others. The groups to be unified and distinguished have changed during the centuries when Louis XIV's court minuet entered Finland and changed gradually into a peasant wedding dance and finally a "genuine" part of the Finnish Swedish minority culture (Hoppu 1995). Thus, dance positioned people in the same way as the fixed seating rules in church. Basic life security and a sense of being in command of everyday life were reached by following social rules. But also otherness has been needed. Edward Said (1985:3) has said that European culture and identity were strengthened throughout history by the fact that the Orient existed as some kind of surrogate or hidden self.

Stuart Hall distinguishes between three quite different perceptions of identity, prevailing both in research and everyday talk. He considers such a division a simplification, but it is still important to make a distinction between *the self of enlightenment*, *the self of sociology* and *the postmodern self*. The enlightenment self bases itself on the perception of human beings as rational creatures seeking uniformity to be able to act in a sensible, cohesive way. The sociological self reflects a far more complicated view of the world, based on interaction of the individual and the society. The postmodern identity is split in relation to those patterns of life which we face; Hall calls it "the mobile party". We have moved from a class identity to an identity of border, says Hall (1999: 21-28).

The Collective Self

The honor of being the founding father for the concept of identity is most often given to an American psychologist, William James, who in *Principles of Psychology* (1952/1891) discusses at length the perception of self, especially the *experiencing self* (*I*) and the *experienced self* (*me*). For James, the central idea is that an individual knows and feels one's own continuity and individuality. He talks about "identity applied to a group", meaning that certain features of a group remain unchanged, although members of the group might change (de Levita, 1965:29-52).

Unlike some authors before him, James thus realized that identities are constructed, not born. This quality of identities has been stressed in recent years. The process character of identities is strongly visible in literature produced in the 1980s and 1990s. Identities, collective as well as individual-based, must be reinforced and modified in order to meet changed circumstances (Saukkonen, 1999: 48-50). Today, the concept of identity is applied more and more frequently to individuals and individuals in groups. Thus it is important to make a distinction between personal identity and more general forms of identity. Most languages make a distinction between sameness (*idem*, *Gleichheit*, *likhet*) and selfhood (*ipse*, *Selbstheit*, *själv*).

Philip Schlesinger (1997:68) stresses the fact that identities always are products of a collective will. This brings about a shared value system. It may originate from history, centuries back. Schlesinger sees as qualities of collective identity the following characteristics:

- It involves construction and reconstruction of a sense of themselves by self-identifying communities, using the signs provided by their cultures;
- It is a process of elaboration of collective consciousness, generally involving active strategies of inclusion and exclusion. *We* are defined as being different from how *They* are;
- The above process extends through time, involving both memory and amnesia, so that the role of versions of history becomes crucial to the self-understanding of a collectivity. Thus, what is understood to be either typically "national" or "ethnic" is usually a highly selective account;
- The same process also extends in space. In Europe, for instance, the paradigm case of collective is that of a group located in a specific national territory endowed with meanings. However, in principle, and in fact, we may conceive of collectivities as located otherwise, for example, as enjoying diasporic identities for which the strict territorial condition does not apply.

If these qualities are accepted as characteristics of collective identity, it is easier to understand why the bond between language and identity became so strong in the 18th and 19th century Europe. Some idealists such as Johann

Gottfried von Herder, one of the early representatives of Romanticism, thought that collective selfhood cannot develop without a joint language. After him and his contemporaries, the mystification of the contact between language and identity has been considered to be weaker. In Europe, language is still no doubt a fairly strong unifying factor, while in many other parts of the world – for example, in Africa – language and identity have a very weak connection. In Africa, people regularly use several languages in parallel, and giving up one does not alter one's identity. Language is viewed as a practical choice: what matters with language is to understand and be understood.

When introducing collective identities, the dimension of cultural identity should also be mentioned. In a society, there are usually a multitude of cultural identities. A community is stronger, if it allows many flowers to flourish. Accordingly, national identity is itself, in a way, based on a compromise, looking for the lowest common denominator, while cultural identities are based on a cultural mosaic, composed of a multitude of shades and varieties. It is precisely this dimension of cultural identity that ensures its potential, genuineness, continuity and ability to change. Today, identities are not viewed as stiff and resistant to change, but they are assumed to adapt to the times, to the community and to the individuals belonging to the community. They are not very flexible and apt to change, but they do have that ability. Most identities are like bouquets, including both more and less easily changing components. An identity can be viewed as a mangrove tree, slowly and not so elegantly moving, but mobile in principle.

The definitions offered above enable also the understanding of how important publicity is in the expression of collective will. Media and other similar institutions have always had as one of their functions to create a shared history and thus promote shared values. So has it been since the early Roman Ages, and so it was in the Middle Ages in the Catholic Church. Its publicity operated on two levels. The sermon in Latin mystified and legitimized the significance of the Church in the eyes of citizens, while the primitivistic church art, easy to interpret by anybody, reinforced the bond between the Church and the person-on-the-street.

The significance of the nation-state is strengthened by texts which emphasize a few qualities and characteristics which are considered important and placed under the umbrella of common characteristics. These qualities thus become instruments for increased unity and distinction (Saukkonen, 1999: 144-145). These written and oral texts create continuity and "order of the mind", rational hierarchies. Thus, the nation gets its own narratives which operate like glue. For example, maps carry such qualities. There are researchers who view elements of everyday life, such as weather maps, as being unifying instruments (e. g. Hylland Eriksen, 1997:22-239). Groups are thus collected around such poles of identification which help them to recognize each other. Some of these identification poles are shared by the whole population, but most focus on a smaller unit such as a generation, a social group or a class, a gender or an occupational group. War veteran rhetoric is shared

by a certain generation with a past consisting of shared experiences, while the rock 'n' roll generation has its own identification poles. The hidden or open nationalism embedded in sports pleases one group in society, and certain qualities are accepted by practically everybody. In Finland, the appreciation of any form of security talk – security understood as a national as well as individual quality – can be considered such an identification pole. Finnish cultural anthropologist, Matti Sarmela (1994: 17), agrees with one of the classics in the field, Clifford Geertz, in that culture in fact is basically a mental construction, a shared system of meanings, including official symbols and images understood by anybody in a society, which do not need any mediation to be understood “correctly”.

National identity is thus by no means a clear-cut concept, although elaborations on it have been developed for the past 200 years. National identity appears quite differently depending on whether it is viewed as a state identity, expressing loyalty to a political structure and its links to the international system, or as communality emanating from national culture, or as an individual identity identifying a person in a larger community. The community can be either a state or a cultural community. Especially in our times, most researchers have tended to distinguish national identity from patriotism and nationalism. Instead, only very few consider it possible to divorce national identity totally from features emanating from the framework of a state (Saukkonen, 1999: 78-80).

The Finnish Identity and Others

Most Finnish researchers agree that Finns are still more “state” citizens than is the case in the other Nordic countries, that is, that Finnish individuals appreciate cohesion more than individuality. This quality is seen as a heritage of J. W. Snellman, and the majority language, Finnish, has a large vocabulary indicating the closeness of the state and the citizen (*kansa*, *kansakunta*, *kansanvalta*). A rough interpretation of the difference between Finns and people in other Nordic countries could perhaps be that it is the difference between being a citizen, and being a subject. To be sure, Jürgen Habermas would select the former for his construction of a citizen in the public sphere, indicating an alliance between free individuals. Finns are able to organize themselves in a variety of associations and organizations, but the brotherhood of the state and the citizen remains strong. For a Finn, the state is a well-meaning big brother, while for example in the U.S., the fiercest battles are carried out between the bad, oppressive state and the small but heroic “ordinary” person, if one wants to simplify the positions (Kivikuru et al, 1996:5-26).

To be sure, the same elements can be found, to a certain extent, among the other Nordic countries – the ideology of a “Nordic People’s Home” is based on this very idea – but perhaps not to the same degree. In Finland,

cohesion-building tends to prevent open discussion in the name of consensus-seeking. For example, the public debates preceding EU membership in Finland and Sweden departed from each other quite distinctly (Kivikuru & al., 1996: 65-208, 322-363; Wallin, 1992).

In a way, Finnish society seems to question its own existence on a continuing basis, although it, as with most peripheral cultures, simultaneously has a spontaneous need to defend itself and to brag about its successes. Still, the subject position is hidden in all mental structures. A Finnish historian, Matti Klinge (1982:105) has stated that a Finn "although surrounded by the affluence of a European state, still in his heart feels himself simple, withdrawn and poor".

Citizenship stands for an individual's collective self, collectiveness which expresses itself in the individual's values, attitudes and behavior. Identity thus reflects the tense interaction between the individual and his/her community. The history of the society brings about identities, but on the other hand, individuals expressing these identities mould and reinforce history (Berger & Luckmann, 1995/1966:195-202). In a way, this concerns the legitimacy of the self. An individual interprets the dimensions of his/her collective consciousness.

Based on what Pulma and Stenius said at the outset it seems as if the Finnish national identity would stress the competence of the collective self to construct communality and consensus. However, the collective identity both unites and divides. These qualities cannot be separated. Communality is created precisely because there is a border, and behind it, people who do not belong to the group. As Zygmunt Bauman (e. g. 1997:70) says, *we* and *they* actually achieve their full meaning first when they operate parallel to each other. Without a consciousness of the existence of a border, we have difficulties finding a meaning for our identity. Thus, there is a sense of border embedded in Finnishness as well.

As in many other peripheral identities, in the Finnish identity the national side seems to be stronger than the cultural side. The sense of border is more definite than in many metropolitan cultures which can afford to be more liberal. A big community has power which makes it more persistent anyway.

Political scientist Pasi Saukkonen (1999: 286-293) has studied national identity in Finland and the Netherlands. According to him, the state and the society are equally strong in the Dutch identity, and other categories belonging to national identity in present-day Holland are a sense of openness, bourgeois middle-class orientation and an understanding attitude towards Europe. In the Finnish identity, instead, the most significant issues are the uniqueness of Finnishness, a sense of closeness, with an agrarian element. In Finland the nation-state attitude was strong, in Holland weak according to Saukkonen, and in Finland, the elites had the opinion that they were far closer to Europe than "the folk" which in their texts appeared as a bit backward and cliquish.

From Place to Space and Back

In the texts mentioned earlier, the Finnish identity emerges as slightly old-fashioned and worn, partly perhaps because it is biased towards agrarian qualities while the city seems to be the site for modern identities, if there are any. During the last 15-20 years, there has namely been a tendency to locate identities in wider spaces than a concrete place. Discussions of time-space, imagined communities and cultural nomadism are frequent in discussions which have pointed out that identities are more strongly linked to time than place. According to this kind of thinking, a shared experience in front of a television screen, watching the same program as millions of others in far-away places creates a stronger bond than a shared concrete closeness, a shared grocery store or a shared bus route. However, the time for the wildest advocates of imagined communities is already over. Research is partly stepping backwards, returning to such considerations as Anthony P. Cohen (1982) and other authors presented. According to them identification on a national level always happens through a place. Even in nation-level discourses, the mediations are based on home, family, home village or region.

Sometimes a sense of place is acquired immediately, sometimes it can be mediated over time. For collective identities such words as "home" or "family" have always had an especially great significance; the connection to them is unquestioningly accepted as natural (Anderson, 1983: 143). One example of such a community on the local and national level is the *Heimat* movement in Germany, active in the early 20th century. Its political discourse always remained on the national level. Representatives of the *Heimat* movement supported the idea of Germany invading and controlling the whole world, but the center of the ideology was still in the town of Weimar which represented peace, safe living and beautiful nature. The state was thus idealized and linked with anything beautiful that was found in the local scenery (Applegate, 1992:67). Today we know that the *Heimat* movement also offered breeding space for one of the ideological monsters of the 20th century, the Nazis. Collective identities can also bind themselves to place with far less dramatic ties, mainly through memory and longing as often seen in immigrant and refugee identities, sometimes also with dominant identities which for some reason have an intense need to look back (e. g. Moring, 2000).

One could perhaps say that phenomena in the real world, in the Balkans, in the Middle East and in Chechnya, as well as the rise of neo-Nazis in Europe has forced researchers of communalism to return to the place. Such "old-fashioned" identities with strong links to place still carry a lot of explosive power, for good and for bad. So it has been throughout centuries. Collective identities offer people security and power embedded in groups, but with them, human groups have also been separated and oppressed. No doubt immigrant identities among second and third generation Turks living in Germany are very different from the identities of Turks living in Turkey, but they are still Turkish identities. The "home" countries, instead, tend to reserve for immigrants

something that is called ethnic identities and leave their holders outside the benefits offered to the core population. Immigrants are treated as guests who have forgotten to return home. Immigrants who have stayed in a country for decades might be compelled to fight for their basic rights. Often the we/they division is built in between old and new minorities which in this way are weaker than they would be if they combined their forces (Husband, 1994).

Although a return to place can be recognized in the identity debates of the 1990s and 2000s, the city still appears as the surrounding for present-day identities. Since the Middle Ages cities have been sites of innovation and change. In the 20th century it has been the case more than ever (Sassen 1988). Cities have been simultaneously dynamic and stagnant, contradictory and similar, based on networking and fragmentation. The chaotic Los Angeles is more representative for present-day collective identities than such a "classic", planned city as Chicago (Mellucci, 1989; Dear & Flusty, 1999).

Immigration moulds cities, some violently, some peacefully. It is essential that structures originating in the nation-state are, in late modern cities, compensated with ethnic networks, which are partly based on self-definition, partly on practices and judgements established by outsiders (Castles, 1993: 47-56). Modern cities are thus like mosaics, still forming a larger entity. Here again one quality of all collective identities surfaces: identities are at least partly self-made, but they will not stay alive if outsiders do not recognize them. The recognition as such can be either negative or positive or neutral. Certain issues are legitimized at a particular time and in a particular historic situation. In most Nordic countries since the 1990s, Europeanism has been strengthened, deliberately constructed and molded by a political framework of the European Union (EU). In contrast, the suburbs inhabited by immigrants in our countries are not adjusted to our home agenda and national identities in a similar way. They tend to remain alien to the majority, and their identification poles are distinctly different from the majority. With the means of modern technology, their links to the "old" community are easily kept alive. The identities of refugees and immigrants remain strong, thanks to satellite dishes and the net.

Cities also have their role in identities of another, more individual-based type. For example, the city is addressed as the base for a "new" gender identity for women. Its' streets allow women more mobility and freedom of action than village paths. The media view issues in the same way. Since the 1950s, the city has dominated for example fashion photography. New fashion is introduced either in a city scenery or in a rural landscape which is strongly idealized and romanticized. The sheer visualization mode in them indicates that locality is exoticized, made unreal (Radner, 1999). This is, again, an example of *Heimat* thinking: rural locality is made so unreal that the city becomes defined as the only realistic framework for life, although the rural place is what is shown in the picture.

Considerations such as the above emphasize the fact that women in our days are more homeless than before. However, several feminist researchers have stated that the increased mobility of women has deeper roots. Earlier,

women were less mobile because they were forced to be less mobile. Western culture has defined women as “the other” for centuries. The ones singing the most devoted praises of the home have been those who have left home and miss it in a faraway place. In the majority of cases those who have left and who now romanticize the value of home are men and those staying home are women, not necessarily because they like staying so much, but because they simply have no other option (Massey, 1992). The fact that men more often than women have developed nomadic identities does not automatically mean that women are more strongly tied to the place. Society and culture have simply swaddled them together with their children.

The above excursions to the Balkans, to the tangled streets of city labyrinths and fashion photo trips might sound like a deliberate attempt to puzzle the reader. However, my purpose has only been to show how many forms identities take. Identities are collective qualities which take form in individuals and their *life-worlds*. They carry legacies from the past and from yesterday, and an identity is always connected to power relations. There are no existing “pure” or genuine identities, only those bound to culture as it is often claimed. Identities are deliberately regulated and defined.

Collective Self and Human Rights

Ever since the French revolution, but stronger than ever in the 1970s, human rights have been attached to collective identities. Human rights are understood as the common good, a safe harbor for human beings enabling them to give their best for the community. Human rights can be considered an insurance policy for the full development of identities. In fact, even today, the word “identity” does not appear in the ideologically tinged public discourse as often as “human rights”. Human rights are a “legitimized” collective self, as expressed in international law and the international community. It is violations of human rights, not identities, which have been brought up in cases such as the Balkans or Chechnya. Human rights can be interpreted as an attempt by modern and late modern societies to encourage empowerment via neutralizing ethnicity, seeking universal values, in fact thus forming a kind of opposite to empowering ethnicity which was discussed earlier.

For the first time in an international arena, human rights and identities were brought together in the famous debate on the New Information Order (NWICO) in UNESCO and other UN bodies. The Non-Aligned Movement wanted to balance the uneven information flow between the so-called North and South in such a way that the South would have had a bigger say in information concerning it. After that debate, a multitude of smaller international discussions have emerged, advocating cultural diversity and against the pressure for homogenization from the side of media operations, from news agencies to satellite broadcasting (e. g. Hamelink, 1994:186-195, 228-

254; Ovsiovitsch, 1999). In these elaborations of media researchers, cultural identities have been viewed as “genuine”, “grassroots-oriented” phenomena, threatened by international media institutions. Internationalism is considered dangerous, because large media companies are assumed to standardize media content. This position diverges significantly from that of literature and the arts which usually consider international influences to be enriching and stimulating, and not as a threat.

Human rights are usually divided into three generations, the first originating 200 years ago, the other from the early 20th century, while the latest one emerged in international discussions after World War II.

The *freedom rights*, that is political rights, have their origin in the French and American Revolutions, and international legislation supports these rights – the only problem is that the sanctions aspect is not developed accordingly. Only the most outrageous cases are punished, as recent history indicates. These rights are usually central during liberation struggles, but they change when the goal is achieved. In many African countries reaching independence in the 1960s, the liberation struggle generation has difficulty understanding their younger cohorts, who have been born and grown up in an independent country. In the 1990s, a new struggle emerged in sub-Saharan Africa for multiparty systems and media freedoms. In these two waves of human rights struggle – one in the 1950s and 1960s, the second in the 1990s – not much has been said about ethnic identities. The framework of the nation-state has been taken for granted. European perceptions of democracy and human rights have suppressed the traditional *homo hierarchicus* and its totally different view on society and community. The link between first generation human rights and the cultural context of its application has not often been pointed out as it should be.

The second generation of human rights focuses on *economic and socio-cultural rights*. International legislation also supports this group of rights: even the poorest citizen is entitled to a decent life, economically and culturally. The most famous instrument supporting these rights is the *UN Declaration of Human Rights* (1948). This group of rights has been perhaps an even greater source of frustration in many countries and continents. Formal independence has been achieved, but no other profound changes have been carried out. Economic and cultural dependence is often more difficult to cut off than political dependence.

The third generation of human rights does not enjoy similar overwhelming support in international law. Its international legal status is in general weaker, although the basic lines of *solidarity rights* have been accepted. They include such collective rights as the right to peace, to development, to balance with nature, to the rights of women and children. In most cases, the right to communication has also been included in them, because it has been considered that humanity includes the right to send and receive information without restriction. The UN organization responsible for this generation of rights is UNESCO.

The media publicity around human rights tends to focus on the first generation rights only, although especially in the developing world, the second and third might be more important. Further, in the media, human rights are most often understood as individual rights – a human being is entitled to political action. Researchers have stated that the media have adopted their perception of human rights in their European form, often even in their most narrow U.S. definition (Ovsiovitsch, 1999: 258-259).

Human rights are in principle as complicated as identities. They can be called collective rights which individuals are entitled to share. The most essential development concerning human rights from an identity perspective is that the strengthening of international law in the protection of human rights has meant, in fact, that the minimum rights of humanity have been transferred outside the nation-state, to the international community. However, many nation-states still get irritated when international attention is drawn to their human rights violations; they consider these issues to be internal affairs. In the 1990s, this was manifest in the Balkans, and many developing countries experience such criticism. Northern sponsors have turned their back on governments that have not attempted to address human rights violations. Thus, an awareness of human rights is often linked to politics – violations by strong powers are overlooked more than those committed by weak societies.

Media Use in Collective Memory

A quality linked to national identity is collective memory, but Ernest Gellner (e. g. 1987) stresses that an equally important quality is “shared amnesia”, things forgotten in the name of making the community stronger. In this respect, German identity no doubt belongs to the most complex of collective identities, having to cope with its Nazi past as well as both the division and reunification of the country, as well as with a significant minority consisting of immigrant workers. Societies in such difficult situations have developed certain methods to cope with their past. The various forms of truth commissions in South Africa, Rwanda and the Balkans have tried to sooth conflicts and spread understanding. A few years back in Sweden, the largest newspapers in the country made a survey about the doings of neo-Nazis in the country and publicized the results, even threatening to return to the issue as soon as new crimes come up. Both of these types of action have been criticized, but from the standpoint of media research they are extremely interesting, because in these, identity construction is used via media and publicity. In fact, it can be claimed that these types of unusual cases make visible the identity work done every day by the media through news criteria and repetition. The media show us on a continuous basis, what kinds of qualities good citizens should have and where the border with bad citizens lies.

Identities have a special relation with the media in contemporary life, because on the one hand, people are mobile and part of their social ties change during a lifetime, and on the other, the role of the media has grown. Perhaps the wildest views on the issue have been revealed by those Italian researchers who say that Italian society today is built on opinion surveys and television. Even the vocabulary used has changed totally in recent years, they claim. The public sphere and grassroots movements appear old-fashioned in comparison. According to Danilo Zolo, it is more justified to talk about “telecracy” instead of democracy (Zolo, 1999).

The phenomenon is, however, not as new as we might think, because Jean Chalaby (1998:26-31) has noted that the collaboration between the media and political publicity started in England already in the early 19th century, during the period of heavy industrialization. The press stopped addressing its readers as individuals as they did during the period of the elite press and instead addressed them as members of particular socio-economic collectives. If we accept Chalaby’s argument, the start of a close relationship between the media and the collective self can be established in a period which was characterized by both the birth of modern nation-states and the emergence of organizations which we now consider representative of the public sphere.

European historical memory is not unsoiled in this respect, because the 19th century also gave birth to “modern” colonialism. Media were used for the legitimation of imperialism, in both books and the press alike. The most famous defender of European supremacy was Rudyard Kipling, who could express himself in a very evocative manner, appearing as the advocate of the man-of-the-street. The message of the author who later won a Nobel Prize came perhaps most strongly to the fore in the poem “The White Man’s Burden” (e.g. 1976/1892).

Media and Globalization

Johan Galtung has recently (1999:4) drafted his perception of the various relations between the state, capital and the public sphere. In his picture, the role of the media varies according to the social system. In feudalism, and in some forms of Communism, the media are attached to the state, in capitalism to capital, and in an ideal system, to the citizenry. In an ideal situation the media mediate information to citizens, allow comment and criticism, plus offer an arena for a variety of groups to express themselves on a variety of public issues. The idea is by no means new: in the late 1940s, the Hutchins Commission in the United States drafted the so-called theory of social responsibility as a function for the media on highly similar principles.

Somewhat before Galtung, Herbert Schiller (1996) presented a considerably darker picture of the role of mass communication. He claimed that American entertainment industry destroys everything that has been the basis for collective identities:

The heaviest cost of transnational corporate-produced culture, however, is that it erodes the priceless idea of the public good, the vital principle of social responsibility and the longtime dream of international community. Substituted for these elemental human aspirations is the promise of consumer choice – a choice that is not genuine – and a hopelessly narrow standard of production efficiency. (Schiller, 1996:125-126)

However, there have been deviant voices among media researchers as well. Marshall McLuhan (e. g. 1967) said that, thanks to new technology and television, we are turning into a global village. That would mean a unity of basic values and thus less tendency to conflict. McLuhan in fact packaged into a popular format something that another Canadian, Harold Innis had said already some 10-20 years earlier. Today, McLuhan has been rediscovered by research. The global village has become a slogan used wildly, but it is not until now that his quite reserved position on this development has come out. McLuhan did not in fact like the idea of a culturally standardized global village, but he did not see any alternative to it, given the circumstances.

Arjun Appadurai (e.g. 1996) has developed more varied considerations about people's life-worlds and the media connection. Although the line of thinking is perhaps basically not that different from Galtung's, the approach is very different: Appadurai is clearly a child of the postmodern world. The set-up is based on the idea of five different scenarios, all open to the individual and all forming part of the elements of his/her identity. The perspective remains on an individual level. There are *mediascapes*, the media as a whole, its structures as well as its contents. Various media take center stage depending on what kind of issue there is talk of. In certain issues, big national media form the core for a receiver, in an other case it might be a small membership journal. There are *ideoscapes*, which stands for the ideological climate of the society. It could be viewed as providing the code for the interpretation of the mediascape. There are *ethnoscapes*, people on the move, bringing new elements into one's life-world. There are *technoscapes* which become globalized faster than any other of Appadurai's scapes, and finally there are the *finanscapes*, the money-world that is equally apt to become globalized. Based on Appadurai's thinking, it can be claimed that the ideoscape, the mediascape and the ethnoscape form the frame of reference for one's self-interpretation.

Media dramas belong to our times, starting from great sports events and beauty contests and reaching up to summits of high-level politicians or their funerals. All these form a legitimized means to strengthen and reinforce identities. The idea itself is not new: Hitler used the media effectively. However, in the age of modern media such events move faster and are more impressive (e. g. Dayan & Katz, 1992). Many are also far better planned, with all the national symbols taken into consideration. For example, in 1995, South Africa won the World Cup in rugby which is considered the national sport for Boers. But the proceedings after the victory over the Australian team

produced a new message about South African politics. Nelson Mandela, dressed in the shirt of the team captain, climbed to the podium and praised the “Boks” for their victory. Many said that the emotional tensions laden in this situation, broadcast live all over the country, exceeded anything else in the political arena in 1995 (Steenveld & Strelitz, 1998).

National Identity and Everyday Living

These kinds of messages wrapped in sports events belong to the early years of independence for many nations, and all sports are not alike. There are certain sports which carry a considerably higher value than others – and these values also change. Earlier, cross-country skiing was the sport *par excellence* in the Nordic countries, but more recently, ice hockey has gained considerable symbolic wealth. Finns experienced a special event in 1995, when the Finnish team won the World Championship in ice hockey over Sweden, in Stockholm. All the elements were in place and the nation went crazy for a few days. However, in politically non-dramatic times, the symbolic value of sports events does not last very long. Like media phenomena in general, they soon become worn-out.

On the other hand, the connections between collective identities and the media are multiple and frequent. The media legitimize and reinforce via repetition the favored forms of information distribution and consumption, ranging from the male-dominated format of news to the feminine dominated talk shows – the “new” superficiality of breakfast news. The genders are presented differently in home news departments than in foreign news (Ojajärvi, 2000; Valtonen, 2000). Researchers like Jésus Martín-Barbéro (1997) have said that the popular television *telenovelas* have taught the rural populations in Latin America – and in southern Europe as well, although Martín-Barbéro does not mention this – how to move from the village to the urban suburbs. Television has, according to Martín-Barbéro, “taught people how to walk in a city”, that is, how to renew one’s identity to fit the new circumstances. Martín-Barbéro stresses that some vulgar media products might, in all their banality, offer exactly what a person moving from the rural, integrated value system needs when moving to the cultural hybridity of the city.

As stated before, the media strengthen the feeling of community and togetherness by showing on a daily or at least on a regular basis the borderline between what is allowed and what is not. On the other hand, the variety of media, ranging from ideological mouthpieces to the elite and tabloid press, also structures society according to *Us* and *Them*. However, it can be said, as Benedict Anderson claims (1983), that the sheer amount of media-use creates credibility and unity in “ordinary people’s” life-worlds. They put the various dimensions of identity in order. The same is done via language use. Certain legitimized discourses assist in structuring phenomena, values and

incidents; they have discourse power. Distinctions between “us” and “them” are often brought into the everyday routines precisely via language use.

Media has thus the ability to widen and regulate the public sphere and the life-world of an individual. Michael Schudson (1998) contemplates in his book *The Good Citizen* the relationship between and the biases in the individual and democracy. Schudson claims, however, that it is premature to talk about the decline of citizenship (Schudson, 1998: 308), although it is easy to locate problems in the relationship between the media and the citizen. A citizen well aware of his/her rights can become even more aware of the dimensions of his/her citizenship, thanks to the media. However, some other viewpoints can also be presented. One of the fashionable sociologists of our times, Anthony Giddens, has talked about “the democratization of democracy”, meaning that especially representative democracy has lost much of its appeal among the citizenry and, above all, among the youth. Globalization has brought up the question of democracy all over the world. But television and other media tend to destroy all elements of public discussion with trivialization and personification. Furthermore, the growth of transnational media enterprises means that leaders selected without democratic systems have gained power without reins, that is without any regulative control.

If one uses the criteria brought up by Giddens, it could be claimed that despite all efforts, the democratic power of the media is weakening, although the role of the media in people’s lives is more important than ever.

Citizens’ Hunt for Their Rights?

Cees Hamelink (1994:284-316) has come up with some very gloomy conclusions concerning identities, democracy, political parties, and the structure of society in general. According to him, the world is in the hands of “princes and merchants” and not even the paragraphs of international law can stop the greed of political and economic interests. Hamelink trusts only the “ordinary person”, although limited in his/her scope of knowledge and oppressed by the established division of power, but obstinate in his/her basic instincts. (S)he believes that there still is potential in the saying “think globally, act locally”. Hamelink places great trust in the empowerment of citizen movements. He is sure that they will not go to extremes.

Hamelink believes that a global movement will be born, challenging gradually a culture and society based on materialism. The start is not going to be easy, because citizens have to take back the power stolen from them by the elites. Hamelink thinks that the networks enabled by new technology will be used for new goals. He does not trust established parties or organizations, but rather new, single-issue movements of highly devoted groups.

Other more positive views have been expressed by, for example, Brenda Dervin and Kathleen Clark (1993). They have elaborated on how multiple

yet “low profile” forms of communication – a communication which respects the individual and his/her “sense of togetherness” – could help people learn to cooperate and act together. Dervin and Clark base their presentation on Paulo Freire’s (e. g. 1970) thinking. Via communication that respects others, in Freire’s vocabulary, “conscientizing” people enables them to make excursions into the unknown, being radical and constructive simultaneously. Dervin and Clark share the basic thinking of Hamelink, but they put more trust in human flexibility and permissiveness. Western society has become too stiff: full-fledged humanity and a collective-individual self cannot be achieved. Communication appears thus as bondage, but also a promise for liberation.

It is far more comforting to agree with Dervin and Clark than with Hamelink’s thrilling but chilling predictions. However, the core of identity dwells in both. There is a potential for Freirean excursions, embedded in the collective self: awareness of one’s roots makes a human being brave and active, and a chance to work in groups adds to the strength of such an exercise. But as I have tried to emphasize in the above considerations, identities are not abstractions, and they are not born but made. They are results of a multitude of historico-political procedures and often contradictory by character. Hence they open a Pandora’s box, full of surprises. The power of the “new” multiple-interest collective force, the media, does not make identity-based distinction processes any more consistent. In fact, two fairly recent deliberately operating power forces, disrespecting conventional boundaries, can be distinguished around identity-construction today: the media and international law. Both have a strong official rhetoric emphasizing peace, understanding and respect for basic human rights. Whether they really do promote such noble goals deserves far more scrutiny, criticism and monitoring than has been done so far in the realm of identity research.

It is not possible to divide the study of the identity apparatus into positive or negative, leading to either optimistic or pessimistic considerations. Such a bipolarity would be far too easy a solution for such a complex phenomenon – but we have inherited our tendency to grasp and explain phenomena via binaries as part of our identity. Good and bad, us and them, remembering and dis-membering...

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In Other Worlds

Mainstream Imagery of Eastern Neighbors

Jan Ekecrantz

Studies of journalistic reporting from distant places often focus on various shortcomings of the reporters. They lack adequate “background knowledge”, give free reign to ethnocentric prejudice, see only what the home desk wants them to see, concentrate on the activities of elites or, on the contrary, on the sufferings of victims, and so on – or it can be a combination of all these traits. This chapter deals primarily with Swedish reports from across the Baltic Sea. The question of the quality of the journalism is not the issue here. Instead, I am interested in the *mechanisms and media of cultural exchange across politically or otherwise constructed borders*. I place the focus on the *nation* as it figures, or serves as a hidden framework in cross-border imagery. The nation-state and journalism’s whole apparatus of reality construction have common historical roots, as two pillars of modernity (Hartley, 1996). This condition, it seems, still largely determines the outlooks of travel journalists today, as much as it did in the early twentieth century.

The empirical focus is on a comparison of Swedish journalistic reports from the 1920s and those of today, against the background provided by the earlier studies within the “Media Societies around the Baltic Sea” program. Across the seventy-five years, there are some striking and unexpected similarities that deserve close attention.

The first section, on “geographies of power and the politics of the past”, identifies different discourses on socio-cultural change in a global epoch and links these to the present research context: a series of studies dealing with both *comparisons* and media *communication* among countries in the Baltic Sea Region. Then there is a summary of a study dealing with contemporary temporal constructions in the news journalism of a number of countries around the Baltic Sea. This comparative approach highlights some differences in the national journalistic cultures. A section, “Going to Russia: back to backwardness”, focuses on a study of reporting in the 1990s pinpointing the marked *Orientalism* in reporting. Next, I discuss two *metaphors*, frequently in use in the period between the wars, in reports from the Baltic countries and in discussions about Sweden’s “mission” to the other side of the Sea: the Hansa and

the Backyard. This is followed up by a historical example in the shape of a Swedish news story from Tallinn written in 1928. To anyone interested in communications and/or discourse production across time and space, Estonia offers a particularly worthwhile object of study¹ – in large part because it itself has been an unusually unstable time-space, repeatedly constructed and re-constructed in a more or less unbalanced interaction with surrounding spheres of power, in the last decade increasingly orienting itself towards Nordic politics and markets. As a community, historically defined by its ever-changing political contexts and belongings, and cross-border cultural influences, it offers us a test case when it comes to journalism's capacities (and generic limitations) for the internal and international reporting of both socio-political transformations and multi-cultural conditions. This is evident from a study of contemporary reporting from Estonia based on a large amount of material gathered from 2001 to 2002, reported here in some detail.

We will be moving around in different, and indeed unstable *time-spaces* – around the Baltic Sea. But the *framing* of these realities, however unstable they may be, seems to have a ghostly or mythical permanence, and does not seem to be easily affected by occurrences in the outside world, as it were – contrary to received journalistic wisdom, according to which the news is always open to the new. Rather, events of even great magnitude seem to leave the journalistic structuring of the world intact. This might seem paradoxical, since the usual expectation, as well as the usual journalistic self-understanding, has it that news is about the new. We will return to this paradox towards the end of the chapter. How are we to understand the astounding lack of change in the media's representational strategies over the past 75 years, and what does it tell us about the conditions and forms of cross-cultural imagery and communication in the late modern world?

Geographies of Power and the Politics of the Past

Media and journalistic cultures must be understood in both historical and geographic, in temporal and spatial terms. The Baltic Sea space is a geo-physical reality and a cultural and political construction that has been reinvented over and over again. Spatially, every locale, be it in a center or a periphery, has been dependent on the larger world. There are, thus, stratified spatialities just as there are multi-layered temporalities. We are living in a very complex mix of *here's* and *there's* and of *now's* and *then's* and journalism reflects all this if you read it in that light – not as a series of reports on the most recent happenings but as a mirror and co-producer of cultural and political conditions. In these texts history meets the present and the local is interwoven with the global. As an example we can take the very concept of "post-communism". Where is it and when? Is it a condition that holds in a particular region of the world, the former Soviet system (with borders that

are not very well defined) or a state that characterizes the entire globe? Is there a time limit for this condition? When does it go away, if ever? It is obvious that this is a discursively constituted reality – taken in a sense as given, however intangible and vague as time-space.

While waiting for a Fernand Braudel of the Baltic Sea to appear, a political economy of Mare Balticum would have to be based on many different types of sources (and authorities like Matti Klinge, e.g. 1994, David Kirby, e.g. 1995, and others), giving us their various “geographies of power”. We could trace the routes (and roots) of economic and political domination and power struggles through the centuries: geography, land, ports, rivers and other resources visualized by maps, as well as the effects of power as represented in the maps in the shapes of all kinds of borders, by centers and peripheries, capitals and provinces and other political and cultural constructions. These geographies of power also have their cultural correlates in historically instituted perceptions of differences and distances, age-old myths, languages that naturalize national borders at the same time as they may be the result of imperial campaigns or nation-building projects.

In the modern era, global and national media and media events form indissoluble parts of the more or less long-lasting remaking or redrawing of geocultural infrastructures and mental spaces, always leaving traces, the one conception covered over by another, like strata, in the often conflicting sediments of collective memories. Here, *geographies of power*, reflected in Othering and “We-ing” strategies, intersect with some “*politics of the past*”, including also the staging of collective memories, or its opposite, collective amnesia, or of a modernistic or eschatological, glorious future. These more or less solid (imagined or not) spatial and temporal structures are dealt with differently within different types of discourses.

In academic, popular and other discourses on cultural change, media and globalization, you are offered *either a historicist* stand, presupposing that history explains everything (or that continuity or traditions reign), *or a systems-oriented* explanatory model focusing on relations in the contemporary world (the present reigns). We are thus faced with a choice between *diachronic* and *synchronic* explanatory models. This is sometimes expressed in terms of *roots* vs. *routes* as alternative and opposing types of explanation. *Roots* (like collective memories or more solid remains) and *routes* (like networks of communication or transit locales) can be seen as alternative and opposing types of explanations.² But this is a false contradiction – routes also have their historical roots, as is often seen in the historiography of the Baltic Sea area. Trade routes, for instance, are of course as old as trade itself. Indeed, today’s tourism revitalizes the old Hansa ports.

Since Medieval times and the times of Vikings and (Danish, Estonian and other) buccaneers, the Baltic Sea Region has been a true crossroads. In the same spirit as the concept of the “glocal”, we could talk of the *Globaltic* area, implying that, at any time and at any place, the nodal aspect means more than the place as such. The “network society” (Castells’ famous neologism)

was not a product of digitized telecommunications, but existed many hundred years before that technology came along, as the combined effect of trade, migration, imperialism, etc., all based on the available ways and means of transport and communication.

Another interpretative choice is whether it is the *global*, or the *local/national*, that is prioritized. Global conditions are *either* seen as all-encompassing and ubiquitous, *or* the opposite: they do not really change the local in any basic sense, because there is resistance everywhere, documented over and over again in specific cultural or sub-cultural locations. This can also be expressed as the question of *universalism* vs. *particularism*. Homogenization and heterogenization are the extreme interpretations of the repercussions of exchanges between the global and the local or national. But these different levels, or translocalities, are not given, but constituted by these exchanges. They are the result of historical communication processes.³

Third, discourses on cultural or media globalization are often bifurcated in an additional way – in their focus on *infrastructural* conditions and transformations (long-term “modernization”) vs. the *socio-cultural and institutional experiences* and framing of technological changes (qualitatively different “modernities”).

These, then, are three oppositions haunting the literature on, among other things, cultural globalization. A meta-discursive analysis of academic, artistic, literary or popular narratives should, of course, not take these binary oppositions for granted. Each of them represents a choice between vantage points that mostly seem to be mutually exclusive; but in the real world, this is not the case. Thus, when we want to explain changes or stability in discursive patterns, it is essential that we allow for diachronic *and* synchronic, global *and* local perspectives as well as for explanations involving *both* infrastructural *and* socio-cultural factors.⁴

This scheme of binary oppositions serves two purposes, intertwined in the following sections. First, it provides us with a model for studying change, a model that is empirical, and that is not in itself couched in a particular, modernistic, post-modernistic or other thought frame privileging either temporal or spatial outlooks. Instead, the focus will always be on the interplay between the diachronic and the synchronic, and so forth. Second it gives us a tool for the critical analysis of journalistic, popular and other discourses of change. What models of change or stability do *they* implicate? The concluding section will follow up on this programmatic statement.

All this relates to theoretical themes that have guided my earlier studies within the “Media Societies around the Baltic Sea” program, where I dealt concretely with problems in globalization theory, post-Soviet media developments, the global appropriation of contemporary Russian literary works, differences between national news discourses in the Baltic area and the transformed Swedish image of Russia in the 1990s – all of this within a theoretical framework that focuses on temporal and spatial conditions as well as time-space elements of mediated discourse. Throughout I have been inter-

ested in the myriads of intersections between the diachronic and the synchronic, between the global and the local, and between media as technological and as a social system. In this chapter I will draw on results from different studies that relate to the theme, "In Other Worlds". The results of the research on Estonia have not been published previously.

Mediated Discourses in a Comparative Perspective

Cross-cultural communication can be seen as an exchange, more or less equal, between different orders of discourse. Studies of such differences are useful when we want to understand how communication between sociocultural systems functions, or, if I may, "dysfunctions".

How are the "other worlds" represented by themselves, that is, by the national media inside these other worlds, with regard to basic categories of reality construction, above all, that of *time*? More specifically, how is the *present* tied to *pasts* and *futures* in media discourse? The use of time in journalistic narratives reveals national cultural discourses.⁵

In a recent study, a national divide could be noted in *Finland*, where the leading Swedish-language paper, representing a historical elite, seemingly tries hard to give a historical angle to most of its news – not anecdotally, as was the case with the *Danish* newspapers during the same period, but as a way of stressing continuity in a transitional world, thereby giving some consolation to a shrinking minority, as it were.

Similarly tentative interpretations of the Finnish and Estonian press place them, along with German newspapers, in the middle of the journalistic path towards modernization.⁶ This means that they, typically, focus on the present, and from that point, figure out what kind of futures are being worked out right now. The media of *Sweden* do the same, but with an expressed aspect of trust in the powers that are busy constructing the future for us. This takes us back to the peak of political modernity in 1950s Sweden, what is often called the People's Home (*Folkhemmet*). This return of a historical utopia comes at a time when the welfare state has receded beyond recognition.

Within the very short historical time span of the post-communist transition in Russia and Estonia, it might make sense to say that *Estonia's* print media have evolved much faster in the past decade than their *Russian* counterparts (although a study of developments in Russian television would probably show a different trend; see Vartanova 2002). Estonian news articles do not seem to differ significantly from, for instance, German news regarding their outlook on recent historical developments, whereas Russian newspapers give the impression that they are still struggling to be "modern".⁷ This leads us to the larger global context.

Post-communism is in many ways tied to the global media system, implying among other things that a new relationship between (or fusion of) politics

and commerce has developed. But this relationship looks different in different countries within the former Soviet world (Downing, 1996, Sparks, 1997).

What kinds of exchanges go on between the *global* and the *national/local*? One type of rather “uni-directional exchange” is, of course, the Western media’s framing and stereotyping of Other nations, for instance the construction of “post-communism” as an international, collective media effort.⁸ And, from the other side of the exchange, we have the global media reception and re-contextualization of national or local cultural products. One example is provided by a case study of the international marketing of a popular, contemporary Russian novelist. It could be shown that book covers of translations reflected both global clichés about Russia and Russians as well as other national cultural themes. There are global stereotypes, but these in turn appear in their Italian, German, U.S. and other variants (Ekecrantz, 2004).

We will now turn to the images that Swedish media have constructed of their Eastern neighbors, Russia and Estonia. How have they captured the wide-ranging transformations and the emerging new societies? How are these societies framed within the trans-national imagery of Swedish reporters?

Going to Russia: Back to Backwardness

In a study based on approximately 500 news stories in two major Swedish daily papers, a number of themes were distilled (using a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, as described in Ekecrantz, 2002).

We can identify some general figures of thought, or frames of interpretation, which are based on constructions of *differences* and *relations* in *time* and *space*. On the basis of these cornerstones, this narrative machinery, the repertoire of journalistic themes, is generated.

Spatial differences are explicit or implicit. Either they can appear in the form of outspoken comparisons between conditions in “our place” (the West, or Sweden), or they can be implied by more or less exoticizing descriptions of what it is like there, far away. The stereotypes of the East are often coupled to equally homogenizing images of the West – the one serving as a precondition for the other.

Temporal differences are constructed in ways that place the Others in some other time than ours – at varying distances from the time horizons of the narrative. Expressions like being “behind” combines such temporal positioning (belonging to an earlier period) with a spatial metaphor (being in, or towards, the back).

Spatial relations are involved in stories about East “meeting” West, and what happens in that meeting. This broader theme harbors a number of sub-themes, as will be seen below. Spatial relations, like spatial differences, can serve as explanations of war, or of peace.

Temporal relations are created when some correspondence between the past and the present is postulated. Most often this is achieved in ways that place the causes of present conditions in the past. This is the traditional historicist paradigm (history colonizes the present). By another logic, history would only consist of “one damned thing after another”. This logic is inherent in the news, which reports from day to day what has happened in the world. The former paradigm sometimes appears in news reporting – for instance in the form of historical interpretations and explanations – because of the contextualizing qualities that we expect from this particular journalistic genre.

A very different historical paradigm, the genealogical perspective, sets out to write the history of the present. This normally means that it is the present (with its cultural, political and other *esprits de temps*) that writes the history (the present colonizes the past), and not the other way round. This is, of course, what goes on all the time in news stories, in principle, but, at least in our material, it never surfaces in the text, in the form of reporter’s reflections concerning the construction of reality. This is to say that the reporter, while actually constructing this or that version of history, never problematizes his or her choices.

The themes that are generated in these ways in the reporting from Russia are, basically, the following ones. The first two create differences and relations in space, the next two in time. In different ways they can also mix, which gives room for different ideological story frames, as when fears or hopes are generated by meetings between East and West. The last theme represents a hopeful neo-colonialism: the West expanding inside the East.

- Eastwards/East of;
- Outposts;
- History is Alive;
- The Communist Inheritance;
- Between East and West (1): The Dangerous Encounter;
- Between East and West (2): The Fertile Meeting;
- The West in the East

In the following, a few quotations from the news material will be given. We will not exemplify these themes one by one here, but rather focus on examples that show how they may be weaved together in the texts. By combining temporal and spatial differences and relations an Other world is construed.

Let us first, as an illustration of the elasticity and ideological usefulness of time, quote the following from one of the news stories: *Our own watches read 12.30. In Murmansk it is half past two. But the time-lag between this place and Scandinavia, where we come from, can be counted in decades – It is like entering the Medieval world, comments Ian McCunn, an elderly man*

from the U.S. Here the author manages, in a few sentences, to unite clock time (hours), modern historical time (decades) and civilizational time (a broader millennial perspective). In clock time the East is ahead of the West, but that empirical fact is not allowed to spoil the story. In other contexts as well, the clock is instrumental (illogically or not) in the analysis of cultural and mental differences: *The time difference has always existed, and in the East one has always had a different way of thinking.* The little word “and” does the job and the second part of the sentence becomes self-explanatory. A difference explains a difference, which sounds natural.⁹

In many of these stories the East is a direction, more often than a place. This direction is very often underlined by strengthening words such as “straight” as in *St. Petersburg is a seven hundred kilometer flight to the east of Stockholm.* Or, again, when starting in Murmansk: *From Murmansk they go by helicopter 500 kilometers straight to the east . . .* And then the East also takes on certain qualities: *We drive a few miles to the east, on evermore primitive roads, and end up in a landscape without trees. We do not see any people at all.* From Moscow traveling eastwards is as predictable: *DN went out to a village near Ljubertsy, east of central Moscow, and encountered the families dragging their carts in the rain and the mud.* Other ascribed qualities are found in the following two, not untypical, textual fragments: *We ask Vladimir Nyurov if drinking is a big problem up here. – No, no, in this part it is not at all like it is further east. You never see a drunk woman around here.* And in this reporter’s “observation” concerning a building: *The staircase is East, shadowy, with a half-broken balcony.*

Were it not for the shadow and darkness there would be other causes for a general lack of transparency in Russia . . . *developments have been – especially in Yeltsin’s Russia – almost unsurveyable, one can quite simply not follow what is going on.* This can be so more metaphorically, as in the case of the flaneur in Nevskij Prospekt, who *looks out over the water. It is like looking into the future of Russia. We do not see a thing. Everything is lost in the mist.* Outside of Murmansk we saw dead trees and a world devoid of human beings. The East is a silent world. *Way out in the east the horizon touched the sky in a threatening way: this is where silence begins.*

The historiography of the texts establishes historical dependence, or similarity, between, on the one hand, feudalism and Communism and, on the other, between Communism and the present situation. A somewhat special view on this is expressed in the parenthesis (or “ice box”) idea, according to which age-old social and mental structures are now returning after the Communist interlude. The narratives about the post-communist condition are strikingly ambivalent. *Communism is dead and the Western world rejoices. But the system that fettered Soviet citizens in physical and mental chains for more than seven decades has left a devastating heritage.* Various things have been “left behind”, in particular a mentality, in its different forms, variously thematizing that *the ghosts of the past are still alive.* All this poses a threat to the West, a threat that is driven by both cultural and political forces.¹⁰

However, the negative descriptions of the East and of post-communism have their polar opposites in very different stories, where the encounters between East and West lack an undertone of potential conflict. Instead, these meetings take place in an aura of fertility, fecundity and bright hopes. In these narratives something else happens in the encounters between people and systems of culture, something that bears fruit. Also in these cases there are the historical parallels. *During the time the castle was erected an expansive community grew up around it. Commerce flourished because the geographical site between East and West was perfect. This is where the Vikings opened up their trade routes towards the enticing East.*

Sweden's historical *mission* (cf. Nordlund, 1999) eastwards has its modern counterpart in the entrance of Western capitalism into Russia. In these meetings it is not the military metaphors that are applied, the "outposts" and "bulwarks" are replaced by "meeting places" and nodes of communication, zones of control are turned into zones of contact in a rhetoric of friendly and productive encounter. *By now, foreign capital is welcome and there are advanced plans to turn Kaliningrad into a Hong Kong of the Baltic Sea . . . an attempt to recreate what was once carried out by the Hansa.* The future, in other contexts disguised by mist and darkness, is here filled with bright expectations. *A man from Moscow working in the computer business is full of confidence. Here, he says, is where East and West meet and the economy is growing.* West is considered the norm for the East, and hence the rhetorical question: *Don't most young people in Russia want the country to be as Western as possible?*

In the Swedish texts, everything that is described in positive terms in today's Russia is associated with Westernness. This is practical (perhaps banal) Orientalism coupled with Occidentalist utopias – dreams of a westernized planet. In other words, reporting from Russia has a strong touch of neo-colonial imagery. There is also a larger super-theme here, nourished by the East-West polarization, saying that They are *different* from Us and therefore They constitute a permanent danger to Us (xenophobia is of course the name for this). But we can at least do business with them and in that way make them a little more like us and, thus, a little less dangerous – to the benefit of both parties. This way of thinking dates back many, many years, and it is also applied to neighbors that are much closer, as we shall see.

Historical Metaphors for Relations Across the Baltic Sea

For the sake of *historical* comparison, I will include an example dating back to 1928, a report from Tallinn. We would perhaps not expect Orientalism (as a form of metaphorical warfare) to be at work so close to Sweden.

First, what *is* Estonia, exposed to Czarist (and before that a Swedish province), Nazi, Stalinist and Perestrojka rule and, for a time (1918-1940) having

a democratic constitution, which was then reinstalled in 1991? The historical maps, covering the last millennium, show us a place that has been a northern, an eastern, or a western “outpost”, and in the 1980s a sort of southern outpost for Finnish television (figures 1-6).

Estonia’s historically alternating position *in between* (sometimes the outpost metaphor has been replaced by the “bridge”), or as part of various power blocs, combines the temporal and the spatial into complex, open, multifaceted time-spaces – the chronotopes of the real world as Bakhtin calls them – that are not easily contained within most representational strategies.

We could go further back in time and find still other external dependencies, for instance on Danish pirates (“Tallinn”, etymologically: “Danish town”) or German orders. Today, Estonia is said to have “returned to the Western World” (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 1997).

How are these historical shifts and dramatic changes reflected, if they are reflected, in today’s journalistic representations, and those of the past? How is historical *change* textualized, if indeed it is, and to what extent is it suppressed by a more universalized, contemporary imagery of the Other, which downplays cultural *complexity* as well as cultural *exchange*?

Throughout the centuries and all social and political turmoil, a few cultural ideas have been remarkably persistent. One of these is the idea constituted by the Hansa, which first was a colonialist reality in the first centuries of the last millennium, and then became a metaphor for unity: the idea of *one people* (an original meaning as in the Finnish “kansa”, see further, Klinge, 1994).

The other idea is – as expected – captured by the backyard metaphor. It is Orientalistic or “East-West” oriented. These are perennial, very stable metaphors, as was seen in our earlier examples from Russia.

How are these historical shifts and dramatic changes reflected, if indeed they are reflected, in journalistic representations from times past? I will use an article by Harry Blomberg in the Social Democratic paper, *Ny Tid*, from 1928 as an illustration of what was obviously a dominant view in Sweden of the autonomous republic of Estonia, which had been constituted about a decade earlier. On the basis of this and additional sources, I find it reasonable to conclude that there were two dominant figures of thought about this former Swedish province at the time. They were connected to the two themes or metaphors of the *Hansa* and the *Backyard*, the former, a celebration of commerce across borders, the latter, a warning about terrible and potentially dangerous conditions beyond the border (see also Stråth, 2000).

Blomberg’s piece is a small literary masterpiece in the Orientalist tradition, communicating sights, sounds and smells from what is here described as an Oriental backyard. The parallels to news journalism from Russia in the late 1990s are striking, including not only the thematization of backwardness, but also the dreams of a trade community gradually obliterating cultural difference and political threats.

Six Historical Maps:

1. The “Drainage” Area



Ehrensward, U.; Kokkonen, P.; Nurminen, J. eds. (1998) *Mare Balticum: 2000 år av Östersjöns historia* [Mare Balticum: 2000 Years of Baltic Sea History]. Helsinki: Otava, p. 15.

2. Great Sweden



Atlas of World History (1993). New York: Rand McNally, p. 97.

3. Imperial Russia



Atlas of World History (1993). New York: Rand McNally, p. 133.

4. Reichskommissariat



Atlas of World History (1993). New York: Rand McNally, p. 148-149.

5. The Soviet Republic



Atlas of World History (1993). New York: Rand McNally, p. 152-153.



6. Today's Estonia

<http://worldatlas.com/web-image/countrys/europe/lcolor/ecolor.htm>

The piece was titled "The Black Bread in Reval".¹¹ It is a mix of horror, exoticism, and pride of the once Great Sweden, as demonstrated by the following extracts:

The Black Bread in Reval

His cab looks as if it were a remnant from the days of Peter the Great. In one's mind's eye, one sees the fleas starting a corybantic dance at the prospect of a square meal, but we restrain our fear and lounge about in the vehicle with Swedish dignity. The cab jumps hither and thither on terrible cobblestones, we cross a bridge, the planks of which are almost worn out by horse's hoofs. Elderly men and women work down here, loading and landing, and their clothes are torn and dirty gray. The horses are bony skeletons, and we get a distinct feeling that we have crossed the border separating Western and Eastern Europe . . . The first church that catches our eye has a gilded Byzantine imperial roof. Russia, Asia, the strangest of all places in the world, sends her greetings, if only as vague hints . . . The pavement is narrow and the traffic very heavy, creating an unbearable chaos which greatly disturbs the Swedish sense of order, this muddle becomes a yardstick for the general level of the culture. The street signs are also such markers . . . Estonian lacks words for the concept of street, those which exist mean fortress or village street. We would be wise to travel around in the world, not only to enjoy the sun and the bounties of the civilized countries, but to learn to understand people whose lives have elapsed on the shady side. Then we would also realize that it is a great and wondrous favor to be born Swedish . . . Against the backdrop of the political misery that has haunted this poor country, the old Swedish days radiate in a particularly beautiful light. It seems as if our ancestors were the only ones who bothered to understand, not just exploit the Estonians . . . to try to raise the country and create more tolerable conditions . . . Here a poor little people, just let out from serfdom and oppression, is struggling heroically for its own life and future. It has not yet been able to shake off all the marks of the past and its face is not yet finished, but it stands there with its hard-earned black bread and hopes for tomorrow.

A couple of general observations can be made. It is obvious, for instance, in this report from a Swedish traveler, that he foregrounds the visible traces of history at the expense of every detail concerning schemes for the future of the new republic. But the Other has no plans. Nonetheless, the contemporary Estonian society had, in just a few years, carried out far-reaching reforms in land ownership, cultural autonomy for different groups, and education. By this time, the number of students in Estonia was larger than in any other country in the world, according to the Swedish *Nationalencyklopedin*. Cultural diversity in the larger region would also affect the intellectual worlds in both the short run and long run, for instance in the form of Lotman's "cultural semiotics" (the famous Tartu school) and Bakhtinian

“translinguistics”, which first saw the light of the day in the 1920s multicultural Vitebsk (now Byelorussia) some 400 kilometers southeast of Tartu.

Our traveler does not, however, talk to anyone around him. Further, the description of the city is homogenizing. The only contextual parameter is its “Asianness”, strongly contrasting with its past “Swedishness”. There is no cultural complexity. Rather, here is where Asia begins with all that is implied by that act of definition.¹² There is some hope, however, that Asia will go away, some time, somehow.

Returning to the “Baltic Sea Province”

The journalistic discourses on Russia in the 1990s and the 1928 story from Tallinn can now be compared with contemporary news about Estonia – a comparison across both space and time. More than 70 years after Harry Blomberg’s ponderings during a ride through Tallinn, and on the other side of its history of the Soviet system: what and how do Swedish media report on its close neighbor on the other side of the Baltic Sea, in particular now, when post-feudalism is replaced by post-communism, and Tallinn is described in tourist ads as the foreign capital closest to Stockholm? We would not expect a similar portrayal of Estonia, as those in the texts on Russia, since Estonia is much closer socially and culturally, not only to Sweden, but also, historically, to Western Europe. There has also, of course, been a technological and political revolution in media communication, creating totally transformed conditions for mutual imagery and media contacts in general. The fact that major media in Estonia are owned and operated by Scandinavian companies is a reminder of the Hansa ideal of cross-border commerce as a leveler of difference. How does this work in practice?

An analysis of Swedish newspaper articles published over a twelve-month period (between 2001-2002) was conducted with the aid of digital archives. A number of themes recurred more frequently than others, and these also served to fuel the less common themes.

Two themes were by far the most frequent ones and also the ones most similar to the reporting on Russia: the productive encounters and threats from the East, as well as the Hansa and Backyard themes respectively, together underpinning the idea of a Swedish “mission” in the region. The Hansa theme strongly associates trade with peace and mutual understanding. There is also the *buffer* metaphor, so frequent in the 1930s – that the Baltic countries ward off various perils (“It is in the interest of Sweden that Balticum can defend itself”, “Estonia stopped people smugglers”).

Themes in Swedish news about Estonia today reflect a journalistic culture which echoes history (1920s and 1930s) and, in some articles, colonialist patterns of thought. In the material as a whole there is a lot of ambivalence, which has to do with certain differences across the various media.

Almost all of the articles with the Backyard theme were found in the major, national dailies, indicating the contours of a national media discourse. It can also be noted here that the expectation was that this theme would show up above all in the tabloids (sex, drugs, etc.), which was not the case.

This is what the Swedish press wrote about: (1) *The Local Meets the Local: There are no Others in the Province*; (2) *The Return of History: The Good Old Swedish Days*; (3) *Crisis-ridden Politics*; (4) *The Singing EU Revolution*, and, finally, the two most central themes: (5) *Mercenary Missionaries* and (6) *Threatening Problems in the Backyard*.¹³

1. *The Local Meets the Local: There Are No Others in the Province*

In the local papers, Estonia is described as a rather normal country, with quite normal people. They have problems, of course, but they are bound to disappear as a result of more extensive exchange. This local discourse is made up of reports on people-to-people contacts between Estonians and Swedes, for example groups of people (business groups, or people from educational institutions) visiting the other country on a friendly basis to set up or celebrate cooperation, e.g. the opening of a local photo exhibition ("Voices from Estonia"), happy retirees leaving for Estonia by boat, a Lion's Club in Sweden having collected paraphernalia for a similar club in Estonia. The Estonians are now coming, not as pirates as in the 13th century, but as medical doctors. There are friendship schools, cities and counties, whose representatives travel to and fro. Chambers of commerce organize seminars with Estonian visitors. In this local discourse, produced by local and regional papers, all the "Others" are notoriously absent, except when aid is handed out to Estonia's poor (in a children's home and a prison for women).¹⁴ Another article, the one that deals with a Swedish and an Estonian school collaborating around democracy and solidarity issues, yields to the Otherness theme in its headline, in which someone is quoted saying "Estonia is different".¹⁵ Maybe headline production is more in tune with dominant news discourses. It is noteworthy that the local media almost completely avoid reiterating some themes that show up in the national press, especially the "backyard problems" (below).

These meetings (cf. the Russian themes: dangerous vs. fertile above) are unmediated by journalists in the sense that it is not journalists who meet others (as in travel journalism), nor are the meetings set up by journalists (as when orchestrating confrontations). In these cases journalists just report on meetings taking place under the banner of local patriotism, celebrating local initiatives of whatever dignity. Under these conditions, otherness and difference is not an issue. On the contrary, it is *similarity* that is thematized, as is always the case with "friendship towns" or counties. The following is a description on the occasion of a visit taking place in Östersund with visitors from Valgama, friendship county to Jämtland: "Valgama is in many ways reminiscent of Jämtland. It is sparsely populated, distant from the capital and

is situated close to the border with another country".¹⁶ Another sub-theme is *dialog*. Discussions and exchanges of experiences are the dominant events.¹⁷

Maybe it is in the nature of things that the nation is absent from the local discourse. Obviously, bilateral, self-organized contacts on the local level are not tainted by dominant rhetorical figures and journalistic agendas on the national level (and, as will be illustrated later, national media not only focus on "national politics", but they are also capital-centered, nationalistic and spectacular). This leads us to the next theme.

2. The Return of History: The Good Old Days of Sweden

Many different papers contain cultural references to Estonia's Swedish period. There are various restoration activities: historical valuables, for instance documents kept in Swedish archives are returned to Estonia (saved from Soviet destruction), the Swedish king re-inaugurates a church, etc.¹⁸ This theme is often activated when the local meets the local. This, in turn, calls forth some reflections on traveling, journalistic and non-journalistic, as a means of getting to know others and their situations. We are reminded of the historical fact that travel across the Baltic Sea has been extensive throughout the centuries . . . Perhaps the local-to-local contacts re-actualize historical travel and a collective memory with no counterpart in the national media. This reactivated collective memory operates as if there had been no interludes between the "good old days" and the present. What has been in between is bracketed, put on ice, as it were. Estonia is now "back to the future", to cite a headline in *Borås Tidning* (May 17). This comes close to Reinhardt Kosseleck's spatial analogy which divides time into a horizon of expectations (modernization paradigm) and a space of experiences (modernity paradigm). The modernization road now lies open to the Estonians and the Swedish rhetoric of progress, selectively suppressing history, is imposed as a grid of interpretation on the changing Estonian society, "embalmed like a mummy" for so many years (Palonen 1997). In Estonia itself, historical discourse contains a strong element of memories more recent than those of the "good old Swedish days": "(H)istorical argumentation, in terms of recent historical memory, is, among the nations in the post-Soviet space, specific to Estonians, and makes up an essential part of the national self-reflection of Estonians" (Ruutsoo, 2002: 41). The return of history in Swedish news is not the same history, then, as that which is significant in contemporary Estonia. What about today's politics? In Estonia the present is now very much defined as the antithesis to Soviet times.

3. Crisis-Ridden Politics

In this period, most of 2002 and late 2001, Estonia experienced a governmental crisis, which dominated the political reporting. Conservative Prime

Minister Mart Laar's coalition was forced to resign. This forebodes a new situation in modern Estonian politics, after a decade of strong consensus. Other political news concerned conflicts over the new language law. Most political problems are related somehow to Estonia's application for EU membership, which is very much in focus in the national papers, in strong contrast to the local papers.¹⁹ The governmental crisis is a problem in the eyes of Swedish journalists just because it complicates the country's EU negotiations. Liberal *Göteborgs-Posten*, for instance, writes about "the unhappy situation in view of the ambitions to become a member . . .", and "the complicated situation this decisive year . . .". (two articles, January 9).

4. *The Singing EU Revolution*

The European song contest held in Tallinn in the month of May, 2002 is not a theme, but rather a subject or an event that triggers off the other thematizations, including local friendship, historical references, and Estonia's EU application. The song contest is actually sometimes seen as a form of political activism intended to help Estonia become a EU member as soon as possible: "The festival is intended to sell Estonia to the EU", or "Now I understand that this is much more than a song contest, it is part of a major political undertaking, the goals of which have nothing at all to do with pop music".²⁰ This "suspicion" has a more sinister side to it, since it implies that after being in the media spotlight for a while, Estonia will fall back into the shadows, where it normally belongs. Estonia is now "back from shadows", states another article. This reflects a more pessimistic view, only found in the larger papers, concerning the country's "Westernization" process.

Another sub-theme voiced also in this context is Swedish development aid, this time coming from Swedish television, providing advice, personnel and equipment.²¹

5. *Mercenary Missionaries*

The next two themes were by far the most frequent ones, and also the ones most similar to the reporting on Russia: the fruitful encounters and the threats from the East (united in the idea of a Swedish "mission"). With reference to the article from 1928, we can label them the Hansa and the Backyard themes. The Hansa theme is strongly associated with trade, with peace, and mutual understanding. There is also the *buffer* metaphor, so frequent in the 1930s, signifying how the Baltic countries ward off various perils: "It is in the interest of Sweden that Balticum can defend itself", "Estonia stopped people smugglers".

This theme suggests that the Estonian people may be different from us, but with the help of investments and marketing of Swedish products, they may become more like us. They are now taking a "decisive step into the Western parlors" (an expression reminding us of Blomberg's article from 1928).

We learn how European banks can help the former socialist economies, about governmental agencies (Swedac), large organizations (LRF) and major firms (NCC, Stora Enso) setting up businesses in Estonia during these months. The Hansa is sometimes an explicit theme as in "The Hansa reappears: globalization gives *new life to old trade routes* and makes the Baltic Sea highly interesting".²² In the last several years, Swedish media corporations have already bought most of the Estonian media, reminding us also of the colonization activities of the original Hansa.²³

6. *Threatening Problems in the Backyard*

This theme is by far the most frequently found in the material examined. First, one can note the same type of descriptions that we found both in the 1928 article, and in the Russian material: "a snowed over road, completely desolate, leads through a thick pine wood" (*DN*, April 14). Otherwise we mostly find problems related to bootlegging (and wood spirit) or drugs, trafficking of prostitutes and the spread of HIV/AIDS as the dominant forms of economic and social exchange between the two countries. A sample of headlines follow, all of them relating to articles about Estonia: *Estonia Weighed Down by Social Problems; Large Increase of Professional Criminals from Balticum; AIDS Explosion in Former Soviet Union; Estonia a Ticking AIDS bomb; Amphetamine from the East a Fast-Growing Problem; Sharp Increase in Drug Raids; Venereal Diseases Very Common in Estonia; Four Jailed After the Brothel Affair with Women from Eastern States; Pimp May Have Earned Millions; Baltic Criminality in Sweden Is Increasing Fast, It Gets More Violent and Better Organized; The Police Identify 400 Criminals from the Baltic Countries; etc., etc.*

As was mentioned above, almost all of these are found in the major national dailies, not in the tabloids.²⁴ It is the conservative *Svenska Dagbladet* (July 8) which gives us this depressing outlook: "I remember the faces of the young. Pale, haunted teenage faces with clouded, lost, lifeless gazes: 18 year-old Julia, who sold her youth to the sex industry, 20 year-old Maria, whose child in all probability will be born a heroin addict".

How to Explain Historical "Continuity"?

In the 21st, "globalized" century there are no temporal or spatial obstacles in the way of mediated communication (and no political obstacles to travel in the region) and, hence, no room for exoticism according to anthropological and sociological thinkers (such as anthropologist, Marc Augé, or sociologist, Anthony Giddens). On the contrary, the mainstream media tend to (re)produce rather atavistic images of the Other, contrary also to prevalent ideas of a "reflexive modernity", which is at the same time a global modernity (propagated by Ulrich Beck, among others). A practical conclusion would be that

multicultural, transnational, late modern social realities are far beyond the imagined communities of modern journalistic discourse, and thus incomprehensible from the standpoint of these communities. In Sweden we are offered a curious mix of traditionalistic and modernistic discourses in which the modernization and internationalization of a country's economy, technology, etc. coalesces with an astounding absence of social and cultural transformation in the social and cultural imagery of late modernity's national media. In this sense, the mainstream media can be seen as a truly conservative force in society. The really new, which they are supposed to reflect in their news, can seldom or never make it through all the filters and industrialized routines.

Provided that the conclusion can be accepted – that today's news media largely reproduce worldviews belonging to times past – we are confronted with a paradox to be explained. We can only speculate here, and suggest the following four alternative but not mutually exclusive, explanations:

1) Petrification of journalistic discourses?

Journalism is built on a limited and basically unchangeable set of discursive practices – all institutions thrive on the realities they institute. There is a fixed, very narrow, and very stable repertoire of descriptive, discursive techniques when reporting from abroad. However, journalism elsewhere in the 1920s reveals very few similarities with today's journalism. Perhaps it is the Orientalist “model” that is constitutive of foreign reporting, *difference* being its *raison d'être*?

2) Collective journalistic memory?

Collective memories are stronger than the validity of new information – events do not rock the imagined world as much as we tend to believe. Rather, it is the frames that “produce” the events, in a way. However, is there such a thing as a collective journalistic memory? Yes, it exists in envelopes in newspaper archives. But not in this case: there is nothing going back to the 1920s in these archives. It is rather cultural myths in contemporary society that are operating here. Estonia, for instance, was almost non-existent in the Swedish media for about half a century, so reporting seems to continue as it had some 70 years ago. Post-czarism or post-communism: we are told the same story.

3) Permanence (repetitiveness) of geopolitical patterns and interests?

Some basic geopolitical facts or national security interests remain the same, providing the cornerstones for foreign reporting in mainstream, national media. Journalism has always been close to the interests of the political elite.

In the case of Estonia, official Swedish interests (security and commerce) remain the same in the post-communist period as in the post-czarist era: at the same time a market in which to invest, and a buffer zone.

4) *“Narrating the nation” as the modernistic
discourse par préférence?*

Journalism’s roots in early modernity limit its representational strategies to a (non-scientific) version of “methodological nationalism” (Beck, 1998:39, 2002:21), hampering, above all, its understanding of transnational realities. Nation-ness is perhaps the dominant way of understanding the foreign or the “outlandish”. The nation then has a double impact: first as that which defines Us (Swedishness), then as the interpretative, stereotyping framework that defines Them.

The combination of 1 and 4 reflects the institutional need for a stable repertoire of discursive techniques and “methodological nationalism” (Beck) stemming from the common historical roots of journalism and the nation-state. This is a mutual relationship in which journalism lives off state institutions and their production of “authoritative” source materials and, conversely, serves to stabilize the state. This close relationship produces dominant narratives of ethnicity as noted by Mustafa Hussain in a recent study: “. . . the symbolic construction of ethnicity is an integral part of identity politics embedded in the dominant discourse which is articulated by the discursive practices of the national institutions in a dialectical interplay with the media discourses” (Hussain, 2003: 115). The alternative that suggests itself would be an “anthropologization” of foreign reporting, making it more sensitive to increasing cultural complexity and diversity and less attuned to national stereotypes of both Them and Us.

However, all four explanations are complementary and make up a complex framework. With reference to the analytical scheme with which we began, we can easily identify both temporal and spatial parameters at work in this explanatory framework. Diachronic dimensions are intermeshed with synchronic ones. The “nationalism” of mainstream reporting is at once a historical remnant from early modernity and a product of contemporary media conditions and markets. Local and national media do produce different types of messages. Furthermore, persistent, age-old geopolitical patterns are upheld by and, in turn, legitimate contemporary interests.

All this adds up to a professional and institutionalized *denial of complexity*²⁵ as well as of cultural transformation. News does not simply produce “simplifications” of the complex. Rather, it constructs a very special and homogenized view of the world that has long been ensconced in the mutual exchange and misunderstanding across borders.

Beyond Otherness: Final Remarks

No doubt a banal Orientalism is at work in these texts. But isn't there a risk that the repetitious criticism of this figure of thought (for instance in so much postcolonialist writing) just reproduces this Orientalism by producing a similarly universalist (meta)discourse?

Part of the problem seems to be a certain fixation on people. The fixation on Us/Them, black vs. white, other voices, all kinds of visual or behavioral human deviance, etc., overshadows other contexts that determine difference, and thus hampers the analyses of otherness. Otherness and difference also reside, not only metaphorically, in things, environments, built or natural. These are also subjected to distance-shaping discourses – or are integral parts of them – and should consequently be addressed by critical discourse analysis.²⁶ Ulrich Beck deals with this problem in terms of “external othernesses”: the otherness of nature, the otherness of other civilizations and of other modernities, and the otherness of the future (Beck, 2002:18ff). The meta-discourse on Orientalism must thus broaden its concept of “otherness”.

More subtle analyses of the multitude of narrative techniques and strategies used in the mediation of Otherness, in different types of media, are also needed (something which may have been indirectly demonstrated here). Discourses on otherness and difference are an integral part of an ever expanding global and strongly visual culture. This implies that we are now coming across another media paradox. If national media serve to conserve national imagery of Others, one would expect global media to have no Others (except aliens) for the simple reason that they are global. This has also been suggested by some anthropologists and sociologists, who have not studied media specifically. However, the truth seems to be that the so-called global media are engaged in Othering large portions of the world population, in particular the Islamic world.²⁷ The cause for this suggests itself. What is often called global media may be more or less global. It is often a matter of the global consumption of non-global productions. This is just another example of global/local complexity adding to the intricacies of time and of the mazes of modernization.

Notes

1. Concerning the special relevance of the Post-Soviet region for media studies, see also Bolin's arguments: “So, why does the former Eastern block seem to be the most fitting object of study in relation to theoretical questions on media's role in social and cultural change/. . ./. Undoubtedly, the eastern parts of Europe are a part of the world where the last couple of decades have redrawn maps, restructured economies, rewritten histories and reformulated cultural ideals, and thus have transformed both the physical and the symbolic environment” (Bolin, 2003:31).
2. James Clifford, the anthropologist, writes about *roots* and *routes* representing the tension between the modern (roots) and the postmodern (routes) (Clifford, 1997).

3. Clifford is a leading representative of this relational perspective: “/. . ./ emerging conceptions of translocal (not global or universal) culture /. . ./ new theoretical paradigms explicitly articulate local and global processes in relational, non-teleological terms /. . ./ The new paradigms begin with historical contact, with entanglement at intersecting regional, national, and transnational levels”. (Clifford 1997: 7).
4. Elsewhere we have applied these discursive categories in comparative media historical case studies (Ekecrantz, Maia & Castro, 2003).
5. It should be noted that the analysis of temporal orientation in texts can be based on grammar (but not for all languages, as will be evident), but also on content: how the text relates the contemporary to times past, or times to come.
6. Some German, Finnish and Estonian headline examples: (German) “Durchbruch bei Verhandlungen in Bonn – Regulierung bald überflüssig”; “Metall will Rente mit 60 Tarifgesprächen regeln”; “IRA kompromissbereit bei Waffenaufgabe”; “Bewegung bei der Zwangsarbeiter-Gesprächen – Vorsichtiger Optimismus nach höheren Angebot der deutschen Industrie”. (Finnish) “EU agrees on defense and troops. The aim is to establish a force as large as 100 000 men”; “Universities want part of innovation money. Nowadays researchers and firms split between them the whole lot”; (Estonian) “New tax makes car a luxury product. For the time being coalition lacks common attitude towards new vehicle tax”; “The price of heating rises 18% in July next year”.
7. The modernizing foreign influence on the Estonian press – not only that resulting from the dominant Scandinavian ownership, but also that resulting from the cultural influence of, e.g. France and the U.S. – has been documented by Kertu Saks (2002).
8. See e.g. Ekecrantz & Olofsson (2000).
9. This cosmology of difference does not work, of course, when traveling straight south, for instance to countries in Africa where there is no time difference from Sweden. Backwardness then needs other semantic techniques.
10. This theme is voiced also by Kapuscinski in his book *The Empire* (1993). See also Waldstein (2002), for a criticism of Kapuscinski’s “Orientalism”.
11. Harry Blomberg, *Ny Tid*, 19 juni 1928, UD:s arkiv. RA. UD:s tidningsklipp. Serie 2, vol. 704a (cited in Sven Nordlund, 1999). The translation is by the present author and the Swedish original can be found in Appendix 1).
12. Nordlund (1999:96) comments that it was common at the time to draw the border between East and West along the Baltic coastline beyond which you find yourself “in the heart of the Asian darkness” (“mitt inne i mörkaste Asien”) according to one journalist writing in *Stockholms-Tidningen* in 1935.
13. Three electronic newspaper archives have been scanned for this study (searching for articles including the word “Estland”): *Presstext*, *Mediearkivet* and *AffärsDatas Nya Artikelarkiv*.
14. See, for instance, *Nya Ludvika Tidning*, June 20 (2002 if not otherwise stated) and June 27; *Borås Tidning*, July 1; *Nerikes Allebanda* July 13, September 16, September 17; *Östersunds-Posten*, August 16; *Gefle Dagblad*, April 21.
15. *Göteborgs-Posten*, April 28.
16. *Östersunds-Posten*, August 16.
17. See, for instance, *Nerikes Allebanda*, September 16, about Swedish teachers discussing environmental problems with Estonian colleagues.
18. See, for instance, *Svenska Dagbladet*, April 6 and May 6; *Nya Dagen*, April 30.
19. See, for instance, *Svenska Dagbladet*, November 23, 2001; *Göteborgs-Posten*, December 20, 2001, January 9, January 23; *Aftonbladet*, January 10.
20. *Göteborgs-Posten*, May 24.
21. See, for instance, *Vestmanlands Läns Tidning*, September 24, 2001; *Helsingborgs Dagblad*, May 22, 23; *Dagens Nyheter*, May 23, 24, 25; *Göteborgs-Posten*, May 18, 24; *Svensk Tidskrift*, May, 2001. Later, Staffan Ericsson and colleagues published a study of this whole event (Ericson, 2002).

22. See, for instance, *Borås Tidning*, December 21, 2001; *Aftonbladet*, January 29; *Göteborgs-Posten*, April 21, *Dagens Nyheter*, May 18, May 26, May 28, June 17, 18, August 15; *Tempus*, November, 2002, *Svenska Dagbladet*, October 4; *Dagen Industri*, August 16, 22, 25, September 26; *TT*, November 28, 2001. (Emphasis mine.)
23. Vihalemm (2002). In October of 2002, MTG is said to have increased its share of the Estonian audience. See further examples in *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 18, 26, and 28, June 17, and August 15.
24. See, for instance, *Dagens Nyheter*, April 11, 14, 15, June 7, July 2, 11, August 26; *Göteborgs-Posten*, September 26; *Svenska Dagbladet*, May 8, July 3, 19, October 10; *TT*, July 17, August 7, 26, and September 7. This theme is obviously also prevalent on the Finnish side, according to Johannes Salminen: “/. . ./ in Finnish eyes, the Estonians are more and more often associated with smuggling and drug crimes. An evening paper even cries out that an HIV epidemic threatens to spread from the brothels in Tallinn”. (Kaplinski/ Salminen, 2002:27). For two examples of Finnish (Swedish language papers) stories on this theme, see *Hufvudstadsbladet*, August 13, 2001: “A Whole Generation Endangered” (on AIDS in Estonia) and *Vasabladet*, February 8: “How Drugs Come to Vasa: from Estonian Labs/. . ./”
25. Cf. the concept “intolerance of ambiguity” in social psychology.
26. Like the “Eastern balcony” in the above example: “the staircase is East, shadowy and with a half-broken balcony”.
27. See, for instance, several contributions in the recent anthology edited by Daya Kishan Thussu and Des Freedman (2003).

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Appendix 1

Det svarta brödet i Reval.

Hans droska förefaller vara från Peter den stores tid. I andanom ser vi hur lopporna begynna en korybantisk dans inför utsikten till ett skrovsmål men vi bemantla vår fruktan och vräka oss med svensk värdighet i åkdonet. På fruktansvärda kullerstenar hoppar droskan hit och dit, vi fara över en bro vars plankor är nästan genomgrävda av hästhovar. Gubbar och gummor arbeta här nere med lastning och lossning och deras kläder är trasiga och smutsgrå. Hästarna är magra skelett och vi få en intensiv känsla av att ha överskridit gränsen mellan Väst- och Östeuropa. / . . . / Den första kyrka vi råka kasta ögonen på bär förgyllda bysantinska lökkupoler. Ryssland, Asien, den sällsammaste av alla världsdelar sänder oss en hälsning om också endast i vaga antydningar. / . . . / Trottoarerna är små och trafiken mycket stark, så uppstår ett olidligt kaos, som i hög grad stör det svenska ordningssinnet; oredan blir ett gradtecken på den allmänna kulturnivån. Även gatuskyltarna äro sådana tecken. / . . . / Estniska saknar ord för begreppet gata, de ord som finns betyder fästning och bygata. / . . . / Vi gör klokt i att icke fara ut i världen bara för att njuta av sol och kulturländernas håvor utan också för att lära oss förstå deras liv som förflutit på skuggsidan. Därmed skulle vi också inse att det är en stor och förunderlig nåd att vara födda till svenskar. / . . . / I det politiska elände som förföljt det stackars landet . . . strålar den gamla svenska tiden i ett särskilt vackert ljus. Det förefaller som om våra förfäder var de enda som gjort sig besvär att begripa esterna, inte bara utsuga / . . . / att söka höja landet och skapa drägligare förhållanden. / . . . / Här kämpar ett litet fattigt folk, nyss utsläppt ur livegenskap och förtryck, sin hjältemodiga kamp för eget liv och egen framtid. Det har ännu inte kunnat skaka av sig det förgångnas alla kännemärken och ej fått sitt ansikte färdigt men det står där med sitt dyrköpta svarta bröd i handen och hoppas på morgondagen.

(Harry Blomberg, *Ny Tid*, 19 juni 1928)

Knowing Me, Knowing You

Mediated Identities in the Eastern Baltic Sea Region

Kristina Riebert & Patrik Åker

This essay attempts to draw some general theoretical lessons from different empirical studies of how identity is constructed in Scandinavian journalism dealing with countries around the Baltic Sea Region. Broadly speaking, the various genres of journalism we studied display two ostensibly conflicting mechanisms – on the one hand, the creation of uncertainty about risk and threats from both inside and outside the reporting countries, and, on the other hand, reassurance through the rehearsal of the familiar. Understanding how journalism creates uncertainty about our world through its content is not difficult, since news stories confront us with crises, conflict, powerlessness, social evils, and so on. The ever-increasing flow of information about different risks serves to amplify fear and anxiety, intensifying the need to seek safety in communities (Bauman, 2001). The main function of journalism is often assumed to be documentation and explanation, but what is often glossed over is the ritualistic dimension of journalism which involves remembering, interpreting, celebrating, mourning, and sharing among members of a community, thus creating security.

The culturalist tradition of inquiry stresses the importance of the ritual and communal functions of journalism, i.e. of news in terms of its meaning-making rather than informational functions (Zelizer, 1997). Meaning-making refers to the symbolic spaces and collective memories constructed through repertoires of narratives and stereotypes grounded in codes of knowledge taken for granted by news producers, and assumed to be shared by news consumers. In what follows, we analyze identification processes in the events, issues and people who make up the “world of the media”, as well as the symbolic spaces and meanings constructed about the Baltic Sea Region via the way journalistic genres address their audiences. The studies on which we base these observations consist of texts and photographs in several national Scandinavian dailies, feature magazines, Scandinavian television news, and a special event that was televised.

It has been said that the end of the Cold War affected the analytical framework from which journalists reported international events. The bipolar world

had given journalists the security of a geo-political framework, one that allowed them to classify nations according to simple notions of good and bad, “our guys” and “their guys”, and so on (Hess, 1996; Hannerz, 2004). Along with the events of 1989-91 came increasing signs of globalization and the concomitant weakening of the nation-state. Up until that time, modern journalism had developed within the framework of the nation-state, creating an ideal of the public sphere that excluded those outside certain geographic (and political/cultural) boundaries. Along with technology-driven deregulation, and the increasing competition and commercialization of the media, the intimate relationship between journalism and the nation-state is no longer a given. How, if at all, have these changes been reflected in Scandinavian journalism, and what types of identities, in such turbulent times, are mediated in news from and about the Baltic Sea Region?

A Culturalist Perspective and the Identity Process

Identification is a fundamental human need, essential for a sense of security and well-being. To have a collective identity means that individuals have been socialized into, or identify with, a group, and, to varying extents, they have internalized narratives and symbols representative of the group. In times of crisis, according to Bloom (1990), a “dynamic adaptive process” comes into play by which the individual will act either to strengthen existing identifications, or adapt his/her identifications to new circumstances. Bloom believes the same process should be at play in collective identities, whether they be familial, occupational, ethnic or national – in times of uncertainty existing identifications are either strengthened or new elements must be incorporated into identities.

While the adaptive process might apply in similar ways to both individual and collective identities, there is, of course, a difference between individual (or subjective) and collective (or social) identity. Here, we are dealing only with the latter – principally national or transnational identities. This is because our studies have focused on mediated identities in news texts and images – i.e., on communication by the few for the many, as Thompson (1995) would say – not on the reception of the media by people in everyday life. The cultural functions of the media are to provide and distribute specific values and knowledge through which we perceive the “worlds” and “lived realities” of others, and with what resources we build a sense of self and our place in the world. Obviously, these resources for organizing or patterning peoples’ experiences interact with lived experiences to vary extents, but how different individuals use such symbolic forms is beyond the scope of this essay. However, we would like to say in passing that we agree with Thompson’s (1995: 210 ff.) view that individuals actively and continuously

produce and reproduce their identities, albeit within the power structures and the media content available to them.¹

Our approach is mainly a cultural one, in which news texts (in the broad sense of “text”) are conceived of as part of the symbolic systems prevalent in given national and transnational contexts. The culturalist approach does not, therefore, discount the ideological climate that can be created by governing elites and social institutions, but rather sees these as interacting with various political cultures (Schudson, 2000:192). Viewing news texts (in their broadest sense) as symbolic goods helps us analyze the structures and functions of the media’s form as well as content.

/.../ [N]ews is a form of literature, and among the resources journalists work with are the traditions of story-telling, picture-making and sentence construction they inherit from their own cultures, with a number of vital assumptions about the world built in. (Shudson, 2000: 193).

The Media and Collective Identities

Collective identity consists of those characteristics by which a group recognizes, describes or identifies itself in opposition to those the group is not. Certain types of identities may be stable, but as noted above, this is a dynamic process, not something once and for all given. Schlesinger (1993: 2-7) describes a continuing “construction and reconstruction of a sense” of who the members of a group are “by self-identifying communities”, involving “active strategies of inclusion and exclusion” by which the boundaries of the community are “policed”. Identity is constituted by delineating Us from Others, but also by suppressing differences and highlighting similarities within the group. The development of national identity, for example, would thus be seen as the unification of cultural diversity under the “symbols and practices” defined by some powerful groups over others (Barker, 1999: 68; Calhoun, 1993). Regarding Others, these can be defined as Enemies, but they may also be Allies or Protégés, related to Us in various ways, e.g., less fortunate groups, groups with strange customs and traditions, poorer cousins who want to become more like Us (Billig, 1995), and so on.

The advent and proliferation of the mass media is key to understanding collective identity formation and socialization into modern communities. Two studies, which highlight the media’s role in shifting temporal and spatial boundaries, thereby enabling new forms of collectivity, are Benedict Anderson’s oft-cited *Imagined Communities* (1991) and Robert Wuthnow’s *Communities of Discourse* (1989). Anderson emphasized the importance of print technology and capitalism for the constitution of the nation-state in the 1500s. The print medium together with the economy of capitalism made possible the necessary temporal/spatial shifts so that people in different

physical places could participate in the same symbolic goods (i.e. the Bible, the novel, and the newsletter). This encouraged social relationships between people who would never meet face to face, but who would be sharing similar rituals. The standardization of language and the increase in literacy broadened the “imagined” community beyond previous spatial boundaries. Temporal aspects of the community were also affected by new notions of linearity (i.e. the calendar), and the ability to promote a collective past, a sense of the present, and a future worth fighting for.

Wuthnow (1989) applied a similar approach to the institutionalization of the significant ideological transformations Europe has witnessed over the last several hundred years: the Reformation, the Enlightenment, and Utopian Socialism. He asked why these ideological changes took hold in some societies, but were rejected in others. His answer is that the production and distribution of printed matter was crucial for the success of these ideologies, and, furthermore, that the texts that inspired them and allowed them to flourish could be interpreted as defining the most important problems in society and offering the most plausible solutions. Both these historical studies highlight the importance of the media for changes in the physical *and* symbolic space for collective identity. In explaining the factors essential to the creation of a sense of community, they draw attention not only to the geographic places where people live their lives and how these places are related to symbolic ideas about those places, but also to the ways people organize the production and circulation of symbolic goods, and, finally to the importance of collective memory.

P.W. Preston (1997) addresses three aspects of community in his study of political/cultural identity, which he conceives of as an expression of the individual's relationship to the community. Political/Cultural identity consists of: locale (the ways we dwell in geographic places), network (the interactions among people) and memory (how this is brought together, stored and retrieved).

This trio points to the ways in which we inhabit a particular place, which is the sphere of routine activity and interaction and is richly suffused with meanings, which in turn is the base for a dispersed series of networks of exchanges with others centred on particular interests, all of which are brought together in the sphere of continually reworked memory. (Preston, 1997: 43-44)

Locale is important for identity because of the depth of everyday experience: from the most local – our family, our neighborhood, the organizations we spend our time in (work and play) – all the way up to various institutional and bureaucratic spheres and the nation-state, and, at the broadest level, the way we relate to the symbolic ideas surrounding us in the world of the media. Identity as established through networks, says Preston, is about the ways we interact with people at all levels, from the private to the public domain, from the familiar to the unfamiliar. An identity established via networks is different from one established via locale since, in the case of networks, the “/.../ patterns of relationships which constitute identity do have a spread:

they are not concentrated in one place, they encompass a particular space". (Preston, 1997: 46-8).

The role of memory in Preston's notion of political/cultural identity has to do with how these sets of relationships extend over time, how the past is used to explain and judge the present, how sets of ideas affirmed by a group and acknowledged by a collectivity come to be called history. "History" is:

/.../ a basis for ideas of continuity; a store of experience and knowledge to inform future activity; a sphere of reflective self-understanding; a fluid sphere liable to alteration in light of new events or merely via the passage of time (Preston, 1997: 52-53).

Like many scholars, Preston is at pains to emphasize the contingency and contested nature of these political/cultural identities. In particular, with the advent of new global structures and the extension of the liberal capitalist system throughout the world, political/cultural identities are also likely to change. We would argue that just how and why these changes take place couldn't be fully addressed without a notion of the role of the media in these processes. Unfortunately, Preston says little about the media, beyond noting that they do convey meanings and have some bearing on "the patterns of common-sense reflection" on our world, for example, by positioning audiences as consumers, or providing political understandings about institutional structures. In the next two sections, we attempt to demonstrate how locale (place) and memory (time) in media representations are integral to collective identity formation in modern societies.

Media, Place and Space

In the wake of the de-territorializing patterns of physical and mental mobility brought about by globalization, David Morley (2000: 2-3) re-examines the core of imagined communities – the notion of the "home". He analyses the "home, the homeland and the nation", both as physical places, and in terms of the symbolic ideas associated with them. The role of the media, he says, is to bring the public sphere into the private sphere, but also to create shared experiences through "broadcast time and ritual".

According to Morley, the way we experience "home" today differs from how previous generations experienced home. Geographic mobility, voluntary as well as involuntary (through unemployment, refugees, etc.), has increased substantially, with the result being that we live in uniquely multicultural societies. People with different backgrounds, customs and traditions are increasingly living side by side, sharing the same physical spaces. Another term for this shift in the experience of locality is what Ulrich Beck (2000) has called "globality", i.e. a general awareness of the links between

local, regional, and transnational phenomena, the sense that the world is organically interconnected, and that countries can no longer isolate themselves from the rest of the world. This experience of “globality” can also be found in Tomlinson’s notion of globalization:

It is /.../ in the transformation of localities, rather than in the increase of physical mobility /.../ that the process of globalisation perhaps has its most important expression. This is to suggest that though increased physical mobility is an important aspect of globalisation for some categories of people, “for most people, most of the time the impact of globalisation is felt not in travel but in staying at home” (Morley, 2000: 14).

That is, the media’s symbolic power resides quite simply in its ability to alter our experiences of place through the daily habit of viewing media images of distant places, people and events.

Parallel to the globalization process, there has been a resurgence of reactionary and nostalgic politics, which endeavor to protect a particular geographic territory (whether national or local) or culture from the dangers of external influence. Such perceptions of an unsafe world have also given rise to aggressive nationalism, ethnic separatism, and the exclusion of certain groups as not really “belonging”. The news media tend to reinforce this by addressing primarily national or local audiences, by allowing themselves to be used as tools of propaganda in ethnic conflict or by favoring the dominant groups in society (Carruthers, 2000; Cottle, 2000) Hagen (1994) describes how news coverage of “conflicts and disasters seems to confirm a sense of Norwegian (read: Western) superiority and safety”.²

Media and communication technologies thus play a crucial, if paradoxical role in the cultivation of community. They allow the public sphere to be “imagined” within the confines of private spaces. This public sphere consists not only of local and national cultures, but also of images of cultures of Others and lifestyles different from our own. Thus, while the proliferation of media technologies compresses our time-space experiences, thereby affecting our sense of place, our sense of place is also impinged upon by the lives and problems of Others (on a global scale). If the media provide the symbolic space for imagining national communities, then they should also play a key role in the reinvention of local, national or transnational communities in times of change. Indeed, some have argued that the increasing complexity of modern life has led to the need to maintain a balance between several overlapping “plural” or hybrid identities (Jansson, 2001; Gripsrud, 1999: 16). New identity hybrids can, for example, result from identifications at both the local and transnational level (Barker, 1999). Given the mediated nature of identities, this should come as no surprise, since the media could address “us” as both Europeans and Danes, as Westerners and Swedes, and so on. The types of identities and communities that are reinvented or reinforced is, however, an empirical question, one that we shall discuss in the following pages.

Media and Collective Memory

Many globalization scholars have been preoccupied with shifts in our conceptions of time-space. Ekecrantz (2000) argues that globalization theories have most often focused on perceived changes in notions of space, rather than on the role of time and history. Ekecrantz's studies, as well as our own, point to the importance of local, national, and historical contexts for media representations around the Baltic Sea Region.³ Media flows must be understood in the context of history, whether this context be transnational, regional, national, or local. By focusing on temporal aspects it becomes possible to understand how media representations can be interpreted in relation to different symbolic spaces and the role these play in identity formation. For example, a global event like the September 11 attacks against the U.S. can, from an American or Western perspective, be described as attacks against the "free world", against our historical legacy of democracy and equality. Other cultures could, however, have difficulty identifying with this version of the symbolic meaning of the attacks, but see them instead as an expression of pent-up hatred for Western imperialism.

If a sense of place is a building block to collective identity, then memory is another key aspect. Important for the maintenance of communities is collective memory – used to evoke identification of group members with a unique and highly selective past, posited to be shared by the group. It therefore comes as no surprise that the rehearsal of history has become commonplace in media discourse; from the highlighting of significant events of the past year and commemorations of turning points in history (i.e. ten years since the massacres in Rwanda) to the colonization by the entertainment industry of the lives of historical figures, or "popular documentaries" where soldiers are asked to recount their experiences. The consequences of the dominance of media representations of history have both advocates and detractors, according to Alejandro Baer (2001). The pessimists accuse the culture industries of reducing history to entertainment and spectacle. A more positive view is that media representations make history more accessible to a greater number of people. The proliferation of media channels may also entail a greater likelihood of plurality in the interpretations of history, a position Baer himself prefers.

Morley & Robins (1995) see the German made-for-TV film series *Heimat* as an example of a reaction to dominant Hollywood media interpretations of German history. This example could be seen to strengthen Baer's argument that the media circulation of history entails a greater diversity of interpretations. On the other hand, Huyssen (2001) posits that mediated versions of the Holocaust memory have contributed to a "globalization paradox". The Holocaust is a globally circulated "universal trope" because it has become a symbol for the failure of the project of Enlightenment in the twentieth century. This means that:

In the transnational movement of memory discourses, the Holocaust loses its quality as index of the specific historical event and begins to function as a metaphor for other traumatic histories and memories. /.../ The global and the local of Holocaust memory have entered into new constellations which beg to be analyzed case by case; while Holocaust comparisons may rhetorically energize some discourses of traumatic memory, they may also work as screen memories or simply block insight into specific local histories. (Huysen, 2001:60-61).

These examples have parallels with the media globalization discussions of the 1990s – globalization is not simply a matter of domination and homogenization, but can become a source of conflict or reinforce cultural differences in the way that the *Heimat* series resists a hegemonic media discourse, or through language, markets, and ideology which still largely anchor local media to national culture.

Collective memory gives meaning to traditions, social and cultural institutions, and certain “ways of life”, but memory can also serve as a justification for political decisions and courses of action. Similarly, different ethnic or national cultures construct a set of foundation myths from which different aspects are highlighted according to the purpose they serve in different historical periods (Stråth, 2000). In national identity discourse, memory is associated with certain key events and figures that are told and retold, by politicians, in education, as well as through the media in fictional and non-fictional genres. Common foundation myths deal the origin of the group, specific characteristics of the group and concepts of a specific “destiny”; and these tend to be resuscitated in times of crises, rapid change or external threat.⁴

Central to the construction and maintenance of national collective memory in the twentieth century has been the education system, as well as cultural institutions such as the museum, and the media. With the proliferation of television, however, history has gained a presence, an immediacy, which promotes an emotional identification with that which is depicted. According to Edy (1999), the news media are particularly important to the sustaining of collective memory since journalists claim to provide “factual accounts of what ‘really’ happened”, and because the past is used as a context for explanations, for analogies, or as a yardstick against which to judge later events. Such news accounts then become recycled – an element in a stock of situations that are pegged to new stories, forming commonsense versions of history. Over time, and with the inevitable framing that takes place in the retelling of stories in different media, the interpretations of the past may ultimately be altered (Edy, 1999: 71-72, 83). Here, one could add that popular media interpretations of the past, especially versions that are “dramatized” or “based on a true story”, may become more widespread than those of other institutions such as universities, at best drawing the media into a power game of competing definitions of the past, at worst de-legitimizing educational or less entertaining versions.

In the genre of what Dayan & Katz (1992) have called “media events”, the media actually define and participate in making history. While this differs from the ways that media circulate versions of history, it constitutes another example of how the media are important in the symbolic organization of collective memory. These “high holidays of mass communication” (i.e. what they call “contests, conquests and coronations”) invite viewers to participate in a “historical” moment of live television broadcasting – whether these be the Olympics, state funerals, or moon landings. Media events are often planned, they reach large international audiences, and are imbued with, or framed by, reverence and ceremony; the symbolic space opened allows viewers to “watch history unfold”. Some media events have transformative power: by reorganizing time and place, they touch emotions and change attitudes, making possible what previously had been unthinkable. The Pope’s visit to Poland in 1979, for example, functioned as a catalyst for a reorganization of collective memory – Poland was transformed from an “Eastern bloc” country to part of Catholic Europe. (Dayan & Katz 1994: 182)

In modern societies then, identity and the formation of identity are largely shaped by, through, or in some relation to, the media. Notions of place and memory are central in collective identity formation. Let us now turn to our concept of “mediated identity”, and its use in our studies of the Baltic Sea Region.

Mediated Identities

In our studies of press photography, television news, feature stories, summit meetings and media events in different national media, we were interested in two dimensions of “mediated identities”. We can call these: the world(s) of the media and the world(s) of the ideal addressee. The former has to do with what people, places and events inhabit the various mediated worlds representing the Baltic Sea Region. Such mediated “identities” can be those of the politician, diplomat, average citizen, victim, or celebrity. They exist in places which could either be related to our previous experience or not, doing things that we either can identify with or not. The world(s) of the addressee describes how journalists position audiences through various techniques. The function of journalistic genres is to put the reader in “the proper mood for understanding the attitudes of the sender towards his subject matter” (Høyer, 1997: 67). This dimension is essentially the same thing as that which narrative theory variously describes as the ideal, fictive, intended, or implied reader. According to Allen (1992), what these terms have in common is that they all attempt to describe “the composite of assumptions as they are manifested within the narrative itself”.

/.../ [E]very story is constructed around a set of assumptions the teller makes about his or her audience: what they know or don’t know: what their atti-

tudes are to certain groups or people; why they are willing to listen to the story to begin with /.../ (1992: 113).

This means that various media genres and discourses – in part simply because of the assumptions implicit in them – divulge the position the producers attempt to occupy in the public space, as well as the ways they conceive of their audiences. In our case, the ideal addressee(s) of Scandinavian (Western) media content about the Baltic Sea Region in the aftermath of the Cold War is situated in a specific historical and cultural context. In a region marked by the rapid transitions occasioned by EU integration and globalization, how is the ideal addressee positioned in competing local, national and international symbolic spaces? Do these mediated worlds (and their representations of place and collective memory) support cross-cultural understanding, or do they simply erect walls between people?

The World(s) of the Media

Those who often appear in the news media, especially on prime time TV or in the daily newspapers, generally belong to a privileged class in society (unless they are victims, or are representatives of “opinion”). Debates, topics, or places that often appear in the media follow the same logic. Catastrophes, conflicts or war can bring Third World locations into focus for a time, but as soon as the news value has vanished, the physical place is replaced by something else. In this way, the world of the media says something about “real world” social hierarchies. The world of the media is certainly no mirror of the “real” world, as journalist ideology claims, but neither is it isolated from that which is represented. We simply cannot make a clear distinction between the media and reality: media is part of our reality.

The blurring of this distinction is captured in Altheide & Snow’s (1979: 11-18) concept of “media culture”, a term they use to express the interaction between media and non-media sectors of society whereby an array of political/social actors and institutions must adapt their *modus operandi* to media logic (e.g., to the form of communication and formats used in the various media). In a nutshell, when the media become central in society, different activities, institutions and organizations will tend to be organized in such a way as to meet the expectations generated by that arena. Discussions of current affairs, social processes, or different events will follow the form of their media representations. The concept of media logic should not be understood as a description of how the media manipulate or fake “reality”. Instead, the intertwining of the media with other sectors of society is a sign of an emerging media culture or – in our terminology – of media societies.⁵

Following the concept of media logic, the individuals and groups we encounter in the world of the media have a mediated identity, and are, to us, nothing more than this mediated identity. Media logic produces the well-

known personification of events and issues as journalists attempt to fill out topics with flesh and blood. Where media logic favors a certain type of celebrity, ordinary people are reduced to metonyms for a trend or phenomenon.⁶ This is analogous to a center/periphery dialectic: the celebrity will be remembered, but the ordinary person will be a face for a short while, and then will be forgotten.

While well-known figures follow the rules of media logic, successful image-making depends on which part of the world you belong to and where you are in the hierarchy of nations. This was graphically illustrated in the Swedish quality press and American weekly news coverage of two high-profile summit meetings in the summer of 1989, when Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev went to West Germany, and U.S. President George Bush visited Poland and Hungary. The coverage of Gorbachev's visit focused on his "conscious" efforts to win over the West German people and his staging of a "political spectacle". His attempt to introduce the Soviet Union as part of the "European house" was received with suspicion by the Western media as a possible attempt at manipulation. Although Bush's visit to Poland and Hungary was just as much of a political spectacle as Gorbachev's visit, the media did not review Bush's performance in the same way. The aspects invoked in the coverage of Bush were the anti-Communist events in the history of Poland and Hungary and the hopes of Poles and Hungarians for a capitalist (Western) future. The inability to distinguish between the U.S. President and his media performance signals an identification of the media with the President: both were on the same mission to help the grateful Poles and Hungarians. (Åker, 2002)

Types of mediated identities in the Baltic Sea Region that have more to do with place and memory than with people can be found in the visual representation of the Russian city of St. Petersburg in Swedish magazines at the end of the 20th century (Åker, 2003). The city is depicted from the vantage point of two time periods, the pre-revolutionary period before 1917 and the post-Communist period after 1989. The mediated identities evoke two types of understanding of the city qua place. There is the beautiful and interesting pre-revolutionary city, a cosmopolitan melting pot peopled by artists, painters, writers, and so on. The post-Communist city at the end of the 20th century, on the other hand, is either full of problems like drugs and crime, or is a place of great economic hopes and expectations – an expanding market and a libertarian dream. The people are either young or goal-oriented – that is, the answer to an accelerating market – or victims of social problems resulting from the transition from Communism to capitalism.

These same types of mediated identities can also be found in Riebert's (in this volume) study of Swedish and Danish television news about the Baltic States and Poland between 1995-2000. The events in that mediated world are elections, shipwrecks, new industries, ecological and social problems, poverty, and economic growth – ordinary people are the "winners" and "losers" in their countries' transition to capitalism. The younger generation in

the cities are the winners; the older generation and those in the countryside are the losers. The fact that the mediated identities consist mainly of official actors and political/economic news, rather than a broader spectrum of themes, is reminiscent of much foreign news of faraway places. Another element more in common with news coverage of distant places than with close geographic neighbors is that a certain share of recurring stories from the Baltic region has to do with threats – the spread of disease, organized crime, ecological damage (through shipwrecks and nuclear power) and illegal immigration.

The identities in the world of the Scandinavian media were of distant peoples in faraway places, rather than neighbors who live as close as 200 kilometers across the Baltic Sea and who share a history, which, until the 20th century, was not so different from our own. The mediated worlds consist of simple dichotomies contrasting the present with the past, Communism vs. capitalism, the East vs. the West, backwardness vs. modernity; the complexities and paradoxes of everyday life in these societies is ignored.

The World(s) of the Ideal Addressee

What Thompson (1995: 16-17) calls the “symbolic power” of the media refers to the capacity to produce, distribute and transmit symbolic forms, as well as to the media’s ability both to create and to influence events in modern societies. One of the main institutions for the production and circulation of symbolic forms (i.e. television, magazines, or newspapers) is that of journalism. When we speak of the world(s) of the ideal addressee, we are not referring to how actual audiences use media content, but rather to the ways journalists attempt to compel the reader/viewer to identify with the content presented.

Since media content is produced and interpreted in a historical and cultural context, audiences’ identification with content can be explained by *how* the content signifies, just as much as by *what* it signifies (Hall, 1993). This means that it is not necessarily what the representations actually show us that is of relevance, but what kinds of symbolic spaces the representations articulate. For example, Lutz & Collins’ (1993) study of the production and reception of *National Geographic* magazine demonstrates how representations of Third World cultures create a symbolic space that validates white middle-class American values. In stories about exotic and foreign cultures, U.S. readers are invited to deal with complex and delicate questions in their own culture like colonialism, pollution, femininity and masculinity. The media “texts” invite readers to take up specific positions related to their own cultural background.

In a study of the Eurovision Song Contest in 2002, the Swedish media response to the host country’s ambition of reconstructing Estonia as a natural part of Western Europe was skepticism (Ericson, 2002). Swedish journalists focused on separating the Swedish symbolic space from what was con-

sidered to be the “bad taste” and unfair voting practices of the “Eastern countries”. In this, they rehearse a familiar meta-narrative from the Enlightenment period contrasting the uncivilized East with the civilized West (Olsson, 2002). Here, the Soviet Union and Russia are conceived of as one symbolic space undergoing transformation during the 20th century, and the newly democratized states around the Baltic Sea are trying disassociate themselves from it. This proves difficult, however, for Swedish journalists immediately pigeon-hole the Latvian victory in Tallinn as “Eastern European taste in music”, i.e. strange, awful and not commercially viable. The media world of the addressee places Sweden in the European heartland and, despite the efforts of the organizers, it is unclear whether Estonia really “belongs” in this club. The interpretive paradigm of Otherness here has to do with the European center’s perception of its periphery (Ekecrantz, 2002: 156).

The ideal addressee in Swedish feature stories on St. Petersburg would be aware of the strong Swedish ties with the city at beginning of the 20th century. St. Petersburg as an historical site is incorporated into the symbolic space of Swedish cultural history. Another ideal addressee position associated with the Swedish symbolic space is that of a society at an earlier stage of progress, i.e. the mediated identities described in the articles are a lot like the identity *We* ourselves have, but these people “have not quite gotten it right yet” where fashion, design, taste, and so on are concerned. Another type of address in evidence is advice to the reader who wants to invest successfully in the new Russian economy. The world of the addressee does not challenge the reader’s image of Swedish society; rather, the representations of St. Petersburg in the different magazines reinforce symbolic notions of a superior and well-functioning Swedish society.

Both national and transnational ideal addressee positions are evident in Swedish and Danish television news about Poland and the Baltic States. News stories demonstrate how these societies are moving from the dark repression of totalitarianism, with their ineffective and dangerous economic standards, towards modern capitalistic and free societies with modernized and safer industries. Most often, the news stories describe how “we” (Denmark and Sweden) are helping “them” achieve these goals. The use of the recurring metaphor of the “dark past” and the “brighter future” is sometimes subordinated to a critique of the “brutal capitalism” which leaves large sections of these societies without livelihoods. Implicit in the latter is that the Nordic welfare model would have been a better alternative for “our” protégés in the East. These symbolic spaces also contain threats – their backwardness constitutes ecological and social threats to us – thus *We* are contributing to the common safety of the entire region (Riegert, in this volume).

The ideal addressee of international news magazines is more associated with a broader East/West perspective. In 1989, American and Swedish journalists address a world ecstatic with hopes of an end to the Cold War and the beginning of an era of peace. In the aforementioned study of summit meetings taking place in Poland and Hungary, Åker (2002) found that the

symbolic space reconstructs a timeline where these countries' historical development naturally leads them toward societies resembling that of the Western reader – except that they are at an “earlier” stage of progress. Historical warnings and fear of the past are never far away, however, as the meeting of President Gorbachev and Chancellor Kohl prompts references to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact during World War II. The ideal addressee is thus positioned to associate this with the last time two leaders from these countries met, and to construct a symbolic space for the Soviet Union as foreign, suspicious and incomprehensible.

In terms of mediated identities, our studies show that the world of the media consists of events and people, cultures and places in constant movement and reconstruction, whereas, in the case of the world(s) of the addressee, the local, national and transnational identity constructions appear more stable and more oriented towards reaffirmation of existing identities. That is to say, while the world of the media is full of threats, crises, catastrophes and uncertainty, journalists address us most often within our own national spaces, as places that are superior and worth protecting. In this way, then, the media contribute to a sense of security, but also to a sense of fear in times of change.

Symbolic Spaces and Mediated Memory in the Baltic Sea Region

There are two ways in which the media convey a sense of belonging in connection with place: through our experience of physical places and symbolic spaces. Physical place is important since media consumption takes place in a specific physical place which is characterized by power relations based on gender, class, education, different ethnic groups with their different histories, etc. (cf. Massey). Secondly, the physical place also consists of “fragments of the real” in media representation. We recognize media representations as real by the experiences we have had – or at least think we have had – outside media representation. Without visual imagery or descriptions of places and artifacts it would be difficult to anchor symbolic spaces to our sense of belonging. The media representation can either reinforce the symbolic meaning of places or transform them. Red Square in Moscow symbolized the heart of the enemy during the Cold War years and was a symbol of the dictatorial power of the Kremlin. However, towards the end of the 1980s, when the media depicted U.S. President Reagan and Soviet leader Gorbachev walking there together in conversation, it gained new meaning, and became a symbol for Glasnost (Zassoursky, 1991:18).

It is important to remember these two aspects of place and not be misled by media content. The fact that similar media content is broadcast over national borders, such as in the media event genre, cannot in itself be taken as evidence for a more global or homogenous world, just as the increasingly

transnational style of newspaper and magazine layout cannot be assumed to convey the same content. To use an earlier example, if we are interested in cultural identities, it is not the broadcast of the Eurovision Song Contest itself that is of importance, but how producers and consumers interpret it as a contemporary phenomenon. This phenomenon is, in turn, grounded in the values and ideas of different communities, anchored to different physical places, and filtered through media logic. Thus, the mediated construction of symbolic spaces must be related to history and collective memory.

Our studies have shown that it is most often the national symbolic space, with its historical traditions and collective memory, that journalists highlight in an attempt to evoke identification with the ideal addressee's own culture. Yet we also found other historical symbolic spaces in Scandinavian media representation of the Baltic Sea Region. In our studies, there were four ways that memory was invoked in terms of the worlds of the addressee:

First, the mediated world constructed the society of the reader as the yardstick by which other countries were judged – e.g. Sweden or Denmark became implicitly the role models for other countries for democracy, economy, social issues, etc. Secondly, there is a world characterized by universal humanism – we are basically the same all over the world with the same needs and feelings – history and differences between cultures are considered natural and almost timeless, but these cultures can find common ground and both gain from cooperation. A third variation views the current situation from the vantage point of the Cold War and the bipolar international system. In this world, the post-Communist period is increasingly characterized by instability, threats and problems. The Orientalist division of the world into a “modernized, rational” West and a “backward irrational” East is an implicit aspect of this view. A fourth way the media represent the Baltic Sea Region is to seek answers in the Second World War. This traumatic period in world history and its impact on the societies around the Baltic Sea is very much kept alive in the Western media. Both Danish and Swedish television news, for example, tend to associate Poland with the sufferings of the Jews (symbolized by Auschwitz), and with the role of former Solidarity leader, Lech Walesa, in finally reversing the post-War tyranny of Soviet Communism. Our studies demonstrate that all four of these media framings (with their specific types of address) are evident in the Scandinavian news about the Baltic Sea Region.

Conclusion

One of the most common characterizations of globalization is that meetings between different cultures will fuel new symbolic “spaces of belonging”. For example, Swedish spokesman for globalization, Carl Rudbeck, has used Creole culture in New Orleans as an example of how vigorous cultures are created

by the cross-fertilization of different cultural influences, or symbolic spaces (Rudbeck, 1998). This positive view of globalization in the world(s) of the media and the world(s) of the addressee could be discerned in our studies of the Baltic region. More prevalent for symbolic spaces was, however, the national context: the identification of a dominant, but contested, symbolic cultural space that serves as protection from external threats. In this way, the mediated identities provided both a sense of security and cause for anxiety for their audiences.

Are the mediated identities described in these studies any different from those of the Cold War era? Media representations do, and maybe must, work with the distinction between Us and Them. That such a distinction exists is, of course, a commonplace. But how journalism articulates the contours of this distinction in different periods and cultural contexts warrants continued investigation.

The peoples and events in this mediated world and the way the media address audiences in various genres (television, press, and photojournalism) are indicative of the ways journalism universalizes local experience by generalizing the particular, but they are also indicative of how it domesticates the foreign, making the unfamiliar comprehensible in a national context.

The universalization of the local can be seen in the use of different individuals as metonyms for trends in society, how political leaders are understood in terms of their personalities, but also how the new democracies of the Baltic are depicted generically: as countries trying to free themselves from a "dark" past, rather than in terms of their unique culture. The domestication of the foreign refers to news stories of what threats "we" are under by "their" industries, how "bad" their taste in music is compared to ours. Our common historical background and planned future projects also domesticates "their" problems, making them "our" concerns as well. At the same time, the Cold War and the Communist period are still very much alive in the mediated world of the Baltic Sea Region, and are an obstacle for the creation of a transnational symbolic space. In highlighting the links between these symbolic spaces, it is possible to understand how the media contribute to transnational or global homogenization in one context, and, in another context, can be a force for heterogenization or social conflict.

Finally, we would note that the meaning-making, ritualistic dimensions of journalism are also undergoing change, prompting conflict between different symbolic spaces and increasing the need to define the communities they presume to address. One particularly interesting future research task will be to analyze how the media, as well as the societies around the Baltic Sea, will handle the interrelation of local, national and transnational symbolic spaces. Media audiences may, in time, be able to know the Other without falling into previous East-West, North-South categories of thought. But this depends on how much the media make use of these categorical oppositions, as well as on how much "we" are able to address ourselves in new ways.

Notes

1. See Thompson (1995) Chapter 7. His point is reminiscent of the action/structure debate, which characterized the social sciences during the 1990s. In a somewhat obtuse way, he argues against what he sees as critical media studies' reliance on structuralist accounts which see the self "largely as a product or construct of the symbolic system which precedes it", while at the same time agreeing that action and structure are mutually influential in determining mediated experience.
2. Cited in Biltereyst (2001). Parenthesis in original.
3. See Ekecrantz in this volume.
4. This was graphically illustrated after the break-up of the former Yugoslavia, when the new governments reorganized collective memory, changing the symbols and dates marking important historical events. Malesic (1997).
5. This concept forms the basis for the research program, "Media Societies around the Baltic Sea: Cultures and Communication in Transition".
6. See Åker's chapter in this volume.

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II. Mediated Definitions of the Other: Then and Now

Placing Good and Evil

Revolutionaries, Streets, and Carnival in German and Swedish Newspapers, 1918-1919

Madeleine Hurd

In 1918, Europe was in a period of reconstruction. Germany, the great cultural and economic center of Central and Northern Europe, had lost the war, was humiliated in the eyes of the world, and was, it seemed, full of both starving people and revolutionaries. Meanwhile, the nature of the Russian “threat” appeared to have been fundamentally changed; terrifying news of the Bolshevik regime in Russia was being borne west by travelers and political refugees. Worse still, the “Reds” were seen as spreading among the people of Eastern and Central Europe like a disease. This new Europe posed a challenge for newspapers. Journalists had to invent new ways of seeing, categorizing, and narrating events. In this article I examine, via a comparative case study of one German and one Swedish newspaper, some of the strategies used by the press to arrange, present, and normalize – or, where necessary, marginalize – the Bolshevik and socialist regimes and revolutionary movements of the new Europe.

Liberal newspapers seldom spoke of morality, good and evil outright. Their tone was “objective”, their judgments oblique. Nonetheless, a newspaper’s strategic use of well-developed and highly differentiated genres would clearly reveal its moral stance. The newspaper’s formulation and placement of a given story profoundly influenced how a reader was likely to perceive it. An event could be recounted in various formulaic ways; for example, whether it was placed in the newspaper’s Police Desk section as an eye-witness account, among the humorous notices, or as a political proclamation, had a determinative effect on whether the reader would conceive the event as normal and important, or ludicrous and illegitimate. For instance, liberal newspapers differentiated organized, parliamentary debate (legitimate) from street-crowd action and Communist agitation (irregular), and, when reporting from abroad, between countries granted space in the political sections of newspapers, and those best covered by travel accounts, or human interest and adventure stories.

This differentiation between the world of legitimate politics and that of carnivalesque transgression thus gave newspapers ready-made categories in

which to place, and thus define, the good and the bad, the acceptable and the disorderly. In this article, I look at how two popular, liberal newspapers applied these categories: the *Danziger Zeitung* in its coverage of the socialist revolution that took place in Danzig's own streets in 1918-19; and *Dagens Nyheter*, in its coverage of the socialist revolutions and Bolshevik regimes in Germany and Russia during the same period.

The Liberal Public Sphere and the Street

Liberal newspapers celebrated, as normal and legitimate, *legal and parliamentary rule*. Their favored actors were powerful men, known, primarily, through their words – parliamentary and public speeches, declarations, proclamations and edicts. Because of this, liberal newspapers placed the speech act at the center of their political reporting. This meant excluding the politics of the streets (seen, at this time, as the province of the crowd, lower-class women and youths – rowdy, dirty, and criminal). When street activities were covered, they appeared primarily as personalized, ludicrous, unruly, or as under control – that is, under investigation by the proper authorities. They appeared, accordingly, in the humorous anecdote, the human-interest story, Poor Relief Board- and Police Desk reports. The latter, especially, were safe ways of dealing with the streets: the story was of the unruly street examined, cleaned and disciplined by the acknowledged forces of order.

The *flaneur* provided another way of reporting street activities: as Peter Fritzsche (1991) points out, it was one that presented the streets as always changing, moving, impermanent, colorful, and irrelevant. Flaneur accounts were episodic, clinical, and voyeuristic; told from the vantage point of an explorer and scientist, they depended on the gaze of a single viewer, personally moving through space. For foreign reporting, the personal travel account might fill the same function. Contemporary liberal newspapers distrusted the proclamations and newspapers of “red” regimes; but they were, as a reader of the contemporary articles can note, eager to repeat what individual travelers had to say about these odd, far-off places. The accounts which appeared in such eyewitness genres were, I argue, far removed from the world of legitimate politics.

Two genres, however, crossed the divide between parliament and street. One was the account of organized workers' demonstrations. By the twentieth century, liberal newspapers had (grudgingly) given these demonstrations “political” status. Their speakers and speeches were reported, which linked them to the legitimate public sphere. However, there was also an element of spectacle in these reports. The newspapers covered the route taken, the number and mood of the participants, and the performance of various symbolic rituals. Street demonstrations maintained their roots in the world of the “public spectacle”.

The public spectacle was the second exception to the definition of legitimate politics as necessarily verbal and in-house. Mass celebrations – military parades, funeral processions, nationalistic festivals – did receive extensive newspaper coverage. During the early twentieth century, open-air spectacles retained a key political function: they anchored politics in the experience of sacred ritual, and thus cemented the political community (Rhodes 1980; Vondung 1971; Griffin 1996; Karlsson and Ruth 1984). Newspapers were correspondingly attentive, recounting, with care, the number of participants, the mood, the rituals, and the symbols.

These two genres gave extra-parliamentary politics an “in”, so to speak, the world of liberal newspaper politics. As long as newspapers described revolutionary activities as disciplined street demonstrations, ritualistic mass spectacles, or, where possible, as well-organized parliamentary debates, the revolution might be presented as fairly legitimate. The revolutionaries’ eventual slippage into other genres – the Police Desk reports of the criminal, rowdy, and riotous; or, worse, the eye-witness accounts of the carnivalesque, the irrational, as evidenced by the appearance of ludicrous or menacing bodies – betokened their symbolic expulsion from the places in which legitimate politics happened.

In the following, I will chart this process in two cases: liberal newspapers’ coverage of Germany’s 1918 November Revolution, and their coverage of German and Russian Bolsheviks and Communists. The choice is dictated by a comparative logic. Danzig was a provincial town in West Prussia, one whose political leaders were understandably concerned about Bolshevik incursions into nearby Polish territory. They were even more worried, however, about the possibility that Poland might be able to lay claim to Danzig in the coming Versailles peace negotiations. It was therefore important to Danzigers to present their revolution as a non-frightening, controllable, if regrettable event; for their next, and – so it was held – greater task, was to present themselves to the world as a well-ordered, well-ruled, and sensible German city, whose claim to belong to Germany was to be taken very seriously. This affected the way in which local newspapers covered the revolution in Danzig – that is, the way in which the revolution could be simultaneously normalized and delegitimized. The logics behind the Stockholm liberal newspaper’s coverage were necessarily different. Sweden had remained non-belligerent; many of its liberals remained strongly pro-German, and the liberal reporters who covered the November Revolution obviously read German and sympathized with German culture. Russia, however, had long been Sweden’s archenemy. It is therefore not surprising that Germany’s November Revolution was seen as understandable and normal, but that Bolshevism was seen as foreign and bizarre – even, as I shall argue, beyond comprehension. In the following analysis – based on about 65 articles from Danzig, and 35 from Stockholm, taken from the months of November 1918 and April 1919 – I hope to show how newspaper genres and tropes were used to normalize, marginalize, or portray as grotesque, the different types of European revolutions.

The comparison, I argue, shows surprising similarities, but also differences, in the use of two sets of related tropes. The first is used, according to what I found, when liberal newspapers characterize a “normal” country. There, political/revolutionary events are either “parliamentary and orderly” or “street-side and criminal” – aspects which together make up a legitimate/illegitimate pair, both sides of which, however, can be placed, not least by the usage of familiar newspaper genres and terms, within an imagined geography of “countries-like-us”. The second I call “carnival” and (perhaps not very inventively) “evil carnival”. These are events which take place when hegemonic symbols and orders are seriously brought into question; they become downright evil in countries which are fundamentally different from our own, such as Bolshevik Russia (or in those areas which have been contaminated by Bolshevism).

The View from Germany

Germany’s November Revolution had three phases. The first, “liberal” phase was, in the fall of 1918, initiated by the definitive failure of Germany, Austria, and Bulgaria to continue the war against the Entente. By September of that year, it was evident that Germany would have to sue for peace. German generals, who had imposed a sort of martial law on the country during the last years of the war, now relinquished their wartime power to a civilian government. The Chancellorship was transferred to the uncontroversial liberal Max von Baden, and cease-fire negotiations with the Entente (primarily USA, England, and France) were initiated. These negotiations were now the business of the German *Reichstag*. This meant, in fact, that it was the business of Germany’s left-liberal and socialist parties; for the loss of the war had deprived the hyper-nationalist pro-war parties of much of their legitimacy. The socialists, to be sure, were split – between, on the one hand, those democratic socialists who had supported the war (the Majority Socialists, led by Friedrich Ebert), and, on the other hand, those who had both condemned the war early on, and were attracted to Bolshevism (the Independent Socialists, led by Rosa Luxembourg and Karl Liebknecht); but it was hoped that these differences could be put aside in this time of deep crisis.

The liberal phase of the revolution was, however, short-lived. In the hopes of gaining a more just peace, the civilian government urged Kaiser Wilhelm II to abdicate; and the news of this abdication, as well as popular fears of an army-led putsch, led to wide-spread street demonstrations and unrest. The radicalization of the revolution was finalized, however, by a mass mutiny among Kiel sailors. The mutiny, which took place on November 5, 1918, was sparked by rumors (later confirmed) that the naval command was intending to take the navy out on a last-stand, suicide mission – better honorable defeat, it was reasoned, than unconditional surrender. The sailors disagreed. They took to the streets, where they were soon joined by mutinying sol-

diers, left wing Independent and mainstream Majority Socialists. After several bouts of shooting, the revolutionaries took the city. Workers' and Soldiers' Councils were established as the new political authority. The mutinies, revolts, and the Council movement spread quickly to the streets of other harbor cities, and, thence, to cities throughout Germany, including Berlin. This might be termed the street phase of the revolution; it was ended, in January, by the election of a Constituent Assembly, ruling in uneasy co-existence with the Councils. There was, finally, a long-drawn-out, third phase, starting in the spring of 1919, which consisted of general strikes and local Communist, Independent Socialist and Council takeovers. This was, in fact, the final phase of the *socialist* revolution; it was, slowly, surely, and mercilessly put down by the new Berlin authorities.

It is the newspaper coverage of the revolution's "street" phase that concerns us here. "Proper" parliamentary politics did not, of course, occur on the street. Streets, as Wolfgang Kaschuba (1991) has pointed out, had once been an acceptable bourgeois political forum; in 1848, democratic liberals had used the streets to form civil militias, parade, and build barricades. No longer. By no later than 1860, the German bourgeoisie had abandoned the street to the forces of disorder: the undisciplined and unruly poor, including vagrants, beggars, and whores, and, as it transpired, the burgeoning but suspect workers' movement. Middle-class politics now happened *indoors* (as in "Houses" of Parliament); the street was suspect, to be disciplined and controlled, the political arena of the illegitimate and marginal (Hurd 2000, Stallybrass 1986).

Nonetheless, the Berlin streets took control of the government on November 9, 1918. This is the picture, at least, that emerges from the memoirs of Chancellor Max von Baden. The ministers had gathered (indoors, of course), tensely waiting for the Kaiser to abdicate; but no news was forthcoming. According to von Baden, "Scheidemann said: 'Then I really don't know how we are to keep the people from going to the street.'" The ministers issued a statement, confirming the process of abdication; but Majority Socialist Party leader Ebert answered: "'Too late! The ball has started rolling. A factory /.../ has already gone onto the street.' Wahnschaffe responded: 'The people can be brought back to their senses.'" Ebert had a pamphlet distributed: "Co-citizens! I appeal urgently to all of you. Leave the streets! Help maintain calm and order!" But it was, indeed, too late – "a train of many thousands of unarmed workers moved towards the city center. The people carried placards with the message: Brothers, do not shoot! Women and children went in front of the marching crowd". When "Wilhelmstrasse filled up with workers' demonstrations", Scheidemann (illegally and preemptively) stepped out onto a balcony and proclaimed Germany a Republic (Baden in Ritter 1968, 66-72).

The revolution was underway. A general, anti-state strike was declared; sailors and soldiers mutinied, and joined workers in forming Councils, while, in a mass popular spectacle, Independent Socialists hoisted the red flag from the Kaiser's palace. Majority Socialist Friedrich Ebert became the new Chan-

cellor, and established a six-man all-socialist government which was to share power, on unclear terms, with Germany's Workers' and Soldiers' Councils.

The reaction of the liberal press was very moderate. It consisted, by all accounts, of both relief (that the military dictatorship was over) and fear (of a power vacuum and ensuing chaos). As a result, Germany's liberal newspapers treated the revolution kindly. For one thing, most of the workers and soldiers of Germany seemed to support it; Councils had taken over most of Germany's cities, and were the one entity, it seemed, still capable of ensuring law and order. They were, moreover, working in tandem with local socialist organizations – another anchor in what might otherwise become a maelstrom. It was certainly best to make peace, with them and with the revolution. The same went for rallying behind the interim, socialist national government; for it seemed vulnerable both to a right-wing military coup and to a Soviet-style Bolshevik putsch. Undesirable in themselves, neither would be able to conduct the peace negotiations upon which Germany's food supply depended. The result, accordingly, was a coverage of revolution as a combination of normal politics (the publication of government proclamations, edicts, and speeches), and the street politics – the latter being tamed, as far as possible, through their placement within the genres of the *flâneur* commentary or descriptions of the orderly workers' demonstration and other types of public spectacle.

This, at least, was the path chosen by the liberal *Danziger Zeitung* when, on the weekend of November 9th and 10th, the revolution exploded on its own streets. The Saturday evening edition of the *Zeitung* had not yet caught up with local events. Instead, the *Zeitung* was dominated by the declarations, proclamations, and edicts of the new Berlin government. Otherwise, the newspaper was as usual: international news and news from the front (the cease-fire had not yet been negotiated), international and national measures against "Bolschewismus", the provision of food and a call for subscription to war bonds – as well as the local theater program, Police Desk notices, and an account of a Christian voluntary association's meeting.¹

The following day, however, the *Zeitung* attempted to relate what Danzigers had experienced on November 9th. The abdication of the Kaiser had been

mirrored in an extremely volatile life and activity in the streets. The Langgasse, in particular, was the goal of thousands of passers-by, for whom the seller of *Extra-Blatt* of the *Danziger Zeitung* constantly provided the latest announcements from the Reich. /.../ The Workers' Organizations of Danzig held a meeting yesterday and decided to have, today at one p.m., a large *public meeting* at the Heumarkt. A strong contingency of Workers' Organization safety officers will patrol the meeting and thereby ensure that everything proceeds calmly and with the greatest possible order.² (Italics in the original throughout unless otherwise specified.)

The revolution was placed on the street; but the flâneur-like account concluded in the language of the public sphere. Street demonstrations had ended

with a meeting of duly constituted organizations, whom the newspaper anxiously endowed with a monopoly of violence. The rest of the newspaper was unexceptional: the canceling of the next City Council meeting, local wage levels, the availability of food, coupons, property sales, and notices inviting people to advertise in the newspaper.

By Monday the liberal newspaper finally confirmed the fact of the Danzig revolution. There was nothing, it seemed, to be worried about – the report appeared on page two, with other municipal news. “After the events of Saturday, of which we have already given a short account, there followed yesterday, on Sunday, the proclamation of the *Republic in Danzig*”. Mutinying soldiers, officers, and civilians had filled the Danzig streets – this was once again covered in a flaneur-like tone:

The street picture was, by early morning, as if transformed. Most of the soldiers spent Sunday on the street. They had removed the epaulettes from their uniforms, the emblems from their caps, the eagle from their helmets; without side-arms, many without packs, they passed by in regiments through the streets, which were also very much enlivened by the civilian bourgeois population. This did not all occur without minor contretemps, mostly connected with taking swords and the epaulettes away from officers, which was not always politely done.³

The newspaper mentioned significant symbolic changes: “In the course of the morning the warships, docked in the harbor, raised the red flag, which also soon was raised from some state buildings”. The article then went on briefly to mention various illegal acts. “Also, the military prisons and the Civil Courts were opened, and those detained or under arrest due to military or political violations were freed”. But the reader was quickly reassured. Although “the streets showed an unheard-of traffic /.../ everything developed with the greatest calm and order”. A Soldiers’ Council had been formed, which would, it seemed, provide a means of controlling the mutinying soldiers; and the Danzig Guards had put themselves at the disposal of the Social Democratic Action Committee. This committee, in turn, had already started acting with the decorum one would expect in the public sphere – holding meetings, passing resolutions, and issuing proclamations.

The Action Committee of the Social Democratic Party of Danzig had formulated its demands the preceding night. These were publicized through *Extrablatt*. The first proclamation had the following text: Workers! Citizens! Soldiers! The sovereign people have taken their fate into their own hands. /.../ The army has joined the people! The red flag flies from the navy ships.⁴

The article then quoted the Committee’s list of demands, and reported on the meetings of other newly constituted authorities. The newspaper covered the Action Committee’s subsequent meeting (which resolved to cooperate with Danzig’s Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils) in the respectful form of the

public sphere: naming the Chairman and speakers, quoting the speeches at length, summarizing the debate and reproducing the resolutions.⁵

The Danzig revolution had, finally, included a mass, legitimizing spectacle. This was respectfully covered by the *Zeitung* in terms strongly reminiscent of the coverage given the mass rallies in support of the war (in 1914 and 1915), or in united protest against Entente peace terms (in April 1919). The “Great Mass Assembly” at the Heumarkt, which took place on “Red Sunday”, the 10th of November, “was calm and orderly in every way”. About 15,000 “*Bürger* and *Bürgerinnen* [untranslatable; approximately male and female citizens], representatives of the army and navy” had gathered to hear the speeches of the Danzig Action Committee. The committee had arrived in motor vehicles decorated with red flags, one of which had the words “Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood!” written on it. The members of the Danzig garrison, also led by a red flag, arrived “in a marching column”. The motorcars, marchers, and flags were joined by a sign from on high: “The crowd greeted with great jubilation a pilot, who had given his airplane a red coat of paint and had decorated it with long, red strips of cloth /.../ [he] flew low over the crowd and waved a greeting, which was answered with a *Hoch*”.⁶

The meeting’s speeches – even that of the “well-known socialist *Führerin* Mrs. Käthe Leu” – were covered in detail, with full public sphere respect. For Leu, for instance, the revolution meant the end of the mothers’ suffering and of capitalism: “we are to become humans once more”. In the meantime, the soldiers were to obey the Councils; those that attacked private property were to be beaten to the bone. “(Lively applause.)” Lieutenant Fitzner confirmed that his regiment had joined the movement; to serve the people was to march with them, not against them. “(Enthusiastic applause.)” Socialist party leader Gehl ended his speech with “Proletarians of all countries unite! All of us, whether in soldiers’ uniform or in civilian clothing, want to work together in every way in the great, heavenly cause. I end with the words: Long live the Socialist Republic.” The masses”, the newspaper reported, “partook enthusiastically in this *Hoch*”. Finally, the “speaker exhorted the crowd to depart in calm and order, and once again called for self-discipline”. The *Zeitung* was happy to report that the point had been taken. The night “has likewise passed without trouble. The rumors that were circulating yesterday evening of violent acts, turned out to be *untrue*. Troops from the Workers’ and Soldiers’ Councils stood watch”.⁷

The *Zeitung* was, indeed, at pains to convince its readers of the respectability and authority of the Danzig Workers’ and Soldiers’ councils, their sovereign ability to keep the revolution under control. This was done to a large degree by accounts of the awful alternative – the disorderly and plundering revolution in *other* cities and towns, retold, during the next few days, in classic riot-and-crime style. Thus, for instance, the small town of Thorn, where the transfer of power had come as a complete surprise: although residents had been able to hear the soldiers disarming the police and attacking the jails, they only learned of the actual revolution the next morning, through posters.

Unfortunately, in the first exhilaration of freedom, things did *not* proceed *without plundering* – during the night, goods were taken from the Bureau of Provisions, the storeroom, the slaughterhouse, the conserving factory. These were, in part, simply wasted; for instance, a civilian was offered a hundred-weight of butter, two tires and a pair of boots for 50 marks, but in vain –; further, the tobacco stores of the inner city /.../ were plundered.⁸

The Thorn Soldiers' Council was, evidently, helpless. It had sent a representative out to the central square in the standard red-flagged automobile, but without result. "During the night a number of army-grays [people in army uniforms], about 40 men under a leader, tried to break into the conserving factory. The same thing happened at an attack on the Sulten distillery".⁹ In Marienberg, likewise, a combination of "*pöbel* [mobs of riff-raff] and soldiers" had raged through the streets. They had stolen goods worth ten million marks. Stolen cigarettes worth 20,000 marks had been found in the infantry barracks.¹⁰ That night, Russian prisoners-of-war had been led on a major plundering expedition. And so the story continued: in Löbau, "*The socialistic turn-around* began, here, with *the plundering of a number of stores*. Led by a sailor and a corporal, a procession of about 200 people, mostly adolescents", had smashed and plundered as they proceeded through the streets.¹¹ There were many similar accounts. Here, we see the *unruly* streets – public unrest, plundering, and violence beyond public control and scrutiny.

During the next few days, by contrast, the *Zeitung* affirmed the (semi-) legitimacy of Danzig's revolutionary public sphere, especially by emphasizing the ability of the revolutionary organizations to *discipline* the street. One of the more aggressive types of street behavior had been the forceful removal of officers' insignia and epaulettes. This was to happen no more: a Danzig Council session formally proclaimed officers' right to wear their insignia.¹² A few days later, the newspaper took the trouble to express sober admiration for the Danzig Soldiers' Council, whose "members are conscious of their heavy responsibility. Whoever sees them at work is overcome by the conviction that they have, in all cases, the best and firmest intention to ensure calm and order". They might address soldiers with the "confidential 'du' [the less formal "you" form] but also with complete clarity, in public, and with decisiveness".¹³ Shortly thereafter, the *Zeitung* reported a proper Council speech act: a proclamation on "The Necessity of Self-Discipline and Order". This ended reassuringly: "Our government /.../ trusts the people to exercise self-discipline. We must prove ourselves worthy of this trust!"¹⁴ The day before, the Danzig Councils and police had created a civil militia – needed, the *Zeitung* pointed out, because "great numbers of unclean elements are bustling about in the streets and in hidden corners, endangering public safety and attacking the property of their fellow people". And order, the public was told, had been re-imposed in the barracks.¹⁵ The Councils were thus firmly established on the *safe* side – the police side – of the street.¹⁶ This, then, was the revolutionary movement, as presented by the cautious

Zeitung: as conforming to the norms of the legal state and liberal public sphere.

Danzig, like Germany, was, nonetheless, in the hands of its two socialist parties and of Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. These, with the help of state and city administration, now were in charge of the demobilization of the army, the provision of food, and ensured (or tried to ensure) the maintenance of law and order among an increasingly hungry, unruly, and despairing population (for the peace negotiations, and with them the food blockade, continued for months). They were not helped by the fact that liberal newspapers – recovering from their first shock – soon proceeded to put distance between themselves and the revolution.

First in Berlin, and then in Danzig, a German liberal party quickly reconstituted itself. Led by newspaper editors and manufacturers, it declared itself in support of the Republic, democracy, and civil liberties; but not of socialization or an all-socialist government. The *Danziger Zeitung* could now report on an alternative political voice, one whose party debates, proclamations, and edicts challenged the all-socialist and Council governments. The *Zeitung* followed other liberal newspapers in proclaiming itself the voice of the bourgeoisie [*Bürgertum*], claiming the right to co-rule. The *Zeitung* gleefully repeated the words of Berlin's "press and bourgeois parties", stating that it was contrary to "political principles" to elect a government "solely from the Workers' and Soldiers' Councils".¹⁷

This call for co-rule was accompanied by an unsubtle newspaper offensive against the revolutionary authorities, who were now, it seemed, to be ejected from the liberal public sphere. One aspect was an increasingly contemptuous attitude towards left-wing socialist and Council meetings. During the next few months, the *Zeitung* made it clear that the revolutionaries did not, in fact, understand or respect the standards of the political public sphere. They were, above all, incapable of adhering to parliamentary procedure.

A series of notices from the provinces initiated this dismantling process. In Lauenburg, a meeting to elect a Workers' Council had been a fiasco, as youths and school children greeted every word with terrible noise and interruptions, called for music, and ended by forming a "dance circle".¹⁸ In Königsberg, the Soldiers' Council had promoted a "strange kind of enlightenment": in the "town theater, movie theaters, and all large public spaces, soldiers appeared as American model speakers (three-minute speakers) and briefly explained to those present the basic goals of the revolution". It had been more to the point, the *Zeitung* opined, to enlighten the populace on the future provision of food.¹⁹ The left-wing Independent Socialists, meanwhile, were downright criminal. In April, a meeting called by the Independent Socialist Party secretary of Neufahrwasser to vote on a general strike instead accused the secretary of breaking into and stealing from people's houses. The storm this occasioned ended only when the secretary and his criminal associates jumped out through the window.²⁰

More lengthy notices were devoted to describing the meetings of the powerful Berlin Workers' and Soldiers' Councils. The Councils, it seemed, were unable to understand that effectiveness, objectivity, and mutual respect were prerequisites for political action. This was partly the fault of the Independent Socialists, who, reported the *Zeitung*, used the meetings for "*political agitation*" rather than "the objective and factual execution of the agenda". When the "Soldier fraction" decided on a "similar maneuver", the result was a "very excited, very long debate" without a definite outcome; one speaker had been met only with "loud noise".²¹ There was, it seemed, no quelling the "loud opposition and lively complaints" from the far left, which also "tumultuously interrupted and relentlessly ridiculed" Germany's state ministers.²² Or, as the *Zeitung* summed it up, in an article which also condemned the "speechifying" of most socialist City Councils, the Berlin Council meetings were a prime example of places "where people lack any inkling of any idea of parliamentary usage".²³ The Councils' and socialists' attempts to play at in-house parliamentary politics were, thus, declared sub-par. But what, meanwhile, of the street?

The Revolutionary Carnival

The story of the street was reformulated as well. Rather than a calm and orderly transition of power, manifested in street demonstrations and public spectacle, but controlled by legitimate political organs, the *Zeitung* advanced a new story: one of almost laughable disorder. The genre in which these new accounts appeared, the eyewitness account, was, moreover, a voice with less standard political authority – a demotion fitting for the transfer from respectable politics to bizarre street carnival.

The *Zeitung* advanced this counter-interpretation by commenting on the words of others. About a week after the revolution, for instance, it took exception to a piece in Danzig's socialist paper, *Volksmacht*. The *Volksmacht*, it seems, had claimed that soldiers and officers had "voluntarily" removed their epaulettes, as "symbols of now-defunct militarism". The *Zeitung* begged to differ. "All truth-loving street passers-by that Sunday", it wrote, could "bear witness" that the removal of the soldiers' insignia had "very, very often" been violently done. Many coats and sleeves – which were, moreover, "*personal property*" – had been badly torn. Further, the *Zeitung* would like to know the ultimate fate of the confiscated side-arms – many of which had been private property of sentimental and technical value. The *Zeitung* also contested the *Volksmacht's* claim that "the masses expressed unanimous agreement with the speaker" at that Sunday's mass meeting at the Heumarkt. Was there a single person living in Danzig, asked the *Zeitung* with heavy irony, "who could not name someone in the audience to whom it would never occur to agree to the Heumarkt demands, or who could not identify someone who simply left before the piece of theater was half over"? These cor-

rections, the *Zeitung* concluded, were made in order to ensure an “accurate historical record”.²⁴

This is the first “eyewitness” attack on the earlier, rather innocent versions of the activities on the street and at the Heumarkt. “All truth-loving” passers-by could affirm that, in fact, violence had been involved in order, at least in part, to perform simple thefts. The Sunday mass meeting, moreover, had been no uplifting, semi-holy spectacle. Participants had *not* united in agreement; to a large number of participants, it “would never occur” to agree with the agitators. It was, instead, just a piece of theater – bad theater, moreover, of the sort where the public leaves before the piece is half over. But now, eyewitnesses – the newspaper and other rational Danzigers – were able to set the record straight.

This was an early warning shot. A few weeks later, a more drastic revision was advanced. The occasion was a review of Captain Brönner’s booklet *The Revolutionary Days in Danzig*. “He gains the thanks of historians”, wrote the *Zeitung*. According to the *Zeitung*, his eye-witness account contained facts that censorship had kept out of the newspapers, and the *Zeitung* proceeded to reproduce long excerpts of the most interesting parts.²⁵

The Captain focused much of his narrative on what he had seen on the streets – and little of it, it seemed, had achieved revolutionary dignity. There was, for instance, “Still another scene from ‘Red Sunday,’” in which the Captain described mutinying soldiers marching (if you could call it that) to whistles and drums.

In front: a wild youth, drunk with excitement, in field-gray, with a red handkerchief on a stick. Behind it, as protectors of the holy symbol, two sailors with fixed rifles, caps jauntily on one ear and pushed back. Lit cigarettes in the mouth, a girl on each arm. Sailors and soldiers, spectators in disorderly rows behind. A picture that would have been unthinkable only the day before.²⁶

To this picture of disorderly soldiers, the Captain added one of plundering, lust, and greed. “The first care of ‘the red brothers’ is, of course, the dividing-up, in order to justify the motto on the flag, ‘equality.’” Groups of soldiers, accordingly, each falsely purporting to represent the Danzig Soldiers’ Council, had arrived at the Weichselbahnhof and “requisitioned” large portions of the 125,000 liters of rum held there. Several thousand cigars “were swindled away in the same way. The *plundering of the barracks stores* is well-known”. All in all, 300,000 marks worth of goods had disappeared. “When the plunderers were arrested and the death penalty pronounced over them, they wept on their knees, crawling for mercy”.

The *Zeitung* was particularly interested in the information provided on the storming of the Danzig jails (which was only tangentially mentioned, the reader will recall, in the *Zeitung*’s own piece). This, wrote the Captain, had resulted in the freeing not only of political prisoners but of criminals, including four Russian robber-murderers. It had also been thoroughly disorderly.

derly. "The prisoners stormed the clothing warehouse, put on field-gray and disappeared". A number of prostitutes had been freed – but not before, "it is claimed", the liberators had made intimate visits to their cells. Finally, the revolutionaries had let 1,500 soldiers with venereal diseases loose from military hospitals; these had demolished parts of the buildings and then "populated the town". The *Zeitung* concluded: "One sees, from this short excerpt, that Captain Brönner has carefully gathered good material; this booklet should not be lacking in any house library".²⁷

If one believed this eyewitness, then, the revolution had been anything but orderly. It had even gone beyond the merely criminal. To be sure, there was a criminal admixture: much had, evidently, been done for personal gain. But the account has more to say of bodily lusts than of rational greed. The interest of the bogus Council representatives was in alcohol and cigars, while the description of the wild, drunkenly excited youth, followed by descriptions of smoking, disorderly soldiers – with a girl on each arm – was an effective means of ridiculing the "holy" red handkerchief on a stick. And what of the prostitutes, the giggling women, the music, the sex, the drunkards – not to mention those with venereal diseases? These were not the "normal" unruly streets of plunderers and hooligan mobs, to be covered in Police Desk notices. The picture painted went beyond this, into a topsy-turvy transgression of the normal boundaries between soldiers and civilian, politics and fun, public life and sex. We have, here, an "unthinkable" picture of disorder: or, to put it another way, a street carnival of the sort described by Peter Stallybrass (1986) – the irrepressible, embodied and eternal street-side opposite of the liberal public sphere. But this carnival veered off into the realm of the dangerous, as the streets became "populated" by the whore, the diseased, and the Russian murderer. And the soldiers, who would control all this, and in whom the *Zeitung* had once placed such trust, were themselves fundamentally changed. They had lost their true, soldierly nature. Arm-in-arm with girls, or worse, as in the hint at soldiers' sex with imprisoned whores, they were thoroughly sexualized; when they wept, "crawling for mercy", they were, of course, emasculate. Here, eye-witness Brönner – and the *Zeitung* that quotes him – reduced the revolutionaries to unnatural, lust-filled, carnivalesque bodies.

Carnival had always been an important polar opposite of the liberal public sphere. It constituted, moreover, a different type of opposition than that furnished by the familiar, well-known, "normal bad" type of street activity. Criminals, *Pöbel*, hooligans, rioters – all of these were familiar and acceptable to the legitimate public sphere, for they were all, prospectively, under control. The liberal state and public sphere deployed schools, urban renewal programs, welfare agencies, and police to deal with such everyday aspects of the impoverished, uneducated, dirty, criminal and riotous street. This type of street even had established places in liberal newspapers – most prominently in Police Desk and state welfare reports (but also in humorous or human-interest anecdotes).

Carnival was something else again. It was, so to speak, the public sphere's forbidden, repressed, and silenced street-side other. In a carnivalesque situation (such as a revolution), hegemonic symbols were not only ignored, they were inverted, transgressed, and ridiculed. The rules of the liberal state and public sphere were not only broken, they were played with. The inversions of carnival were, accordingly, grotesque, de-sacralizing, and impermissible – a true transgression of borders, confounding the female and the male, food and politics, politeness and vulgarity, comedy and tragedy.

This made it fundamentally “unthinkable”, illicit, disgusting, disturbing. It was also dangerous – that is, revolutionary; for the public now experimented with alternative symbolic orders, using those standard enemies of the liberal public sphere – bodily lusts and the street – to question the hegemonic interpretations of proper political order. Carnival was not innocuous. On the contrary, as Iain McCalman (1987) and James Epstein (1989) have pointed out in the case of British radicals, the ridiculing of powerful symbols rivets public attention: the de-sacralizing of the hegemonic order (e.g., straggling, smoking soldiers with girls on their arms – or, to take a more modern example, making love on the American flag), is a fundamental revolutionary act.

To describe the revolution as carnival was thus strangely both to empower it, and render it fundamentally illicit – neither of which sat well with endeavors of the liberal public sphere to normalize, or, as time went on, to dismiss the revolution as insignificant. In the months that followed, indeed, “carnavalesque” descriptions were again toned down. Although useful, they could not become the standard means of categorizing the German revolutionaries – for the dismantling of the socialist revolution was a long-drawn-out process, and the liberal newspapers probably preferred not to present the carnivalesque as a social fixture. In the long fight to uproot what remained of the socialist revolution, it was, it seems, safer to reinsert its obdurate remnants into a more familiar and orderly trope: that of the everyday street criminal, or rioter (provoked, perhaps, by agitators) – criminals whose existence called, in turn, not for revolutionary Councils (who were in any event unable to conform to public sphere norms) but for the old-fashioned, legitimate state authorities.

The *Zeitung* treated the next phase of the revolution in just such “normalizing” terms. This was in April, 1919, when the Danzig Independent Socialists attempted to call a General Strike in protest of the steady roll-back of the revolution (e.g., the removal of the red flag from public buildings, the indefinite postponement of all socialization plans, the marginalization of the Councils). This unrest had nothing to do with “sensible workers”, wrote the *Zeitung*; it was the work of a few ultra-radical agitators. These, in turn, exploited not only words and pamphlets, but also rumors and street theater – a ludicrous parody, it seemed, of the normal forms of public sphere communication.

Yesterday, at different parts of the *Stadtgraben*, one might observe the same bit of theater. Two people start a fight on the street; this attracts the attention

of passers-by. Soon a curious public has gathered around the two. When, thus, enough spectacle-seekers have assembled, the fight stops and one of the fighters hold a Bolshevistic propaganda speech.²⁸

“All this mischief”, the newspaper concludes, would soon be halted through the imposition of martial law.²⁹ But in the meantime, the streets were, again, on the move. This time, however, we are dealing with a Police Desk rather than revolutionary street. First, “a number of rowdy elements” – forty to fifty lads, some of them drunk – proceeded with “yells, noise-making and whistles” through the streets, ending up in the Guards’ Room at the Widenkaserne. There, after “all sorts of bloodthirsty speeches”, they seized the Guards’ weapons. The only real trouble came the next day, when “adolescent lads and rough-necks [*Janbagels*]” proceeded, equally noisily, to the railway station.

On the one side [were] curious and trouble-making elements, young lads, drunkards, people whom one sees on the street every day. They stood and yelled at the troops that protected the railway, vile curses and insults, coupled with threats of violence.³⁰

The guards attempted to arrest two men who seemed to be shouting directions. Shots were fired and answered; several people, including a woman, were killed or wounded. “This was a continuing provocation by irresponsible elements /.../ the sensible part of the public recognized that *the troops* were not only severely provoked, but also had acted only in *execution of their duty*”. Next, the newspaper reported how the events were discussed in the revolutionary organizations – but in this case, only to show their impotence. In the Danzig Workers’ Council, moderating voices were met with cries of “Pfui!”, “great noise”, “Who fired the shots?” and “excited exchanges and yells: Give us ammunition! We’ll take care of the louses”. The assembly disbanded amidst “uninterrupted din”, most of the participants then returning to the Central Station square.³¹ The next day, martial law was declared. And, after the brief excursion into the non-parliamentary, the end was, likewise, communicated by a vision of the streets – now cleansed, empty, and peaceful.

After two stormy, wildly agitated days, Danzig has again become calm. The streets, which as recently as the day before yesterday presented the picture of war, yesterday regained their normal appearance. /.../ On the streets /.../ one could note, all over, a feeling of happy relief that it had been possible to avert further disaster for our town. Yesterday afternoon and evening there were still a few shots heard in the streets, which, however, were of no importance.³²

Consider, here, the change in tone: the self-assured *flaneur*-like marginalization of the revolutionaries. These were, now, redefined as common rowdies, hooligans, and punks – “people whom one sees on the street every

day” – provoked into temporary action by a few Bolshevik agitators. Like their organization, the Danzig Workers’ and Soldiers’ Council, they were both impotent and riotous. It was in these terms, indeed, that the German Revolution was finally to be defeated. It had been too dangerous to keep the image of the carnival alive in the streets of Danzig. But what, in the meantime, about these radical agitators, these Reds – on the streets of cities throughout Europe?

The View from Sweden

In the following, we move from an analysis of how a liberal newspaper might handle revolution on its own streets, to how it handled revolution abroad. The newspaper in question is the liberal Stockholm newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* (or DN, as Swedes term it). The analysis concerns the genres used to differentiate respectable politics from criminal acts, and our familiar world from the grotesquely carnivalesque, in DN’s reports of the European revolutions of 1918-19.

Since there were no Swedish revolutions, coverage of revolutionary drama meant turning to foreign news. Nonetheless, many of the tropes used to categorize domestic events – the distinction between parliament and streets, or speech acts and eyewitness accounts – still applied. A normal country was parliamentary; normal political acts consisted of speeches and proclamations by well-educated males. Foreign newspapers were, moreover, often culled for additional information (of the Police Desk or anecdotal type); foreign editorials might, moreover, be considered indicative of foreign public opinion. If the country was not “like us”, however – if the government was impotent, dictatorial or terrorist, if the local newspapers were censored or if they were considered unreliable sources of information – DN would rely on alternative genres and voices. Among these were the eyewitness and travel-account: a genre especially popular in reporting on Europe’s revolutions.

It was not as if *Dagens Nyheter* had little practice covering revolutions. The Russian Revolution of the fall of 1917 alone had provided ample room for various genres and tones, beginning with the acceptance of the first, liberal phase under the Menshevik Kerensky, and continuing – in increasingly pejorative terms – with coverage of the Bolshevik takeover. 1918 provided the spectacle of the German socialist revolution; the following year saw a Bolshevik revolution in Hungary and increasingly radical unrest in Germany. How were these to be reported?

Again, the newspaper was faced with the question of what constituted legitimate political space. The geographical distinction was, however, no longer between in-house politics and the street. Borders were drawn, rather, between parliamentary countries (e.g., Sweden, Germany, England), which newspapers could cover in terms of their statesmen’s speech acts and their newspaper editorials; and those uncharted, unlit Bolshevik countries (par-

ticularly Russia) which lacked legitimate statesmen and newspapers, and thus dropped off the map of the public sphere. Frighteningly, moreover, Bolshevism was threatening to escape Russian borders, constituting a “sickness”, “flood” and “subterranean fire” that attacked portions of otherwise normal countries. And, once established, Bolshevik regimes completely changed a country: removing it, so to speak, from the map of the normal and comprehensible, only to take it to the unmapped realms of isolated darkness. Reliable information from the latter could – much like information from darkest Africa – only be garnered through the piecemeal accounts of travelers.

This, then, was the imagined geography that appears when one reads DN’s coverage of revolutionary Europe of 1917-19. The newspaper had been relatively sympathetic to the Menshevik Revolution, and even, initially, to the Bolsheviks. The first notices, in 1917, of “The Bolshevik Adventure in Petrograd” explained their success by describing the Russian people’s justifiable longing for peace. The provisional government’s incompetence, coupled with new defeats, German peace overtures, and the Allies’ refusal to consider peace negotiations, had led to a “colossal” electoral turn-around in Lenin’s favor. For when “starvation knocks on all doors and the whole is threatened by complete dissolution”, people might well turn to extremists.³³

But this sympathetic tone was soon abandoned, as an “understandable” revolt against hunger and war degenerated into a reign of terror – a reign that DN, like other newspapers, was soon putting forward as the prototype of unacceptable horror. For, in the opinion of a 1918 editorialist, the Bolsheviks had turned the Russians’ longing for peace into “bloody terrorism” – a “land transformed into complete chaos, where the lowest instincts are loosed, where those representing the government constitute nothing more than a regime of thieves pure and simple”, with mass starvation, unemployment, and “theft and plunder” as “business-as-usual”. Incidentally, the editorial concluded, it might be noted that Berlin’s Soviet ambassador had – as a result of compromising letters found in his baggage – recently found it advisable to get out of Germany in hurry.³⁴

DN saw a link between what had happened in Russia, and Germany’s post-war fate. Headlines warned that Russia was making overtures to German radicals, and newspaper notices quoted right-wing German newspapers’ fears that Russians might first invade Poland and then Germany in a desperate quest for food. But, DN repeatedly reassured its readers, Bolshevism had no German foothold. In DN’s extensive coverage of German politics, the country was consistently held up as *normal* – parliamentary and orderly, and, accordingly, inhospitable to Communism. And this normality continued to prevail, it seemed, throughout the German Revolution; for unlike its Danziger counterpart, the newspaper stayed, it would seem, firmly on the “non-carnavalesque” side of street-side reporting.

One must not, warned an editorial – “The Bolshevik Sickness”, published in November 1918 – confuse Bolshevism with organized workers’ movements. Bolshevism was, indeed, an “enemy of culture, the oppressor of freedom, a

dictatorship which abrogates all civil rights, practiced by a minority supported by armed might". In Russia, class differences, far from than disappearing, had rather "been sharpened to the utmost, and taken the form of one class butchering the other" – as well as anyone who dared differ from the "Bolshevik papists" – while parliaments were dissolved with bayonets. But "no one who has read the last days' messages from Germany" could seriously believe that the German "Czarism" had been superseded by any form of "German Bolshevism". To be sure, the socialist German government did not represent the entire people – but it was accepted by many, including the state administration. Anyway, the exclusion of the bourgeoisie was plausibly justified by the fact that "the bourgeoisie had been more deeply engaged in the old system"; they could not be "reinstated to full political citizenship" until the old system was dismantled. The extent to which the revolutionary government was not Bolshevik was further evidenced by the health of the anti-socialist press, while socialist editors themselves called for order and democracy. "One does not, here, find anything that corresponds to the plundering and murdering idlers and loafers who have constituted one of the most prominent elements within the Leninist anarchy". Here, at least, "the anarchistic men of violence /.../ have seen their efforts thwarted by the German folk character's love of order and work".³⁵

This gives a taste of DN's coverage of the German Revolution – the sort of orderly transfer of power expected of a normal, parliamentary country. Such excesses that did occur were likewise normalized: they involved youths, hooligans, and other unthreatening figures, familiar to and contained within the liberal public sphere. This normalizing gaze was apparent even in eyewitness reports, which otherwise focused on the exotic and the unpleasant. Thus, for instance, "An Eyewitness of the Revolution" reported that, in Munich, it had begun with "male and female workers marching in relatively good order". On the way, some had

/.../ broken into the barracks and had fetched the garrison that was established there, which willingly followed along. Speeches were held and a resolution was taken, amidst the people's jubilation. Calls were heard: Long live the Republic! Down with the Kaiser! And so on. Even the Bavarian Royal House was given its proper share of yells and threats, and large masses of people surrounded the Royal Palace. Adolescents and hooligans made a din, howling and hooting. Now and then a stray shot was fired. But relatively good order was maintained the entire time, and there was no spilling of blood. /.../ The socialist leaders requested calm and order, and anyone who attempted to plunder or vandalize was to suffer the death penalty.³⁶

A still more glowing report was handed in by an engineer, Helge Norlander, who had "made a detour to Berlin in order to see the revolution". He had been treated with courtesy by revolutionary armed workers, who had found him an open hotel (his sleep had been disturbed, however, by the sound of

shots during the night). The next day, the streets were full of people, including Norlander. "The mood among the crowd was completely calm" until a machine-gun started firing, which scattered people in panic. A brief battle was fought; immediately, "Red Cross cars arrived and took care of the dead and wounded". The streets, however, were still crowded with people:

/.../ one was generally much more ruled by curiosity than by fear /.../ Director Norlander wishes especially to emphasize the humane spirit and the calm with which the revolution had been conducted, despite the irritating opposition of the few who remained the Kaiser's faithful men even after the Kaiser had abdicated. /.../ [The soldiers'] behavior towards the public was characterized by good humor and friendliness /.../ The provision of foodstuffs was normal throughout.³⁷

This last, Norlander illustrated with a common revolutionary image: the relative availability of milk for the children. A Swedish colleague had, in fact, received his child's ransom of milk throughout the revolution. "This is such a small, but extremely illustrative example of the stability of the German organization", Norlander concluded, contrasting it favorably, indeed, with the availability of milk in cities which had undergone neither revolution, nor four years' war.³⁸

And so this "normal" revolution continued: "The General Strike in Berlin Already Ended. The Unrest Has Died Down. The Population Obeys the New Regime"; "A National Assembly Will Decide on the Future State" – "The Revolution Now Completed; Calm and Order in the Whole Country".³⁹ For, according to the author of the editorial "The Storm Dies Down":

Under the hurricane which has, during the last days, blown over Germany, swept away age-old thrones, state administrations and authorities, and replaced them with new, instantly improvised organizations, the characteristic, which has so long been typical of the German people, still predominates: their capacity for self-discipline and order; an admirable self-control in a situation which – one can presumably safely say – in every other country would have degenerated into anarchistic chaos.⁴⁰

This tone, once assumed, is maintained throughout the winter. DN, in contrast to the *Danziger Zeitung*, seems quite content with a normal, parliamentary, orderly definition of the revolution. It ignored the revolutionaries' supposed street-side carnival. DN agreed with liberal German newspapers in tracing most of the more extreme radical unrest of 1919 to nothing much worse than agitators, working on excitable and criminal street-side elements: that is, the street population of *pöbel*, youths, hooligans and bums whom one finds in any parliamentary country. On the whole, these represented a normal type of street disorder, caused by familiar criminal elements with recognizable criminal motivations. They might, of course, be goaded into unusual activity by

hunger (DN was sympathetic to the suffering caused by the Entente's continuation of the German food blockade); but they were not that unusual, and could be duly and legally repressed by the normal forces of order.

Indeed, DN held this tone no matter how severe the unrest. There is, for example, the case of the "Violent *Pöbel*-Riot in Hamburg". Here, a "mob" had stormed the City Hall Restaurant, driving out the guests, "plundering" the kitchen, and beating up those who tried to stop them. "The town was, up until eight p.m., at the mercy of the *pöbel* /.../, people and cars were attacked", and forced to surrender money and valuables at gunpoint. The police, however, managed to quell the "flock of rabble", killing and wounding several "troublemakers" and arresting more, upon whom were found "guns and burglar's tools". The police were also victorious when "plundering mobs of *pöbel* stormed the police stations", despite the participation of "shady *pöbel*" from the suburbs. Finally, the civil militia cleaned out the whole city; arrests included "a large number of women prostitutes. About ten criminal beerhouse hangouts have been closed and will, after disinfection", be converted to civil militia headquarters.⁴¹ Hamburg's streets and beerhouses had, in short, been cleansed of their – admittedly numerous and impudent – standard criminals (rabble, prostitutes, burglars).

The same tone was used to discuss Frankfurt, where "excited masses of people" led to "bloody excesses and plundering". Here, the masses had stormed jails, beaten opponents, and burned official documents. Nonetheless, it was emphasized, this was no Communist insurrection; the Frankfurt Communists themselves had held speeches condemning all violence and plundering. The next piece, "The Cause is the Lack of Food", traced the unrest to the reduced food rations.⁴² This was thus comprehensible, everyday disorder, as might happen in any normal (hungry) country; the terms used to report it echoed those used for similar, local incidents by, for instance, the *Danziger Zeitung*. The whole was happening, after all, in a normal, parliamentary country.

This tone was, however, abruptly dropped in certain cases: when reporting on any part of Germany under Spartacist (that is, left-wing socialist or Communist) rule. There, DN would have nothing to do with descriptions and explanations appropriate to "normal" countries. Instead, it went to the opposite extreme – in descriptions of grotesque carnival that put Brönnert's feeble efforts to shame. And the closer one got to "real" Bolshevism, the more unbelievably illicit were the people and the streets.

Reports from the Carnival of the Reds

In 1919, parts of Germany underwent local, brief Communist revolutions. Of these, the Munich-led revolution caused DN the most concern. (Interestingly, the *Danziger Zeitung*, primarily concerned with unrest on its door-

step, virtually ignored Munich.) DN's coverage provides a good example of the particular genres and tropes reserved, it seems, for situations like these.

Munich's "red regime" was outside of normal politics. It also stepped outside "normal" criminality, plundering, and rioting. It was, rather, chaos wedded to a parody of normalcy. For one thing, it did have political leaders – or, rather, "dubious subjects" who suddenly pop up, "stick up their heads". DN dedicated several mud-slinging character sketches to what it termed the "Bavarian gang of cronies", all eager, it seemed, to ape Russian Bolsheviks. There was, for instance, "a Doctor Lipp", Foreign Minister – "or, as it is called in Bolshevik-language, the Folk Commissioner for Foreign Concerns". This man, twice hospitalized for "delusions of grandeur", had spied for the German Field Command, been sent to jail, re-emerged a martyr, and was now a Minister of the Bavarian Soviet Republic. And what of another Minister, "a Doctor Rothenfelder", originally "a Franciscan monk" and then a right-wing patriotic journalist?⁴³ Not to mention the "student Toller", an unknown juvenile hothead, who also seemed to have a leading position within the Munich government. This gang of "red elements", "self-proclaimed dictators", was running Bavaria's "Communist regime" in full accordance with the "Russian pattern" – the whole thing was, after all, "nothing but a slavish copy of the Russian way". Council rule, the arming of sympathizers, censorship, and socialization, "are all, of course, part of the classic program"; a program being followed down to "details such as the confiscation of private housing, and the law that no family may have more than one room and kitchen".⁴⁴

Munich, thus, had caught the "Bolshevist sickness" and was, consequently, feverish, hallucinating, and under quarantine; not surprisingly, carnival had replaced public sphere norms. Thus, we read, the "excitement and agitation in Munich have risen to the greatest extreme. Calls for Jewish pogroms have been spread". The only link to the outside world (which had imposed a blockade) was pamphlets dropped by planes; but reading these was soon made punishable by death.⁴⁵ The only newspaper in Munich was the Communist *Red Flag*, "in which the student Toller continues to reproduce his insanities /.../ The few bits of information that are to be garnered from the Spartacist publication are antiquated messages from Budapest and Moscow".⁴⁶ Meanwhile, supporters of Bavaria's governor Hoffman fought it out with the revolutionaries:

In the city, complete anarchy rules. Both parties have engaged each other in raging battles. Bands of thieves have broken in and plundered houses, and threaten the banks. Everywhere proclamations are posted, saying how the garrison is again on the side of the Hoffman government, calling for leaders, and leveling accusations of murder. The posters are torn down by patrols of sailors. Military automobiles, armed with machine guns, rush through the city hunting the supporters of the Hoffmann government.⁴⁷

By the end of this particular day, however, "Extreme Communists Are the Rulers".⁴⁸ The city was isolated, without information, deserted, and dark.

A temporary calm now rules /.../ No newspapers are coming out. /.../ The new City Commander has issued strict laws, which can be deemed life-threatening for the bourgeoisie. Carriage and auto traffic is strongly restricted by the Spartacists [Communists]; it is also extremely difficult to get into the town, which lies, during the night, in complete darkness.⁴⁹

But bizarre things still happened. During the following days, the “student, Toller” called a meeting and suggested “confiscating the food ration cards of the well-to-do, and halting their coal and gas, as well as milk for their nursing babies, who are only going to grow up to be the enemies of the working people”. Meanwhile, “Respected burghers have been arrested as hostages, under the threat that they will be shot, if something happens to any of the jailed Communist leaders”; the “arming of the proletariat is being done with feverish haste /.../ Military commissions are requisitioning private cars, as well as all food found in bourgeois houses, hotels, and restaurants. The nursing babies” were already suffering from the food blockade.⁵⁰ Starvation threatened: restaurant waiters “refuse to give a stranger as much as a small piece of bread”.⁵¹ An eyewitness “traveler from Munich” confirmed that the Communists had occupied all hotels, and confiscated the hotels’ food, as well as that of private households, “to be divided among the proletariat”.⁵²

The terrorist leaders are trying, as far as they can, to create a dictatorship of violence according to the Moscow pattern. Dr. Lewien presides from the palace of the Wittelsbachs, outside of which several cars are held in constant readiness should they be needed for the flight of the leaders. All the entrances to the palace are occupied by Red Guards, and the leaders’ nervousness increases from hour to hour /.../ want is growing meanwhile in Munich, and bread and meat have completely disappeared from the menus of the hotels.⁵³

And this circus continued, it seemed, for weeks. The world of insane leaders and street posters, student-led meetings and pamphlets dropped from airplanes which meant death to read, was, of course, a parody of a proper public sphere and government; while the frantic violence and dark isolation, the willful starvation of babies and the bread-less restaurants, went far beyond “normal” street disorder. This was carnival, but of a sort far removed from the disorderly but relatively innocuous, sex- and alcohol-centered street-side vulgarities described by Brönnner. It seems to introduce a fourth trope – one of *evil* carnival – reserved, I believe, for the “Reds”.

The evil carnival was, it seemed (like its more playful counterpart, the merely illicit) best described by eyewitnesses – often by travelers who had “escaped” from the affected territory. For instance, a traveler gave DN an account of the “horrible days of revolution and revolt” of the “Red terror” in the German city of Halle. First, Independent Socialists had called a general strike, which had stopped the publication of bourgeois newspapers. The whole city “was dead, all the stores were closed”; there was no milk for the

children. Government troops arrived and occupied the railway station, to which the “masses” responded with insults and whistles. “People were hysterical with rage. I saw how two women held a worker fast, who was fighting to get loose with all his might, yelling ‘Such criminals, such treacherous dogs!’” The mob started getting violent. It first attacked a Red Cross ambulance, beating its patients, and then a car driven by a lieutenant colonel.

He is beaten bloody. A worker takes him to the civilian guards, who release him again. The *pöbel* seizes him again, throws him into the [river] Saale and shoots at him. He swims over to the other side of the river to climb ashore there. Then some twelve-year-old boys throw themselves upon him with sticks, kick his hands, until he loses his grip and tries to swim further. But he is shot at until he sinks. His corpse is recovered three days later.⁵⁴

This account was complemented by a personalized account of fear; for, in the meantime, many parts of the city were left with neither revolutionary nor government protection.

The plundering begins Saturday night. It is led by the men of the [municipal] security company. No one can stop them, the bourgeoisie has no weapons. Doors are destroyed with hand-grenades, windows shattered with rifle-butts. So it goes from store to store, the crowds of plunderers keep growing. Wine is found, and now one is treated to real revolutionary pictures: thousands of shrieking women and bellowing men.⁵⁵

The next day, again, the “shooting battles continue. Everyone in town goes in order to look on, everyone is curious”. That night, more plundering: “the large department stores and jewelry boutiques have been emptied”. The following day, however, “the theater is stormed, the plunderers arrested and martial law declared”. The eyewitness ended with a direct appeal: no one who had not themselves experienced it could imagine “the despair during those two nights, when one constantly asked oneself ‘When will they get to us?’ and one knew that there was no chance of saving oneself”.⁵⁶

The personal, somewhat literary eyewitness account seemed, indeed, to be a favorite method of recounting the surreal horrors – decked out with rifle-butts, attacks on the wounded, blood-thirsty children and drunken, shrieking women – of life under the Red sickness. The voices were, after all, both personal, and from people like us – literate, propertied, educated, restaurant patrons, “donators” rather than receivers of requisitioned food and housing – neither proletarians nor *pöbel*. These allowed “us” to feel how very perverse the situation was: *our* (middle-class) homes, money, and property threatened, *our* babies denied milk, *our* norms outraged. This perversion was part of the evil carnival. In Germany, one encountered it in its milder form. In Eastern Europe, especially Russia, one faced its full horror.⁵⁷ In order to understand the ways in which the German Revolutions – both socialist and

Bolshevist – were categorized and described, it helps to look at how DN covered the revolutionary “prototype” – that of Soviet Russia.

Reporting from the Heart of Darkness: Evil Carnival in Russia

Germany (aside from the parts temporarily infected with Bolshevism) was still deemed normal – that is, like Sweden. Russia, by contrast, was fundamentally different; and this difference is worth exploring, for it casts light on *how* Germany could be normal – that is, what it *meant* to be normal. For one thing, one could trust German newspapers. By contrast, if one were to believe *Dagens Nyheter*, no trustworthy news had been available from Russia since the Bolshevik takeover; the government’s publications and newspapers were treated with extreme skepticism, their contents repeated only when they contained bad news. For real information on the country, it seemed, *Dagens Nyheter* relied on eyewitness accounts. Here, the tone was set early. The Russian Bolsheviks were terrifying, abnormal barbarians, in comparison to which the German Bolsheviks appeared as ludicrous amateurs.

This note was struck as early as 1917, in an eyewitness account (translated from an account given the British *Daily Chronicle* by its Petrograd correspondent) on Petrograd power struggles. “The Bolsheviks have an especially difficult time finding trustworthy men and therefore entrust highly important tasks to youths, which often gives comical results”. Because of weak support, moreover,

Bolshevists have armed thousands of workers who never before have had a rifle in their hands and who are completely undisciplined. They have beaten the opposition prisoners, especially the military cadets, who have even been torn to pieces. The Winter Palace has been badly vandalized. Pictures have been torn to pieces, mirrors doors, and windows shattered, chairs and sofas torn up. All that has been too big and heavy to be pulled from there has been heedlessly destroyed.⁵⁸

This tale of barbaric disorder became, indeed, standard in DN’s coverage of the Bolshevik Revolution. Although DN explained the revolution as a result of the justifiable desire for peace, its *consequences* were horrible – as repeatedly confirmed by the (eagerly published) stories told by Russian refugees. Three themes recurred. The first was the barbarism and cruelty of the Bolsheviks; the second was the bizarre and aberrant nature of their regime. The third element in what I term evil carnival was the fact that *people like us* were subjected to unimaginable sufferings – indeed, and incredibly, suffering more than did many workers, women from market stalls, servants, and seamstresses.

Thus, a “Cossack Captain” – also, incidentally, an editor and factory-owner – told of his time in a Petrograd jail, of “such a reputation that the mere name fills the spirits of the population with terror. It is a fact that conditions in Russia are, now, worse than during the days of Ivan the Terrible”.⁵⁹ The “World-Famous Russian Painter” Nicolaj Rörich could relate how “the barbarism of the revolution” had destroyed many of his paintings – along with, presumably, Petrograd’s other art treasures, the fate of which was unknown. Most artists had either “died or fled”. Nonetheless, prices were high for famous paintings in Russia. “Who buys them? Not the state or public collections, but private persons, presumably the proletariat’s new capitalists. And they pay well”.⁶⁰ In addition, small news items confirming the Bolshevik bizarreness popped up in the otherwise gossip- and anecdote-filled section that DN called “Names and News”. There, for instance, one could read how “Russia Reforms Its Calendar”. This did not, however, involve adjusting to “modern times” or the “Western culture world”. The calendar focused, rather, on revolutionary commemoration, and gave “every worker the power to choose a weekday as [his] day off”. Another notice satirized Petrograd’s “communism in housing”, which allowed “the poor simply to move into the apartments of the well-to-do”. But this had led to problems: the poor had taken to selling off the possessions of their unwilling hosts “lock, stock, and barrel”. Finally, DN waxed ironic over a “certain Kosarev” – a prominent Communist, arrested for extortion and taking bribes, and who was, it turned out, an ex-jail inmate with false papers. At his trial, however, his “Communist convictions” were advanced as “extenuating circumstances /.../ We do not yet know what the final punishment was”.⁶¹ These people, one concludes, were both ludicrous and barbaric.

Passengers fleeing Petrograd on the Swedish ship *Carl XV* (most of them Scandinavian) went into more detail. The great problem, they told *Dagens Nyheter* journalists, was “the attempts of the Bolsheviks to nationalize everything”, including the insurance companies – whose capital was to be used “to establish a new city with parks, rest homes, and entertainment centers for the workers”. The Bolshevik decision to nationalize food distribution had reduced people to starvation. Hotel restaurant prices were outrageous. “Open-air markets are abolished and the stores are closed, and everyone is directed to the public food kitchens, where there is, however, no chance of getting a full meal. On Sundays bread and some other foods are distributed to the workers – members of the bourgeois class are given absolutely nothing”. Undernourished people, horses that had died in harness, were common sights on the streets. Again, one noted how the Bolsheviks were accused of being both ludicrous and cruel – particularly to people like us. “We” were not the workers who receive extra rations; we were people who knew and cared about prices in hotel restaurants.

The same note was struck in the passengers’ descriptions of housing, clothing, and other aspects of city life. Housing was not too bad, although only one expensive hotel remained open; for “many rich people have fled town,

and their apartments are available". The Bolsheviks seemed to prefer the top stories – in order, "it is believed", to best be able to fire down on the streets in case of unrest. Finally, all excess clothes, and especially furs belonging to the better classes, had been confiscated. "In most cases, however, the result is that a worker who has received an elegant fur or a worker's wife who has suddenly become the owner of a fur cape, worth perhaps many hundreds of thousands of rubles, simply goes and sells it in order to get money, and thus is again in equally great need of help". The only thing that, despite everything, was still the same, was the "night life:" theaters were full each evening. Nowadays, one needed to show one's passport to get into the theater – "but that little formality is something one soon gets used to".⁶²

In these accounts, the horror was often directed at the (often frivolous and useless) favoritism shown towards workers, at the expense of the bourgeoisie – a horror the readers were expected to share, for the cozy assumption of a middle-class audience was evident in the untroubled mention of, among other things, closed hotels and hotel restaurant prices and the little formalities of theater-going; and was likewise implicit in the tone of irony, as well as the outrageousness of a "proletarian capitalist" buying art and the uselessness of giving a worker's wife a fur cape.⁶³ This was, perhaps, the most salient aspect of the evil carnival: for the bizarre nature of the suffering of people like us showed, indeed, the true nature of carnival's evil transgression.

All these tropes – the vicious parody of the normal public sphere, the brutal and ludicrous barbarism of the new rulers, and, above all, the carnivalesque inversion of civilized norms – clearly appeared in the most detailed *Dagens Nyheter* eyewitness account, "Life in Bolshevism's Russia". This series of lengthy articles was written by the former editor of a Cadet Party newspaper, I. Hessen, who had "managed to get out of Petrograd" and was now in Berlin.

Hessen began his articles by saying that it was, in fact, impossible to conceptualize the situation in Russia; he was reminded of the Armenian who, when asked to describe a raisin, could only say that it resembled neither an orange nor a lemon. Likewise, Russia resembled neither a civilized society, nor a primitive one: life there was neither.⁶⁴ Or, to put it another way, it was carnival triumphant: inversion and transgression beyond recognition.

Hessen's portrayal of Bolshevik politics, not surprisingly, showed them to be one great parody of the normal public sphere – full of corrupt, criminal, and brutal men, whose hooligans quelled democratic opposition with "an infernal howl". Newspapers were censored – especially, for example, when they described how male and female Bolsheviks spent their time together in "wild drinking parties". Bribery and nepotism exceeded all bounds; Maxim Gorky's actress wife had accepted jewelry for letting a Duke escape to Finland.⁶⁵ This was all highly amusing; but still more effective, perhaps, was Hessen's description of the strange new patterns of middle-class life, with its Bolshevik inversions of bourgeois ("civilized") taboos of class, gender, and food.

There was, of course, the subversion of order inherent in middle-class people freezing to death, starving, and begging. Hessen described people with large apartments, who, because they lacked connections with “Soviet circles”, could only get enough wood to heat up the kitchen.⁶⁶ Formerly well-to-do people were out on the streets, selling old possessions: “mirrors, combs, Christmas decorations and the like”.⁶⁷ A professor of the Polytechnic Institute had lost 110 pounds; “the people are as if extinguished, without life or interest, they look like walking corpses”. Another acquaintance of Hessen, the famous lawyer Rajesvskij, had been driven insane, and hung himself, out of fear of starvation. “In every street one constantly meets well-dressed people, men and women, who stand and beg”. And when they say, “I am dying, give me something to eat!” they are not exaggerating. All conversation among his friends – “on the streets, at the theaters, in the streetcars, in the schools, at the meetings of professors” – everywhere, concerned only food.⁶⁸ Workers had it no better: anyone with a full belly was either a soldier, a policeman, a Bolshevik administrator or a big-time jobber.⁶⁹

Those who should have little power had, it seemed a lot. Food markets still existed; but nowadays, the exchange “rests on new principles”. Again, an eyewitness invoked the pathos of the mother (well-bred, we are to assume) without milk for her children: one often saw such mothers begging women in the market for “a bottle of milk for their hungry little ones”, at an incredible price; but the “hag selling milk suddenly assumes an attitude and can’t even be bothered to answer”.⁷⁰ But this was the new, inverted world. “It is not the seller who tries to attract buyers, but rather the buyers who humbly beg the seller to forego a bottle of highly diluted milk for ten rubles, towards which the seller either shows himself graciously inclined or else breaks out in insults and curses”.⁷¹

Thus, even people with money might starve; for the sellers did not need money. Instead, the buyer had to demean himself. “It is a matter of getting hold of a seller, persuading him, getting him to like you, for instance by inviting him for coffee, taking him home with you and offering him the place of honor, and so on”. And, even so, the seller only bothered when he wanted to buy a sable coat or some jewelry. The results of this class inversion were to be seen, daily, on the street:

Despite the incredibly high prices on anything that can be called clothing, one often sees ladies dressed in expensive furs – but, in accordance with the usages of the Russian lower classes, without hats – and with fine, expensive, but frayed and crookedly worn-down shoes. These mistresses are members of the new aristocracy, that is, factory girls, former servants, seamstresses etc., who have known how to acquire all these glories for themselves through their fiancés.⁷²

This was the bizarre inversion of vulgar over polite, ugly over lovely, the lower-class woman clowning about as an upper-class one. But this was not

the last word in these processes of inversion, it would appear. One heard a lot about atrocities, wrote Hessen. "But do people know that, for instance, four professors at the Petrograd conservatory starved to death last Christmas? That in the folk-kitchens [state-run cafeterias] in Petrograd, one can see society ladies sit and wait until the visitors have finished their portions, so that they then may lick the plates?"⁷³

Russia, on this reading, had become thoroughly perverted. The image of well-born ladies licking the plates of the proletariat was, perhaps, the most outrageous yet – more shocking to "our" sensibilities than, for instance, homeless Russian children dying of exposure. Children dying of exposure to the elements is "normal"; groveling society ladies is inversion. It outrages the norms we have governing gender (the public humiliation of women), body and dirt (being forced to lick plates publicly), and of class (society ladies licking the scraps of proletarians). The evil carnival could offer nothing better.

Conclusion

In this article, I have postulated four ways of categorizing how early twentieth-century liberal newspapers dealt with revolution. The first, as I tried to show, was to "normalize" it – by incorporating it, to the extent possible, into the parliamentary world of authoritative speech acts, combined, where necessary, with street demonstration and public spectacle. The second mode was to brand it as illegitimate – but "safely" so: that is, to define it as the public sphere's well-known, familiar, and internal opposite. The revolution, by this telling, was not really a revolution at all, but rather the meaningless, violent and street-side eruption of everyday hooligans, *pöbel*, criminals and prostitutes – distressing enough, of course, but ultimately under the control of the state, army, police, welfare authorities, and schools. Indeed, the contemporary German movies *M* and *Three-Penny Opera* openly reflect this sense of Germany's criminal world co-existing with, and even mirroring, that of the public authorities – intimately linked, in *M* at least, by city maps, newspapers, and street movement. Both of these types of "revolutions" could, thus, be imagined as happening in a normal, parliamentary country.

But some criminals could transgress beyond their fellows, shading off into the truly embodied, illicit and perverse. It is notable, for instance, that criminals and cops join forces in order to capture *M* – a truly dangerous transgressor: an insane (and odd-looking) serial murderer of little girls. For city streets still bore within them the potential of carnival – my third category of revolution, as exemplified by Captain Brönnner: sexual and sensual, dirty and smelly, transgressive and disrespectful, and thus potentially productive of a true challenge to hegemonic mores and norms. During the German Revolution (as, indeed, the student uprisings of 1968), this street carnival was often covered with indulgence, irony, or contempt – as opening possibilities (at

worst, for vulgarities and disorder) rather than destroying civilizations. However, as I have tried to show, carnival was never innocuous. It aroused disgust and dismay, and thus could be used to delegitimize street politics. Worse, it could, in the eyes of liberal newspapers, degenerate into the truly other, the truly surreal, as it had, it would appear, in the *evil* carnivals of Bolshevik-occupied Germany and Russia.

This, I have argued, is how Swedish newspapers characterized areas of “red sickness”: as embodying a sort of heart-of-darkness transgression that was even difficult to describe (“neither orange nor lemon”) and hence isolated, gloomy, violent, and doomed. It was in Bolshevik societies, it seems, that one placed truly hellish transgression and inversion. The most telling transgression, we gather, was that of *class* prerogatives, norms, and culture. In Germany, shady, cowardly Russia-inspired Bolsheviks confiscated bourgeois property, censored liberal newspapers, and advocated the starving of middle-class babies. In Russia – the true heart of darkness – things were correspondingly worse: vicious criminals ran the state, the mob murdered the intelligentsia, society ladies licked plates while seamstresses paraded in sables – the brutish, in short, ruled over the civilized.

Bolshevism thus meant an outlandish attack on *people like us* – the civilized, educated and propertied “normals”. This was bad enough in the parts of Germany which had been contaminated; but the Russian carnival was painted as truly outrageous. Was there a sort of Orientalism here? To be sure, the threat to civilization inherent in the ignorance and brutality of the “great unwashed” was acknowledged throughout early twentieth-century Europe, and the resources of state repression were dedicated to keeping this group under control. But the triumph of the Russian brute was, surely, more terrifying than, for instance, the proletarian regimes of Munich or Halle. In Russia, the attack on people like us had been sudden, complete, and devastating; and the Russian Bolsheviks were so frighteningly alien. The eyewitness stories remind one of the way in which, for instance, Western Europeans might report on some African colony, where the natives had risen up against their white rulers: stories of illiterate and voodoo-worshipping “Negroes” moving into their masters’ houses, destroying their culture, attacking white women, starving white babies, humiliating white men – and yet, aping the ways of their betters: in, for instance, attempting (ludicrously) to wear “white” clothes and to buy “white” art. This would have been the evil carnival of race inversion. Surely, DN’s reports from Russia show something similar. The people-like-us, the civilized, literate elite, were a Western people. The Bolshevik terrorists, vandals, and servant-girls in expensive, crooked shoes were something else again: in all probability, prototypical Russian barbarians. Was this, then, how Western – or at least Swedish – liberal journalists viewed Russia: as a brutish and alien society, superficially *colonized* by Westernized people-like-us? Was the East a vast, unknown territory, with only a thin veneer of people who thought like us, wrote intelligibly in our newspapers, with whom we could communicate? *Those* were, after all, the people – the civi-

lized, the natural elite – upon whose sufferings the newspapers focused. Russia had once been colonized by the civilized, normal people. Then, the natives had risen up: let the evil carnival begin.

Notes (Newspaper Citations)

1. *Danziger Zeitung*, 9 Nov. 1918, evening edition. Italics in the original (throughout, unless otherwise specified). All translations by author.
2. *Danziger Zeitung*, 10 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
3. *Danziger Zeitung*, 11 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
4. *Danziger Zeitung*, 11 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
5. *Danziger Zeitung*, 11 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. *Danziger Zeitung* 13 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
9. *Danziger Zeitung* 13 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
10. *Danziger Zeitung* 14 Nov. 1918, evening edition.
11. *Danziger Zeitung* 15 Nov. 1918, evening edition.
12. *Danziger Zeitung* 11 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
13. *Danziger Zeitung* 13 Nov. 1918, evening edition.
14. *Danziger Zeitung* 14 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
15. *Danziger Zeitung* 13 Nov. 1918, evening edition.
16. *Danziger Zeitung* 14 Nov. 1918, evening edition.
17. *Danziger Zeitung*, 12 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
18. *Danziger Zeitung*, 15 Nov. 1918, evening edition.
19. *Danziger Zeitung*, 20 Nov. 1918, morning edition.
20. *Danziger Zeitung*, 12 Apr. 1919, morning edition.
21. *Danziger Zeitung*, 10 Apr. 1919.
22. *Danziger Zeitung*, 13 Apr. 1919, morning edition.
23. *Danziger Zeitung*, 27 Apr. 1919, second edition.
24. *Danziger Zeitung*, 19 Nov. 1918, evening edition.
25. *Danziger Zeitung*, 8 Dec. 1918, morning edition.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. *Danziger Zeitung*, 11 Apr. 1919, morning edition.
29. *Danziger Zeitung*, 11 Apr. 1919, evening edition.
30. *Danziger Zeitung* 12 Apr. 1919, morning edition.
31. *Danziger Zeitung* 12 Apr. 1919, morning edition.
32. *Danziger Zeitung* 13 Apr. 1919, morning edition.
33. *Dagens Nybeter* 8 Nov. and 14 Nov. 1917.
34. *Dagens Nybeter* 7 Nov. 1918.
35. *Dagens Nybeter* 15 Nov. 1918.
36. *Dagens Nybeter* 12 Nov. 1918.
37. *Dagens Nybeter* 15 Nov. 1918.
38. *Dagens Nybeter* 15 Nov. 1918.
39. *Dagens Nybeter* 11 and 12 Nov. 1918.
40. *Dagens Nybeter* 14 Nov. 1918.
41. *Dagens Nybeter* 17, 23, 25 Apr. 1919.
42. *Dagens Nybeter* 3 Apr. 1919.
43. "Dubious" and "stick": characterizations of the Spartacists in *Dagens Nybeter* 17 and 27 Mar. 1919; "gang" from *Dagens Nybeter* 12 Apr. 1919.
44. *Dagens Nybeter* 11 Apr. 1919.

45. *Dagens Nyheter* 12 and 26 Apr. 1919.
46. *Dagens Nyheter* 23 Apr. 1919.
47. *Dagens Nyheter* 16 Apr. 1919.
48. *Dagens Nyheter* 17 Apr. 1919.
49. *Dagens Nyheter* 19 Apr. 1919.
50. *Dagens Nyheter* 19 Apr. 1919.
51. *Dagens Nyheter* 23 Apr. 1919.
52. *Dagens Nyheter* 26 Apr. 1919.
53. *Dagens Nyheter* 23 Apr. 1919.
54. *Dagens Nyheter* 17 Apr. 1919.
55. *Dagens Nyheter* 17 Apr. 1919.
56. *Dagens Nyheter* 17 Apr. 1919.
57. See also *Dagens Nyheter's* eyewitness's account of Communist Hungary, 16 Apr. 1919.
58. *Dagens Nyheter* 15 Nov. 1917.
59. *Dagens Nyheter* 7 Nov. 1918.
60. *Dagens Nyheter* 5 Nov. 1918.
61. *Dagens Nyheter* 25 Apr. 1919.
62. *Dagens Nyheter* 15 Nov. 1918.
63. See also *Dagens Nyheter's* eyewitness's account from Moscow, 19 Apr. 1919.
64. *Dagens Nyheter* 14 Apr. 1919.
65. *Dagens Nyheter* 17 Apr. 1919.
66. *Dagens Nyheter* 14 Apr. 1919.
67. *Dagens Nyheter* 19 Apr. 1919.
68. *Dagens Nyheter* 14 Apr. 1919.
69. *Dagens Nyheter* 19 Apr. 1919.
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Swedish and Danish Television News of their Baltic Neighbors 1995–2000

Kristina Riegert

This chapter rests on the assumption that television news is an important site for the cultivation and mobilization of collective identities, i.e. international, national, or ethnic ones. On a daily basis, foreign news tells audiences what events and issues “we” should care about, what threats “we” are exposed to, what catastrophes “we” are providing aid for, or which summit meetings are going to affect “us”. Through the construction of these diplomatic, conflict-ridden, or exotic worlds, with their stock set of events and people, their utilization of certain symbols and stereotypes, the national media cultivate not simply people’s understandings of who “Others” are, but also, through this very process, they delineate who “we” are expected to be.

Identity formation is of course an ongoing process of self-definition and concomitant “Other-definition”. In times of upheaval and change, re-definitions and shifts in perceptions of the Other may occur as responses to the disintegration of multi-ethnic states, civil unrest, large-scale integration such as the integration of Europe, or changes in the global economic order. It is thus interesting to study the way transitional societies, such as those in the south-eastern Baltic region, have been depicted in the news media of some of their closest neighbors. How have the radical transformations in the 1990s of the countries of the Baltic Sea Region been reflected in Scandinavian news stories? The results reported here look at how Swedish and Danish television news stories depict the people, the culture, the politics of their newly democratized Baltic neighbors. It analyzes not only how television news stories participate in the construction of national identities, but also how they set these identities in transnational contexts, possibly cultivating a regional identity.

Sweden and Denmark are both Nordic countries with similar cultures and values, yet over the course of their long, intertwined history, they have been on opposite ends of a rivalry for power in the Baltic Sea Region; and, more recently, they have often chosen different paths on matters relating to the EU and NATO. Both countries have been active supporters and investors in the new democracies of the Baltic Sea Region. How is all this reflected in Swedish and Danish television news agendas? What forms of kinship and

distancing mechanisms can be discerned in these news images and do they change during the relatively short period studied? What types of narrative themes are invoked to make “sense” of events and are these shared by the Nordic countries or are they country-specific? How do designations of “otherness” relate to events and issues such as economic reforms, relations with Russia, or applications for EU or NATO membership?

Comparative and/or diachronic studies allow us to trace the contours of media representations during tumultuous periods, over space and time. It is in the nature of comparative studies that one searches for similarities or differences, patterns or peculiarities. The point of view taken here is that while such patterns will be of interest, a more important aim will be to illuminate what these journalistic constructions have to say about the relation of the reporting societies to the societies reported on, and about the complex interaction between society and the media which form the very basis of journalism. From this point of view, what is interesting is not so much *that* foreign news is put into political or cultural frameworks of the reporting nation (Chin-Chuan Lee, et. al. 2002; Riegert, 1998; Cohen, et. al. 1996), nor even, for example, that an Anglo-American news culture exerts a formative influence on international news coverage (Van Dijk, 1988; Paterson, 2001), but rather the *tools* and *means* by which both Swedish and Danish television news make sense of their eastern Baltic neighbors as well their own roles in the region during the late 1990s.

The Historical and Political Context of Scandinavian News Coverage of the Baltic Sea Region

Swedish and Danish television news interest in the Baltic Sea Region should be seen in the historical and cultural contexts of ties stemming from both countries' positions as regional powers from the 16th to 18th centuries. In the 20th century, however, relations across the Baltic Sea were mainly influenced by the dominant position of Russia. Following World War II, Sweden's position of armed neutrality was influenced by Finland's special relationship with the Soviet Union, and by the choice by Norway and Denmark to join NATO.¹ During the Cold War, then, the strategic balance struck by the foreign policies of the Nordic countries was partly a result of the need to placate Russian sensitivities. When the events of the early 1990s made it clear that the security of the entire region was going to be affected by the collapse of the Soviet Union, ties between the Nordic and Baltic States were reestablished.

In September 1991, when the Baltic Republics broke away from the Soviet Union, both Denmark and Sweden actively supported their independence and their aspirations for integration into Western institutions, such as the European Union. The Scandinavian countries initiated bilateral and multilateral financial aid and encouraged investment in the Baltic States and

Eastern Europe. In the late 1990s, Sweden was Estonia's second largest trading partner, and was Latvia's third largest, whereas Denmark did more trade with Lithuania. Both Sweden and Denmark are also significant investors in the Baltic countries and Poland. Sweden and Finland are the leading investors in Estonia, whereas Denmark was the larger investor in Latvia. (Vihalemm, 1997: 140-143; Vihalemm 2002) In the mid-90s, Sweden and Denmark lobbied extensively, though unsuccessfully, for the inclusion of all three Baltic States in the first round of negotiations for EU membership. In light of the above-mentioned trade and investment with these countries, both countries' support for the rapid eastward enlargement of the EU cannot be seen as altruistic, but rather a result of the potential of an expanding market in their immediate vicinity.

Since 1991, Denmark, Sweden and Finland have vied for leadership in the Baltic region. All have historical, geographic, and political reasons – as well as reasons involving prestige – to take the lead, all share the same welfare egalitarianism, the importance of EU membership, and the desire to deepen ties across the Baltic. The rivalry existing among them inspired, in the late 1990s, new initiatives and ultimately has proved beneficial to these newly independent countries of the Baltic region (Mouritzen, 2000: 265-268).

Denmark saw itself as being uniquely placed to facilitate the Baltic countries' relationships with the "West", since it is the only Nordic country that is a member of both NATO and the EU. Denmark has therefore taken the lead in regional issues relating to military security policy, and actively supports NATO membership for Poland and the Baltic States.² This does not seem to translate into Danish news interest in the region, however, as revealed by a Danish project analyzing foreign news coverage in a plethora of press, radio and television news programs over a two-week period in November 1998. The study found an extremely low frequency of coverage for the Eastern and Central European countries despite their "close proximity" to Denmark. This contrasts with the much greater coverage given to other European countries. For example, Germany, Sweden, and the UK accounted for a third of all Danish coverage of Western Europe during the period studied (Kitaj, 2000). News coverage of Sweden during this period was characterized by breadth: nuclear power, the Gothenburg fire catastrophe, business and economy, criminality, health issues and culture. An altogether different pattern emerged from the coverage of Russia. According to Møller (2000: 89-99), Russia was given massive, but one-sided news coverage lacking in human interest stories. The typical story emanating from Russia was dramatic: economic crises, hunger and emergency aid, anti-Semitism in politics, or the assassination of a female member of the Duma. The coverage during these two weeks was said to place "us" (i.e. Denmark) in the roll of donors, working to solve "their" problems: helping them to modernize, and providing aid for the helpless victims of natural catastrophes and political chaos.

Where Denmark supports the NATO aspirations of the Baltic States, Sweden emphasizes security-building measures via peace-keeping, and has been

promoting regional security through its membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace (PFP) program. Sweden's desire to be a leader, as well as its support for regional cooperation, are channeled into its participation in the more economically oriented Council of Baltic Sea States (Dahl, 1999). As was evident in the case of Denmark above, a similar gap exists between the enthusiastic official policy and the lukewarm news interest in the region, according to the few studies that have been conducted on Swedish news coverage of the region. According to opinion polls cited by Weibull & Rosengren (1997: 182-3), there is much greater interest among Swedes in their Nordic neighbors and Anglo-Saxon countries than for countries in Eastern Europe (including the Baltic region). In comparison, Suhonen (1997: 185-6) writes that Finns are more interested in Estonia, although the media images in Finnish news tended to identify "Estonians with Russians or with the Soviet tradition" despite evidence of more nuanced coverage by 1996. Due to what Suhonen calls the "traditional news criteria of Western journalism" however, the influence of the mafia, social problems, prostitution, "sex tourism", smuggling, and environmental problems in Estonia received a disproportionate amount of attention in the Finnish media.

Swedish news interest in the south-eastern Baltic region appears to have fallen off since the tumultuous years of the "singing Revolution" between 1989-1991, and there is evidence of a dampening of enthusiasm for the Baltic countries as well. One study of Swedish television coverage of the crisis between Russia and Latvia in 1998 demonstrated a shift in the portrayal of Latvians between 1991 and 1998 (Riegert, 2000). In 1991, Sweden's largest news program, *Rapport*, portrayed Baltic nationalists sympathetically, with the majority of people wanting freedom and democracy. In 1998, ethnic Russians in Latvia were portrayed as victims of Latvian nationalists, for "simply" wanting the right to Latvian citizenship that was denied them. Despite this, Latvia and Russia are constructed as two types of "others". Latvia was depicted as Sweden's wayward protégé: its inability to deal with the legacy of its Nazi past and with its Russian minority was interpreted as a lack of complete democracy, i.e. they were not yet like "us". This is in contrast to Russia, which, like its predecessor in 1991, continued to be constructed as an unstable and potentially threatening "Other".

A survey of the coverage of the Baltic States and Poland during a one-month period in 1997 (February 15 – March 15) in a number of different media showed that it was Poland, Latvia and Estonia that were given most attention in the news. Lithuania and Latvia were framed negatively due to the situation involving lax security at the nuclear power plant, Ignalina, and to the disappearance of a Swede in Riga. Poland and Estonia appear as "interesting" neighboring countries. In particular, the media image of Estonia was more varied and nuanced, due to news reports of the cultural and economic exchanges between Swedish and Estonian regions and towns. The image is that of a:

/.../ strong commitment on the part of the Swedish people and knowledge of the need for aid. One aspect that influences the media image of Estonia negatively is the discussion that Estonian industries could pose a threat to Swedish jobs. (Observer Media, 1997: 3).

This image is similar to Møller's conclusion above, that Sweden is depicted as a benevolent donor and giver of aid, while slightly worried about economic threats posed by the transitioning economies to the east.

Methodological Notes

The media sample analyzed in this chapter consists of all news stories that deal with Poland and the Baltic States in Danish and Swedish public service news programs from March and November, 1995-2000. One of the reasons why a sample which included only particular months was chosen was the relative lack of news about the Baltic Sea Region during a given year, which made it difficult and time-consuming to assemble a representative sample. There was also concern about the skewing effect of the shipwrecked *Estonia* in September 1994, (and the commemorations which take place every year around this time) where over 800 Swedes, Finns, and Estonians perished. The months of November and March are, here, generally considered to be "average" or typical news months, compared with summer months, or months closer to holiday seasons.

Another concern that shaped the choice of sample was the need to analyze the news coverage in the context of the news cycle. Contrary to popular assumption, the cycle for news stories is not necessarily a 24-hour period; any given news week can consist of several running stories which are covered over a period of days (not to mention scandals which can dominate the news agenda for weeks). The running story is particularly interesting in relation to questions of identity in the news media, for it is after journalists exhaust stock angles used for planned events that different news angles are promoted in order to keep the story going. Secondly, television news editors try to promote a flow in the running order of their program by constructing links between news stories by, for example, trying to balance stories of differing importance, alternating heavy and light topics with an eye to what will attract and keep viewers. This "flow" can be thought of as the attempt of television news to discipline diverse news stories into themes (Riebert, 2003).

The analysis thus covers all news packages, voice-overs and news presenter "reads" about the Baltic States and Poland out of a total of 12 months of news between 1995 and 2000 (inclusive), of news programs.³ The news programs analyzed are the main evening bulletins of the public service broadcasting organizations in Sweden and Denmark: Sveriges Television's *Aktuellt*, and Danish Broadcasting Corporation's *TV-avisen*. This method satisfied my

primary interest, which was to get an idea of which countries were covered and the extent to which they were covered, but more importantly to analyze *how the people, the issues and events are depicted, and whether this changes during the latter half of the 1990s*. A drawback to this type of sampling is that some parts of the region may be underrepresented due to the fact that recurring events, like elections, may take place during other time periods. On the other hand, elections are no guarantee of news coverage – one of Lithuania's elections was covered by Danish *TV-avisen* in 1995, but not by Swedish *Aktuellt*, whereas the reverse was the case in 2000.

In the last section of this chapter, three transnational narrative themes (economic transition, political transition, and symbolic ideological transition) and specifically national themes were identified based on the structure of the most frequently recurring story content. Categorizing themes is simply an attempt to identify, group, and contrast elements of journalistic texts during the period studied. These are here called “narrative themes” because they often tell dramatic stories about the conflict-ridden and difficult struggle of the Baltic countries to become like “us”. (Cornfield, 1988)

Newsworthy Neighbors?

This section draws the contours of the media worlds of the south-eastern Baltic Sea Region as they appeared in Danish and Swedish television news programs from 1995 to 2000. The more general indicators in the following section, as well as the narrative themes in later sections, reveal both similarities and differences between the Swedish and the Danish news programs. For example, both *Aktuellt* and *TV-avisen* manifest a similar level of attention to the Baltic States and Poland during the six years included here, as measured by numbers of news stories – the totals differ by only 7 items. Table 1 shows that *TV-avisen* has a total of 73 news stories compared to 66 for *Aktuellt*. To get a sense of how little news coverage this entails, these same news programs during a *single* November week in 1999 included 38 (*Aktuellt*) and 35 (*TV-avisen*) news stories that were classified as “European” (Riegert, 2003). Comparatively speaking, then, news from the eastern Baltic region is quite sparse, despite its geographic proximity to the reporting countries.

As far as the resources allocated to the region are concerned, the large majority of stories in both news programs consist of news packages (stories done by a correspondent). *TV-avisen* has more packages than *Aktuellt*, whereas the latter has more voice-overs and reads, both of which are read by the news anchor.⁴ The preponderance of longer news stories indicates that *TV-avisen* gave its Baltic Sea neighbors more priority than *Aktuellt*. It should be said however, that *TV-avisen*'s news packages came from a handful of correspondents stationed in or around the region.⁵ This is in contrast

to *Aktuellt*, which had more correspondents doing news packages, yet none appeared to be stationed in the region.

According to the distribution of news stories in Table 1, *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt* have their relative high points of news coverage during different years. *TV-avisen*'s interest in the Baltic States and Poland is highest in 1995 and 1997, after which the coverage decreases to a low point in 2000. Although *Aktuellt* is also most interested in its eastern Baltic neighbors in 1995, this interest does not decline sharply during the entirety of the period examined, but rather instead hovers around approximately the same number (aside from a brief dip in 1996 and 1997) of news stories until 2000. Table 1 also shows that *Aktuellt* has almost twice the number of news stories as *TV-avisen* in 1996, and three times as many in 2000, whereas *TV-avisen* has four times as many stories in 1997 as *Aktuellt*. Both news programs appear to devote similar attention to the Baltic States in 1995 and 1998-9.

Table 1. News Stories about the Baltic States and Poland in *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt*, March and November, 1995-2000*

Year	TV-avisen		Aktuellt	
	Number of news items	% of total items	Number of news items	% of total items
1995	23	32	19	29
1996	5	7	9	14
1997	21	29	4	6
1998	12	16	13	20
1999	7	10	7	11
2000	5	7	14	21
Total nr.Items	73	101	66	101

* Percentages are rounded.

Most of the similarities in news attention can be attributed to certain events: there were presidential and parliamentary elections in Poland and Estonia in 1995 and, in both of these countries, coalitions consisting of former Communists came to power. The surprise election in Poland – where “former hero” Lech Walesa and “former Communist” Aleksander Kwasniewski battled it out in two rounds of presidential elections – was given much coverage in both news programs. Walesa ultimately lost narrowly to the younger and more dynamic Kwasniewski, prompting what was deemed “the end of an era” in Poland. Events in the eastern Baltic region were also covered in both programs in 1998 and 1999 when EU enlargement procedures began, and when NATO formally accepted Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary into the Alliance. This is not surprising since these issues are transnational and touch on the interests of the entire region.

What about differential attention in Swedish and Danish news to particular countries or areas? Table 2 indicates which geographic area or country

was given the most news coverage by *Aktuellt* and by *TV-avisen* between 1995 and 2000. Apart from the fact that Poland is given the most attention by both news programs, the differences between the two programs outweigh the similarities. *TV-avisen*'s greatest interest after Poland is in stories that have to do with more than one country in the region, e.g., news stories about EU or NATO enlargement. After Poland, Estonia is the country that received the most attention in *Aktuellt*.

Table 2. Parts of the South-Eastern Baltic Region That Got the Most Coverage in *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt*, 1995-2000

Country/Region	<i>TV-avisen</i>				<i>Aktuellt</i>			
	Packages	Voice-overs/ Reads	Total Items	Total % of Items	Packages	Voice-overs/ Reads	Total Items	Total % of Items
Poland	20	6	26	36	15	5	20	30
Lithuania	4	3	7	10	7	3	10	15
Latvia	11	0	11	15	2	2	4	6
Estonia	5	0	5	7	11	6	17	26
The Baltic States/ Eastern Europe ⁶	22	2	24	33	12	3	15	23
Total No. Items	62	11	73	101	47	19	66	100

Aktuellt gives more than three times as much attention to Estonia as *TV-avisen*, whereas *TV-avisen* gives more than twice as much attention to Latvia as its Swedish counterpart. The Danish program's attention to Latvia may be surprising for Swedish readers, since they might assume Latvia to be considered more newsworthy by *Aktuellt*, given that part of Latvia (and Estonia) belonged to Sweden's 16th century empire. *Aktuellt*'s lack of attention to Latvia cannot be explained here, but *TV-avisen*'s coverage of Latvia turns out to be almost exclusively (9 stories out of a total of 11) the result of a media scandal between March 19th and March 24th, 1997, when Latvia's president Guntis Ulmanis was on an official visit to Denmark. The scandal – which originated with the “censorship” of Queen Margarethe's speech to the Latvian president expressing Danish support for Latvia's membership in both NATO and EU – snowballed into a domestic squabble which threatened the unity of the Conservative Party. In 1997, it was by no means uncontroversial that the Danish government, let alone the Queen (who is constitutionally bound to avoid involvement in Danish foreign policy), should publicly support Latvia's membership in NATO, given that Russia was still officially opposed to the membership of the Baltic States. This can and should be interpreted as a domestic debate about the way Danish foreign policy should be handled, and the way Denmark appears to the outside world.

The People and Events of the Region in *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt*

What types of events are parts of the Danish and Swedish media worlds? Table 3 presents the topics/issues in Danish and Swedish television news about the Baltic States and Poland from 1995 to 2000.⁷ From this we see that *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt* have a similar repertoire when it comes to images of their eastern Baltic neighbors. Both news programs carry stories on crime, whether it be the mafia operating in the region, crime in the Baltic States themselves, or stories of smugglers getting caught. Other recurring stories associated with the region have to do with East European ships dumping oil, needing assistance, or running aground (especially in Denmark). It should be noted that stories about the survivors of the *Estonia* and the relatives of those who perished, as well as different Estonia Commission inquiries, are found only in *Aktuellt*, perhaps because no Danes perished with the shipwrecked *Estonia*. In Sweden, however, the wreck of the *Estonia* almost always serves as backdrop, implicit or otherwise, to stories about the seaworthiness of ferry traffic.

Among the most commonly occurring topics of news coverage for both countries (14% for *TV-avisen*, 12% for *Aktuellt*) were what I have been calling Politics/Government/Democracy, i.e. news about elections, about the relevant candidates or leaders, or about political parties or demonstrations, in one of the four eastern Baltic countries. News about elections or political issues was inevitably linked to issues included under Economic/Financial Issues (9% for *TV-avisen*, 11% for *Aktuellt*) and slightly less commonly, to Social/Welfare Issues (8% for both). The elections in Estonia, Poland and Lithuania (the latter was covered only in *Aktuellt*) were taken as opportunities to describe the transitions of these countries from centrally planned to market-based economies. These stories often included descriptions of the negative social consequences of the transformation to capitalism for several sectors of the population, such as farmers, the older generation, or Russian minorities. The transitions were otherwise always depicted as “successful” by dint of the resulting economic growth, low inflation, and adaptation of industries to EU or Western standards.

The categories, NATO, and Foreign and Security Policy cover Danish and Swedish interest in their eastern neighbors’ aspirations to join NATO, NATO’s eastward expansion, the Partnership for Peace program (PFP) and the actual ceremony of the induction of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary into NATO in March of 1999. There is little difference in attention to NATO-related news stories, which means that Swedish *Aktuellt* interprets the expansion of NATO to be an issue of international and regional importance. In both countries, the official NATO ceremony was covered as a “historical moment”, one that put the division of Europe and the Cold War to rest once and for all.

Table 3. Danish and Swedish News Coverage of the Baltic States and Poland by Issue/Topic, 1995-2000 (per cent)*

Topics/Issues in News Stories	TV-avisen	Aktuellt
Crime, Smuggling and Organized Crime	4	3
Economic/Financial Issues	9	11
Social/Welfare Issues ⁸	8	8
Environmental Problems or Issues ⁹ /Energy Issues	4	7
Cultural/Educational Issues ¹⁰	1	5
Agriculture	4	1
EU ¹¹	12	7
NATO	8	5
Minority and Immigration Issues	5	1
Commemorations and Official Visits	4	5
Personalities and Portraits	2	2
Politics/Government/Democracy ¹²	14	12
Foreign and Security Policy	8	7
Transport/Seafaring	2	3
Protests and Demonstrations	1	1
Swedish/Danish Influence vis-à-vis a Certain State, Issue or the Baltic Region ¹³	6	13
Influence of Baltic Region/Countries on Swedish/Danish Domestic Issues ¹⁴	7	8
Estonia Commission Inquiry/Situation of the Survivors/Relatives of the Dead	–	4
Other	1	–
Total %	100	102
Total Number Coded for Content	142	119

*News stories could be categorized as having up to three topics or issues, therefore the proportions represent percentages of total number of coded issues rather than the total number of news items.

Aside from these similarities, Table 3 highlights other characteristics in the media discourse that are specific to national interests and the countries' role in the region. In particular, *TV-avisen* gives more attention to news stories concerning EU-enlargement than *Aktuellt*. While it is true that both Sweden and Denmark belong to the European Union, and both have officially supported EU enlargement, Denmark has been a net beneficiary of EU membership in its agricultural sector whereas Sweden has not been. Implicit in *TV-avisen's* greater focus on Polish and Estonian farmers and the changes they will have to make in order to meet EU standards is, thus, the crucial role of agriculture in the Danish economy, and the reduction in EU subsidies to Denmark that will be entailed by EU enlargement.¹⁵ Another area of interest for *TV-avisen* (but not *Aktuellt*) was Minority and Immigration Issues. A continuing story under this rubric was about the Danish authorities' attempts to deal with people from the Baltic States who used their tempo-

rary residence permits in Denmark as a way to do their (illegal, it is implied) business.

A clear-cut reflection of kinship mechanisms in the news coverage can be found in the two categories involving the Swedish or Danish role vis-à-vis a certain state or issue in the Baltic region. For *Aktuellt*, 13% of the issues/topics coded for were explicitly related to Sweden's influence or role as benefactor, sponsor, role model, or leader in relation to the Baltic States and Poland, compared to less than half as many times *TV-avisen* portrays Denmark as having such a role. This is not surprising, since Sweden has traditionally been seen by the other Nordic countries as a kind of Big Brother, not only because of its historical status as a regional power, but also because of the tendency of its policy-makers to continue to act as if it indeed still has this role (Riegert, 2000).

Another category, one that reflects the ways news stories make Baltic events and neighbors relevant to "us", was called Influence of Baltic Region/Countries on Swedish/Danish Domestic Issues in Table 3. Examples of news stories included in this category are the influence of the international Estonia Commission on the Swedish government's decisions concerning the raising of the shipwrecked *Estonia*, as well as stories on the way Denmark or Sweden will have to adjust to EU enlargement or changes to NATO. Also in this category are ecological issues and, when covered explicitly as potential threats to Sweden or Denmark, reports on the security measures at Ignalina, the Lithuanian nuclear power plant. Comparing the media representation of Scandinavian influence *over* the eastern Baltic neighbors with the opposite – the representation of the Scandinavian countries' as *being influenced by* their Baltic neighbors – *Aktuellt* highlighted the former. This was not the case for *TV-avisen*, where the countries of the Baltic region are seen to influence Denmark and Danish domestic policy just as much as Denmark exercises influence over these other countries. Thus, while media representations do show Danish sponsorship of the induction of the eastern Baltic neighbor countries into the EU and NATO, there is an equally strong tendency to depict the country as vulnerable to influence by events and threats from the East.

What about the depiction of different actors in Danish and Swedish news coverage? Who is it that peoples the worlds of these Scandinavian news programs during this 6-year period? What stands out in Table 4 is the overwhelming dominance, in both news programs, of political parties, leaders, and governmental actors, as well as, in the case of *Aktuellt*, state institutions. Regarding members of civil society, *Aktuellt* also has a greater focus on social, economic, and cultural actors than *TV-avisen*. These include new entrepreneurs, hospital workers, architects, filmmakers, and factory workers. In terms of the "person on the street" and international actors such as the EU or NATO, there is no difference between the Danish and Swedish news programs.

Table 4. Actors in Danish and Swedish News Coverage of the Baltic Sea Region, March and November, 1995-2000 (per cent)

Actors	TV-avisen	Aktuellt
National, Governmental, and Political Actors ¹⁶	55	46
Interest Organizations Actors ¹⁷	1	3
State Institutions ¹⁸	5	10
Social/Medical/Cultural Workers, Entrepreneurs, Laborers	4	8
Farmers	4	2
Average Citizens ¹⁹	10	13
Businesses/Companies	2	6
Royalty	2	1
International Actors (EU/NATO, OSCE, Nordic Council)	8	8
Criminals/Mafia/Nazis	2	1
Experts/Commentators/Journalists	6	2
Other	1	2
Total %	100	102
Total no. of actors	359	313

Aktuellt was more likely to use the country name “Estonia”, “Latvia” or “Lithuania” or the terms, “East European countries” and “Baltic countries” as metonyms for the governments, whereas *TV-avisen* is more interested in the actual domestic political party actors than *Aktuellt*. One of the reasons for this is connected to two continuing stories that involve particular Danish political actors (one of the two is the aforementioned scandal involving the Danish Queen). Another explanation may be that there is a greater emphasis in Danish political culture of networking and negotiations, based on the Danish tradition of coalition governments.

Viewers of *Aktuellt* also saw more business or financial actors in the eastern Baltic Sea Region than did viewers of *TV-avisen*, whereas viewers of the latter saw more experts/commentators and journalists than viewers of *Aktuellt*. In short, the actors found in the eastern Baltic region in Swedish and Danish news programs are mainly official actors, and, to a much lesser extent, members of civil society.

What, then, can be said about the representations of the Eastern Baltic countries in the media world of two of their Scandinavian neighbors? First, a word of caution. This sample is not a representative sample, but rather was chosen with an eye to gathering material about the Baltic States that was as continuous as possible, while, at the same, not allowing specific crises (like the *Estonia* shipwreck) to skew the results. In other words, the months chosen give an idea of the south-eastern Baltic region’s place in the news world of *Aktuellt* and *TV-avisen* during an average month. The news flow studies of the 1970s and 80s often make the point that Western journalism has a number of blank spots or “news holes” – we hardly ever hear of certain African or Latin American countries unless there is a crisis or catas-

trophe. Additionally, news about faraway places tends to concentrate on conflicts or scheduled events such as elections or state visits. (Gerbner & Marvany, 1977) Both of these tendencies are manifest in Danish and Swedish news stories about the newly democratized states of the Baltic region in the post-Cold War period, despite the geographic proximity of these countries.

Both Scandinavian news programs can thus be said to evince lukewarm interest in the Baltic region, and much of the reporting is focused on political or economic issues and official actors. In *TV-avisen* there is a marked decline in news from the region after 1997. One of the largest countries in the region, Poland, was the object of a more sustained news interest in both Scandinavian programs, and *Aktuellt* favored Estonia – a result of historical, as well as current political, financial, and cultural ties. However, one should not discount timing here: both Poland and Estonia were set to join the European Union during its first round of expansion in 2004, and Poland joined NATO during the period under study (1999).

What is surprising is that there is so little coverage in these two programs of Swedish or Danish economic investment in the countries of this region, despite the fact that both countries have invested heavily in the Baltic States' economies in particular. (See Lauristin & Vihalemm, 1997.) It may be that such stories are found in the financial news segments that come after the news programs studied, although any big story would have made the headlines of the regular news bulletin. Nevertheless, general news coverage of the region has clearly not followed the financial investment made by Scandinavian firms. On the contrary, what little coverage there is gives the impression of selfless benevolence, i.e. that Denmark and Sweden are contributing substantial amounts of development aid to help modernize these economies.

Transnational Narrative Themes of Transition

Several themes in the Danish and Swedish news about their Eastern Baltic neighbors were quite similar. These could almost be said to be generic themes, despite the fact that between 72-82% of all the news stories in this sample were not news agency stories, but originated from *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt* correspondents. An extreme example of this type of generic narrative can be found in *TV-avisen*'s story on Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis and *Aktuellt*'s piece on Lithuania's President Algirdas Brazauskas. The structure of these two news stories, broadcast during different years, was astoundingly similar.²⁰ The two presidents are portrayed as men whose lives parallel the histories of their countries: their biographies move from childhood (during the Baltic States' period of independence from 1918-40) through the Soviet annexation, culminating in the so-called Singing Revolution and independence in 1991. Both men are presented as icons or father figures for their countries, with whom the populations of their countries are presumed

to identify – although as viewers, we cannot be certain whether this is the way these politicians are actually viewed in their own countries, since both men were members of the Communist Party.

As noted previously quite a number of news stories had to do with the political and economic transitions of the Baltic States and Poland. As shown in Ekecrantz's (2002) findings on Swedish feature articles about Russia, the most common transnational themes used to portray the worlds of the Baltic States and Poland were variations of Orientalist East-West binary oppositions. *Aktuellt* and *TV-avisen* used three types of narrative themes to make sense of events in the south-eastern Baltic region for Swedish and Danish audiences. Common to all three is that they can to a large extent be mapped onto an East-West axis that is, as Ekecrantz pointed out, overlaid by a temporal axis – the dark past and the brighter present. The first theme is found in news stories relating to economic transition, the second involves political transition, whereas the third is symbolic and ideological, related to the legacy of the past, especially World War II. The second theme is less explicitly East-West than the others, since it has more to do with questions surrounding the difference between liberal vs. welfare capitalism, where choices have to be made about what sectors of society should be prioritized. Here, one can see an explicit references in both Swedish and Danish news programs to the negative effects of "brutal" capitalism. Finally, the first and third themes were at times explicitly related to the fact that "we" in Sweden/Denmark were helping these countries become modern and enlightened, like "us". Chart 1.1 lists common binary oppositions found in a diverse number of stories about the Baltic States and Poland that are found under the Economic Transition theme.

Chart 1. Binary Oppositions of the Economic Transition Theme

Low Standards	High Standards
Waste	Efficiency
Outdated technology	Advanced technology
Domestic industry	Foreign industry
Ineffective Laws	Rigorous Laws
Danger	Safety
Polluters	Environmentally conscious
Disease	Health
Helplessness	Control
Stagnation	Change
Danger/Bankruptcy	Safety/Money

One example of how this theme played out can be found in a story by *TV-avisen's* Connie Petersen (March 2, 1995) about the transformation of a top-secret Estonian factory that produced military components and employed 20,000 workers to one producing civilian components employing just 1,400 people. In the "good old days", a worker said, they could afford to heat the building

and take their families away for vacation; now times are hard, and the demands of efficiency mean that wages are low and the workers are struggling. However, since the production process is reasonably modern, "there is hope – even for this former Soviet industry". Here, the stagnation and inefficiency of the Soviet era is set against the demands of modern Western industry.

Probably the most poignant stories relying on the economic transition narrative are those about "what has to be done" by Polish or Estonian farmers (examples can be found in *TV-avisen*, November 24, 1995, *Aktuellt*, March 30, 1998) in order to reach EU standards and rules. These stories typically contrast the countryside with the city, illustrating this with images of horse-drawn wagons, farmers plowing the fields and outmoded equipment, all of which of course appears antiquated to the Western eye. Of course, these particular farmers could, in fact, simply be poor, but that does not necessarily mean that "they" are technology backwards. The images provide all-too easy examples of the dramatic changes Eastern Europeans are going to have make when their countries join the EU (in order to become like "us").

Other stories that contain the types of binary oppositions in Chart 1.1 have to do with East European ships getting stranded or saved in Danish or Swedish waters. The fact that these ships are not seaworthy makes them problems for "us". "We" have to bring them into port, deal with oil spills or clear away the stranded skeletons of "their" ships from our beaches (*TV-avisen*, March 3, 1995, *Aktuellt*, November 21, 1996). Both *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt* have stories about the alarming spread of multi-resistant tuberculosis in the Baltic States. These stories are not prompted by the same event, but appear in the news programs in different years. The spread of multi-resistant tuberculosis is described as a significant health issue, which the Nordic countries have recognized and tried to alleviate by providing millions in aid (*Aktuellt*, March 23, 2000; *TV-avisen*, March 24, 1998). Implicit in these news stories is the fear that the disease will become a threat to Sweden and Denmark and that "their backwardness" poses problems for "us".

Finally, a narrative that recurs throughout the sample in both news programs has to do with stories about the various scares connected to Ignalina, the Lithuanian nuclear power plant. According to the news programs, Lithuania will have to close the plant prior to EU membership, since its construction (like that of Chernobyl) does not comply with Western safety standards. Ignalina has been allowed to remain open thanks to significant amounts of Swedish and Danish (and other Western) aid that has helped increase security at the plant. The aid was not, of course, entirely selfless. Because Lithuania is dependent on the power provided by the plant, any realistic alternative to nuclear power that would be available in the near future would increase pollution in the Baltic Sea Region.²¹ In a news item from March 3, 2000 in *Aktuellt*, donor countries are said to "demand" that the Lithuanian government take responsibility for the functioning of the plant, which was threatened by work stoppages that resulted from non-payment of wages and fees at several levels. Denmark and Sweden are thus depicted as environmentally responsible,

and can buy nuclear safety with their funds, whereas Lithuania's backwardness contributes to pollution, as well as the risk of large-scale catastrophes.

A second transitional theme can be discerned in the news stories describing political issues facing the countries of the south-eastern Baltic region. This category would include, for example, stories that framed parliamentary elections in terms of universally valid choices for the problems confronting the newly democratized societies. The choices had to do with whether to concentrate on industrial growth or protect the environment, whether governments should follow the teachings of the church (in Poland) or utilize the benefits of modern science, whether employment or industrial efficiency should come first, and so on.

Chart 2. Binary Oppositions of the Political Transition Theme

The Older Generation	The Younger Generation
Social Justice	Brutal Capitalism
Welfare	Economic growth
Agriculture/Environment	Industry
Former Communists	Former Freedom Fighters
Religion	Science
Recipient	Donor
Losers	Winners

This transnational theme is one of the most interesting cases as far as a regional Nordic identity in the news coverage is concerned. An example of this is the presidential election in Poland in 1995, which took place in two rounds with a two-week interval since neither candidate got a majority of votes in the first round. In terms of mediated identities (see Riegert and Åker, in this volume), this was a paradigmatically simple story for Swedish and Danish reporters: The Catholic Lech Walesa – veteran “freedom fighter and “folk hero” – is pitted against the young, well-educated former “Communist” and “western-style” politician Aleksander Kwasniewski, dividing the country into those who see Walesa as the “only guarantee against a return to the darkness of Communism” (November 2, 1995) and who could not “imagine” voting for a former Communist, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, those who see Kwasniewski as a sophisticated politician who can lead them “into the future”. According to these news stories, there is little difference between the candidates regarding economic reform, other than that the “former Communists” have come to power on the promise that they will deal with the social costs of the transition to capitalism (*TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt*, November 20, 1995). They want continued reform, but not at the cost of the poor and disadvantaged elements in society. (*TV-avisen*, November 3; November 5, 1995).

In contrast to the other two transnational themes, the political issues raised in these stories depict the transitions of the new democracies to market capitalism in terms that are not entirely positive. Poland “is an example of what

happens when an economic strategy fails to take into account social responsibility". It has "kept the worst of Communism and adopted the worst of capitalism". Unemployment is described as rampant. (*TV-avisen*, March 9, 1995.)

One common narrative technique is to characterize who can be considered the "winners" and "losers" in the wake of certain events or phenomena. In Estonia, it was retirees who were the "losers in Estonia's rapid transition", and who, in 1995, voted "old Communists" back into power. Market reforms will continue, but more attention will be paid to the weaker segments of society (*TV-avisen*, March 6, 1995). According to *Aktuellt's* correspondent Rolf Fredriksson, the losers in Estonia's "march into market economy" have been those who live in rural areas: one farm owner "got his grandfather's farm back and wants to bring the farm up to speed after 50 years of neglect", a country store with a large assortment of goods has opened, but no one can afford to buy them (March 3, 1995). The "old Communists" are promising more money for retirees, the countryside, and the public sector.

The media's explanation for the return to power of former Communists in both Poland and Estonia is that the brash, younger generation is thundering forward into reform, leaving large parts of the population suffering. This doesn't mean that *TV-avisen* and *Aktuellt* are questioning market reform and capitalism, rather it is the way these countries are "modernizing" which is the object of critique in these narratives.

A third type of transnational theme has to do with the transformation of these countries away from their totalitarian past with its traumatic collective memory. Stories framed according to this narrative involve symbols of a dark past and the ideological notion that the present is better and the future will be even brighter. A number of news stories having to do with Poland (state visits or commemorative occasions) bring up World War II as a traumatic period in the country's history. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the coverage of Poland invariably deals with anti-Semitism and the extermination of the Jews during World War II.

Chart 3. Binary Oppositions of a Symbolic Ideological Transition

Communism/Fascism	Capitalism
Repression	Freedom
Melancholy	Happiness
"Cement" Communism	Unfettered Commercialism
Hero	Criminal
Dark Past	Bright Present/Future
Perpetrator	Victim
Soviet Union (Russia)	NATO
Cold War	Peace

Anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe was of course not only a Nazi phenomenon; it was also common in Catholic Poland and the Soviet Union. *TV-avisen's*

story of one family caught between two evils, also demonstrates how “we” helped the victims (March 5, 1995). After 130,000 Lithuanian Jews died at the hands of Hitler, Stalin exiled 128,000 Lithuanians in order to russify the Baltic States. Israel Rachlin and his family were among them. The former head of the Danish Communist party, Ole Sohn, went back to the KGB archives and found the “reason” for Rachlin’s exile: in his import-export business he had dealings with the Germans. According to the narrative, the Danish Prime Minister had personally intervened on Israel’s behalf and brought the family to Denmark. This is a story about a family whose life mirrors history, how the victims try to gain some understanding of the perpetrators’ motives, but also how Danes aid the victims of repression.

Later in 1995, *TV-avisen* has another story on the resurgence of anti-Semitism in the Polish presidential election (November 9, 1995). Polish society is described as polarized: here we find the most “heroes” – people who died trying to save Jews – as well as the most “criminals”: those who actively assisted in the extermination of the Jews. According to the story, many representatives of the Catholic Church have expressed anti-Semitic sentiments, but at the same time the church has produced the most authoritative document on the relationship between Jews and Catholics during World War II. The conflict is presented as a worrying paradox since people in positions of authority are anti-Semitic. *Aktuellt* (November 27, 1997) also connects Poland with the Holocaust, due to an official Swedish education campaign about the Holocaust and visits by Swedish dignitaries to Auschwitz. Auschwitz is also on the Danish Prime Minister’s agenda when he makes a state visit to Poland (March 5, 1997).

These collective memories and symbols of the region’s repressive past also surface in commemorations of the passing of an era, in such stories as the closing of the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk where the labor union Solidarity once challenged the Polish Communist regime, and, above all, the celebration of the induction of Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary into NATO. The signing ceremony took place in the hometown of former U.S. President Truman, who presided over the founding of NATO fifty years earlier. The ceremony was represented as an historic moment: the end of the dark past and a tribute to a new future. This, said the speakers, was the end of the bipolar world, of the Cold War era, and a triumph over the Iron Curtain dividing Europe. Several of the ministers were said to have personal reasons to triumph: U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and Foreign Minister Bronislaw Geremek who fled or fought Communism. (March 12, 1999, *TV-avisen*, *Aktuellt*). Freedom triumphs over oppression, was the message – more so than the it was about capitalism triumphing over Communism. Both news programs point out that Russia is opposed to NATO’s eastward expansion, but this is not seen as a “real” threat – of the kind that the ceremony was designed to celebrate – which is the “definitive” break with the past.

Examples of the “bright” present and future juxtaposed to the “dark” past can also be found in two cultural stories in *Aktuellt*. One of these has to do

with what is deemed a “flowering of culture” in contemporary Poland. Despite the lack of state subsidies, the city of Krakow is restoring a classic theater building, and world famous director Andrej Wajda is working with his former enemies, enjoying his newfound artistic freedom. All over the country theater is popping up “like mushrooms out of the ground”, in contrast to the Communist era, where everything was concentrated in the capital (November 11, 1997). Another story by the same reporter two years earlier described Warsaw as undergoing an architectural revolution, from the grim “concrete slab” buildings of the Communist era, it was turning into a “normal” Western European city, with pastel colored buildings and modern office high-rises (November 26, 1995).

National Themes

As noted previously, *Aktuellt* and *TV-avisen* differed when it came to the way the reporting country influenced or was influenced by the events in the region: *Aktuellt* had many more stories in which Sweden was depicted as influencing events in the region than *TV-avisen* did. In particular, the stories where Denmark is “influenced” by the region have to do with different threats: ecological disaster (Igualina), ships running aground, illegal products imported into the country, refugees or criminals from the south-eastern part of the Baltic Sea Region. For example, in a story on March 3, 1995, a Lithuanian ship was stranded on the coast of Denmark. According to the story, there had been a number of similar incidents in Danish waters in recent years and this was a problem because Denmark ended up having to pay to get rid of the wrecks left on their shores, and the local authorities appealed to the government to act on an international level to deal with the situation. The theme in this item is that other countries’ lawlessness and irresponsibility, and Danes’ sense of order and responsibility, are juxtaposed.

Another story along these lines suggests that Denmark found a way to deal with Baltic citizens who kept reappearing in the country and applying for asylum (March 16, 1995). New and drastic methods of detainment were suggested in the Danish parliament in order to discourage the influx, which was seen to be part of a rising tide of a new type of criminality. This occurred despite the protests by opposition politicians that detaining people without charge was “un-Danish” and a violation of human rights. A third narrative had to do with what was going to happen to Denmark with the eastward expansion of the EU. Stories about the Danish industries presumed to be affected by the expansion would most often be included in a domestic news item, and thus were not included in this analysis. But we see, for example, a news story about a Danish factory opening in Poland that indicates that the lower wages in Eastern Europe will cost Danes jobs. (March 4, 1997)

Variations of the narrative about the EU’s eastward expansion appear to be more important for *TV-avisen* than for *Aktuellt*. In particular, *TV-avisen* is

more pessimistic regarding the pace of integration of the East European countries (9-November 10, 1998) due to the opposition of Germany, France and Great Britain. In 1999, *TV-avisen* says that while Denmark is willing to “pay” for expansion, the larger countries’ fears of the influx of cheap labor, as well as selfish interests (Britain is said to refuse to give up its rebate), are stumbling blocks to agreement about how expansion is to be financed (March 25, 1999). Between November 4th and November 10th, 1998, *TV-avisen* describes how “practical politics” and “realism” hinder the theretofore “romantic vision” of a pan-European Union. Denmark and Sweden are said to have lost the battle for a rapid expansion of the EU, since Latvia and Lithuania were not chosen to begin negotiations for the first round. This was a great disappointment to Denmark and Sweden, who had been working hard behind the scenes for all three Baltic countries to be taken in together, says *TV-avisen*. Both news programs have stories focusing on Latvia’s efforts toward economic reform (November 4, 9, *TV-avisen*; November 4, *Aktuellt*). On November 8, 2000, *TV-avisen* reports that a date has been set for the entry of the EU candidate countries, but says this is probably unrealistic, since these countries will take longer to reach “our” standards.

The most prominent national theme for *Aktuellt* can be said to be those stories that presented Sweden as a leader in the region. The topics of these stories speak for themselves: Sweden sends aid to Poland after catastrophic flooding, and builds temporary homes for the victims (November 18, 1997), Sweden helps Estonia clear its harbor of Soviet mines (March 23, 1995), Sweden gives 60 million SEK to increase security at Lithuania’s nuclear power plant Ignalina (March 3 and 14, 2000). State visits by the presidents of Lithuania and Poland are framed as occasions for Sweden to promise aid and investment in these countries (November 21, 1995, March 29, 1995).

Another such story has to do with the “new era” exemplified by the cooperation of non-NATO members in military exercises organized by NATO’s Partnership for Peace program. According to *Aktuellt*’s reporter, Sven Strömberg, Sweden “feels that it has the responsibility to take on a leading role within the Northern European flank, and that it is expected to do so”. This statement is apparently rejected by a Swedish military officer, who says that one should downplay Sweden’s role in the “hard security” of the Baltic Sea Region, and emphasize its leading role in environmental and law-enforcement matters. Despite the apparent conflict over the precise nature of Sweden’s role, the story still depicts Sweden’s south-eastern neighbors as “learning” from Sweden (November 15, 1995).

An interesting exception to *Aktuellt*’s positive coverage of Sweden’s role in the region is found in the critical news story by Stina Blomgren about the opposition to the privatization of national companies in Lithuania (March 17, 2000). The narrative criticizes the extensive foreign investment in the country and, as the country having invested most in Lithuania, Sweden is identified as part of this “new colonialism”. Swedish companies are said to own the two largest television channels and the largest bank, and are said to have

dominating shares in the largest electricity company. This narrative theme contrasts state versus private ownership, national companies versus foreign companies, and poor Lithuanians versus rich foreigners. The story is followed up by a studio interview with a civil servant from the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sven Eric Söder who says that most people in the Baltic States appreciate the Swedish business community's engagement in their countries, that they feel this provides jobs for the people there and that those who oppose the engagement do so because of uncertainties about the new situation in a region that, until recently, was divided by the Iron Curtain. Thus, the critique brought forward in the news story is categorically denied by a representative of the Swedish government who tries to vanquish the Lithuanian opposition by, in effect, saying that Swedes are welcome in the region, and that those who don't see our benevolence are simply wrong.

Conclusion

This chapter has analyzed Swedish and Danish television news stories about the south-eastern Baltic Sea Region at the end of 1990s. The analysis compares the world(s) of the newly democratized countries of the Baltic Sea Region (the events, issues and people) as they appear in news stories over a limited period. In addition, it examined how narrative themes and binary oppositions are invoked to make "sense" of events, and how these are construed to relate to the reporting country and the region.

First, the general paucity of news coverage of the newly independent states in the Baltic region by their Western neighbors was said to be reminiscent of Western journalism's lack of interest in events in the Third World, a situation hardly satisfactory for neighboring states. Secondly, the people and issues encountered by Swedish and Danish news audiences could be similar or substantially different depending on the year in question. The convergence of Danish and Swedish media worlds during certain years appears to be the result of certain events: in 1995, the presidential and primary elections in Poland and Estonia; and, in 1998-1999, the coming to power of former Communists, the beginning of EU-enlargement procedures, and Poland's joining NATO. Substantial differences in interest in the Eastern Baltic neighbors apply in other years, with Swedish *Aktuellt* demonstrating a steady (if low) interest, and Danish *TV-avisen* gradually losing interest in the region after 1997. Another difference between the Scandinavian news programs was that some parts of the Baltic region appear to loom larger in *Aktuellt* than in *TV-avisen*, with Estonia getting three times more attention in the Swedish news than in Danish news, whereas Latvia got more attention in Denmark.

Nevertheless, the resources for Nordic regional identity formation could be found in the overall similarity in the news about the Baltic Sea Region over these six years. Viewers encounter essentially the same types of politi-

cal, economic and social actors struggling with the same types of issues relating to the transitions of these countries from Communism to capitalism. What occurred most frequently in both programs is news about elections, industries, social problems, unemployment, new leaders – the “winners” and the “losers” in the transition to capitalism. The winners are said to be the younger generation in cities, whereas the losers are the older generation and those out in the country. Like much foreign news, political actors dominate Swedish and Danish coverage of the region, whether these are represented by “Estonia”, the “Latvian government” or a “Polish ministry”. A smaller proportion of recurring stories from the eastern Baltic Sea Region have to do with threats – multi-resistant tuberculosis, ecological damage (Ignalina), crime, and illegal immigration. Issues over seafaring accidents are common in both programs: the *Estonia*, East European ships running aground, dumping oil, or ships and people in need of rescue. *TV-avisen* in particular invokes the collective memory of the sufferings of East European Jews during World War II. Some of these sufferings are pegged to current events – Poland is invariably linked to the Holocaust. National “we’s” are also in evidence: Sweden’s benefactor role in the region and the *Estonia* shipwreck are prioritized by *Aktuellt*, whereas issues relating to EU-expansion and Danish problems stemming from smuggling and illegal immigration coming from the “East” are given greater space in *TV-avisen*. *Aktuellt* is peopled more by representatives of businesses and entrepreneurs and by cultural workers (the arts and architecture) than *TV-avisen*. Otherwise, seen over a period of time, the events and images that fill the television screens in Sweden and Denmark about their Baltic neighbors appear to be quite similar.

Regarding how viewers are addressed, there is little in this sample to suggest that viewers of Swedish and Danish television see much change in their Eastern Baltic neighbors in the six years studied. The Scandinavian addressee has in common with other Western narratives the tenets of Orientalism and modernism in that the transitions of the Baltic States and Poland are depicted as Eastern “backwardness”: i.e. these countries are “modernizing”, moving from dangerous, outdated, barbaric systems and technologies into safety-conscious, civilized modernity (cf. Ekecrantz, 2002). However, although the economic transitions were depicted as “successful” in terms of level of economic growth, low inflation, and the adaptation of the economy to EU or Western demands, there was also a down-side depicted, that of what was called “brutal capitalism”, which produced social consequences such as greater poverty and unemployment. The social consequences of “brutal capitalism” was the explanation provided for the return of the former Communist parties to power in Poland, Estonia and Lithuania during the period under study. This could represent an emergent regional identity process as opposed to the international media’s more generalized Western discourse. On the basis of this study it is impossible to know whether the focus on the plight of the elderly, the farmers, the newly unemployed and the Russian minorities – i.e. the media-defined “losers” – reflected the

Nordic model of “third way” welfare state capitalism, or whether the international media also contributed to this perspective.²² What can be said, however, is that to news audiences, the countries of the Eastern Baltic region remained protégés, little brothers, whom “we” are helping to become like “us”. This “we” is specifically Scandinavian, since both Sweden and Denmark are involved in regional cooperation and development projects, and have been supporters of the rapid entry of all three Baltic States into the EU. What is critical, however, is that there is little basis for news viewers to understand this government-led support since financial investment and trade issues with these countries is almost totally absent in the news coverage, giving the impression of selfless benevolence on the part of Sweden and Denmark.

Finally, *Aktuellt* depicts a consistently self-confident Sweden: a role model, a leader of Baltic regional cooperation, and a benefactor who gives development aid. Denmark is also depicted as a role model and sponsor of Eastern European countries’ induction into the EU and NATO; however, events and people in the Baltic region are depicted just as much as influencing Denmark and Danish domestic policy.²³ That the media focus on negative ways in which Denmark is influenced by events outside of its borders can be seen in the context of the election in 2001, an election described by journalist and author Carsten Jensen thus:

We live with proposals for internment camps for Muslims, and a discrimination of foreigners that is reminiscent of Apartheid. We live with campaign posters that suggest that everyone who isn’t Danish is a rapist, and with ideas about how foreigners who break the law should be placed on desolate islands. These are not initiatives from the Danish People’s Party. They come from Denmark’s Liberal Party (Venstre) and the Social Democrats, the two largest political parties in Denmark (Jensen, 2001).

This is not to say that *TV-avisen*’s media coverage contributed to the ascendancy to the cabinet level of populist anti-immigrant issues. Rather, the ease with which the outside world in general can influence Denmark is itself part of the Danish political discourse.

Notes

1. In the early 1990’s, Sweden’s policy of non-alignment was reformulated: Sweden hoped to remain neutral in the case of war in its immediate vicinity. This prompted a debate about Sweden’s role in matters involving the Baltic States. Former Prime Minister Carl Bildt’s position – that Sweden would not automatically be neutral if the Baltic States came under renewed threat – has been subject to much domestic debate. Sweden made it clear that this declaration does not mean that Sweden would promise to aid the Baltic States militarily in the event of a war.
2. See Mouritzen (2000), Archer & Jones (1999: 179).

3. There are 9 days of *Aktuellt* broadcasts missing from the Swedish sample and 12 days of *TV-avisen* broadcasts missing from the Danish sample.
4. Voice-overs are often called "wallpaper" because of the news footage in the background.
5. In the beginning of the period, in particular, news packages were invariably authored by Connie Petersen. She does not appear in 1999, which could suggest that there is a correlation between the decline of news packages from the region and the presence of a correspondent.
6. This category refers to stories which deal with more than one of the Baltic States and Poland, as well as when Eastern Europe and one of the Baltic States were referred to collectively.
7. News stories that simply mention Eastern Europe or the Baltic States were not included, neither were EU/NATO news stories where Poland or the Baltic States were simply mentioned in passing as countries applying for membership.
8. This includes health stories, stories about unemployment, or about the role of the church in Polish society.
9. Flooding and natural catastrophes are included here, although news stories about the *Estonia* shipwreck have their own category so as to facilitate a comparison.
10. This includes a story about the way the cityscape is changing Warsaw from drab gray buildings to pastel colors.
11. For both EU and NATO this includes meetings that dealt with enlargement issues, although not all of these meetings were included in the coding if they were about specific Swedish/Danish interests in relation to enlargement.
12. Most often these stories were about elections or political issues in each country in the run-up to elections.
13. This category is: stories about Swedish/Danish aid to a certain country or to the Baltic Sea Region, the encouragement of investment or cultural exchange, or stories about how these countries are taking a leadership role or are emulated by others. This is coded for only when the *angle* or an important part of the news item deals with the Swedish/Danish role in one or more of the countries in the region, such as diplomatic support regarding EU or NATO enlargement, etc. and not simply a reference to a Swede or a Dane in passing. In contrast to the category below it, this category is about Swedish/Danish foreign policy.
14. This category is: how the Swedish/Danish domestic scene is affected by events or issues from the Baltic Sea Region. This could be stories about, for example, threats from unsafe nuclear power plants, or domestic stories about events/visits to Poland due to the Swedish government's campaign to remember the Holocaust.
15. Here it should be noted that a significant number of domestically oriented EU enlargement stories were excluded from *TV-avisen's* sample for analysis. The criteria for inclusion were that the stories be explicitly related to the situations, positions or conditions in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania or Poland.
16. Country/Region used metonymically as actors: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, etc., as well as individual politicians or political parties.
17. The International Estonia Commission, the Church, and Labor Unions.
18. This includes ministries and governmental authorities.
19. Retirees/ voters/ asylum seekers/ patients/ unemployed/ victims/people on the street/ *Estonia* survivors & relatives/ Jewish victims/ representatives of Jewish organizations.
20. The stories were broadcast on March 18, 1997 on *TV-avisen* and November 21, 1995 on *Aktuellt*.
21. See Horst & Lolk, in this volume.
22. A cursory review of BBC World's coverage of the Polish and Estonian elections of 1995 suggest that this indeed is a specifically Scandinavian interpretation of the electoral politics of these countries.
23. Two events which received intense media attention highlight these tendencies: one of the mini-crisis between Latvia and Russia, (Riegert, 2000) the other the aforementioned Danish domestic scandal provoked by the visit of the Latvian president.

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Representations of Otherness in Finnish Culture

Media Images of Russians and Estonians

Pentti Raittila

This chapter analyzes the manifestation and reproduction of otherness in Finnish language and culture.¹ The focus is on how cultural discourses about Russians and Estonians surface and how they are reproduced in the Finnish media, and journalistic practices. I analyze journalistic texts, but when discussing the results I comment on some aspects concerning journalistic routines, especially how sources are used in news texts.

The Specificity of Ethnic Otherness in Finland

In Western thinking, the ethnic Other has been different from “our people” in skin color and other physical features: he or she is either a person from a far away country, or an immigrant who has a different color or appearance. Ethnic differentiation can be based on origins, history or special cultural features, and the formation of ethnic identities is a continuous process. Ethnic differentiation does not necessarily involve inequality between different groups. However, the ethnic differentiation effected, from the “outside”, by the majority group can be a basis for discrimination and concealed racism. Here racism refers to the classification of humans and population groups into “races” on the basis of biological, physical and cultural features and characteristics, and to the putting of population groups into unequal positions in relation to others.

Besides being different, ethnic otherness can have the additional property of constituting a threat, of being an enemy. Aside from constituting an outside threat, enemy images have been based on perceived domestic necessity and the motives of the state; for example in the creation and strengthening of national identity. The enemy image can also be used to legitimize aggression and enhance various political goals (Luostarinen, 1989; Harle, 1991).

Defining racism is both a problematic and controversial issue, and Anglo-Saxon and Western European discussions on racism cannot easily be applied

to Finland. For example, the notions of otherness, identity, and racism, as presented by Stuart Hall and Robert Miles, arise from within the context of colonialist societies. In discussing racism, Hall and Miles emphasize the features of a person's appearance – especially skin color – in differentiating “the other”. (Hall, 1999; Miles, 1989)

The situation in Finland is, however, in many ways different, since there is no centuries-long experience of colonialism, slavery or mass immigration. Immigrants represent only two percent of the total population, and Finland's largest immigrant minority groups – the Russians, Ingrians and Estonians – do not much differ from the Finns in their physical appearance. Their otherness is therefore based more on cultural and political issues, and thus it becomes necessary to examine Finnish media images of Russians and Estonians from a historical standpoint.

As I discuss the representation of Estonians and Russians in Finnish journalism in the following, I don't consider the strict separation of racism and other ethnic otherness necessary, because the line between them is fluid. The representation of Russians and Estonians in Finnish culture involves many xenophobic and other similar, if less extreme, thought patterns attached to the Other than blatant racism.

This study attempts to make transparent those routine or hidden thought patterns, manners of speech, and journalistic routines that may renew stereotypes and historical attitudes towards Estonians and Russians. The analysis is based on two case studies: the Finnish media coverage of the catastrophe of the ship, *Estonia*, in September, 1994 (Raittila, 1996) and the results of a media-monitoring project where the occurrences of ethnicity and racism in the Finnish media from 1999 through 2000 were analyzed (Raittila, 2002). Here, I pay special attention to newspaper articles concerning Russians living or visiting Finland.

In my research on the Finnish media coverage of Russians and Estonians I focus on how language, discourses and ideologies are reconstructed in textual practices. Language users build their expressions by choosing and combining material from a culturally common “archive of statements”.² The central concept in this paper is *cultural memory*, by which I refer to very diverse and contradictory statements, thought patterns and discursive formations that have, over the course of centuries, embedded themselves in Finnish literary and oral tradition, institutions and mentality. The first part of the concept, *cultural*, characterizes well its essential nature: it is not an individual or universal concept, or something that applies to all societies. The latter part, *memory*, emphasizes the importance of history in the construction of linguistic or other acts. Cultural memory contains contradictory elements, some of which can, even for a long time, be latent or pass unnoticed until they are *actualized* by changing social situations.

Cultural memory contains, within Finnish society and culture, the thought patterns and statements about Russians and Estonians that are available to users of the Finnish language. Their use is not a mechanical choice; it is a

question of process that molds new thought patterns and speech habits. Finns do not “inherit” the speech habits describing Russians and Estonians, they join the flow of renewing discourses where every speech act simultaneously expresses and reconstructs cultural speech habits, the “archive of statements” relating to Russians and Estonians (see Voloshinov, 1990: 100–101).

Historical background

The history of the Finns’ image of Russians is largely a history of a kind of “enemy image”. At the end of the 15th century, a period of repeated, lengthy wars began between Sweden and Russia that lasted until 1809, when Sweden was forced to hand Finland over to the Russians. Finnish Russophobia has its roots in the Western European tradition which perceived Russia as an eastern tyranny with a strange culture and heretical religion. This mythical enemy image was reproduced during periods of political and military hostility between Finns and Russians. With the rise of liberalism, nationalism, and socialism in Europe in the 19th century, Russia was condemned by Western countries as a bastion of reactionary political views and authoritarianism. During this same period, Finland’s relationship to Russia and Russians was very different from the situation in the countries of Western Europe. Finland was established as an autonomous Grand Duchy of the Russian Empire in 1809, and for most of the era of autonomy, the attitudes of Finnish people to the mother country and to the Russian people were friendlier than those of other countries bordering Russia. This lasted until the end of the period of autonomy when increasing oppression led to a conflict between Finland and the Russian government (Alapuro, 1988: 85–100; Klinge, 1972; Immonen, 1987: 38–40; Luostarinen, 1989: 127–130; Tarkiainen, 1986: 12–54, 311–316).

Following the October Revolution, Finland declared its independence from Russia, and a Civil War broke out within Finland between the so-called Whites and the Reds. When the victory of the Whites ended the war in 1918, a massive and determined operation was launched to implant anti-Russian and anti-Soviet sentiments in the minds of the Finnish people. The relationship of the Finnish people to the Russians was politicized: it was largely through the ideological effort of spreading Russophobia and anti-Bolshevist propaganda that the young Finnish state aimed to consolidate its national identity. In contemporary historiography, the Civil War of 1918 was generally described not as a class conflict but as a “war of independence” waged against Russia. The Reds and Communism were interpreted as Russianism, and the social and class conflicts as national and ethnic antagonisms. (Alapuro, 1988: 199–200; Immonen, 1987: 107; Klinge, 1972: 109–110) This does not mean that there were not real developments in the Soviet Union that provided the building blocks for an enemy image. However, in addition to this, the Finns’ conception of Russians was derived largely from Finland’s own domestic

developments. The Civil War of 1918 had a central place in Finnish collective memory, and the Russians were observed through traumatic memories of this war.

The image of Russia that was created between 1918 and 1944 rested essentially on mythical elements. According to these myths, the Russians – like the Huns, Persians and Turks – represented an inferior race and at the same time a serious threat to Western civilization. A similar way of thinking was common in other Western countries as well, and it was connected to the race debate of the early 20th century. In Finland this mythical image was created in close connection with the Finnish self-image, as a negation of that image; and one purpose was to get rid of the stigma of a “Mongoloid race” that was attached to the Finns. (Klinge, 1972: 29-56; Luostarinen 1986: 105-113)

From 1939 to 1944 there were two wars between Finland and the Soviet Union, and the enemy image was reinforced, both through bombings and other personal experiences, and as a result of war propaganda. The end of hostilities in 1944 brought a dramatic change in the Finnish image of the Soviet Union. Attitudes to Russians were politicized in a totally new way. In official government statements and in the mass media, war propaganda and the enemy image were replaced by expressions of friendship and confidence. According to the peace treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union, the main organizations that fostered Russophobia were disbanded and the most hostile criticism of the Soviet system and antagonistic attitudes against the Russians were removed from the public domain. This doesn't mean outright censorship, rather self-censorship and guardedness when speaking and writing publicly about Russians. As is most often the case, however, the consciousness and everyday talk of the people changed more slowly than the public image.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in the beginning of the 1990s and the developments in Russia since then have changed the attitudes towards Russians in new ways: they were not the representatives of Communism and atheism anymore. Political “correctness” and caution was no longer needed when speaking about Russians.

The relationship of Finns to *Estonians* has never been as important for Finnish identity, when comparing the relations of Finns to Russians. Moreover, Estonians and Finns do not differ much religiously and culturally in the way Finns do from Russians. Language kinship, the concurrent national awakening in the 19th century and the shared experience of gaining independence from Russia after World War I were the special features of the relation to Estonians.

Characteristic of the relationship between Finns and Estonians has, since the 19th century, been the notion of Estonia as a more backward country than Finland. In the 19th century, Estonian nationalist elements began to admire Finland, considering Finland a kind of big brother. The basis for this was the larger size of Finland, its better status under Russian rule, and an independence movement that emerged earlier. The Estonian image of Finland as “big

brother" faded in Estonia in the early years of the 20th century, but the Finns continued to regard Estonia paternalistically through a big brother/little brother lens (Alenius, 2002: 56-59; Lehti, 1998: 88-91).

The interaction between these two nations over the Gulf of Finland was broken when Estonia was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940. Contacts with Estonians remained limited until the 1970s, and a new era began in the early 1980s with the advent of Finnish mass tourism to Estonia. Attitudes towards Estonians were twofold: on the one hand they were part of the Soviet Union and thus "Russians", on the other hand, they were seen as "distant cousins", though a somewhat lamentable and backward nation. Estonians were simultaneously part of "them" and "us".

At the end of the 1980s, Finns tried to present themselves as a wise big brother that had been able to maintain comfortable relations with the Soviet Union and consequently warned her "little brother" not to seek her independence too eagerly. Nevertheless, relations with the Estonians were very positive at the end of the 1980s. (Jaakkola, 1989; Raittila et al, 1989). Attitudes towards Estonians became more ambiguous after Estonia's independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. In the latter part of 1980's, Estonians had been portrayed as an idealistic kinship nation that fought for its independence, but after gaining independence they were more and more often described in Finnish newspapers as criminals and prostitutes. This was also a link that connected Estonians to Russians. "Eastern criminality", the "Eastern Mafia" and "Soviet-like" cultural features were associated with Russianism and remained as part of Estonians' otherness in relation to Finns, despite being perceived as kinsmen and different from Russians. (Kiin, 1998: 24-28)

Case 1

The Reason for the *Estonia* Catastrophe in September 1994

This multifaceted and contradictory relationship between Finland and Estonia became apparent with the sinking of the ferry *Estonia*. This shocking event also influenced Finns deeply, and brought to the surface fresh and previously concealed idea matrixes about Estonians. The aforementioned multi-layered and contradictory history of the relations between Finns and Estonians, the ideas reflecting kinship, Russianism, Communism, and a big brother attitude were part of the context of the media representation of the accident.

The notion that Estonian seamen were in some way responsible for the sinking of the *Estonia* arose indirectly and implicitly through different rhetorical elements in Finnish journalism (Raittila, 1996: 85-108). In the following, I will focus on how the idea of the guilt of Estonians relates to the handling of the causes of the accident in Finnish journalism.³

During the first few days after the accident, there was no official information concerning the cause of the disaster. Therefore the first speculations by

the mass media shaped the images the audience received of the accident. Because of the urgency and limited amount of facts, the journalists' own cultural expectations and news production routines had an exceptionally strong influence on the nature of the news produced during the first day after the disaster.

I have divided the different explanations put forward by the mainstream media for the shipwreck into five different phases in an effort to systematize where guilt was assigned; in reality, the handling of causes of the accident did not proceed in such a straightforward way.

1. Early morning, September 28: Suspicions are raised about Estonian seamanship. Before the facts about the causes of the disaster became known, there was talk on television programs and on the radio about Estonian seamanship. This is really all that was needed because in Finnish cultural memory these "seamanship practices" were connected to experiences of the Soviet Union, i.e. to the negative connotations about the "Russian work culture". The Finnish cultural context created a different implication in discussions of Estonian seamanship than would have been the case if it had been English or German seamanship.

2. Early in the morning, September 28: Shifting cargo, i.e. explaining the disaster based on earlier accidents. Soon after the disaster Finnish radio news and Finnish News Agency wires released an assessment according to which the cause of the accident might have been the shifting of cargo on the ship. This theory seemed plausible due to the fact that there had previously been several shipwrecks near the Finnish coast as a result of shifting cargo. The ready-made explanation model based on previous accidents strengthened the reliability of the theory both in the eyes of journalists and the general public. First, the shifting cargo argument was repeated on radio and television news as a preliminary assessment and possibility, but gradually it developed into a consistent narrative of the accident.

3. Later in the morning on September 28 and in the press September 29: The cargo shifted because it wasn't secured. On the morning after the accident, reporters began to produce evidence to support this theory: the idea of shifting cargo was corroborated by suspicions that the cargo wasn't secured at all, or at least not in an adequate manner. Thus, a human factor was added to the original suppositions of shifting cargo, and the discussion of causes was linked to human responsibility and blame. During the morning hours there had already been discussion on a more general level about Estonian shipping practices, and the idea of an improperly secured cargo combined with the suspicion of a shifting of the cargo reinforced the interpretations that blamed Estonian seamen for the accident.

The Finnish News Agency garnered more plausibility for its theory of shifting cargo by interviewing transport professionals: "The law in Western

countries defining the securing of truck freight is very strict. I wouldn't even speculate how the freight of 'Eastern trucks' is secured", commented one professional. The opposition between "*law in Western countries*" vs. "*the freight of Eastern trucks*" labels Estonia as a part of the East; in the Finnish context it became part of the culture of Soviet carelessness.

4. At noon, and in the afternoon, September 28: The story of engine operator Henrik Sillaste and its interpretation. Estonian seaman Henrik Sillaste was one of the first survivors to be interviewed. From the hospital, Sillaste described how he had seen water coming through the bow visor onto the car deck. In some interviews, he said he assumed that the bow visor had broken because of the heavy waves. He did not claim in any of the interviews that the *Estonia* left the port of Tallinn with the bow visor open. But in the news during the first day after the disaster, the story of Sillaste was altered so that, with different obscure formulations, it was repeatedly stated that the *Estonia*'s bow visor was open at sea, which implied that it never had been closed properly.

The interview with Sillaste changed in the journalistic process and dissolved into a journalistic narrative discourse. The ambiguous variations in the representation of the Sillaste story gives room for at least five different interpretations: 1) the bow visor was left open when leaving Tallinn; 2) the bow visor wasn't properly secured when leaving the harbor; 3) the bow visor had been broken in Tallinn but the ship sailed into the storm anyway; 4) the bow visor had been handled during the voyage, and it opened and couldn't be secured any more; 5) the bow visor was broken or opened because of the storm. In the first four interpretations there is, at least implicitly, the notion of mistakes or carelessness by the Estonian crew. The conclusion of the technical causes of the accident by the international investigation commission corresponded mostly with the fifth alternative (Final report, 1997: 171-183). The fifth interpretation surfaced only in a few news stories during the first day, despite the fact that it was based on Sillaste's words. However, this didn't fit as well with the narrative constructed that day; a more suitable version was the image of slack Estonians who left the port with the bow visor open.

5. In the afternoon, September 28: Reinforcing the interpretations of Sillaste's story. Similarly, as in the theory of the shifting cargo, the new bow visor theory attained further substantiation and evidence. Different media sources said that the seals of the bow visor were not in perfect shape. Later on, the Finnish News Agency quoted the General Secretary of International Maritime Organization as saying that 80% of all maritime accidents are caused by human error. The most important single factor reinforcing the idea of the open bow visor was the comparison of the sinking of the *Estonia* with the capsizing of the ferry *Herald of Free Enterprise* in 1987 outside Zeebrüggen in Belgium. The ferry capsized 90 seconds after it had left the harbor because the bow doors had been left open.

The media documentation on the causes of the Estonia tragedy exemplifies what happens when journalism works in haste and in an unclear situation. Journalism functions on “automatic pilot” in much the same way as it did in the production of the first stages of the reports on September 11th (see Heikkilä, et al, 2002). This model is typical not just for journalists, but for people in general: when we don’t know, we assume. When we assume, stereotypes and cultural thought patterns guide how the pieces of the story are put together into a consistent explanation.

This analysis shows how the media built a coherent story of the causes of the accident out of dispersed elements in a situation where the authorities and experts were reluctant to comment on the causes of the disaster. The process was guided by Finnish cultural memory; it hinted to us what fragments of information were turned into news stories and how these fragments were organized and interpreted. When needed, the interviews in question were referred to in an ambiguous way so that the end result fitted into the framework of a coherent story.

Later, the Joint Accident Investigation Commission of Estonia, Finland and Sweden disclosed the faults and weaknesses of the construction of the bow visor as the technical reason for the sinking of the *Estonia*. Already at an early stage, some specialists referred to possible problems in the car ramps, but such views were passed over in the first reports. Why? Maybe because they did not match the already adopted views of the incompetence of Estonian seamen.

The central conclusion of this case study was that certain thought patterns in Finnish cultural memory were activated which led to the attribution of fault for the catastrophe to Estonian seamanship. The otherness of Estonians was revealed in the accident news by the fact that they were the victims and objects in need of help. The Finns were presented as heroes who did the rescue work, and the Estonians were presented as “little brothers” who still had their “Soviet outlook”. The effort of news journalism towards a condensed and coherent story produced, during the first stages of the accident, a point of view which put the blame on the Estonians, even though the journalists constructing this story may have consciously tried to avoid making premature judgments about the Estonians.

At the same time, the Estonians were, after the disaster, objects of sympathy for Finns. Being an object reproduced again the old little brother vs. big brother theme: the Finns were the helpers and the heroes of rescue work, and they gave their support to the Estonians who lacked seamanship and were generally a more backward people.

Indirectly, the reporting of the *Estonia* disaster reconstructed Finnish thought patterns and speech habits towards Russians, such as in the example of one journalist who, pondering the causes of the disaster, wrote that “*the tragedy of the Estonia was caused by a Ruski⁴-secured truck*”. In a word, this reveals the negative connotations which blame Estonian seamen, while at the same time activating and reproducing the negative image of Russianism in Finnish cultural memory.

Case 2

Russians in Newspaper Articles

This analysis is based on the results of a research project at Tampere University where the occurrences of ethnicity and racism in the Finnish media from 1999 through 2000 were analyzed (Raittila, 2002)⁵. From that data, this case analyzes 195 news articles about Russians, particularly from the point of view of the production and deconstruction of otherness. Special attention is given to the themes, means of expression, and mutual interaction between Finns and Russians in the newspaper articles. At the same time, I studied how the thought patterns and speech habits rooted in Finland for centuries may possibly still appear in media texts.

Table 1. The central themes and speakers in the articles where Russians are the central group in the articles (news, interviews, feature articles; N=195)

Main theme of the article	articles in total	no speakers	speakers other than Russians	only Russian speakers	speakers Russians and Finns, no dialog	speakers Russians and Finns, with dialog
1. Crimes committed by Russians	87 (45 %)	30	35	9	5	8
2. Life of Russians in Finland (other than crime news)	31 (16 %)	3	5	12	9	2
3. Shopping trips by Russians, casual labor, etc., visits to Finland	25 (13 %)	4	8	4	5	4
4. Supervision of the Eastern border	10 (5 %)	6	4	—	—	—
5. Reminiscences of the last wars, etc., historical articles	7 (4 %)	1	6	—	—	—
6. Other themes	35 (18 %)	8	22	3	1	1
In total	195 (100 %)	52	80	28	20	15

Table 1 shows the thematic distribution of the articles dealing with Russians. Moreover, it shows how different subjects have functioned as speakers in those articles. The most important feature producing otherness in Russians was the high percentage of crime news in the data. Approximately half of the crime news dealt with smuggling, and the illicit trade of booze, tobacco, gas etc. The rest of the crime articles dealt with drug trafficking, pimping and prostitution, violence, stealing, drunk driving, illegal border crossings and fraud. Articles were for the most part blurbs about criminals getting caught, or their trials, but there were also some longer stories.

The way that Russians were mentioned in crime news was quite neutral for the most part. Even though Russians and Finns were superficially described

to the same extent, Finnish criminals were not usually called “Finns” but identified, for example, by their place of residence or age. However, Russian criminals were almost without exception identified as “Russians”.

Naming Russians and Finns on a different basis – the former by their ethnic background and the latter by their place of residence – is one example of how categorization is done according to different criteria. This raises the question of whether naming a criminal as someone from Helsinki labels inhabitants of Helsinki in the same way as a reference to a Russian labels the whole Russian minority in Finland. On the background of different possible interpretations concerning Russians and people living in Helsinki, there is an image of the “*generalized Russian*” outlined in Finnish cultural memory.

Mead uses a term, “the *generalized other*”, when dealing with abstract models of roles and attitudes of others in the socialization process. According to Mead, the “*generalized other*” shows the collective attitudes of the entire community (Mead, 1934: 152-163). In Finnish identity and socialization, Russianism has such a central role that one can speak correspondingly of the relation to both “specific Russian others” and to the *generalized Russian other*.

Repeatedly designating petty criminals as Russians links the features connected to crimes to the entire category, “Russian”, which in the long run reproduces the “*generalized Russian*”. Correspondingly, one could imagine that positive stories about Russians living in Finland may deconstruct the negative features of the “*generalized Russian*”. This may indeed happen, but on the other hand, this may not necessarily take place, since it is possible that these Russians are treated as exceptions, as not belonging to a category of “*generalized Russians*”.

The “non-crime” articles about Russians dealt with a variety of subjects. The largest theme in those articles was the problems Russian immigrants have adjusting to their new country. Moreover, there were some success stories of Russian immigrants. The articles on temporary visits to Finland dealt for the most part with shopping tours and other tourism. In addition, there were articles on Russian berry pickers and other temporary laborers in Finland.

In some articles, Russians coming to Finland were portrayed in such a way that these “others” were in fact described like Finns. They were considered to be “almost Finnish” because of their Ingrian roots or marriage to a Finn. Tolerance in relation to these Russians was not constructed through accepting difference, but rather by considering these Russians to be “like us”. Since they have embraced Finnishness these Russians were no longer categorized as “*generalized Russians*”.

In addition to distinguishing between the themes, I also looked at the production of otherness by analyzing the speaker structure of the articles. The analysis of speaker structure is connected to otherness through the fact that in previous studies on ethnicity in journalism, it has repeatedly been shown that the representatives of ethnic minorities rarely speak about their own affairs. The authorities and other representatives of the majority population speak on behalf of minorities. The fact that minorities have a stagnant

role as objects of other people's speech in the news stories reproduces the otherness of minorities in journalism. (van Dijk, 1991: 151-156; Pietikäinen, 2000: 201-204)

The speaker structure was analyzed by separating the actors according to whether they were speakers or objects. The purpose of this classification is to uncover the hidden "power structures" of the journalistic text. It is an analysis of the way the journalist has arranged other people's words: who is quoted, who is cited, and who is presented as a silent actor. On the basis of the speaker structure one can also examine the "dialogic nature" of the speech: how different people and instances appear and speak in the same article.⁶ The analysis connected to speaker structure and the dialogic nature of journalism touches upon the idea of *public journalism*, of which one central aim is to instigate mutual dialog between different social actors (Heikkilä & Kunelius, 1998).

In particular, my emphasis was on how often Russians were the speakers and on what kind of interaction there was between Finns and Russians in these articles. One of the analytical tools used in the analysis of the dialogic nature of the articles, is the so-called *contact hypothesis*. Social psychologists who have studied ethnicity say that contacts and interaction between different groups can be means of overcoming prejudices and racism. Even though the contact hypothesis has been questioned within the field, it can, in many ways, be used as a starting point for an analysis. (Allport, 1979/54: 261-282; Liebkind, 1988: 118-138)

On the basis of this, then, a related hypothesis was constructed according to which a dialog and interaction between ethnic groups in the media can create possibilities for a growing dialog and mutual understanding in the everyday life of citizens. While the reception of journalistic texts or their impact on the contacts outside the media is beyond the scope of this study, my focus has been on the dialog between ethnic groups in journalism as an indicator of the role of journalism in constructing a multicultural society. The hypothesis is therefore not tested by this analysis, but remains an inspiration to its design.

The Russians were, in the majority of the articles, mainly objects: they were speakers in articles dealing with themselves only in one third of the cases (Table 1). Typical for the articles dealing with Russians was the monologic nature of the texts: different actors appeared in different stories, and encounters and interaction between minorities and the majority population was very limited.

In crime news, Russians were speakers even less often than in other news stories. Somewhat surprisingly, there seemed to be more dialog between Finns and Russians in crime news than in other news. Formally "equal dialog" in crime news did not mean the deconstruction of the negative category of the "*generalized Russian*", because all but one of the dialogic crime news stories were reports of litigation cases. The dialog was constructed so that the Russian suspect had room to voice his or her views, and after that his or her

credibility was damaged by other speakers' counterarguments or by the rhetorical methods of the journalist in question. The newspapers printed the justifications that the Russians produced for their defense, which portrayed them often in a ridiculous and unconvincing light.

Contrary to my presumptions, based on the *contact hypothesis*, the dialogic nature of the speaker structure in the articles did not unambiguously contribute to the deconstruction of otherness in the texts. The dialogic articles reciting the district court sessions hardly helped in overcoming otherness. In non-crime news the dialog between Finns and Russians built natural contact in the way I expected, but there were very few dialogic stories.

Above, I have limited my analysis to the mutual dialog between the speech acts of actors. In addition to this, there was dialog based on the layout and various visual properties of photographs. For example, in some articles there was perhaps only one speaker, but in the photograph accompanying the article, with its "monologic" formal speaker structure, there could be Finns and Russians shown interacting with one another. In some articles, the visual interaction was more important than the verbal speaker structure in positioning Russians in an "us" and "them" framework.

Finnish journalism in relation to the Russian people was apparently correct, in the sense of "accurate", but at the same time it was structurally distorted. The distortions arise at least partially from the journalistic routines: the hegemony of the sources of authority that are easily obtainable, the monologic nature of articles, the tendency to write more on crime than on other, potentially more positive themes, and the unnecessary emphasis on ethnic background in connection with crime stories.

To put it a bit bluntly and simply, one can say that the Russians living in Finland or visiting Finland were brought forward in the Finnish press primarily as faceless criminals. They were the objects of news journalism. They had very little interaction with Finns, and a great majority of the rare occasions of dialog with Finns consisted of a dialog between justice officials and suspected or apprehended criminals.

The entire picture is rather negative and based on everyday, routine journalism. With few exceptions, the otherness of Russians in news articles was not constructed through negative labeling or by presenting stereotypes; but the cultural conventions connected to the news genre formulated the presentation of the thought patterns concerning Russians. For example, the crime articles were quite conventional in themselves, and the linguistic expressions describing Russians were apparently neutral.

The politicizing of Russianism and the connection to the Russian threat, which has been part of the old mythical image of Russians, did not surface in the news articles in this period, 1999-2000. Neither did the notion of Russians as an especially friendly and warm-hearted people – as portrayed in the interviews of the Soviet era – appear in the news articles (Raittila, 2004 284-289). The contradictory and multi-accented nature of the thought patterns and speech habits concerning Russians meant that, according to the situation,

some aspects were activated and some left in the background. In August 2000, the sinking of the nuclear submarine *Kursk* in the Barents Sea⁷ called forth stereotypes attached to Russianism in much the same way as the sinking of the *Estonia* called forth concepts linking Estonians to Russians: in the stories about the Kursk disaster, a culture of lax security, negligence and lying was connected to the “Russian national character” (Leivonniemi, 2001).

Discussion

Finnish journalism has simultaneously worked as a deconstructor and reproducer of cultural stereotypes in its way of handling ethnic minorities and racism. Deconstructing racist and discriminating thought patterns has for the most part been done through an understanding of cultural myths, which have then been taken into consideration in everyday journalistic work. The otherness of Estonians and Russians has in neither of the cases analyzed been constructed primarily through prejudiced attitudes, but was produced by journalistic routines. The cultural conventions attached to the news genre gave shape to the presentation of the thought patterns about Estonians and Russians.

It would be productive for journalists to be self-reflective in two ways: on the one hand, with consciousness of the cultural myths and thought patterns regarding the subjects of their articles, and on the other hand, with consciousness of the mechanisms of routine work. Both in the news on the *Estonia* disaster and in the press articles on Russians, there were examples of people who subjectively defended Estonians and opposed racism using constructions, which – unintentionally – erected a notion of the guilt of the *Estonia*’s crew or the otherness of Russians. Journalists may be more self-reflective when it comes to ethnic questions than when it comes to his or her own working practices.

The media process of the *Estonia* disaster differed from the articles on Russians in 2000, since in the former, it was a question of “actualizing” the cultural thought patterns in a sudden catastrophe situation. In the news on Russians it was a question of one phase in a long continuum. From the enemy image at the beginning of the 20th century, one has advanced through the official friendship policy of the years 1944–1991, to the “natural” situation where neither anti-communism nor self-censorship is regulating the writing on Russians. The articles dealing with Russians in 2000 were not only linked to the Russian discourse in the usual way, but they were connected to the “immigration discourse”, to the discussion about the “multi-culturalization” of the Finnish society.

The media texts dealing with Russians and the disaster of the *Estonia* can also be looked at in relation to the construction of Finnish identity. In both cases, journalism built up attitudes of superiority in Finns towards Estonians

and Russians. It was very obvious in the case of the *Estonia* disaster. In the news material dealing with Russians, the superiority of the Finns was brought forward via the totality of the articles where *generalized Russianism* was constructed, on the one hand, from the large amount of crime news and, on the other, the “tolerant” articles where Russians were objects of Finnish benevolence.

Notes

1. The article is based on my dissertation on the same subject (Raittila, 2004).
2. The term is based on the idea by Foucault (1989: 128-130 and 1978: 14) of the “archive” between the language system and speech (see also Hall, 1999: 107-109; Said, 1985: 41). When talking about archaeology of discourses and archive of statements, Foucault stresses that he is interested in “the conditions of the discourse’s manifest appearance”, in “the transformations which they have effectuated” and in “the field where they coexist, remain and disappear”. He would like to “seek in the discourse not its laws of construction, as do the structural methods, but its conditions of existence”. (Foucault, 1978: 14-15)
3. There were similar features in the way that the Swedish media dealt with the responsibility and blame of the Estonians (Hedman, 1996: 39-62; Frid, 1996: 131-142; Nowak et al, 1996: 119-128, 186-190). Here I will, however, concentrate solely on Finnish journalism. The analysis is based on the media data of September 28-29th in 1994 which involves all material concerning the Estonia catastrophe of all national TV and radio channels and six major Finnish newspapers.
4. Ruski (“ryssä” in Finnish) is an old Finnish expression for Russians that has strong negative connotations.
5. The media data in this study involves 17 major Finnish newspapers (2789 different articles and in 261 articles the Russians were main foreigner group). In this paper, I am not analyzing opinion articles but only news items, interviews and other news stories dealing with Russians (195 items).
6. In Table 1. we have a description of how the news items were divided into five groups: 1) news without speakers; 2) news where the speakers were not Russians; 3) news where the speakers were only Russians; 4) news where the speakers were Finns and Russians but there was no dialog between them; 5) news where the speakers were Finns and Russians and there was dialog between them.
7. The news on the sinking of the *Kursk* was not part of my research material, since this material covered only articles dealing with Russians in Finland.

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III. Mechanisms of Identity

The Mass-Mediated “We” in Danish Journalism

Anker Brink Lund

“We are the Best”, reads the front page of *Jyllands-Posten*, the broadsheet newspaper with the largest circulation in Denmark. “Now we fear no one”, blusters the major Danish tabloid *Ekstra Bladet*. In unison with the rest of the Danish mass media, the leading dailies celebrate an impressive 8-0 win that qualifies the national soccer team for the final rounds in the European championship.

These self-satisfied headlines demonstrate how the we-they relation is unambiguously rooted in a feeling of undivided solidarity in sports copy. The national news reflects a fundamental overarching attitude, or “super-theme”, contrasting “our little corner of the world” with the rest of the universe (Jensen, 1998). This way of presenting the home team versus the opposing others prevails not only when things go well. The mass-mediated “we” also shares responsibility and the blame when things go wrong. Danish pride, consequently, was severely hurt when the soccer team was beaten by other European teams later in the tournament. When sports is on the agenda, in wins and losses, journalists talk in military terms about victory and defeat, the good guys versus the bad guys. The contest is meaningful only under the assumption of public identification with the home team in terms of a familiar “us” versus an alien “them”. (Frandsen, 1995).

The journalistic “we”, however, is rarely unambiguous outside mass-mediated sports, and even in a professional pastime of this kind, performers are neither homegrown nor of native descent. Nonetheless, “Domestic” and “Foreign” are frames of reference still routinely at play within most departments of press, radio and television companies. But they are no longer indisputable distinctions in national and international news production. The fluid borders between conflicting identities show up clearly in the Danish journalists’ presentation of news about Europe. Denmark is, of course, an integrated part of Europe. But is Europe also regarded journalistically as an integrated part of Denmark?

The complicated questions of European politics seem to be considerably less newsworthy and spectacular than European sports – not because the

European Union is less controversial than EURO-soccer matches, but rather because neither the rules of the game, nor the allegiance of the national team stands uncontested, despite the fact that Denmark has been a member of the EU for more than a quarter of a century. The reluctant inclusion of Europe – as well as ambivalent views on globalization in general – pose a fundamental question of mass-mediated identity: Who has the right to become an indisputable component of the domestic “we”? And who shall be communicated as a significant (or inferior) “other”?

From a journalistic point of view, questions of race and ethnicity have been taboo in public discourse since the Second World War. In recent years, however, these issues have gradually been given priority, not simply in public opinion polls, but also in political decision-making. Even so it is not a simple matter for professional journalists and their editors to deal with the neologism “Nydanskere” (foreigners born in Denmark, but with parents of another ethnic origin), mass-mediated in terms of “ethnic minorities”, “second generation immigrants”, or bluntly put as “the aliens”.

In letters to the editor, the domestic “we” is generally marked, via punctuation, as superior. Distressed Danes may write about “us”, unconditionally and without quotation marks, as opposed to the insignificant (and inferior) “others”. But few professional journalists do so. In some Danish media, this vocabulary is explicitly forbidden and considered bad form. Nevertheless, the we-they issue appears as an implicit conflict in the daily news. Unbecoming questions about identity and xenophobia crop up despite editorial policy. How this is dealt with at the professional level I shall illustrate on the basis of case studies of Danish media from one week in November, 1999, which frames Danish identity on the national, regional, and international level of news production.

A grant from the Danish Parliament enabled a team of researchers from the University of Southern Denmark to collect and code national, regional and local news media, excluding trade papers and magazines.¹ Ekecrantz & Olsson (1994) and Becker et. al. (1996) inspired the project design. Between the 15th and 21st of November, all news items found in daily newspapers, the national news agency (Ritzaus Bureau), public service television news (DR1 and TV2), the national public radio station (*Radioavisen*), eight local radio stations, and nine regional TV stations were included in the analysis (Lund, 2002).

As a supplement to the content analysis (30,798 items), telephone interviews (1,005 respondents) were conducted with a representative sample of the Danish population in order to gain information relevant to agenda-setting and the impact of the news that was given top priority by press, radio and TV. On this basis, two Top 10 lists, representing the priorities of the media and the mass audience, have been constructed.

Table 1. Mass Media and Opinion Poll Agendas

Headline News Top 10	Opinion Poll Top 10
1. The war in Chechnya	1. Earthquake in Turkey
2. National soccer match	2. The OSCE summit
3. Danish EU derogations	3. National soccer match
4. Political debate about immigration	4. Expulsion of foreign citizens
5. The OSCE summit	5. The war in Chechnya
6. Thorsen & Trads (court case)	6. Thorsen & Trads (court case)
7. Political conflict over national budget	7. Egyptian airplane crash
8. Chewing gum producers versus dentists	8. Tax benefits of the wealthy
9. Earthquake in Turkey	9. Political debate about immigration
10. Expulsion of foreign citizens	10. Chewing gum producers versus dentists

Three cases have been chosen for the discursive we-they analysis:

- Coverage of the war in Chechnya (ranked 1st by the media and 5th by the poll).
- Danish EU derogations (ranked 3rd by the media, but not falling within the Top 10 of the poll).
- Political conflict about immigration (ranked 4th by the media and 9th by the poll).

When regarded from the point of view of the opinion poll, in particular, the third case is closely linked to mass-mediated debate about the expulsion of foreign citizens, ranked 4th by the representative sample of Danes and 10th by editors of press, radio and television. Furthermore, aspects of the war in Chechnya are related to news coverage of the OSCE summit in Istanbul (ranked 5th by the media and 2nd by the poll). Consequently, by choosing these three cases for further study, the majority of the central news themes from that week are placed under scrutiny.

Foreign News: War and Peace

In modern journalism, there is rarely "space" for more than one war at a time (Holm et. al., 2000). During this week in November, 1999, battles in Chechnya had first priority. The war effort was brought to the fore by national and international expectations related to a summit where fifty-four heads of state met under the auspices of the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe).

In this context, the Danish "we" is unambiguously mass-mediated as a sovereign state among states. "We" constitute a humanitarian and responsible actor on the international scene willing to delegate power and sover-

eignty to the international community in order to the secure peace. The Danish Foreign Minister is our uncontested representative, and this statement on international rules for regional security is quoted by most national media: "We are obliged to prevent the outbreak of conflicts if possible. The charter will contribute to a joint and indivisible security. It will promote the creation of an OSCE space without demarcation lines, or zones with different degrees of security" (Ritzaus Bureau, November 17, 1999).

At the OSCE summit, a charter was debated that would codify a change in how domestic affairs should be regarded: they would no longer be treated as prerogatives of the individual member state only. If a nation jeopardizes regional security or violates international conventions on human rights, "we" – the international community – must intervene. Similar rules have existed under the auspices of the United Nations since the end of Second World War. Not until the fall of the Berlin Wall, however, has the sovereignty of the former superpower, Russia, been explicitly questioned in this way.

The war in Chechnya thus becomes the testing ground for the OSCE principles. Reports from Istanbul are staged as a showdown between the good guys and the bad guys, i.e. the Danish public is offered a classic spectacle familiarized through foreign relations coverage originating from Cold War confrontations between East and West (see Ellefson & Kingsepp, in this volume). Here, once again, the point of view is indisputably right versus wrong, which translates principles of international law into two questions: Are the Chechens "freedom fighters" or "terrorists"? Is Russia a "warmongering aggressor" or a "defender of national sovereignty"?

There is limited room left for ambiguity. The journalistic presentation of events taking place at the summit underlines the function of the mass media in their definition of political subjects and the relations among them. As a run-up to the OSCE summit, defense ministers from the fifteen EU countries condemned the "arbitrary coercion in Chechnya" (as it was put by international news agencies). The Danish dailies follow this up with headlines such as: "Danish Pressure on Russia" and "We Condemn the Coercion in Chechnya". The mass media generally base their coverage on official statements by the foreign ministry cast as the sovereign Danish state speaking with authority to the world community: "We demand that President Yeltsin confirms in Istanbul the promise that Russia will very soon comply with her international obligations. We will also hold Yeltsin to finding a political solution to the conflict in Chechnya. Russia yielded to efforts by the OSCE to settle the Chechen conflict in 1996. Russia should do this again" (statement quoted by several Danish broadsheets, November 18, 1999).

The journalistic coverage echoes Cold War rhetoric in a way that had become rare in the mass media during the 1990s. Paradoxically, it was sovereign Russia that had exerted diplomatic pressure to make the OSCE a dynamic organization that would compete with NATO. But the cession of sovereignty has its boundaries: "We want to show the Western World that they have no right to criticize Russia for exterminating bandits and terrorists

within its own borders", says President Yeltsin, according to the Russian news agency Interfax. By way of Reuters and Ritzau Bureau the quotation reaches a few Danish newspapers.

In 1996, U.S. President Clinton had accepted Russia's intervention in Chechnya, comparing it to the breakaway South and the American Civil War of the 1860s. The Russian media quote this presidential precedent and draw analogies with other troubled regions, such as Northern Ireland, the Basque region, and Corsica, where no international organization is permitted to "play watchdog". The majority of Danish news reports write off these statements about Chechnya as biased comments by an aggressive "scoundrel state". Only once during that week in November did the Russian label for the Chechen rebels, "Islamic terrorists", reach a Danish audience (*Politiken*, November 18, 1999).

In light of the events of 9/11, two years after the coverage analyzed here, the wording and staging of the mass-mediated conflict between Russia and Chechnya clearly demonstrate how definitions of "us" and "them" change over time. Along with the diplomatic and military efforts, the conflicting parties offer competing points of view to professional journalists. In 1999, the Chechens had the upper hand and "we" were on their side against the aggressive Russians. But previously (and again, in the Fall of 2001) the war in Chechnya was covered in the Danish mass media only via Western correspondents living in Moscow, i.e. behind the lines of one of the belligerents. This point of view translated into short telegrams about the development of the war. However, during the November week under study, teams of journalists and photographers from the American newspaper *Washington Post*, the French news agency AFP, and Swedish TV4 had permission from Russia to visit the refugee camps. On-the-spot reporting resulted in different kinds of stories with civilian victims playing prominent roles:

The Russian military doesn't warn the civilians in the battle zone prior to bombings. The refugees tell us of a large number of victims: "We have been bombed before, but it is not until now that we realized that all possibility of escape was impossible. Hiding in basements does not protect us against the missiles, says Mrs. Baisajev, a Russian woman married to a Chechen".

This typical extract, quoted in several Danish broadsheets on November 16th, originates from a foreign correspondent representing *The Washington Post*. The text expresses the quintessence of the important we-they issue in anti-war propaganda. The special status of the source, connected through marriage from one of the warring "we's" to another, adds an extra human touch to the news story. Diplomatic questions of sovereignty, spheres of interest, and oil rights are of little importance in this context. The focus is on a specific individual caught in the war zone during an inhuman rocket attack. The sympathy is clear cut: one does not discuss national sovereignty with an innocent victim of war.

The journalist, being a professional, plays the part of a neutral observer, letting the facts speak for themselves. But the particular angle of the news, intentionally or not, forces the reading public to take sides. By means of editing the puzzling facts of reality, we – the audience – view the problem from the perspective of the daily life of the innocent victims. This, in turn, triggers demands for humanitarian treatment and respect for human rights, as defined by international conventions. “We” temporarily become responsible members of the international community.

The emotional identification with exemplary cases of flesh and blood becomes even stronger with the moving pictures presented by television news. It is mainly by conveying these images that the media are able to create a public opinion. Pictures of this kind are particularly convincing, since, as a matter of convention, they are presented without an explicit sender. Editorials and attached information can have varying degrees of credibility. But the diplomatic game does not command the power to define “us” and “them” to the public to the same extent as moving pictures of everyday life. In comparison to the icons of suffering civilians, the handshaking efforts of gray-haired men in formal suits and black limos signal aloofness and detached authority.

In short, the Danish spectators of the mass-mediated OSCE summit are given a choice between a human rights angle and a cooperative international peace framed by rhetorical power manifestations. Little effort is made by the journalists to bridge the gap between the point of view of suffering individuals and that of sovereign nations involved in a game of international negotiations. One Danish broadsheet, *Berlingske Tidende*, chose to summarize the story in the following way at the top of the foreign news page: “Narrow Victory to the U.S. and Western Europe”. But at the bottom of the same page, the Moscow correspondent draws a rather different conclusion: “Russia gets the best out of it”.

We, the audience outside the warring countries, are identified as a small but significant part of the world community. The combat between soldiers and diplomatic actors are elements of an appeal to international opinion. Thus, the Russian government claims that Chechnya has no legal right to independence because they unilaterally proclaimed national sovereignty. Moscow, therefore, will not and cannot enter into a dialog with “an illegitimate power”. In response to the Russian statement, Ilijas Akhmadow, acting Foreign Minister of Chechnya, answers, through the international news agencies, with a claim that Chechnya is a sovereign nation.

Coming from representatives of warring parties, statements like this one have a complex double meaning. On the one hand, this is an appeal to the outside world for recognition. On the other hand, it is stated with the creation of an internal “we” identity in mind. In order to succeed, such battles with words and pictures must necessarily work differently in foreign and domestic news. Paradoxically, when Yeltsin, obviously weakened by illness, went to the OSCE summit in Istanbul, the domestic Russian “we” appeared

to be strengthened, because the rest of the world confronted the Russian nation as an international underdog.

All the Danish media covered the OSCE summit during this November week using information from news agencies. Only *Radioavisen*, TV2 and three broadsheet papers had special correspondents in Istanbul. Their reports varied from pompous rhetoric ("Cold War in Istanbul", "Dramatic Dispute about Chechnya at Summit") to unrestrained farce ("Clinton Wants to Send Yeltsin to School", "Yeltsin & Co. Are Called to Order"). On television, the summit was framed as a family quarrel, with Uncle Bill from America scolding naughty Uncle Boris assisted by the Danish Prime Minister (on "our" behalf) saying: "We call on Russia to do something about the tragic situation in Chechnya immediately. We condemn the excessive and arbitrary coercion. The military operations are out of all proportion. Old people, women and children are innocent victims. It's a violation of OSCE convention" (TV2 *News*, November 18, 1999).

Perceived as an opinion-shaping power game, spectacular media events, framed as foreign news, have significant domestic utility. Small as well as more powerful nations gain a rare opportunity to articulate their sovereign "we" on national television. As a Russian diplomat puts it to *Berlingske Tidende's* Moscow correspondent: "The Istanbul summit concludes nothing. And everyone is satisfied. Everyone speaks up, and then they go back to their respective countries" (November 18, 1999).

European News: Meanwhile down in Brussels

The journalistic coverage of the OSCE summit and the war in Chechnya demonstrates that the creation of national identities is far more complex than zero-sum sporting events. The case study also illustrates that nation-states delegating sovereignty to international organizations are compensated by the privilege of recognition as members of humanitarian networks constituting a transnational super-"we" (Castells, 1997).

The sharing of sovereignty is rendered far more problematic in the ongoing media coverage of Danish EU relations. During this week under study, this important aspect of foreign-domestic relations was displayed in news items on the fifteen defense ministers' preliminary negotiations towards EU military co-operation. Editors labeled this event "historical" because it forced the Danish government to "exert EU derogations".

In the aftermath of the 1993 referendum resulting in a no-majority vote on the Maastricht Treaty, Denmark proclaimed four national exemption clauses – the so-called "EU derogations". From a journalistic point of view this political decision poses difficult daily choices: Are EU stories to be placed under the heading "National/Domestic" or should they be placed under "International/Foreign" as a part of the significant "otherness" that has to be considered when defining their national sovereignty and identity?

In relation to the EU meeting of defense ministers, several journalists question who is actually representing the Danish government's national interests. *Ekstra Bladet* expresses this dilemma bluntly, in the style of tabloid journalism: "To make it perfectly clear to Hækkerup and Helveg (the Defense Minister and Foreign Minister, respectively): It is definitely not just an adverse side effect of the Danish derogation that we cannot participate in EU defense. In fact, this is precisely the point of the derogations". (November 15, 1999)

As can be seen from Table 1., which shows the agendas of the week at hand, the issue of the EU derogations is in third place on the media agenda, but is not among the Top 10 in the opinion poll. Despite the many news items and the commentary in the press, radio, and TV, popular interest in this issue would appear to be limited. This may be a result of the lack of decisive influence on the part of Danish officials. "We comment very little", admits a Danish diplomat anonymously during the negotiations quoted by the broadsheet *Jyllands-Posten*: "Today, Danish EU diplomats don't dare to define what might be the policy of the Danish government. On the other hand, it is hardly possible for us to influence the speed and the direction of the negotiations on European defense". (November 15, 1999)

By definition European military cooperation is an international issue, but Denmark-based journalists tend to treat problems of EU as domestic, originating from alien pressure "down in Brussels". In letters to the editor, the "Denmark first" perspective is strongly emphasized: "My sons are not going to war in Africa to defend the interests of France" (*Politiken*, November 20, 1999). Fundamentally, such positions are incompatible with the preferred perspective of foreign correspondents based at EU headquarters: "Today the European foreign and defense ministers meet in Brussels. They are going to make a landmark decision concerning the historical process of militarizing the union. The meeting will focus on the military impotence of the EU in tackling challenges in the aftermath of the disappearance of the Iron Curtain ten years ago" (*Berlingske Tidende*, November 15, 1999).

In this typical foreign correspondence from Brussels the "European we" is in focus, whereas the national Danish EU derogations are relegated to four lines in last part of the article. At home, however, the defense negotiations motivate the editorial staff to focus on the issue of a future referendum on Danish EU-membership. A political representative from the minority partner of the coalition government places herself in the limelight by presenting this aspect as a soccer metaphor "We have placed ourselves out of bounds", she says to *Jyllands-Posten* (November 16, 1999), suggesting that the question of a Yes or No vis-à-vis EU defense ought to be discussed in close relation to the general question of Danish participation in "euro-land", i.e. the European Monetary Union (EMU). Right wing conservatives follow up this angle by pointing to the "national spirit of European defense" as an important reason to abolish the Danish derogations now and altogether.

Most media commentators agree that these proposals about a decisive referendum are "a very brave idea", but as one journalist remarks cynically,

"what this actually means is that nothing will happen" (*Berlingske Tidende*, November 21, 1999). Editorials of competing broadsheets warn against "a mix up of defense and domestic politics" that may complicate the upcoming referendum on the "political extravaganza" as an unbecoming strategic problem of the current government.

Viewed from the editorial offices of Copenhagen, too much high-flown discussion about the EU may weaken the efforts to remove the "national compromise" which is blocking Danish participation in international cooperation. *Berlingske Tidende* (November 21, 1999) pinpoints the problem, presenting Gallup poll results in favor of Danish participation in peacekeeping operations abroad: "The figures are absurd, since they show that Danes want the EU to do something which they themselves do not want to be part of". Note the alienated "they" instead of the traditional "we" usually mobilized journalistically when representative pools are reported.

This mix-up of "we" and "they" is no mere accident. The vocabulary reflects fundamental problems of political identity: "We are still thinking that we are better than the rest of the European Community. They are fully aware that we despise the EU, and yet Denmark benefits from all the possible financial advantages of cooperation", says *Politiken* (November 21, 1999): "The government should argue unambiguously. We ought to vote on all the derogations – once and for all, says *Jyllands-Posten* (November 20, 1999). In the broadsheet, *Aktuelt*, the Foreign Minister turns the we-they issue upside down: "The other countries know very well that when decisions have to be made, we follow suit, trapped by our derogations".

From a journalistic point of view, the EU is a foreign affairs misfit that activates domestic pros or cons. The conflict lines split the Danes into two halves. From a news production standpoint, these conflicting opinions on EU issues are not desirable, since they split readership. They are, however, regarded as important news because the leading party of the coalition government, the Social Democratic Party, was split internally on this matter. Consequently, professional journalists and political commentators routinely translate complicated transnational issues into simple yes or no matters domesticated at Christiansborg (The Danish Parliament).

During this particular November week, the "historic events" taking place in Brussels were yet again domesticated, becoming a trivial combat between the government and the opposition on tactical questions such as how to ensure popular support of the mutual "EU project". In doing so, the Danish media coverage of EU questions actually conceals far more than it reveals. Below the journalistic surface of day-to-day reporting unresolved we-they issues are at stake. Nevertheless, the large majority of contributors to the mass-mediated EU debate seem to base their textual actions on the implicit premise that the current Danish "they" will, in due time, eventually become an integrated part of the European "we".

Domestic News: Citizens and Aliens

"We never decided, as a sovereign state, to become multi-ethnic", a feature writer for *Jyllands-Posten* (November 19, 1999) complains, arguing that referendums on any international issue must be considered a political right for Danish citizens. The statement summarizes a super-theme found in a large number of stories from this particular November week. Two of them were in the Top 10 stories, but the many local events add up to an ongoing "Kulturkampf" involving not only national identity and sovereignty, but also citizenship and alienation.

In marked contrast to the half-hearted pros and the sullen cons of daily EU coverage, stronger emotions are at stake in the day-to-day mass media reports on "the Danes" and "the ethnic minorities" (Hussein, et al, 1997). Of the two cases that were in the Top 10 issues that week, one was about conflicting views between the parliamentary opposition and members of the governing parties regarding the implementation of the Danish Immigration Act. The other agenda-setting events concerned the expulsion of Pakistani and Turkish residents convicted of crimes that were committed in Denmark.

The triggering factor in the government dispute on immigration was a human interest story about a fisherman's wife living in Tycoon who had been denied a residence permit because her husband was at sea so often that they were not considered to be living together in a legal sense. Inspired by this story, members of Parliament collected another 128 examples of controversial implementation of the Immigration Act. Most of these examples had previously been reported by different mass media, thus creating a sense of urgency and moral uproar about the way the law was handled.

The critics claimed that people from the so-called "asylum-producing countries" were systematically discriminated against by the people administering the law. Conflict flared on Sunday, November 14th at a general meeting of an opposition party. In launching the campaign with the 128 examples of "harsh implementation" of the Immigration Act, the initiators carefully explained that their demand for tolerance did not include criminals: "When a foreigner doesn't hold Danish citizenship and he/she commits a serious drug crime, then give them a one-way ticket – goodbye and don't come back!" (*Ekstra Bladet*, November 15, 1999).

But these political actors did not succeed in separating the government dispute from another headline story this week: a fierce debate about the expulsion of criminal immigrants. A number of such court sentences had provoked riots in the city of Odense and in the north-eastern part of Copenhagen. In their follow-up coverage, the mass media discussed the popular fear of "aliens" and the tendency to "ghettoize the problem". Demonstrators' right to hide their identity behind masks and hoods was also discussed by the media, as well as questions of "multiethnicity", "globalization" and "reactionary prejudice".

An explosive cocktail of discursive themes related to the Danes/aliens conflict was supplemented by additional we-they dimensions: law-abiding citizens versus criminal deviants, law and order versus human rights, the solidarity of the welfare state versus the threat from abroad. The radio news on Monday morning (the 15th of November) presented an interview with the Finance Minister who mitigated the problems by saying: "This is merely about practical problems that we shall now solve in a practical way".

Thus a political attempt was made to turn the explosive conglomerate of complex problems into a tangible issue on the parliamentary agenda: "The government has to agree on this, of course. And we shall have an agreement before appearing in Parliament", the Interior Minister asserted to *Jyllands-Posten*. In the media, however, the controversial issues had become contagious, detonating a variety of local, regional and national news items. *Ekstra Bladet*, Denmark's Radio and TV2 (national as well as regional) followed up with new cases illustrating the contradictory implementation of the Immigration Act. Letters to the editor followed. The Danish Refugee Council and five NGOs threw white papers and press releases into the heated debate. Editors claimed the regal first-person plural for the media themselves: "We can only recommend that these demands be met", as one typical editorial stated (*Politiken*, November 16, 1999).

The tabloids wrote about "a potential civil war", while the broadsheets talked about "a regular crisis in government". The Prime Minister denied both labels and referred to the matter as "a pebble in the shoe", i.e. a mere tiff (DR1, November 17, 1999). In due course, the Prime Minister played the European "we" as a trump card by using the EU's Schengen Agreement as a decisive argument for the Danish government not to reform the current way of administering the immigration law. In doing so, the European imperative is used as a shield to protect the governmental "we" against criticism from the oppositional "we" in parliament, i.e. mitigating domestic conflict by referencing a significant other abroad – a political spin that works effectively within Danish news reporting.

These tactical maneuvers succeeded in transforming the popular dispute about the integration of immigrants into an internal disagreement among ministers of government. The sense of clear and present danger continued one week, until Friday, when the Finance Minister ended the heated discussions by simply restating her point of view from the beginning of the week: "We have found practical answers to practical problems" (Ritzaus Bureau, November 19, 1999). The peace and quiet of normal weekend life prevailed. The following week there were no traces left of the so-called crisis.

Evidently, it is easier for Danish journalists to focus attention on governmental disagreements than on a controversial question such as immigration and the expulsion of non-Danish citizens. By delegating such issues to the parliamentary level, problems of civic identity and racial prejudice can be framed as personal infighting between politicians. At this level, governmental closure can be obtained on issues where no social solution is at hand. In

doing so, super-themes of great complexity can be reduced to case stories routinely tackled in a professional way by news producers.

On the other hand, a critical reading of the media content reveals fundamental problems confronting not only the gentlemen of the press, but more importantly the current state of the Danish nation. The controversial question at hand concerns the oppositional relation between national citizenship and international human rights. International conventions on human rights encompass all humanity, irrespective of nationality. In this perspective, critical news reporting may render national citizenship outmoded and reactionary. But in the formation of public opinion, the constitutional problems of “we” as opposed to “others” are not easily written off.

Most Danish media still implicitly distinguish between “citizens” and “aliens”, even though the boundaries between the “we” and the “they” in a politically correct world are becoming increasingly blurred. In reproducing everyday life, professional journalists perform the important job of producing ethnocentric news, by redefining the identity of the nation (Berkowitz, 1997). Strategies of inclusion and exclusion are important in news production, implemented primarily by choosing among competing sources of information. In that way, the media are able to locate the actors as a part of “normality” – always perceived as positive – in contrast to “deviants” perceived as potential threats to the state of the nation.

Professional journalists encounter profound difficulties managing such issues in a multi-cultural context. This is not merely due to the lack of professional skills or personal prejudice. The problem is inherent in modern journalism. The profession has no tools for news production in this field of work because the mass media cannot perform their domestic tasks in the traditional way when the civic “we” is no longer a concept beyond dispute. This, I believe, is the most important challenge for journalism in the 21st century: Can a national “we” remain meaningful as a common denominator in the mass media serving societies characterized by “localized globalization”?

The State of the Nation

Until the 1960s – when the party press dominated the Danish mass media – news producers competed with each other as adjuncts to political organizations. The aim was not merely to be first, as well as journalistically unbiased, but, more importantly, to frame and name events by setting the agenda and defining the discursive setting for the state of the nation (Hjarvard, 1999 and Søllinge, 1999).

Until the fall of the Berlin Wall – in the days of the Cold War and grand narratives – the national we/they relation reflected the worldwide ideological competition between East and West, and between left and right. By the turn of the millennium, however, the state of the nation was characterized

by complex conflicts in a globalized world community and a localized welfare state marked by varying we-they positions (Lund, 2002).

Role conflicts concerning we-they relationships (Danish journalists usually call them "shifting identities") may, in fact, change on a day-to-day basis from the global, the international, the national, the regional to the local stages of news production. The spin-off and frequent changes in focus from one arena to another enable experienced media actors to frame themselves in different roles – for example, act under the label of a "patriotic statesman" serving the nation-state, elected spokesman for a political party advocating humanitarian responsibility, local politician devoted to a community cause involving the rights of grassroots organizations, etc.

Professional journalists deal with these conflicting "identities" in a situational and pragmatic manner, one that depends on their collective interpretation of specific events, news genres, and spectacular actions with social and political consequences for the civic "we". No single authority is the indisputable master of the house. Not only abroad, but also regarding domestic matters, it is difficult to maintain unambiguous roles in terms of a we-they identity. Conflicting positions compete, and shifting alliances take turns having the upper hand and defining the ground rules. Consequently, it is increasingly difficult to carry out traditional journalistic tasks from the sidelines, when the identity of a national "we" is constantly changing.

When day-to-day news coverage is analyzed as an unlimited number of miscellaneous case stories rather than as a comprehensive time tableau, it is easy to overlook how the nation-state is not just one player among others, but also a constitutional arena for news production. Genealogically, the national welfare state is constituted as a self-evident conceptual framework in mass-mediated reporting on events from far and near (Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994). The grand narratives may be less prevalent today than before, but the fundamental home/abroad framework for news gathering and opinion formation does not change overnight.

The foundation for meaningful news reporting on the national and international levels may be regarded as a normative framework for civic virtues in a democratic state: the government is to protect the national "we" against threats from the outside, and assign equal rights to the citizens. The citizens, in return, accept the nation-state with its privilege of representation and its monopoly on the execution of legal force. The welfare state includes, furthermore, the duty of citizens to work and pay taxes to the community to support the less fortunate. The role of the media, in this scenario, is to ensure a public sphere in order to communicate the will of the sovereign state to the citizens, and to protect civil rights against abuse from ruling elites (Habermas, 1962).

Political analysis, of course, clearly demonstrates that this ideal of a public sphere does not exist as an institutional reality in nation-states such as Denmark (Pedersen et al., 2000). The ideal, however, lives on in the minds of journalists and in the normative framework of news production. From this

point of view, the mass media distinguish, without any further ado, between "international" and "domestic", and between "alien" and "Danish". In spite of frequent allusions to globalization and universal human rights, "the journalistic we" is fundamentally defined by the nation as a political and cultural unity founded in a geographic, cultural, and mental space.

Danish journalists, to a surprising extent, concur as to those angles which are applied to most day-to-day news material. This conformity, however, is based on tacit or implicit assumptions, making it difficult for an external observer to evaluate the choices made. Danish media criticism of bias regarding ethnic prejudice often ends in quarrels about whether there has been deliberate manipulation (Hussain et. al., 1997), which journalists may flatly reject, arguing that daily pressures, e.g. lack of time, dominant news criteria, and biased news sources are the actual source of the problem (Lund, 2003).

Although the news media mainly report what other people say or do, important choices are necessarily made in terms of priority, inclusion or exclusion of source, positioning of material, etc. The power to define is the power to distort (Spector & Kitsuse, 1987). In the Danish news media, this definitional power appears explicitly only in the commentary pages of the dailies. In most other newspaper departments, as well as in radio and television, definitions of "we" and "they" are usually delegated to sources. But these sources gain the right to speak, of course, only if editors and journalists choose to quote their views as news.

When journalists move beyond the self-reliant world of sports, doubts can always be voiced about who should be included in the mass-mediated "we" and who may not be. Generalizing the public into social categories such as "wage earners", "consumers" or "ordinary people" reflects a rhetorical demand to solve contextual conflicts. The journalistic quest for stable identities as opposed to conflicting roles itself produces prejudice. The clash between "us" and "them", however, is not strictly about editorial choices. It is a fact of life for the social and political construction of reality.

News coverage cannot define a universal and indisputable confirmation of a given national identity. There are a number of collaborating and competing forces in play. Rarely will journalists and editors be able to decide independently who we are and what we are becoming. In this respect, the editorial staff depends on credible sources of authority. Professional journalists, however, are to a great extent decisive in determining who should be granted a speaking part as sources of this kind. Consequently, the news media effectively propose what the audience is to think about and how it ought to do so. Priming the political agenda in terms of constant role play endows the media with a definitional influence based on editorial freedom of the press in a national setting (Schudson, 1995).

Communicating images of national identity (and suppressing alternative interpretations) renders definitional power from the political system to the press in the role of proxy public opinion. An important limit to free choice in this respect, however, concerns the positioning on mass-mediated agen-

das of conflicting topics within competing super-themes: Do the negotiations about a common EU defense concern domestic or foreign policy? Is the war in Chechnya about a sovereign nation's interests or about universal human rights? Should the Immigration Act be altered or applied in favor of multicultural integration or as a political alibi for identity-seeking Danes? In the specific instance the journalists may believe that they are answering these questions objectively by reporting what they see and hear. But no professional tools enable the gentlemen of the press to supersede the stereotypical power of implicit we/they prejudice.

This professional urge to simplify complex relationships surfaces not only in spectacular cases, such those exemplified above, but also in the more trivial coverage of travel reports and business news. In the trade section of newspapers, the ideology of globalization has promoted an editorial tendency to put "all of us" in the role of "worldwide shoppers" and "potential share holders". Researching this gradual change over time may enlighten our understanding of more controversial areas of modern journalism where the national "we" prevails – in spite of mass-mediated lip service to human rights and global universalities, e.g. in mass-mediated politics and cultural news coverage.

A promising line of research would be to deal with the complexity of the mass-mediated "we" by moving the focus of analysis from the national and international towards the local and regional level of news production. Media convergence is indeed not the only trend in the globalization of communications. Divergence in terms of subdivided "we's" still prevails in the provincial press, radio and television. The local pages of Danish dailies parade journalistic ghettos – defined as local communities and trading districts – clearly separated from the neighboring territories. In this way it becomes journalistically possible to act within a framework of changing we/they relationships and still maintain a comprehensible Danish "we".

Note

1. The larger project was entitled: *Magtudredningen: An Analysis of Democracy and Power in Denmark*.

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Newspapers' Picture of the World

The Domestic Family of Man

Patrik Åker

In contemporary journalism, an extraordinarily successful international trend in newspaper design is the placement of a large photograph on the front page. This study focuses on how we can understand the use and function of these photographs. Many of these photographs do not function directly as evidence for a story reported on the front page; neither do they depict anything dramatic, and they are seldom newsworthy in the sense of documenting a recent event. Those spot-lighted in these photographs are surprisingly often average citizens, and not celebrities, as might be expected given how journalism often personifies trends and currents in society. In other words, they often seem to break with our traditional understanding of press photography. Since so many of these photographs break with this tradition, the following analysis is an attempt to understand what this change implies for the role of journalism in contemporary society.

The focus of this study has been on large, front page pictures found in the press of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Russia during the week of November 15-21, 1999.¹ The time perspective in these pictures makes them resemble feature pictures rather than news photography with its traditional orientation toward events and action and it is relatively common that ordinary people, so to speak, are placed in the limelight. Studies have shown that the space given to big front page pictures has increased during the last ten to fifteen years (Nilsson & Severinsson, 2001: 57). The morning papers in Denmark, Finland, and Sweden all demonstrate this trend, which distinguishes them to some degree from the Russian newspapers. In this sense, the Russian papers appear not to have gone through the same design revolution that the Scandinavian press has.

One large front page photograph and the surrounding text from each of these countries, with the exception of Finland, where two photographs, one from a Finnish-language and one from a Swedish-language broadsheets, are included. The criteria for choosing these pictures were that they be large, and dominate the front page, that ordinary people be represented, and that the orientation of the event is local, regional, and/or national (i.e., not inter-

national). The front page picture from Russia stands out in two notable ways. First, the ordinary people in the picture are not represented as individuals. Instead, they can be said to constitute a crowd. Secondly, this page is taken from a financial tabloid and not a morning paper, for the simple reason that the picture was most similar to the pictures from the papers of the other countries. The Russian picture is used to bring the other photographs into sharp relief, to make the analysis clearer.

Another criterion for the choice of sample was to exclude pictures that explicitly dealt with foreign countries. Research shows that, for the most part, in order for news about foreign countries to gain access to the front page, a spectacular event must have occurred (see for instance, Holm, 2000: 100). This is not the case when journalists write about their own country. Thus, while news about foreign countries can be explained by traditional news values, there are seldom convincing explanations for the recurrence of large front page pictures of domestic conditions, which is why they are so interesting to study.

This chapter works with the following thesis: These large front page pictures can be seen as examples of a more intimate side of the public sphere, and this intimization highlights issues of identification and identity formation. They can be seen as evidence of the symbolic power held by the institution of journalism. Furthermore, the pictures are examples of journalism *qua* holder of tradition. If symbolic power is connected to tradition, it is possible to view the symbols purveyed through journalism as crucial to a sense of belonging. This sense of belonging has a history that gives it its continuity – a past, a present, and a future. It is decisive for how people understand themselves and their world. In this sense, we can talk about tradition (cf. Thompson, 1995: 179-188). That is why pictures such as these are important for identification with a collectivity, and therefore also for identity formation. In this chapter, I will try to show how these very large, and therefore salient, pictures establish the position of a “reader-We”. In one respect this is obvious and scarcely analyzing: it is simply the way journalism works. Still, what makes it crucial is the connection to tradition. The mediated We stands in relation to specific symbolic spaces constituted by exclusion (cf. Morley, 2001). This happens during a period in our history when people interact, both physically and via the media, over cultural boundaries to a greater extent than ever before.

Another aim of this analysis is to call into question the patterns that are said to be dominant in press photography: topicality, objectivity, and personification (see for instance: Hall (1973), Bignell (1997)). These concepts are problematic in different ways and are not applicable to these types of large front page pictures, which the press often use to market a specific journalistic profile, and as an entry into their “world”. Topicality and objectivity have several of things in common. The use of both concepts makes sense only under the assumption that in journalistic practice it is possible to record sudden (planned as well as un-planned) events in society without affecting the outcome of these

events. This neglects the transformative function of journalism (for example, in the framing of events), and thereby its symbolic power.

The transformative functions of journalism are, however, important for the third concept – personification. Personification describes the tendency to highlight individuals to the detriment of important issues which are either ignored, or placed in the background. But it is also possible to discern another tendency here, namely that journalism de-personifies people, by turning them into symbols, or metonyms, for processes and conditions in society. These different aspects of the concept of personalization are well-established tenets of media research. My ambition here is to relate the latter meaning of personalization – that ordinary people are reduced to metonyms for trends in these societies – to the symbolic power of journalism. The selected front page pictures indicate important developments in the quality press, in particular the significance of photography for contemporary journalism at the very end of the 20th century. In order to fully understand these developments, it is necessary to compare the press in different countries, since, on one level, the pictures represent a transnational trend, which results in similarities across national boundaries, yet on another level, they are nation-specific and are important for reader identity at the national or local level.²

Why does the daily press in different countries look so much alike? One possible answer can be gleaned from one actor's experience working internationally. Today, design gurus like Mario Garcia travel around the world and re-design the layout of newspapers. One of the projects he seems to be most content with is the new layout he gave to the Swedish daily, *Göteborgs-Posten*, in the early 1990s³. The new design of the front page of *Göteborgs-Posten* established the standard for prestigious dailies in Sweden. (Garcia also re-designed *Dagens Nyheter* in 2000, but the paper was influenced by Garcia's ideas before that as we shall see below.) Nowadays, there is hardly a Swedish newspaper that doesn't use large, eye-catching, enigmatic pictures on its front pages. For people like Garcia, and for ambitious editors, form seems to take priority over content. Or, put differently: the content may vary but the form is universal.

Recent studies have demonstrated that many of the large pictures that so often grace the front pages of our newspapers follow the traditional journalistic norms of topicality and timeliness, where this is understood as reports about sudden events in the "outside" world such as crime, accidents, etc. (Nilsson & Severinsson, 2001:58). While it is true that the front pages often contain such event-oriented pictures, what is interesting is how many do not in fact conform to this norm. This indicates that the role of press photography in journalism and in contemporary society is undergoing a change. In the long run, established perspectives on news values and what constitutes newsworthiness must be reassessed in light of significant changes such as these (cf. McQuail, 2000: 342). Perhaps the decline of journalistic notions of up-to-the-minute information can also be understood as a decline in the perception of the need for transparency. On the whole, a looser sense of

time will lead to a decrease in salience of the relation between the photograph and its referent. It seems like contemporary press photography is no longer burdened by the need to appear transparent. Perhaps digital technology has liberated photographs in the same way that the camera once released painting from its mimetic function. Another explanation is that the journalists, as a component of media institutions, have a more central role in contemporary society, and thus have greater symbolic power. Since the media penetrate nearly everything, and have grown more autonomous, the need to justify their choices by relating to external events is commensurately lower (see, for instance, Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1998).

That then, is the framework within which this analysis is situated. I will argue that the pictures are examples of the symbolic power of journalism, and explain how this can be related to physical places and symbolic spaces. The journalistic control to which these pictures give expression can also be used to problematize concepts such as personification, topicality, and objectivity, and thereby also help us to understand the changing role of press photography in today's media societies. In order to do this, I find it necessary to make comparisons between different countries.

The Boy with the Earache

The picture in the Danish newspaper *Berlingske Tidende* shows all the signs of tremendous physical pain: a bawling five-year-old boy with his eyes closed in agony. His mother has placed her hand on the boy's forehead, perhaps to figure out whether he has a fever, perhaps just to calm him down. At the bottom of the picture, we see the boy's hand touching his mother's – the boy is protected by his mother. The mother's gaze is directed diagonally towards the top of the picture. She is looking at something the reader can't see. To the left, a doctor is seen from behind and below, from the shoulder on upwards. The doctor's gaze is directed towards the boy. The impression is that we are looking at a very light, sparsely equipped consulting room. In the background we see a movie poster of the French film *Rêves* (Dreams). The poster gives the room and therefore also the doctor a touch of cultural capital. It can also be seen as a way to "intimize" the public place. It is hard to orient oneself in the room and get a clear impression of what it looks like – for example where the window or exit is located (according to the light in the picture, there must at least be one). There is a door in the background, to the right, but the door does not seem to be in use, since there is a table in front of it. Despite this uncertainty, the representation of the room gives the impression of a place we all can recognize, or maybe more correctly, a specific space is mediated.

The caption gives readers the names of the boy and the female doctor, but the boy's mother remains anonymous. However, the boy Kristoffer is actually



not important in this article, an article about the abuse of health care in Danish society. According to the article that goes with the photograph, many people consult doctors unnecessarily and, in this context, the boy comes to symbolize a person worthy of health care. This boy, who is so clearly in great need, can be compared to all of those who abuse the system. The article and its accompanying image are thus not examples of a sudden, unexpected event. The reasons for its front-page newsworthiness must be found elsewhere.

A first glance at the picture arouses feelings of sympathy. The little boy is in great pain. An innocent child arouses everyone's sympathy. In this way, the photograph can be said to communicate something that transcends national and cultural boundaries. Could this quality be related to journalistic notions of objectivity? If objectivity means the ability to show something real, a transparency in the sense that it records a "reality" as it is, this picture certainly has such qualities. This picture conveys a sense of authenticity. On the other hand, it is difficult to discuss the picture in terms of objectivity regarding the context of the news page. What about the relationship between the text and image? To a news consumer, the text anchors the picture and gives it meaning. The same picture could, for instance, be used to illustrate deficient health care or that ear problems have become more common among children. But the text guides the reader to the theme of a boy who is deserving of health care. The text can therefore be understood as reinforcing the picture's enigmatic dimension – there is a puzzle that needs to be solved by the reader.

Several other observations can be made about the relation between text and image. Roland Barthes says that texts function in two ways in relation to

images: either as an anchor or as a relay (Barthes, 1977: 40f). By this he means that either the text can dominate the image, or it can exist in dialog with the image and can thereby be regarded as of equal importance.

The picture in *Berlingske Tidende* can be representative of both types of relationships to the text. And one more aspect could also be added: a reading where the text is totally irrelevant to the image. All these relationships between texts and images are possible depending on the position of the reader. For those perusing texts for information, the text will be an easy way to gain a deeper understanding of the picture. Regarding the front page as a whole, the large picture is there to catch the reader's attention. This is the introduction to the events of the day and here the dialectic between text and image has a purpose. Since the reader can move back and forth between the two, the picture must have certain qualities that make it worthwhile for me the reader to come back to it. The child's pain is understood across cultural boundaries. This picture can be placed in well-established photographic tradition, namely the documentary. In this tradition, the subject, the photographer, interprets an event or fact and presents a picture that summarizes the subjective interpretation. A subjective side should thus be added to the factual dimension of the photograph (see, for instance, Stott, 1973). The picture is a striking attempt to communicate the boy's pain.

Like images in the documentary tradition, the picture of the boy also communicates metonymically. The boy, his mother, and the doctor, are not interesting as individuals but for the larger whole they represent. Indeed, while we learn the names of the boy and the doctor in the news text, these names are generic and replaceable, they are there for the sake of the news story. On the other hand, the photo anchors us to a particular physical place. First, we have the consulting room, and, in my view, it is of importance that the reader recognizes this as a typical example of Denmark's many consulting rooms. Secondly, we can discern the territory of Denmark, a place where one can find people who abuse the health care. These physical places are, in other words, connected to symbolic spaces. One obvious symbolic space that the ideal readers of this article come to identify with is Denmark, as a place filled with honest people who are not known to abuse the system.

The Lady in the Hat Shop

In the middle of the photograph sits an old woman holding a red hat in her hand. A red rose seems to be a part of the hat. The lady's eyes are shut, and she sits in a modernistic steel chair (from the mid-20th century). The chair is discernible only at the bottom of the picture. She has an overcoat, which gives the impression that she has just entered the room, or is perhaps about to leave. Only part of the room is in picture, giving the impression that the room itself is not important, instead, the things in the room are what gives



it meaning. They come forward as strong signs. The opening of the article in the Finnish newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* says "Once upon a time there was a small hat store /.../" (author's translation). With an opening like this, the lady's closed eyes connote dreams. Maybe she's thinking about the good old days when she ran the hat shop. And what about the hat? Maybe the hat she holds is her own, her hatless head seems not to correspond to her clothes. Yet the hat itself does not fit in with the rest of her clothes. It contributes to the picture's enigmatic dimension.

This opening to a longer article inside the newspaper is, to a significant degree, about the past. It is placed under the vignette "Plus" and represents the human-interest genre rather than traditional news reporting. Again, this story is not the result of a specific event, and there may be no particular reason why the lady in the hat shop is on the front page on this particular day. It could be that many people who live in Helsinki recognize the lady and know about her shop, and that it brings back memories from the past. But why is she the lead item on the front page on this Monday in Novem-

ber, in Finland's largest quality daily? Perhaps because it touches something in the spirit of the times, or a theme in a current debate. Maybe the article's actuality is that history comes alive.

The photograph works as an "index" of sorts – it has, or serves as the anchor for, a certain kind of magical realism. People can recognize the lady, maybe they have met her once in her little shop or have other memories from that time. For those readers, the lady is real, she steps into the spotlight today, and readers can see how time has changed her. If time has changed the old lady, the shop itself seems to be unchanged. Time seems to have stopped. In that way the lady can travel back in time simply by returning to her old shop. The shop functions as a kind of museum. The feeling that the lady is visiting the past is reinforced by the text, but the article leaves readers with more questions than answers.

If the lady is some kind of celebrity, or at least well known, it could mean that she is important as an individual. But the photograph can also communicate on another level. It can touch a reader who has neither heard of, nor seen, the lady before. From that reader-position the lady becomes metonymic, she gives history a face, and makes it come alive. From this point of view it is not the lady as an individual that interests the reader, but rather the woman as a representative of society at a certain point in time. Her closed eyes invite this type of reading. She sits introspectively and completely still in her steel chair. The relatively introverted representation of the lady can be interpreted as a representation of a larger context. This is one story, but there are thousands of others. The presence of time is evident, but instead of reporting on the present, as in traditional criteria of newsworthiness, the story is a piece of Finnish history. (See also, Ekecrantz, in this volume.)

One important physical place in this feature story is, of course, the hat shop. It is still there today as a kind of historical artifact. Another physical place is the city of Helsinki, where the shop is situated. These physical places also are related, respectively, to Helsinki and Finland as symbolic spaces. The ideal reader becomes involved in a certain collective memory. If we not recognize this history, we are excluded from the reader community which the newspaper is attempting to address.

The Woman on the Pier

Should we or should we not feel pity for the woman on the pier? She looks quite comfortable sitting there with a computer in her lap. But the headline of the Swedish-Finnish paper *Hufvudstadsbladet* says "Telecommuting Can Become a New Trap for Women" (author's translation). In the background, there is what readers would recognize as the archipelago of Åland and some red boat houses. In the foreground to the left, "project leader" Camilla Wahlsten sits with her computer. The picture is relatively uncluttered and



gives the impression of an untouched, almost desolate, yet grandiose landscape. It is autumn, the air is crisp and clean. The woman is wearing a thick coat with a scarf comfortably wrapped around her neck. It is still possible to sit outside and work. The impression is that this picture is set up to illustrate a specific theme – the new possibilities opened up by advanced computer technology. But this does not correspond to the warning theme in the headline and accompanying text. The text rather warns of the dangers inherent in the new technology – it can create new traps for women by offering low-paid, routinized labor. But the caption tells us that Camilla Wahlsten is different. She is a project leader and has the opportunity to decide over her own work.

It is not a specific event that has triggered this article. Perhaps a new government report has reached the editorial office of *Hufvudstadsbladet*, but this is difficult to tell from the text and picture. On the other hand, since the paper addresses the Swedish-speaking population of Finland, it is easy for me to associate the article with current debates in Sweden. The context of a story like this is the large-scale demographic shift in population from the countryside to the big cities. As a consequence, thinly populated areas have become potential vacation spots for tired people from the cities. In order to make the countryside attractive again, hopes are pinned on new information technology.

The article tells the reader what Camilla thinks and feels, and she stands out as an advocate of the telecommuting, with all the possibilities it opens up. The front page picture can thereby be understood as an image of a heroine, a feminist pioneer. But at the same time, the picture does not really communicate by means of its indexicality. It is not important that it really is Camilla Wahlsten in the picture, or that the landscape is real or that this special loca-

tion can be identified. It is the *visualized* conception of the archipelago that is important, not the transparent representation. This photograph does not communicate through its authenticity, but through common notions associated with how our future will be, thanks to new communication technology. This picture can above all be read as an *illustration* of an ongoing debate.

Camilla personifies characteristics that can be related to the IT generation such as clear-sightedness, commitment, and drive. Camilla also represents a hopeful future for women who telecommute from the countryside. At the same time, the text gives the image new meaning. The woman becomes a representative for a highly politicized “city vs. countryside” debate, about whether investments should be in IT instead of in spheres like nursing and schools. In the article, Camilla Wahlsten herself discusses these issues, questioning the investment in broadband and the strong belief in telecommuting. But in the picture, and the accompanying caption, she is strongly de-personified in order to foreground the opportunities and possibilities of the future IT society. In this, she has a metonymic role, and the text of the article contradicts the picture and caption.

The place for this story is the Åland archipelago. It is an interesting place because of its turbulent past, belonging first to Sweden then to Russia and then to Finland. There are also different opinions among Åland’s inhabitants about whether they should belong to Finland, Sweden or if they should form their own state. Therefore, the symbolic space of this physical place, the countryside in the archipelago of Åland, can be related to several different nation-states. One symbolic space could be the tradition of struggle for alternative solutions, a fight for survival under difficult circumstances. This can be compared to Åland’s relatively high degree of self-government and the readers of *Hufvudstadsbladet* who belong to a minority group.

A Church, Some People, and a Marketplace

The next photo chosen for this close-reading is taken with a wide-angle lens. The Trinity Church and the iron fencing with its open gate are compressed against the middle of the picture. Most of the people in the picture are on their way out of the gate. In the front, to the right, a cart loaded with cartons relates to the main theme of the article. The marketplace just beside the church is going to be moved out of the church enclosure. Parishioners and the people who work for the church have long been discontent with the marketplace and the commerce so close to their church. Life and movement are foregrounded in the composition of the picture from the Russian newspaper, *Delovoy Petersburg*, but it is hard to see any evidence of a marketplace. Perhaps the two women to the left are selling food, and that could indicate some sort of commerce. But these kinds of mobile street-kitchens are common on every street in big cities like St. Petersburg. These two women are



also the only people who are not in motion in the picture. Can it be that they are not part of the marketplace? They are already on the right side of the iron fencing.

There is no eye contact with the people in the picture, but the representation of gazes and bodies directs the observer. In the front, to the left, we get a glimpse of a shoulder. The person is heading out of the picture. This directs the reader's interpretation of the image to the extent that it is possible to see the people on their way out of the gate as actually leaving the place in front of the church, moving towards the new marketplace beyond it. This interpretation is also reinforced by the headline and caption, which explains that the tradesmen have occupied the place in front of the church, and that a new place has been arranged for them.

The municipal architect (city planning committee) approves of a new marketplace, which explains why the article is published in the first place. The article puts great emphasis on explaining the plans for the organization of this form of commerce. So, in contrast to the other photographs analyzed thus far, a specific event has prompted *Delovoy Petersburg* journalists to leave the editorial office and cover it on the spot. When the photographer enters the scene, the tradesmen are about to leave with all their things (a large photograph inside the paper illustrates this). So the photographer takes a picture of the place and tries to catch what happens after the decision to create a new marketplace is implemented (and what is implicit here is, of course, that all this happening at that very moment). It is hard to tell whether the photographer had a specific strategy other than just giving the reader a

report of the situation. The picture doesn't show any decisive moment. The photographer could have been standing there the whole day, and probably caught many pictures as relevant as the one on the front page. This picture is not driven by some outspoken aestheticism. It is a very traditional press illustration of a given situation.

There is also a second theme in the story. The church and commerce are in many respects each other's opposites. If the church stands for eternal values, the core of the market is shorter-term profit maximization. It is also hard not to see a connection here to the relation between religion and commercialism in the former Soviet state. In that society, both were for all intents and purposes banned. Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, the church and commercialism have had a tremendous impact on "the new times". Up till now, they seem to have flourished without regulation, but in the article it appears that commerce must be separated from the church.

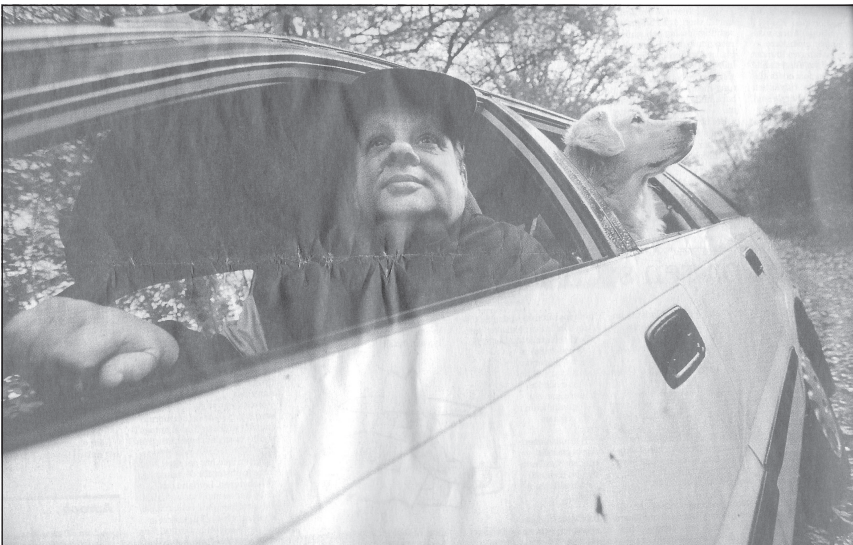
One thing that is puzzling is that the photographer has chosen a wide-angle lens and a particular angle, which gives the place a somewhat surrealist character. The mighty church rises above heads of the people present and appears to lean over them, almost driving them away from the place. At the same time, the composition of the picture marginalizes the church somewhat; it is in the background and only occupies a small part of the surface of the picture. Instead, it is the people at the iron gate who become the central focus of the photograph. Nowhere in the text is it implied that the people are being driven away from the church, but it could look like this to the casual observer. This is a very traditional press photograph in an objectivistic spirit; the form of the picture is not supposed to allow for alternative interpretations. The lens that was used can be understood as a practical solution to the problem of capturing the entire scene. The picture communicates transparently, it serves as proof of what happened at this particular place, on that particular day. In line with this, it is interesting that the article does not argue for any standpoint, but is characterized by a journalistic bringing together of facts in order to report a situation at a specific moment in time (cf. Ekecrantz & Olsson, 1994: 79).

Despite the central position of people in the composition, the role they play is anonymous. Nor does the ideal reader participate in the event: it is as if we stand outside and secretly look in at what people are doing in this place. The photographer is an observer, and therefore the ideal reader also takes that position. The church and commerce are dominant themes in this story, while the people are subordinated. But there is a tension between the concrete place, with the people inhabiting it, and the place as a metonymy for dominant trends in society, such as the return of religion and commercialism to everyday life. The function that these people seem to fulfill in relation to this tension is that they are set in motion by forces from above. The people are following a set course. Since a new and better place has been arranged for them, one can't say that they have been driven away. Strong forces like religion and economy are under political control.

The physical place, the marketplace, is the central focus of this article. This market is situated in St. Petersburg, and the city can be said to represent Russia in the post-Cold War struggle among the political sphere, the church, and the market economy. In that sense, the physical places can be mapped onto a struggle over Russia as a symbolic space. But in this example, the event-oriented journalistic representation does not utilize its inherent symbolic power as an autonomous force, as the earlier examples from Denmark and Finland did. Russian journalism in this example remains in its traditional role as an intermediary between the powers that be and the people.

A Man and the Dog in His Car

The last photo chosen for a close reading offers a view from just beside a car's front door. From a "worm's-eye view" we see a man and a dog looking out from the car windows. Their expressions are almost the identical: they look with interest, though not with a whole lot of curiosity, at something outside the frame of the picture. They are looking in different directions, so it is not something special that has caught their attention. Their relaxed expressions also indicate that they are not looking at something strange or dangerous. They are rather searching for something. The caption in the Swedish paper *Dagens Nyheter* quiets the reader's curiosity: "Private patrol", the caption begins. The caption refers to the sort of "citizen guard" that has been formed in small cities around the country. People have lost faith in the police and decided to take control over the situation. There is a continuity between the image and the article, but something bothers me as a reader. It is the central place the car



has in the picture. It is so central that, at first glance, it might seem that the picture is an opening to a feature story about automobiles.

There is nothing alarming about this picture. It is a bright picture, rain drops on the car function as an indication of either a recent autumn shower or early morning dew. The latter seems more convincing, since the caption says that the newspaper reporters have participated in a night's watch of two small districts. No specific event can explain why the newspaper has decided to send their reporters on that particular night. The article can instead be understood as the result of a trend or mounting concern in society that crime is becoming more and more of a problem that the police seem unable to control. But this article could have been published at any point in time. Concern about crime is constant over time, and, in rural districts, crime waves can cause widespread anxiety. "In the village of Ryd, former merchant Kjell Johansson and his dog Fiona are ready to respond when the alarm goes off" (author's translation). It is Kjell we see in the picture. But the journalists are not there because Kjell happens to be out on patrol. Instead it is probably the other way around. Kjell is there because there happen to be journalists covering his activities.

The chosen angle makes the man and dog interesting. It is a long feature story, stretching over six pages. And since it was published on a Saturday, it is supposed to serve as weekend reading. *Dagens Nyheter* sent one of its better-known photojournalists, Anette Nantell, to do a spread on this story. The photographs have unusual angles on well-known topics, and the pictures in the story are just as important as the text. The approximate equality in weight accorded to a text and the images associated with it also separates photojournalism from routine press photography (see Hicks, 1973/1952). Image and text create a dialog, a dialectic that allows for greater depth of argument and story nuance, as well as alternative interpretations. Another thing that separates this front page picture from traditional press photography (in the objective, event-oriented tradition) is that the moment is decisive in a different way. The picture allows for alternative readings instead of summarizing a specific event. But in the context of the page, the picture is not enigmatic. The text anchors the photo in a very clear way. The aesthetic of the photograph functions rather as a teaser for the reader and makes her curious about the article.

On the front page, Kjell is represented as an ordinary man, and it is in that sense that the reader should understand him as representing a group of citizen guards. This is the face of an average citizen who has to spend his nights patrolling the streets. In that respect, he serves as proof of the ineffectiveness of the police and the widespread mistrust among citizens. Fiona, the man's dog, amplifies this impression of "ordinariness". The dog, a Golden Retriever, is probably the most common breed in Sweden due to its popularity among children and its well-tempered nature. The dog, while popular, is not the most ideal watchdog. Paradoxically, the man and his dog, through their commonplace normality personify the topic.

The physical place of this story, a small village in the countryside, can be seen as representing all small villages in the country of Sweden. These physical places can be related to Sweden as a symbolic space. Part of this symbolic space contains the history of a hard-working and honest people who together have built up the welfare state, which, in Sweden, is known as "folkhemmet" (The People's Home). The dismantling of the welfare state during the 1990s has been accompanied by greater individualism, distrust, and a general disbelief in governmental authority and the state system. The feature story articulates this shift, but at the same time can serve as an example of the journalistic struggle to reinstate the honorable history of the hard-working Swedish people.

Discussion

Aside from the Russian picture, the other four front page photos have much in common. These pictures all seem to share a capacity not only to communicate "universal" values, but also to "take the temperature" of the societies to which they speak. This must explain why they dominate the front pages of their respective daily newspapers. The pictures analyzed include such themes as maladjusted health care and law enforcement systems, the importance of historical memory, work and leisure in the new information society, and good citizens who fight crime. A morally upstanding individual is placed in the limelight as a way of foregrounding different problems in society. This individual becomes a metonym for broader trends in society, and by extension, becomes metonymic for the nation's inhabitants.

The people in these front page pictures serve as substitutes for the ideal reader. We can see our problems and ourselves in these people. This "including" dimension can be compared to a repetitive journalistic We (see Lund, in this volume). That is one reason why, despite the reduction of individuals to metonyms, it would be misleading to place these photographs within the documentary tradition. If the reader is not able to identify with these people, then the reader becomes the Other. The images exclude the observer in a different way than those of the documentary genre. The latter are often meant for another class or group than the one portrayed (see Solomon-Godeau, 1991). The analyzed pictures thus break with the documentary tradition's history of looking down the social hierarchy. Furthermore, these pictures are not negative comments on society and do not focus on the unexpected and abnormal (cf. Andén-Papadopoulos, 2000). On the other hand, these pictures do follow the documentary ambition of attempting to depict universal and eternal values, while at the same time commenting on current topics in society at large.

Interestingly, the ambition to capture the spirit of the time does not involve event-orientation but rather the metonymic qualities of the photographs

which give them a sense of timeliness. Journalists use human interest stories in order to invite readers to delve into different aspects of today's society. Events that have taken place outside the editorial office are only relevant as background to the journalistic world created in these large eye-catching pictures. This kind of intertextuality is most certainly related to previous news stories about the same topics. The journalistic world builds upon its previous representations of events, and can thus be seen as sources for these large images.

The relationship between the physical places and the symbolic spaces is important for the interpretations of these images. This is what I have referred to above as the images' "including" dimension. The reader becomes part of a symbolic space through certain recognizable signs. The different places depicted carry with them relations to specific values and myths (and, as a Swedish reader, I have only a limited understanding of those in other countries). The nations manifest themselves via the recognition of the different places depicted, and my ideas about the countries involved are reinforced by this visualization. In the pictures I analyzed, we have the Danish consulting room, the Finnish second-hand shop with its nostalgic artifacts, the archipelago of Åland, and the Swedish countryside. It is not the real places that are of importance, but the connotations convey their representation. The underlying message these pictures communicate are that the place and its people are intertwined, and they articulate a certain moral sensibility. For instance, the Swedish picture illustrates how even the most patient Swede finally must take the law into his own hands. In all of the images, in fact, we find that upstanding people guide the reader to the "right" values.

The front page picture from Russia tells another story. In the Russian representation, it is the specific place that is of importance, not what it connotes or symbolizes. The picture functions as proof of the events that its accompanying text describes. Another relevant aspect of the picture is that the individuals in the picture are like ornamental figures: the distance between individuals and decision-makers is analogous to the distance to the depicted subjects. The people in the Russian front page picture are totally de-personified. This appears to be a result of the use of a type of journalistic strategy different from that used in the Nordic countries. In the Russian case, the journalists report about the world outside, about decisions made in the political sphere. The journalistic representation does not permit alternative nuances or interpretations. In this strategy, journalism functions in its traditional role as mediator between forces lying outside of its remit.

The large front page photographs can be seen as an expression of the fruitlessness of examinations of the role of journalism as a documenter of "reality". The photographs demonstrate that we should not attempt to draw a distinction between journalism and reality. Front page photographs are to a large extent produced by an active strategy that is not dependent upon external events. Instead, the photographs can be seen as an expression of what Altheide & Snow (1979) call a "media culture", one in which the cen-

trality of media representation becomes the glue that holds together norms, values, traditions, and rituals of various parts of society. In this way, the photographs are an important part of the process of becoming part of a certain community, and therefore contribute to a definition of what and who is not allowed access to that community.

What are the implications of the design revolution which the Scandinavian press has gone through? It would appear that the format of the newspaper promotes a certain type of content. This trend in international press design is also interesting in relation to processes of globalization and conceptions of who We are. Globalization is said to be intimately connected to changes in relations between time and space (Dencik 1998). The impact of time differences is said to have been replaced by an overall simultaneity. Conceptions of space and place are no longer bound to the nation-state. The analysis of the different pictures has however demonstrated that beneath the notions of universal human values (with their roots in the human interest genre), are pictures whose interpretation depends on specific histories. The prominent position of specific places and spaces in these pictures does, of course, conceal the general dimension of history and memory and their importance to the interpretative process. In the picture from Finland, the time dimension is most explicit, but time and history can also be seen in the "former" merchant depicted in the Swedish image. This time-marker indicates that the image should be interpreted in a specific historical context; i.e. the individuals and these places gain meaning in relation to symbolic spaces, often the national context. Behind the façade of universal humanism, it is possible to discern stories about Us in the context of the nation, if not the nation-state.

Notes

1. This is drawn from a larger sample of front page pictures from morning broadsheets and daily tabloids in Denmark (37 pictures from *Berlingske Tidende* and 29 pictures from *B.T.*), Finland (19 pictures from *Helsingin Sanomat*, 25 pictures from *Hufvudstadsbladet*, and 43 pictures from the tabloid *Ilta-Sanomat*), Sweden (40 pictures from *Dagens Nyheter* and 48 pictures from *Expressen*), and Russia (12 pictures from the financial tabloid *Delovoy Petersburg* and 40 pictures from the morning paper *Izvestia*).
2. Here it is possible to find parallels to the concept of glocalization. That concept implies that global processes (which can be media forms) are always framed to meet national or local situations. See Robertson (1995) or Johan Cronström (2001).
3. <http://www.mariogarcia.com/English/news/archives/gotesbor.html>. Downloaded. 01-06-26.

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The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Stereotyping Russia the Western Way

Merja Ellefson & Eva Kingsepp

The title of this article, *The Good, The Bad and The Ugly*, is, of course, also the title of a classic “spaghetti western”. While any likeness between films of that genre and the object of our study is limited, the title nevertheless suggests what kind of actors we may expect to find in the news stories we shall investigate here. It is usually fairly easy to identify the leading roles: the hero (the Good) and the villain (the Bad). Sometimes the villain is ugly as well, but the Ugly may just as well be someone who is not necessarily bad, but simply different or deviant – an alien/Other. In our study we have focused on the war in Chechnya and the OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) conference that was held on November 18-19, 1999, in Istanbul. It is a story where we may find a hero and a villain, and perhaps also actors that are presented as alien, as Other.

An interesting matter here may be the question of whiteness. In Sergio Leone’s film, as in many other westerns, the main characters are different visually from one other. The Good hero, Joe (also called “Blondie”), played by Clint Eastwood, has somewhat lighter skin, and his clothes have a slightly lighter color than the Bad, or Sentenza, played by Lee van Cleef. The Ugly, or Tuco, played by Eli Wallach, has the darkest hair and skin color, and he is dressed less neatly. That is, the appearance gives an indication of the morality and the fundamental character of the roles. According to Richard Dyer (1997), conflation of the symbolic power of the white hue and the white skin creates both an image of white superiority and an implicit hierarchy among white people. Can we find a similar pattern in our material? We don’t expect to find as clear, explicit markers as those that can be found in westerns, but we may find more subtle presentations of differences.

In short, our study is to be seen as following the tradition of structuralist analyses of narratives (see Cawelti, 1971; Wright, 1975; Fridlund, 2002). Newspapers construct their own versions of reality and decide which events or questions are important (“worthy of being put on the agenda”), and which are not. Since newspapers are important sources of information for many people, this phenomenon warrants further investigation.

Theoretical and Methodological Concepts for the Study

We have based our study on the two closely related concepts of narrative and myth. Barthes (1970)¹ uses the word “myth” in an ideological sense – as naturalized cultural knowledge – instead of in a religious sense. A narrative can be defined as an account of a sequence of actions, or as events structured within a discursive framework. The narrative form is widely considered fundamental to our conception of meaning (see Berger, 1997; Branigan, 1992; Mink, 1987; a psychoanalytical account of its importance is found e.g. in Reeder, 1996:117). Narratives are found not only in drama and fiction, but also in a wide range of media content, including the production of news. News production is a part of an age-old cultural practice: narrative and story-telling. As narrative, news is orienting, communal, ritualistic, and cultural. Seeing news as myth eliminates the problem of trying to classify it as either entertainment and information, since the distinction is no longer of relevance. News tells us stories and teaches us the values and beliefs that are important for our culture (Bird & Dardenne, 1997:334 f).

Narratives, Myths and News

In analyzing narratives, the distinction between story and discourse is fundamental. American film theorist Seymour Chatman (1978) describes the concept of the story as the “what” of a narrative (the events, i.e., what happened), and discourse as the “way” of a narrative (how the story is told). Accordingly, discourse can be seen as the practice by means of which a story gets a plot. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines plot as the arrangement of incidents, i.e., the events in a story are turned into a plot by its discursive structure, or mode of presentation. The function of plots is, in Chatman’s words, “to emphasize or de-emphasize certain story-events, to interpret some and to leave others to inference, to show or to tell, to comment or to remain silent, to focus on this or that aspect of an event or character. / . . ./ Each arrangement produces a different plot, and a great many plots can be made from the same story” (ibid: 43).

Narratives tend to work together with temporal and causal frameworks – narrative schemas – within which we can make events comprehensible, both in a logical way, and in the context of human behavior (Branigan, 1992; Rubin, 1995). Meaning is often created out of the discursive practices rather than from the events within the story – although the latter are equally vital to an analysis (Culler 1981:186) – but it is not only discursive strategies, in conjunction with plots, that present us with meaning. If causality between the events is diffuse or non-existent, our minds will create a causal structure linking the events to each other. This can be done, for example, by the convention of “filling in” the gaps by verisimilitude. Verisimilitude is about that which is essentially ideal – the way things should be rather than the

way they are – and is built on culturally constituted norms and conventions about what is natural and normal (Chatman, 1978: 45f, 48 ff). It is thus a form of naturalized explication, related to a kind of generalization where the need for explanation *per se* is more important than truth.

Narratives are usually characterized by a disruption, a movement from a state of equilibrium to a new equilibrium through a state of disequilibrium (Todorov, 1977:88). In news stories, however, the disruption is not necessarily resolved. To see news stories as narratives can help explain why certain issues get little coverage. A long-lasting conflict fades away from the news after the initial disruption. A continuing conflict as such is not news. Individual news texts, however, differ from this classic narrative structure. They are fragmented and do not follow a linear progression. Newspapers tend to group news stories together, such as foreign news, domestic news, and sports, but the links between different news stories are unclear. (Lacey, 2000: 41) The result of dealing with each news story separately is that the reader is not thereby more able to see society or the world as a totality. The process of “filling in” the gaps thus becomes difficult.

One form of narrative is the mythic narrative. According to Cassirer, ancient religious thinking has formed the structure of our everyday language, being more visible in some aspects of culture, such as poetry and art, but “not merely a matter of linguistic and intellectual history but also of logic and epistemology” (Cassirer, 1961:17). Myth is a metaphorical device for telling people about themselves, about other people, and the world around them, and it teaches people values, definitions of right and wrong. Myth gives answers to fundamental questions that a society considers acceptable, and explains various situations and phenomena.

News as a communication process can function like myth or folklore. News is about creating order out of disorder, offering reassurance and familiarity, and providing explanations and answers (Bird & Dardenne, 1997:334 ff; cf. Ekecrantz, 2000: 5ff). Both myth and news outline the boundaries of acceptable behavior by telling stories. For example, the function of a crime report is not primarily to inform, but to tell people about the cultural norms, about right and wrong. Its central meaning is symbolic. Furthermore, since crime stories are dealt with separately from news about poverty, or political decisions affecting the welfare system, the possible connection between these different aspects of the social whole is lost (Lacey, 2000: 42ff).

Myth, like news, has meaning only in its telling. They need to be communicated, and in order to retain their power, they need to be constantly retold. Myths need both resonance and consonance. They depend on the feeling that we have written or have read the same stories over and over again, and that even new events, which may be entirely different, can be encoded into the existing framework constituted by the myth. So each version feeds on the totality of the myth itself. The media have the power of placing people and events into existing categories of heroes, villains, good and bad. They use existing narrative conventions and maps of meaning to

construct a certain reality. The result is that the prevailing maps of meaning have come to be perceived as natural and common-sensical. Journalists also tell stories about events that are unfamiliar to the readers. In this case, newspapers are closer to the mythological matrix where the story-teller has a special authority (Bird & Dardenne, 1997:338 ff, 344ff). In the mythical matrix, the audience tends to place their faith in specialists who tell the truth about the unfamiliar phenomenon or event. Myth, like news, rests on its authority, on its being taken to possess the truth.

In the Heart of Whiteness

Constructions of reality in our news media are often written from a Western perspective, which is not to say that there are no other perspectives outside mainstream media production. The dichotomy of the past – the Communist dictatorship of the East, and the capitalist democracies of the West – is still operative in dominant news narratives. As they appear in the news, the dominant attributes of the East are relatively constant and bear a remarkable resemblance to Orientalism. (Ekecrantz, 2000: 2 ff; cf. Said, 1993) Symbolic boundaries often follow geographical borders. When Estonians express their wish to come closer to Europe, they are in fact talking about membership in the European Union. But does that mean that they are not yet European? Where is the border between Europe and the Orient, between West and East? This dividing line is often seen as the boundary between Western modernity, civilization and development and, on the other hand, Eastern pre-modernity, barbarism and underdevelopment. Therefore, it is easy to forget that Communism, too, was a modernistic movement (e.g. Ekecrantz, 2000: 11).

The myth of the Orient was closely linked with the Aryan myth. Race, skin color, origin, and character replaced the old dichotomy between religions, which does not mean that this secularization erased the old Christian imagery. (Said, 1993: 187f, 199, 215) The white hue is still a powerful Christian symbol. It symbolizes goodness, purity, virginity, or cleanliness in both a moral and physical sense. Consequently, white people are called white, not because that is the most accurate hue to describe their skin color, but because they wish to be seen as symbolically white. The conflation of the different meanings of whiteness enables white people to inhabit without visual contradiction the highest point in the Enlightenment's understanding of human development. (Dyer, 1997: 41 ff) If white people were described as pink, the image of pure blood and superiority would disappear.

The old Christian idea of a natural hierarchy was slowly secularized and transformed by social Darwinism, phrenology, and race biology. According to the older neo-Platonist vision, the closeness to God marked the hierarchy between different forms of being. Closest to God were the archangels and other angels. Next in the Great Chain of Being were human beings, demons, animals, plants, and on the bottom we find the simplest beings. All beings

were good when they were in their proper place. This natural hierarchy was the very condition that guaranteed the perfection of the universe. The word “bad” consequently meant lack of perfection or lack of good. To be bad was to be a “matter out of place”. (Tenkku, 1981; 187 ff, 264 ff; cf. Douglas, 1997) Sand, for example, is good on the beach but bad on the floor. When it is on the floor it is dirt, i.e., out of place. Dirt, or perhaps we should say “stains”, signifies a discoloration, a spot caused by contact with foreign matter (for example, tea stains), or damage to reputation. Consequently, to be stainless is to be clean and pure (in physical sense), and immaculate (pure in symbolic sense). The word “bad” is therefore linked to the word “evil”, which means morally bad, and is connected to the concept of sin. If we are to apply the idea of a natural hierarchy to modern racism, it is easy to place the black man closest to the demons and the white man next to the angels; i.e., We are not only good, but also more developed.

In Christian iconography, the natural goodness is often visualized with this white hue: white wings and clothing, as well as with light skin and hair color. Dyer (1997) offers many examples from Hollywood films where the character of different roles is reflected in the appearance of the actor playing this role. The darker the person’s soul, the darker the clothing or hair color, and the darker the shadows on the face. Some white people are whiter than others. In visual culture, working class people are often presented as darker than the middle class and the aristocracy, and men are pictured darker than women. Unlike women, men are sexual beings, i.e., men have less symbolic whiteness (darker soul), thus their darker skin color. White middle-class women in particular are markedly different not only from men, but also from women of lower class, and non-white women. Their position is, however, ambivalent. On one hand their sexual purity is idealized and on the other hand they are objects of desire (see Dyer, 1997: 61 ff; Frankenberg, 1999: 11).

Some subaltern whites have managed to “whiten” themselves, i.e., have been accepted as one of “us” Dyer (1997: 53) gives as an example of the changing attitudes against Irishmen. In Great Britain, the Irish have been seen as the last missing link in the chain of evolution starting from monkeys and Negroes, and ending in the civilized white European. Jews have been in a position of structural instability throughout European history. How white must a person be in order to be white? Are Iranians, or Arabs white? What about Chechens and other Caucasians? These peoples obviously have a white skin tone, but are they White? After all, the image of whiteness depends on the conflation of the symbolic power of white hue and the white skin.

What We Have Done and How

Vladimir Propp (1968) has shown how Russian folk tales share the same basic narrative structure. Propp’s model has successfully been developed (by e.g.

Greimas) and adapted for studies of other narratives. Since journalists are also working within the tradition of story-telling, we have found it interesting to use narrative theories inspired by Propp and Lévi-Strauss and focus on the morphology of the news about the OSCE meeting and Chechnya. Having chosen to include picture analysis in our study, it is difficult to ignore the theories of Barthes, especially in the context of news production, since this particular field is central for questions of power and domination. Using his concept of myth, Barthes has shown how issues of ideology and power are embedded in texts as well as in innocent-seeming pictures (Barthes, 1970; 1977).

Our analysis focused on the news coverage of a single topic, the war in Chechnya and the OSCE conference in Istanbul, on the front pages of 40 major newspapers from 16 countries² on two days in 1999 (18-19th November). We analyzed the part of the article that was on the front page, including headlines and photographs. Out of the total of 80 front pages, 54 had coverage that focused – for the most part – on Chechnya and OSCE, and of these, 29 articles had at least one picture. Tabloids and local or regional newspapers were, on the whole, free from news about this topic. Furthermore, national news, even of seemingly minor importance, was at times given much greater attention. An example of this was the Swedish *Svenska Dagbladet*. On the 19th of November, when the OSCE meeting was in the headlines of most of the European papers, *Svenska Dagbladet* relegated the meeting to a minor paragraph on the front page referring the reader to an article buried in the inner pages. The main news items of the day were shopping on the Internet, an ongoing investigation of the EU office in Stockholm, and the astonishing piece of news that the parliament may vote in favor of Systembolaget (the Swedish national liquor store) being allowed to be open on Saturdays.

As far as our language abilities have allowed, we have translated the headlines and other texts concerning Chechnya/OSCE.³ All the newspapers are listed in Appendix A, including the ones that did not mention the topic at all. The analyzed newspapers represent different countries and, thus, different cultures, belief systems, and media systems. However, they all belong to the “Western sphere”, so we expect to find at least a certain degree of similarity. Furthermore, our material consists of texts written in Germanic, Finno-Ugrian, and Romance languages, which all have slightly different linguistic structures. For this reason, we have chosen to concentrate primarily on the metaphors used by the journalists, and on the general narrative structure described above. We have tried to reconstruct the story and see how the event is turned into a plot by the news discourse. Interesting questions are: What happened, and how did the story end? How is the story told? Can we find differences in how the individual newspapers/countries present the event? Can we find the classical leading characters of narrative structures? How are they presented? We begin our analysis by introducing the overall narrative, and after that, we will give a more detailed analysis of the articles that we find representative or particularly outstanding.

News about OSCE and Chechnya

As stated earlier, individual news articles are usually fragmented and do not follow a linear progression. Therefore, we have concentrated on the overall narrative, that is, we have endeavored to find the sequence of events at play, and then to see how the discursive framework structures this sequence. There are 54 countries presented at the OSCE meeting, but the ones most frequently mentioned, and thus most important, are France, USA, Germany, and Russia. It is implied that the war in Chechnya was not the only reason for the summit. As we shall see later in our analysis, in a couple of newspapers this is expressed more explicitly by listings of other subjects on the OSCE agenda. However, these are given much less attention. The reader is expected to be familiar with both the OSCE itself and the war in Chechnya, since no background information is given.

The plot structures the event in three phases or stages, all the result of the status of Russian president Boris Yeltsin, who is the most important and most visible actor of the drama. He is, however, not the hero, but the villain.

- 1) An OSCE meeting is arranged in Istanbul. The war in Chechnya has turned out to be a problem and needs to be discussed by the Russian leader Boris Yeltsin and other world leaders. An ongoing conflict as such is not news unless something threatens to disturb the existing equilibrium. A sudden change must occur. The reader, however, gets only a very vague idea of what this threatening disequilibrium might be. Here the conflict between the Russians and the Chechens is emphasized, but since the Chechens have no voice, it becomes unclear who the real opponents are.
- 2) The disequilibrium arises out of the conflict between President Yeltsin and other participants. Yeltsin argues with others, gets upset and leaves. This is the dramatic turning point of the plot. If the story were only about the OSCE summit, this would also be the turning point of the story. However, we must keep in mind that the war in Chechnya does not end as Yeltsin leaves, meaning that the conflict highlighted in the news is not the one between Russians and Chechens, but the one between the Russians and the other OSCE countries. Thus, there is a difference between the story and the plot.
- 3) Then, a compromise is reached and the plot ends in a new equilibrium. What happened was that the remaining Russian delegation gave in and agreed to allow OSCE representatives to visit Chechnya. Although the story and the plot continue after Yeltsin's departure, he is still, through his absence, crucial for it, since it is that which makes the compromise possible. Yeltsin's abandoning the scene (activity turned into inactivity) makes possible the happy ending. The story, however, doesn't end happily, since the war doesn't end.

The narrative, consisting of a before-during-after-sequence, is quite easily followed in the headlines and accompanying pictures. Exceptions to this pattern are few indeed. We will now give a more detailed analysis of the narrative.

The Beginning: Yeltsin Goes to Istanbul

Chechnya dominates the headlines. It is a dramatic event and makes for better headlines than international norms for human rights, rebuilding Bosnia, or building an oil pipeline from the Caspian Sea to Turkey in order to reduce Azerbaijan's and Turkmenistan's dependence of Russia. Since the plot is built around this disequilibrium, the other issues are not considered particularly newsworthy and are mentioned only by the Finnish paper *Hufvudstadsbladet* (Nov. 18) and also, the next day, by the Finnish paper *Aamulehti*. In this part of the narrative, tension is built up, and the main actors, the heroes and the villain, enter the stage. These are rarely introduced in the texts, since the reader is expected to recognize the most important world leaders as well as his/her own national leaders.

In the first of the two articles in *Helsingin Sanomat* (Nov. 18) we are informed that Yeltsin denies that the war is meaningless and hopes that everyone understands that Russia is acting according to international and civilized regulations and norms. Clinton, on the other hand, claims that the war is causing considerable suffering for the civilians. Here we have the two main characters, the hero and the villain, as well as the third one – the victim who is not actually taking part in the play but who is nevertheless present via his/her absence. Additional heroes are presented. The Finnish representatives at OSCE are the President and the Prime Minister. According to the second of the two *HS* articles, the European Parliament is planning to request that the EU Commission stop the subsidies given to Russia. Two Finnish politicians give their opinion on the matter. The former Foreign Minister Väyrynen says that if the Western European powers are to be consistent they should even consider military action in Chechnya. His remark is an implicit comparison to Kosovo, but it is unclear if it is meant as critique of the Western Powers. The hero in *HS* is more heterogeneous than the villain. The hero is not simply Clinton but also “we”⁴ who are helping him. The superiority of the hero is also shown: We, the Good, are giving subsidies to Russians to help them and yet they are behaving badly and deserve to be punished.

The French papers seem to prefer more vivid rhetoric than others. The following example is from *Le Figaro* (Nov. 18), its headlines say “Chechnya: Yeltsin will Explain Himself” and “The Number One Man in the Kremlin Must Justify the War at the OSCE Conference in Istanbul”. There is a picture of two young Russian soldiers carrying grenades. In the article we are told that Boris Yeltsin, “the master of the Kremlin”, will himself defend Russia's intervention in the Caucasus. He has already set the standards by saying that “They don't have the right to do that to us!” The reader is also informed that the EU

leaders want to see a serious dialog between the Russians and the Chechen separatists, and free access for humanitarian aid. Furthermore, France will convince their partners that the new European security agreement should not be signed unless Moscow accepts an intervention in Chechnya by the OSCE. In an interview in *Le Figaro*, Javier Solana says that it is “bizarre” that the OSCE can’t do anything about the situation in Chechnya. Meanwhile, the Russians are continuing to challenge the West by seizing control of a town that has symbolic value, and by continuing their bombings of Grozny.

The words and quotations used in *Le Figaro*’s presentation of the war and of the Russians give us an uneasy feeling of overwhelming danger. Here we find Yeltsin described as “the master of the Kremlin”, something like an evil sorcerer: obviously he is proud of the brutal Russian actions in Chechnya (which all the others in the civilized world are dismayed at). The strangeness of the situation is also pointed out by Solana, who uses the word “bizarre” in connection with the OSCE’s lack of possibilities for action. Even though Yeltsin is an evil master, he is also somewhat childish: the quotation “They don’t have the right to do that to us!” could connote, for example, bickering children who make up reasons for destroying each other’s toys. He also has to explain himself in front of the others, like a naughty boy before the headmaster. The photo underlines the oddness of the situation: the Russian soldiers look young, thin, confused. The manner in which they are dressed emphasizes the meaninglessness of the war. The reader may even feel sorry for the poor lads carrying their grenades in the depressing surroundings. Interestingly, we are to some degree led to think that not all Russians are villains; they may be simply misguided.

The only really “war-like” picture – a large photo of a surface-to-surface rocket launcher in action by night – is in *Dagens Nyheter* (18 November). This photo gives another image of the war: the glowing missiles in the night sky are truly frightful and merciless, and even more horrifying since we “know” that they will hit civilians. The headline says, “Yeltsin, Eager to Fight, Defends the War”. According to the text, Clinton is expected to ask his Russian colleague to accept mediation in order to achieve a political solution to the situation in Chechnya. But Yeltsin is eager to fight and has proclaimed that he “hopes that everyone will understand that Russia actions in Chechnya are in accord with international and civilized rules”. Both the U.S. and the EU nevertheless criticize Russia for “violence, and a lack of judgment” regarding the risk to Chechen civilians. Fighting continues in the republic and at least 200,000 refugees have fled to the neighboring republic of Ingushetia. Russian leaders claim that the refugees don’t really need help. “We are fully capable of dealing with the situation on our own”, says the Russian Minister of Rescue.

Russia’s way of fighting the war is here presented as irrational – the use of violence is lacking in judgment, and is conducted against civilians, which is utterly barbaric. As if this were not enough, we learn that the Russians don’t think that the refugees need any help, meaning that the Russians are

either completely lacking in all empathy (they are cruel and inhuman) or they don't have any idea what the situation really looks like. The quote from the Minister of Rescue (a title that sounds quite odd to us) hints that the latter explanation might be the correct one – this man can't really be in touch with reality.

In general, popular expressions among journalists are the ones that connote "war": Yeltsin has "war on his mind", Russia "strikes with missiles", its "military offensive grows", and Yeltsin "is eager to fight", to mention only a few. An interesting metaphor is the headline in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* (Nov. 18): "Russland igelt sich gegenüber dem Westen ein". The reflexive verb "sich einigeln" is built from the word for hedgehog ("Igel"), and suggests a hedgehog curling up, showing its spines – a verb that thus describes two movements, one inward to protect the soft belly (people in war coming together to defend their country), and one outward with the spines sticking out (threat or hostility against the enemy). The newspaper continues the topic the next day by saying, "Russia is on the defensive", which strengthens the message.

The metaphors used in the newspapers present Russia and Yeltsin as irrational and obstinate. Yeltsin stands firm and has war on his mind, which is obviously not a way of reasoning in a civilized manner and definitely not good for reaching mutual understanding. Yeltsin differs from the rest of the delegates in an important way – all the others are concerned with human rights, but Yeltsin is not. The war in Chechnya seems, in the stories examined, meaningless or unintelligible, and there is excessive use of violence, which causes considerable suffering to civilians. The aim and purpose of the OSCE is presumably to work for a peaceful Europe, thus securing the safety of civilians and guarding human rights, through discussions geared towards mutual understanding, and Yeltsin is jeopardizing the process.

Le Figaro differs from the other newspapers, since here we find a more explicit differentiation in the Hero field as France is taking on an important role. Chirac is mentioned together with Clinton, and France is also going to initiate the others in the heroic "blackmail" effort of not signing the agreement unless Russia accepts that the OSCE politically enters (and thereby solves) the Chechen conflict. This is quite unusual, since it challenges the picture of the West as a collective with Clinton as the Superhero and an initiator of action. Nationalistic exposure of the delegates mostly places other national leaders as Clinton's good friends and colleagues, but here Chirac, or rather "la France", is actually holding the banner in front of the Russian army.

Key binary oppositions are associated with the descriptions of heroes and the villain: civilization – barbarism, rationality – irrationality, human rights – acts of cruelty. However, the heroes are more difficult to define than the villain. The heroes are most identifiable as the opposite of Russians. It is more important to know who or what We are not, than who or what We actually are. There is, however, a personification, Clinton versus Yeltsin. Interestingly enough, there are two categories of Others. There is the obvious villain, the Russians, but also the victims, the Chechens – They.₂ In terms of activity, We

and Them (Russians) are active whereas They₂ (Chechens) is passive. We/Heroes might be considered to be quite passive in comparison to Them, because in contrast to Western leaders, Yeltsin is more often portrayed as doing something (active predicate in the sentences). However, the passivity of Us and of Them₂ is not of the same kind, since the heroes possess a latent power to act, and They₂ are only powerless victims without their own voice or representation.

Yeltsin Argues, Gets Upset and Leaves

The disequilibrium, the highlight of the plot, is the Battle, which is not as much a real fight as it is Yeltsin making a fool out of himself. He is acting in a childish, uncivilized manner (and thereby following a presumed tradition of former Soviet statesmen, like Khrushchev and the famous shoe-banging incident), which is shown in several ways. In this part of the plot, it is difficult to reconstruct the story and the events. Therefore the reader doesn't quite understand why Yeltsin suddenly gets upset and leaves. The way the events are presented accentuates the irrationality of the Villain and the focus is shifted from the original conflict, the war, to a more symbolic battle between Good and Evil, civilization and barbarism.

The positions of Us and Them are on the whole unchanged, although there is room for some slight modifications. The They here is more explicitly Russia as inheritor of the history of the USSR, but there is also Russia as "almost-like-Us". Several newspapers mention Yeltsin standing up on the tank in 1991 to defend the fragile Russian democracy, that is, the battle between civilization and barbarism temporarily moved inside "the heart of darkness", among the Russians themselves. For example, the Italian paper *Corriere della sera* portrays Yeltsin as "Boris the First, and Boris the Second". The journalist says that the good Yeltsin and the bad Yeltsin are indivisible parts of his personality. He is generous, instinctive, and capable of great courage, great anger and bad judgment.

In general, the metaphors and expressions used here emphasize the picture of irrational Russian people supporting their equally irrational politicians. Neither the people nor the politicians seem to have a clue of how true democracy works, nor do they show much progress in that respect either. The difference between Us and Them becomes quite clear when both Clinton's and Yeltsin's speeches are quoted. Due to different rhetorical traditions, Clinton sounds more reasonable in the Western media than Yeltsin, who speaks of Chechen "murderers and bandits" and "the plague of terrorism". In his opinion these should be eliminated. The Western leaders, Schröder, Chirac, Klestil, d'Alema and others, emphasize the importance of democracy, human rights, and the rights of minorities. We can find here an example of the previously mentioned hierarchy within the white race. The ethnic Russians may be part of European history, and they may have white skin, but they do not possess enough symbolic whiteness.

The question of Chechens is particularly intriguing. As Muslims they definitely represent the Other, and as Caucasians they can be pictured as having less white skin than the Russians or the Western Europeans. It is also questionable whether they are as symbolically white, i.e., developed and civilized, as heroes. Only the Italian *Corriere della sera* brings up the question of “our” ambivalent feelings about the Caucasian Chechens. The Italian paper ponders whether the Western Powers are secretly wishing that Islamic radicalism might be stopped in the “area of many ethnic groups and oil, called the Caucasus”. In the photos, the Chechens are refugees, old women, and children. The victims are for the most part in the background and not entirely visible, probably because we cannot readily identify with them. We can, at best, feel a little sorry for them because Russia is attacking them. The Swedish paper *Svenska Dagbladet* has one picture of a crowd of refugees. At first, it might seem that the photograph goes with another headline, one about possible restrictions in Sweden’s policy concerning asylum seekers (“Refugees’ Rights Are Restricted”). Perhaps we wish to end the war, not for the sake of the Chechens, but for Our sake? There is obviously a desire to limit the number of asylum seekers.

Once again we find metaphors that connote war, but this time they are somewhat “softer”: there is the Cold War atmosphere, the struggle in Chechnya, the Russian bear is roaring (a much more impressive figure than the previously mentioned hedgehog), but is on the whole more on the defensive. The article in *The Times* is in some respects outstanding, since the picture of the Russian bear (in itself connoting the difference between animals and humans) is taken further. Even though animal metaphors could be considered humorous, they are a classical rhetorical method of decreasing the ontological status of the opponent, frequently made use of to support for example racism, ethnic cleansing, or sometimes even genocide. This particular article also says that “a reinvigorated President Yeltsin gave a bravura performance” and “a forceful, passionate and faultless speech”, but such a portrayal of Yeltsin is belied by another comment from the same article – “whatever they’ve given him, it seems to work”. This remark makes the reader feel that Yeltsin’s vigor is not normal, it is chemically induced, and thus his (and Russia’s) status as Very Much The Other is taken to extremes.

There is a retrospective ingredient that recurs several times during this phase of the narrative, sometimes communicated by the national leader’s own memories (e.g. Estonian Laar) and sometimes through the mediation of Clinton’s recollections. The past is also hinted at through the presence of the Turkish President, the last remaining person from the signing of the (today “legendary”) Helsinki agreement. The Heroes were also good in times past. Similarly, the Villains were bad – we are reminded of the Communists (USSR) and the Red Army. As we can see, the focus is shifted from the concrete battle in Chechnya to something more symbolic, something between the mythical conception of East and West. It is interesting, though, that the Russian people are included, in a temporal aspect, among “almost-like-Us”. The

freedom fighters climbing up on the barricades in Moscow in 1991, our “Russian friends”, are not really Them but they are not quite one of “Us” either.

Compromise and the Happy Ending

This part of the narrative is a little contradictory, but still consistent overall. The story we reconstruct here is that after Yeltsin’s departure, the Russian diplomats reached an agreement concerning the Chechen crisis, but it is difficult for the reader to understand the reason for this sudden change.

The headlines speak of a “Russian turn-around” and about Yeltsin “giving in”, having “second thoughts”, making a “reluctant” agreement, or simply leaving the meeting. Yeltsin and Russia are contrasted in a manner that makes it seem like Yeltsin’s escape made it possible for Russia – the reasonable part of Russia – to take over, and come to a mutual understanding with the Heroes. Another possible interpretation would be that Yeltsin was defeated, something that all the pictures of him wiping the sweat from his forehead suggest. In the photographs, Yeltsin is pictured as an isolated man, even when he is in a crowd or sitting with Clinton (e.g. in *Le Figaro*, Clinton is reading and Yeltsin is actually addressing him – he is leaning forwards but Clinton is busy with his papers). Several pictures accentuate how Clinton and the others are together, forming a group of friends. They are listening to, discussing with, and even hugging each other, something that is shown quite frequently (it is always Clinton who is hugging different statesmen or at least touching them). No one is hugging Yeltsin, who is shown leaving the room, alone.

Finally, the disequilibrium turns into a new equilibrium when the conflict between the heroes and the villain is resolved. Nevertheless, there is an interesting shift in the narrative. The first part emphasized the bloody, ongoing war. In the second, the attention was shifted to something more mythic, to a battle between good and evil, and finally the Good won and the Bad had to give in. However, the war did not end and the Chechens are still dying, that is, the happy ending really belongs only to the plot, to the discursive part of the narrative.

Conclusions

There are many things to be said about this topic, and we have only pointed out a few of them. The OSCE meeting gets more space in the Estonian, Finnish and Scandinavian newspapers, probably due to the geographical closeness of these countries to Russia. French, German and certain English-speaking papers are also rather active in reporting from the summit. Not surprisingly, our material shows that the interest diminishes as the compromise is made. Due to the fragmented structure of the individual articles, causality must be

established with the help of verisimilitude, by following culturally constituted norms, conceptions of normality, and images of heroes and villains. We can see how the narrative structure confirms the old picture of Russia as the Other. We can find traces of two myths, that of the undeveloped, dark East (a version of Orientalism) and that of the civilized, white West. Myths rely on our sense of the reliability of a natural index, which leads to a sense that there is evidence of, for example, underdevelopment. Therefore, it is easy to forget that the myth shows only a selection of facts.

As Anker Brink Lund has shown in his article in this volume, the mass-mediated We is often heterogeneous. Our material is no exception. The hero is at times explicit and has a name, such as Clinton, Chirac or Schröder, or less prominent leaders – Persson, Laar, Ahtisaari, to mention only a few. The hero can also be understood as a group, for example, OSCE, excluding Yeltsin; or EU Europe, including certain post-communist countries; or The Five (the expression used by Italians to denote USA, Great Britain, Italy, France, Germany); and so on. The media audience may also be seen as part of the implicit We. The hero category is, however, partly constructed and held together by excluding Others. The villain (the Russians) is presented as aggressive, irrational, unreasonable, unpredictable, and undemocratic, which means that We must be its opposite. It is also said to be impossible to criticize the Chechen war in Russia without being called a traitor. This constitutes further proof of their undeveloped democracy. A symbolic boundary is thus created between the civilized world and the dark “Orient”. It is therefore entirely impossible for Us to understand the Russian way of thinking, and, although they are accusing the Western powers of being immoral and hypocritical, the accusation doesn’t sound very convincing. The heroes are, however, not quite as active as the villain.

The role of the victim (the Chechens), however, is not as stable as that of the hero and the villain. The Chechens are not only helpless refugees, but also armed men of (seemingly) dubious character; that is, it is difficult to establish whether they are good or bad. This interesting nicety, however, is taking place on a lower level, which prevents it from threatening the basic hero-villain structure. Due to its inactivity, the victim is not really visible in the hero-villain scheme – the victim is also spatially absent from “the battlefield” of the OSCE meeting. Nevertheless, its function is important: someone is suffering and the hero wants to help the victim and deal with the perpetrator, the villain. As Muslims and Caucasians, the Chechens are basically just alien, different from Us.

News production can be seen as a myth-making system that not only describes the real world – if we can speak of such a thing – but most important of all, it teaches us the values and norms that are crucial for our belief system. News reporting from the OSCE meeting shows the limits of acceptable behavior, and what could happen if we gave up our value system. The result would be the same kind of chaos the villain, the Bad, represents. Thus news reporting emphasizes important values like democracy, human rights

and peaceful coexistence, which are part of what we have been calling the symbolic whiteness. This in turn leads us to the conclusion that the Russians and the Chechens have not yet reached the same level of development, civilization and modernity as exists in the Western sphere, which confirms Our position as the hero, the Good. There were naturally some differences between the countries and newspapers that we studied, but it was the similarities that we found so intriguing.

Notes

1. Instead of myth, Barthes would later talk about a third, obtuse meaning, characterized by *signifiante* (a concept used by Kristeva), thus making possible poststructuralist modes of interpretation. See "The Third Meaning: Research Notes on Some Eisenstein Stills", pp. 52-68 in *Image, Music, Text*. London: Fontana Press 1977.
2. The newspaper material was selected and collected for the research project "Time Table Tableaux" within the *Media Societies around the Baltic Sea* program based at Södertörn University College, Sweden.
3. Our translations (as well as descriptions of the pictures) are found in an appendix after this chapter. The study is based on the entire article, although our list only includes the translated headlines.
4. An implicit, imagined community. It is difficult to know what is meant with "us" and "we". Finns? Finland? Finnish politicians? Western Europe? The West in general?
5. In this table we have not drawn distinctions concerning the size or motif of the pictures; in some cases, there are even more than one picture at the same time. We will return to this later on.
6. Since it is not significant to the analysis whether it is a tabloid or not, we have not made any further investigations concerning this difference.

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Appendix A: The newspapers

In the table, “T” stands for “text” and “P”, of course for “picture”.⁵ “H” or “B” indicates that there is only a headline or brief announcement on the front page, referring to the actual article inside (in one case, though, no article is referred to). Those newspapers that were part of the material collected by the project group at Södertörn University College, but that were not analyzed because of language limitations, are put in italics. Finally, we have also noted those that have the characteristics of tabloids, and, in one case where this was not known, is a local paper.⁶

The newspapers are:	Country	18 Nov.	19 Nov.	Note
<i>Oslobodenje</i>	Bosnia	-	-	
Jyllands-Posten	Denmark	-	T+P	
Politiken	"	-	T+P	
Berlingske Tidende	"	-	T+P	
EkstraBladet	"	-	-	Tabloid
B.T.	"	-	-	Tabloid
<i>Al-Ahram</i> , international edition	Egypt	- (?)	T+P	Picture only
Eesti Päevaleht	Estonia	B	T	
Postimees		T+P	T+P	
Helsingin Sanomat	Finland	T	T+P	
Aamulehti	"	-	T+P	
Hufvudstadsbladet	"	T	T+P	
Ilta-Sanomat	"	-	-	Tabloid
Vasabladet	"	-	-	Local
Le Figaro	France	T+P	T+P	
Le Monde	"	T	-	
Libération	"	B+P	T+P	
Süddeutsche Zeitung	Germany	H	T+P	
Bild	"	-	-	Tabloid
<i>Dagbladið-Vísir</i>	Iceland	-	-	Tabloid
<i>Morgunblaðið</i>	"	T	T+P	Picture only
La Stampa	Italy	B+P	T	
Corriere della Sera	"	-	T+P	
Aftenposten	Norway	T+P	T+P	
<i>Sankt-Peterburgskije Vedomosti</i>	Russia	-	T	
<i>Izvestija</i>	"	T+P	T+P	Picture only
<i>Delovoj Peterburg</i>	"	-	-	Tabloid
<i>El Pais</i>	Spain	-	T+P	Picture only
Svenska Dagbladet	Sweden	B+P	T	
Dagens Nyheter	"	T+P	T+P	
Expressen	"	-	-	Tabloid
Aftonbladet	"	-	-	Tabloid
Neue Zürcher Zeitung	Switzerland	T+P	T+P	
The Guardian	UK	-	-	
The Times	"	-	T	
Financial Times	"	T+P	T	
Daily Mail	"	-	-	Tabloid
The Sun	"	-	-	Tabloid
The Wall Street Journal Europe	USA	B	T	No article inside
USA Today	"	B+P	T	

Appendix B: Headlines and pictures

1) The Beginning: Yeltsin goes to Istanbul

"Yeltsin left for Istanbul with war in mind". (No picture. *Eesti Päevaleht*, Nov. 18)

"Yeltsin will try to make the OSCE understand the Russian objectives". Small photo of a smiling Yeltsin. (*Postimees*, Nov. 18)

"Sharp Yeltsin to top meeting in Istanbul". "EU parliament wants to stop subsidies to Russia". "Russia hits the Chechens with missiles". (No picture. *Helsingin Sanomat*, Nov. 18)

"Chechnya dominates the OSCE meeting". (No picture) (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, Nov. 18)

"Yeltsin eager to fight defends the war". Photo: "Stalin organ" missiles at night. (*Dagens Nyheter*, Nov. 18)

"The OSCE meeting will be characterized by Chechnya". Photo of a boy making a snowman in front of a tank, also three small pictures of Clinton, Yeltsin and Vollebæk. (*Aftenposten*, Nov. 18)

"Russia curls up in a ball like a hedgehog". (the verb used is "sich einigeln"). Picture: map of southern Russia/Chechnya. "Chechnya as problem for the OSCE". (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Nov. 18)

"Russia stands firm on Chechnya". Photo: Slightly smiling Yeltsin with both hands partly raised. (*Financial Times*, Nov. 18)

"Moscow under pressure at OSCE". Photo: Close-up of Yeltsin walking towards the camera, his right hand slightly raised in a rejecting manner. (*Libération*, Nov. 18)

"Russia knocks at the door of the Istanbul meeting". "Chechnya: Who will stop Yeltsin?" Photo: Yeltsin wiping one of his eyes. (*Libération*, Nov. 19)

"Chechnya: Yeltsin will explain himself". "Number One in the Kremlin must justify the war in front of the OSCE Conference in Istanbul". Photo of two young Russian soldiers. (*Le Figaro*, Nov. 18)

"Solana: the Fifty are holding a soft line against Moscow". Photo: Solana talking. (*La Stampa*, Nov. 18)

"Warning: As Russian military offensive in Chechnya grows, President Clinton increases pressure on Russian president Boris Yeltsin to accept help from international mediators". Photo: Smiling Yeltsin waving his hand. (Short notice in column "Newline", *USA Today*, Nov. 18)

"World leaders converged in Turkey for a European security summit at which Russia's military campaign in Chechnya will be high on the agenda". (Short notice in column "What's News".) (No photo.) (*The Wall Street Journal Europe*, Nov. 18)

2) Yeltsin argues, gets upset and leaves

"Yeltsin cleared out of Turkey". "The Estonian parliament made statement in favor of Chechnya". (No picture.) (*Eesti Päevaleht*, Nov. 19)

"Laar criticized Russia. Russia accepted the co-operation of the OSCE in solving the war in Chechnya. " "Parliament joins the critics against Russia". Photo: Clinton (with his back towards the camera) with some statesmen, for example the Estonian Prime Minister Laar. A small picture of Yeltsin is situated together with a quotation of his statement about "No right to criticize Russia . . .". (*Postimees*, Nov. 19)

"Obstinate Yeltsin left the meeting in Istanbul". "Refugees were crying for help from the UN representative". Photo: Yeltsin leaving the room. (*Helsingin Sanomat*, Nov. 19)

"Yeltsin left Turkey for home, Clinton disappointed with discussions". Photo: Yeltsin leaving the room. (*Aamulehti*, Nov. 19)

"Cold War atmosphere at OSCE meeting". Photo: Yeltsin wiping his forehead. (Directly under the picture is a headline about Danish beer (!), which makes the accidental connection between picture and text rather confusing.) (*Berlingske Tidende*, Nov. 19)

"Yeltsin leaves summit after sparring over Chechnya". (No picture.) (*USA Today*, Nov. 19)

"Yeltsin quits summit after Chechnya criticism". (No picture.) (*Financial Times*, Nov. 19)

"Russian bear roars back to life". (No picture.) (*The Times*, Nov. 19)

"Yeltsin is on the defensive because of Chechnya". Photo: Yeltsin and Clinton sitting in arm chairs at a small table, listening in their headphones. (*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, Nov. 19)

"Yeltsin leaves OSCE-meeting in anger". Photo: Yeltsin leaves the room. (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Nov. 19)

"Chechnya: Yeltsin is challenging Clinton". (No picture.) (*La Stampa*, Nov. 19)

"Yeltsin-Clinton, struggle of Chechnya". "Boris primo e Boris secondo" ("Boris the First and Boris the Second") Cartoon of Yeltsin and Clinton. (*Corriere della sera*, Nov. 19)

3) Compromise and happy ending

"Yeltsin gave in to pressure". Photo: Yeltsin with headphones "alone in a crowd". (*Hufvudstadsbladet*, Nov. 19)

"Russian turn-around. OSCE: the surrounding countries allowed to help in solving the conflict in Chechnya". Several pictures in arrangement: Photo on top: Yeltsin wiping his forehead. Photo on bottom: a thinking Clinton. In between: a collection of serious men, listening, thinking and looking worried. (*Dagens Nyheter*, Nov. 19).

"Russia agreed in the OSCE meeting to allow the European safety organization to visit Chechnya". (Small notice.) (No picture.) (*Svenska Dagbladet*, Nov. 19).

"Yeltsin left – Russia and Europe in agreement". Photo: Yeltsin facing down, wiping his forehead. (*Aftenposten*, Nov. 19)

“Yeltsin in new thoughts”. Photo: Yeltsin facing down, wiping his forehead. (*Politiken*, Nov. 19)

“Dramatic agreement about Chechnya at top meeting”. (No picture.) (*Jyllands Posten*, Nov. 19)

“Yeltsin reluctantly agreed to let the OSCE into Chechnya”. (No picture.) (*The Wall Street Journal Europe*, Nov. 19)

The Dramaturgical Need for Closure

Mass-Mediated Stories of Risk

Maja Horst & Mette Lolk

“Smoking Damages the Placenta”, “New Salmonella in Denmark”, “Risk of New Terrorist Attacks”, “Warning: Lethal Ecstasy”. Hardly a week passes without mediated coverage of new risks that need to be assessed. Risks appear to be constitutive of contemporary life: How should we deal with global warming, SARS, traffic accidents, life style diseases, terrorism, and so on, so that we can create safe and happy lives for our families, our organizations, and our nations?

A wide variety of sociological analyses have focused on this perceived change in society, where risk and the prevention of risk have become a central item on the political agenda. Although the diagnoses of the changing role of risk diverge, many of these analyses imply that the role of risk is central for the construction of individual, group, and national identities in modern society. From an anthropological point of view, Douglas has demonstrated that assignment of blame is a central constitutive feature in any society (Douglas, 1996). We should therefore understand the present preoccupation with risk as a particular way of casting blame in modern Western cultures, one that is intimately linked to the rise of an individualistic culture (Douglas & Wildavsky, 1983). In this political climate, the person identified as “being at risk” always seems to have a moral right to sympathy, and to responsible political actions that mitigate the risk.

Ulrich Beck has taken the argument so far as to say that modern societies are developing into “risk societies” (Beck, 1992). Here, the central political struggle concerns the distribution of risk rather than of wealth. Following up on this analysis, Giddens has argued that the sense of being at risk will come to be crucial to the construction of both personal and group identities (Giddens, 1990). While Niklas Luhmann disagrees with this claim that society is changing fundamentally, he also points to societies’ enormous preoccupation with risk. He argues that it stems from our obsession with rational decision-making, since this makes us aware of the inherent uncertainties in every decision (Luhmann, 1991). On this account Luhmann claims that there is a fundamental distinction between those who are perceived to make de-

cisions about risk and those who are perceived to live with the dangerous consequences without being able to influence these decisions.

No matter what kind of diagnosis of risk society one adheres to, it is obvious that observation of and communication about risk is a central feature of modern societies. As such, it comes as no surprise that stories about risk are a prominent feature of mass-mediated news coverage. In this chapter, we will explore the way communication about risk merges with general notions of identity and the construction of identity in the media.

We have chosen to use a case study as the basis for a general discussion of the mediated coverage of risk. This is not because we can claim that the content and development of this particular story is representative of all mediated risk stories, but because it exemplifies some central aspects of the mediated coverage of risk. Viewed through our perceptual lens, whether they cover traffic accidents, infectious diseases or environmental catastrophes, this type of story shares a similar dramatic staging. First and foremost, these stories thematize potential accidents and future dangers as quantifiable entities with identifiable causes. This makes it possible to ascribe responsibility and guilt. Furthermore, they often subscribe to a particular *rhetoric of fear* (Mulkay 1993) that makes frequent use of words like “catastrophic”, “serious threat”, “deadly”, “ticking bomb”, “imminent danger” and “shocking figures”, a rhetoric that sets the stage in a particular way.

We will call this dramatization of mediated stories (Eide & Hernes, 1987) *risk dramaturgy*. The following analysis is an examination of the construction of identities through the dramatization of risk. In this context, it should be stressed that we are not concerned with the substance of risk, but rather with the staging of stories about risk in the news media. We have chosen to view the mediated interpretations as a drama that invokes a particular rationality which treats possible future accidents as the causal outcomes of present circumstances, where it is possible to cast some of the actors as responsible, and others as victims. Via, among other things, the mediated establishment of “the one responsible”, and “the one who suffers”, one could of course create or strengthen identity on many levels, not merely identity vis-à-vis a nation. Our aim in this chapter is specifically to analyze this rationality and the construction of Danish and foreign identities as they emerge in the articulation of risk, not to assess whether any perceived risk is more or less real.

We would emphasize, however, that danger and risk are two different issues. In this chapter we perceive risk as a notion that covers the attempt to estimate the likelihood of future negative consequences of present conditions, with the goal of trying to avoid them. Rather than dealing with current certainties, risk is a notion that concerns future probabilities, which do not exist independently of their articulation in discourse. There is an infinite number of possible accidents and misfortunes in the world, but in order to treat these dangers as risks, we have to articulate them as such, make them quantifiable and place them in contexts where we can evaluate whether they

are large or small, acceptable or unacceptable. In order for a danger to become an articulated risk, we have to communicate. Risk is the prediction of something that has not happened yet, a prediction that, of course, comes into being only through its articulation. Therefore it is essential to understand the communication surrounding risk, since articulation is central for making it “real”.

Our approach is thus to avoid making a clear-cut division between so-called realist and relativist accounts of risk. Rather, we acknowledge that reality is of a “performative nature” (Robins, 2002), which means that the articulation of risk is both a cultural (social) and a technical (natural) operation. When we claim that risk is made real through articulation, it is not to deny that there are real dangers and that it takes more than articulation for these dangers to be turned into risk (Douglas, 1990). Or conversely, that these dangers only exist as articulated constructs without any reference to materiality. In the present case, however, we focus on the construction of risk via communication in the media.

The mass media can be seen to be a central arena for the construction of risk as well as the construction of identities in contemporary society. But the mass media are not just an arena for representation, they constitute an actor in relation to other actors (Eide & Hernes, 1987). We do not perceive mass-mediated news as a reflection of a construction of risk that takes place outside the various media institutions. But neither is it an isolated instance of discourse. News must be viewed as an integral part of societal risk construction that is intertwined with the work of constructing risk that takes place in many other settings in society (Allan, 2002; Anderson, 1997; Eldrige, 1999). The reporting of risk in the media must be seen as a central part – though not the only part – of the “definitorial struggles” (Miller, 1999) that define some dangers as risks that demand consideration, and some identities as “at risk” and “responsible”. Thus, whether we focus on expert opinion, policy making, or more general constructions of notions of risk and identity, the mass media must be seen as an actor rather than a passive reflection of actions outside its sphere. Mediated coverage is a productive force in its own right and should be considered as such.

With this background in mind, a concrete case from Danish news coverage will be used to illuminate mediated stories of risk. This news story is about the risk posed by the Lithuanian nuclear power plant, Ignalina. It originated when a former employee at the plant seriously questioned the security precautions at the plant in a Danish television documentary broadcast by Danish Radio on Sunday, November 14th, 1999. In the days that followed, the issue of inadequate security measures at Ignalina was covered in a number of Danish print and electronic news media and also elicited reactions in the political and administrative system.¹ The story can be seen as an example of a high-profile, serial risk story. It is high-profile, because it received coverage in television, radio and most national newspapers, at the same time that it generated front page news articles and editorial commentary. The term “serial”

focuses on the fact that the story evolves over a period of days, where yesterday's news functions as the motivator for today's reactions.

After a short recapitulation of the story, three aspects of mass-mediated risk dramaturgy as demonstrated by the Ignalina case will be discussed. First, the role of sources in the staging of the story will be considered. Secondly, we identify three different ways of framing the risk of Ignalina: technical evaluations, political implications, and rhetorical assessments of credibility. Finally, we discuss the "dramaturgical need for closure" in mass-mediated risk stories and the possible existence of a techno-rational hegemony.

"Ten Minutes from a New Nuclear Disaster"²

The Ignalina story commences with the TV documentary, "Russian Roulette", on DR2 Sunday night during prime time. The program was produced by Joergen Pedersen, of Net-Produktion, a company specializing in documentaries for television, primarily the two public service stations in Denmark. The program builds around an interview with a former employee at Ignalina, Vladilen Safonov, who delivers a devastating critique of the security conditions at the nuclear power plant in Lithuania. As is often the case with documentaries, this program was heavily advertised in the days prior to broadcast, with teasers on both DR1 and DR2 as well as advance publicity in several newspapers.

The following day, November 15th, the security problems at Ignalina could be found in most national newspapers, some of which gave it front-page and editorial attention. The articles focus primarily on the content of Safonov's warnings, as they appeared in the documentary. Several articles quote the Minister of the Environment, Svend Auken, saying that he will initiate an inquiry. The broadsheet *Politiken* goes so far as to say that Auken has promised an "urgent investigation" into the security at Ignalina.³ Politicians from both the right and the left are quoted as calling for urgent action, and in all the news pieces it is argued that Denmark and the EU should reject the Lithuanian plan to phase out the power plant gradually and, instead, demand an immediate closure.⁴

While it is the lack of proper security precautions that is the focus of the media on Monday of that week, most papers also report that Safonov has been arrested in Poland at the request of the Lithuanian authorities. Most of the Ignalina articles imply a connection between the arrest of Safonov and his disclosures in the documentary. This prompts, among others, Soeren Soendergaard, the MP for the left-wing party "The Unity List", to demand action from the Secretary of Foreign Affairs: "We must come to the defense of people who dare speak the truth".⁵

In the evening news, on the two major TV channels, DR1 and TV2, however, the story has taken a slightly different turn. Now the main story is that

Safonov has unexpectedly been released, and that he arrived in Denmark on Monday afternoon. This is also the main focus of the press coverage on Tuesday. The critical information about Ignalina has now become background information in a story about a persecuted hero, harassed by the Lithuanian authorities because he revealed the truth about the risks posed by the power plant. In these news stories, the focus is on the human aspect, for example, the viewer witnesses the tearful reunion at the airport between Safonov and journalist Joergen Pedersen, who made the documentary. Another story in the news is how the Danish Parliament authorized a relief fund of 100 million Danish Crowns for the conservation of energy and the development of new power plants in Lithuania. Although this decision has no formal connection to Safonov it is more or less presented like it is a direct consequence of his accusations, for instance with a headline like "Nuclear Panic Frees Up Millions".⁶

There are, however, a couple of cracks in the mass-mediated joy over the reunion between Safonov and Joergen Pedersen. Most noticeably, the tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* questions Safonov's credibility as a source, which in turn casts doubt on the entire foundation for the Ignalina story.⁷ The reservation stems from information that Safonov is accused of fraud in Lithuania, and that, according to the executive director at Ignalina, Safonov was never employed there. Furthermore, scientists from the research institute Risoe, the leading institution for Danish expertise in nuclear power, as well as administrative experts from the Danish Emergency Management Agency, state that Safonov's warnings contain no new information. They therefore agree that there is no reason to change the Danish state of alert.

On Wednesday, the media's interest in the story is markedly lower and the skepticism towards Safonov has grown. The experts from Risoe and the Emergency Management Agency are now stating that he does not "appear to be fully trustworthy" and that his information is not "fully up to date".⁸ Thursday brings a further decline in interest and only few newspapers cover the story. At the same time, there is a shift in the storyline so the focus is now primarily on Denmark's energy policy and initiatives to help Lithuania with the dismantling of Ignalina. Additionally, the gradual closure of Ignalina is connected to the possibility of Lithuanian membership in the European Union. In the following weeks, the story is only sporadically covered and a line of conflict stabilizes between the government, the administrative authorities and the scientific experts, on one hand, and, on the other hand, the left-wing oppositional parties, who keep criticizing Danish policies on nuclear safety in Eastern Europe. At this point, Safonov is more or less completely out of the story, which focuses on more general policy aspects.

In short, the development of the Ignalina story can be captured in the following way: At first, the media frame it as a classic risk story about a nuclear threat from the East. Apparently, everybody can agree that carelessness with nuclear security is unacceptable. In this context it should be noted that in the 1970s the Danish public voted against the development of nuclear en-

ergy for security reasons. Thus, exposing the Danish public to the same risk from abroad adds an extra sense of unfairness to the issue. Secondly, the villain seems to be Eastern European bureaucracy in some form or another, since it is clearly presented as the fault of the management of the Ignalina power plant that the security installations have not been kept up to date. It is therefore apparently a clear case of a risk brought about by “the others” in an entirely unacceptable and unnecessary way.

Early on, however, Vladilen Safonov becomes the center of attention. Initially, he is cast as the hero, the hero who gets punished by the rigid Eastern European systems of authority for revealing the truth. Later, however, he is presented more negatively as, at best, a trivial person or, at worst, a liar and a crook, who has lured the Danish public with his scary stories about the lack of security measures at Ignalina. Finally, the story turns into a more general discussion of Danish and European assistance in closing outdated nuclear power plants in Eastern Europe.

The Role of Sources

As with many other mediated risk stories, the Ignalina story is characterized by a high level of complexity. Nuclear security is a difficult subject, and one needs to possess an advanced level of technical knowledge about nuclear power and security systems to understand Safonov’s criticism completely. Only very few news recipients can be expected to have this kind of expertise, not to mention the journalists writing the stories. In this way, the journalists covering the story are very dependent on their sources, and the scope of their critical investigation is necessarily rather narrow.

The initial story stems primarily from the statements of a single source – Safonov – and because of this, it is not strange that the question of his credibility becomes central. Apparently, it was Safonov himself who decided to contact the news media with his knowledge about Ignalina after having seen a Danish TV program about Chernobyl. He came into contact with Joergen Pedersen, a former employee of DR who had a number of highly praised documentaries under his belt, and is employed by the union-owned production company Net-Produktion. It is not surprising that this company chose to make a program on the basis of his story. It fits perfectly with their goal of influencing the public agenda by making TV programs that stimulate debate.⁹ As Joergen Pedersen himself describes their documentaries: “They must hit where it hurts. And as a documentary producer you have to be willing to put yourself on the line”.¹⁰

Throughout the news coverage of the Ignalina story, Joergen Pedersen plays an unusually conspicuous part in the sequence of events. He has not only (along with a couple of other journalists) produced the program, he is also present when Safonov is arrested in Poland, and once again at the air-

port, waiting with open arms, when Safonov is released again. Furthermore, before the broadcast of the documentary, he presents the Standing Parliamentary Committee on Environment and Planning with questions regarding the security of Ignalina.¹¹ After the broadcast he arranges a meeting between the authorities who have been implicated, selected experts, and Vladilen Safonov at the Emergency Management Agency.

In this way, Joergen Pedersen is not just a passive reporter, but very much engaged in trying to make things happen in a way that could be characterized as “activist journalism” or “public journalism” (Glassner 1999). This active role not only reflects the ambition of Net-Produktion to stimulate public debate, but also Pedersen’s substantial personal engagement in the story and in Safonov. Joergen Pedersen himself is used as a source in several news articles, where he insists that Safonov really *is* the persecuted nuclear safety expert that he claims to be.

The documentary is built around the testimony of Safonov, and at this point, his claims are not supported by other sources or challenged by counter claims. Although the executive director of Ignalina is interviewed in the documentary, he comes across as surprised and neither confirms nor denies Safonov’s information about the security precautions at the plant. Anonymous sources from the European Atomic Energy Agency are referred to as expressing dismay over the revelations. But it is remarkable that no Swedish or Danish nuclear experts appear in the program, particularly since Swedish nuclear experts have worked as consultants on security concerns surrounding the gradual closure of Ignalina.

As mentioned, it is almost impossible for laypeople to judge the content, let alone the consequences, of Safonov’s criticism of the management of security issues at the plant. In these circumstances, it is not strange that most newspapers and electronic media use technical experts as sources in the turmoil of the days that followed. There is a noticeable conformity in the choice of expert sources, presumably because there is only a very limited number of people with the necessary competence on this particular subject in Denmark. The expert sources, who belong to the Research Center Risoe, the Danish Emergency Management Agency, and the Danish Energy Authority, all seem confident in their disregarding of Safonov’s information. That this reaction appears so quickly and seems so unified apparently stems from the fact that the sources in question were given the opportunity to view and evaluate the content before the documentary was broadcast.¹² According to spokespeople for these authorities, it was a fortunate stroke of luck, though also very uncommon, that they were able to appear well-prepared, coordinated, and clear in their statements.

Strangely enough, the Secretary for the Environment is not informed of the government experts’ evaluation of Safonov’s revelations before the documentary is aired, and therefore promises an urgent inquiry into security at Ignalina. As early as the next day, however, he recants this in a new statement, but uses the opportunity to inform us of the 100 million Danish crown relief fund. As

mentioned, several other politicians issue calls for political action. They are mostly from the opposition and they demand action on the risk posed by Ignalina, as well as the imprisonment of Safonov. In contrast, it is remarkable that the NGO Greenpeace is quoted so little, given that Greenpeace is so quick to issue comments and a call for the immediate closure of Ignalina. The Danish wire service, Ritzau, quite often includes comments from Greenpeace in their telegrams, but apart from a single short reference in *Berlingske Tidende*,¹³ these comments do not reach the news media.

Based on these observations, it seems fair to say not only that reporters are heavily dependent on their sources in this story, but that these sources also use the story to gain access to the news media. Seen in a broader perspective, it is not surprising that oppositional politicians from both the right and left line up to comment on this story. The initial story is extremely well-suited to this kind of mediated promotion, because it seems so clear-cut. On the other hand, the experts, who are also used as sources, appear rather to get dragged into the news because they possess the expertise and professional responsibility relevant to things like emergency management planning. This does not mean that these experts don't have particular views that need to be taken into account when being interviewed by the media. For example, it may not be easy for professional administrators to admit that earlier risk assessments have been based on incomplete or incorrect information. This is later addressed by an MP for the Socialist People's Party, who argues that the government should be more active in seeking information about Ignalina rather than relying on administrative authorities, since the latter "play down uncertainty".¹⁴

The general point in this context is that all sources can have particular considerations that should be taken into account when they participate in the creation of news stories. They can seek the media actively, or they can be sought out by the reporters, but, either way they all have reasons to partake in the creation of the story in particular ways. Whatever the reasons on behalf of the sources, however, the possibilities of including a variety of sources such as experts, politicians, or otherwise involved parties gives the journalist the opportunity to stage the mediated dramatization. As long as a source is willing to give a statement that opposes an earlier claim the journalist can stage continuous conflict. These conflicts, however, also produce certain alliances, for instance between politicians and experts, who seem to sustain the same interpretation of the risk.

Technology, Politics, and Rhetorical Credibility

The Ignalina story is not a coherent and consistent story. Actually, it is rather imprecise to speak here of *one* story, because there are different trajectories, which sometimes run parallel to one another, and other times cross one another. In the following section, we will discuss three such trajectories in

terms of *frames*, since this term implies the selection of those particular elements that inscribe a given object with meaning in a particular way in the news (Entman, 1993). But viewed through our theoretical lens, these frames also represent three different rationales with which to evaluate the seriousness of the risk posed by Ignalina. It should be noted that these rationales are not in opposition to one another; rather, they should be seen as complementary. Indeed, news articles often employ them in combination.

The basis of the story is the *technical* content of Safonov's criticism: the poor condition of the security installations at the Ignalina power plant. When we say that mediated accounts use the technical frame, we mean that technical facts are the subjects of the news, and the issues raised have to do with knowledge about technology, the concrete organization of the power plant, accident statistics and (the lack of) security precautions. Not surprisingly, this framing relies heavily on expert sources, since they seem to be the only people able to evaluate the different kinds of information.

Reporters using this frame establish the obvious comparisons with Chernobyl and Barsebäck (the Swedish nuclear power plant close to Copenhagen). One example of this is the headline in the tabloid *Ekstra Bladet* on November 16th: "Big Brother to Chernobyl". This headline implies that Ignalina is similar to Chernobyl – a poorly managed nuclear power plant which might explode at any minute – and that it will therefore likely end up like Chernobyl, though much worse, since Ignalina is bigger than Chernobyl. Furthermore, the technical framing also emphasizes the consequences of an accident at the plant and in particular, the proximity to Copenhagen. *Ekstra Bladet*, for instance, has an illustration, which shows the geographic position of Ignalina in relation to Copenhagen. This gives the impression that the only risk involved is to those living in Denmark. In short, the technical framing is pre-occupied with the question: How much risk is there connected to Ignalina? Yet, as exemplified above, all the mediated accounts assess the level of risk in connection to Denmark and the Danes. The risk posed to Lithuanian society is not mentioned, rather the risk and danger to Denmark and Danish people seems to be the only relevant yardstick.

In parallel with the technical framing of the story, there is another kind of framing. This one is centered around *political* questions, which include national issues, such as Danish nuclear emergency management, and foreign affairs, such as relations with Lithuania and the EU policies on the dismantling of old nuclear installations in Eastern Europe. The main question in this framing is the following: Is the current state of affairs politically acceptable? And if the answer to this question is no, a new question arises: what can and should be done?

When reading the press release from the Ministry of the Environment, it is obvious that the government and the implicated authorities attempt to turn the media's interest away from Safonov's revelations, and towards the policies already established to help Lithuania with its energy policy and with sustainable development. The 100 million Danish crown relief fund is, in par-

ticular, often described as a solution to the problem, although this decision was made long before anyone heard the name "Safonov". Since the story nearly vanishes from the political and public agenda within the first week, it might be concluded that the authorities apparently succeeded in dampening the opposition's criticism in parliament and in turning the focus towards initiatives to aid in the dismantling of Ignalina that already had been taken. In this context, it should be noted that the government employee whom we interviewed in June 2000 states that the actions taken on behalf of the authorities were based on the very fortunate combination of the preview access to the documentary and the already established policies in the field. Had the authorities been taken by surprise, then the case might have had much greater political consequences, not so much because of its technical severity, but because it is necessary that the government be seen to be taking cases like this very seriously.

The last type of framing in the Ignalina story concerns the *rhetorical credibility* of Vladilen Safonov, which can be understood as a question of ethos, as it is described in classical rhetoric. The core of this framing is the realization that the perceived competence, character, and goodwill towards the audience are important features in communication, and that they have an impact on the likelihood that the audience will be persuaded by a given claim, as Aristotle points out in his *Rhetoric* (2003). All other things being equal, information from a credible source will of course have more credence than information from a source perceived as unreliable.

As mentioned, Safonov's identity, credibility, and motives for contacting the media become central issues in the news story about Ignalina. Who is Safonov? What was his function at Ignalina? And – given that he has been living in the West since 1994 – why has he waited 5-6 years to come forward with his story? These questions remain unresolved, and when it comes out that the Lithuanian authorities want him extradited on fraud charges, his credibility is thrown into question. It is obvious that the identity and credibility of sources are always of central importance in the news, not the least in stories about risk. Not only are the problems often complex and opaque, which results in a greater dependence on expert sources, but, in this case, the question of credibility is particularly crucial because the basic information on which the story is based stems from just one single source. If Safonov is not trustworthy, then why should we believe his revelations of the security problems at Ignalina?

We have here no independent way of assessing Safonov's actual motives, of knowing who he really is. It is of no consequence whether he is, in fact, a persecuted innocent man with an earnest wish to reveal the truth and help mankind, or a fraud, who simply seeks to draw attention to himself to secure status as a refugee, in order to avoid criminal charges: it is the existence of doubt about his credibility that weakens his allegations. Indeed, he could in principle be right in his criticism of the conditions at Ignalina, even if he were a swindler. But the way Safonov is framed in the news makes his personal credibility a condition for trust in the information he claims to

possess. Therefore, this frame might be summarized around the following question: "Is Safonov credible?"

In our view, these three frames and their intrinsic rationalities do not simply come into play in this particular case, but can be found in many different mediated stories about risk, although the relative importance of each can of course vary. The recent example of SARS, for instance, was framed as a technical problem when the stories were concerned with the factual knowledge about the disease; it was framed as a political problem when the question was what kind of legitimate responses should be taken to mitigate the risk, and it was framed as a question of rhetorical credibility when the issue was the trustworthiness of, particularly, Chinese authorities.

In the present case, the circumstances around Safonov's identity and credibility played a major part. But for all mediated stories about risk, it can be argued that the minute serious doubt can be raised about the competence, character or goodwill of a source, for instance an expert, the focus will shift from the technical content to questions about rhetorical credibility. Furthermore, the identification of these three frames might point to reasons why risk stories apparently are "good" news for journalists. There are unlimited possibilities for journalistic angles, as well as a variety of ways to stage the conflict and alliances among the sources. This makes it possible to create a dynamic drama over several days where the frames, journalistic angles, and different sources create synergies and alliances, as well as tensions and conflicts.

From Fear and Powerlessness to Hope and Control

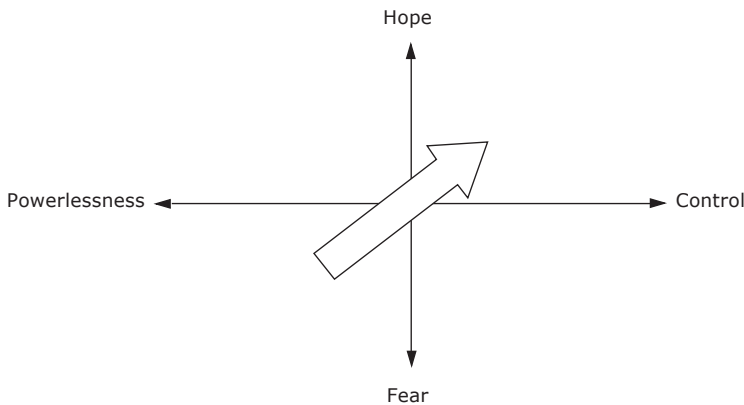
Although the three different frames work according to different rationalities, they seem to share a common ambition in the way they function in the story: to find some sort of "solution" to the problem of risk posed by Ignalina, and in this way, to create closure to the story. The technical frame is concerned with the question of whether it actually is the case that Ignalina poses a very high risk to Denmark. This frame leads to assurances that improvements have been made since Safonov was employed, and that a number of Western experts are continuously involved in an assessment of the security standards of the plant.

The political framing leads to assurances that nuclear safety at Ignalina is an issue taken seriously by politicians. This is backed up by information about existing EU policies for closing Ignalina and the Danish relief fund aimed at developing sustainable energy policies in Lithuania. Just as with the technical framing, the political framing also makes the authorities appear trustworthy and reliable. Finally, the framing that focuses on rhetorical credibility, while not quite as clear-cut, seems to result in serious doubts about the trustworthiness of Safonov. In this way, this framing can also be seen as leaving the public with a sense of calm, since it seems to confirm that the threat may not be as

bad as one first thought. The three frames all appear to point to reasons to be reassured about the relative order of the world. What at first looked like a story about a high risk with grave consequences might not be as bad as expected. All of the frames, regardless of which frame the viewing or listening audience would find most interesting or compelling, lead to the conclusion that the risk is probably not as grave as it appeared in the first documentary.

Considering the overall development in the mediated dramatization of the story about the risk posed by Ignalina, this movement from anxiety to calm seems to be a general characteristic. The story is put on the agenda and dramatized in a setting of powerlessness and fear. The metaphor is “Russian Roulette”, where “Poor Nuclear Safety Threatens Denmark”, because there are “New Doubts about the Security at Ignalina”. These warnings lead to an immediate demand for action. Somebody has to take responsibility for solving the problem. At first, the consequences seem to be that the minister in charge “will investigate the nuclear power plant” at the same time as “demands for the closure of the nuclear power plant” are raised. The headlines in the following days stress that “Ignalina Leads to Consultations in Parliament” and that “Nuclear Panic Releases Millions”, that there is “Danish Support for Dismantling of Power Plant”. In the course of those three days when the story receives intensive coverage, the problems in the mediated drama shift from a setting of fear and powerlessness, towards one of hope and a sense of control.

Figure 1.



Rationality and the Need for Closure

Is this shift towards hope and control a coincidence? We would argue that high-profile serial risk stories probably always contain a “*dramaturgical need for closure*”. No matter which framing is selected, the mediated coverage has an internal dynamic that leads to searches for some kind of closure, which

can function as a “solution” – a kind of ending to the story. The dramaturgical need for closure implies that the audience can leave the story behind, knowing that order prevails, either because the risk was not so high as initially assumed, or because someone (usually politicians and authorities) are seen to be taking care of it.

We do not claim that all stories about risk in the mass media can be seen to display this feature. Stories that are covered less intensively probably cannot be characterized by the dramaturgical development from fear and powerlessness to hope and control. But we suspect that whereas high-profile, serial, mass-mediated risk stories can take many turns, they will seldom leave the audience in an empty space, where the risk is left unchallenged and unremedied. The news media cannot cover a potential catastrophe intensively for several days, and then leave the audience in a limbo where nobody has been assigned the role of trying to resolve it. Rather, the responsibility for acting upon an identified risk will have to be designated. News consumers need to know that someone takes responsibility, otherwise, how can we sleep at night? Of course, this does not imply that action is really taking place outside of its articulation in the media, but in the mediated drama, at least, responsibility has the appearance of being assigned.

Within the sociology of risk it is argued that the reason we are so preoccupied with risk in modern societies is because we try to incorporate all potential dangers into our decision-making procedure (Luhmann, 1991). We will not accept that life is dangerous, instead we try to control danger by calculating the odds that accidents will occur. If the risk is considered too high, then we can act in order to reduce it. In line with this, we argue that the dramaturgical need for closure implies a notion of politics based on rational decision-making. There is an internal dynamic in the mediated staging of the story, which points in the direction of rational solutions to the problem of risk. The risk dramaturgy seems to imply that some form of rational order ought to be the basis for decisions in contemporary society. It invokes the expectation that political decisions are based on rational considerations, in order to take relevant precautions against unacceptable risk. If Ignalina really should be considered a threat, then surely somebody is responsible for taking action, in order to do something about the risk.

In this context, it should be noted that the pursuit of this dramaturgical need for closure is not only a journalistic preoccupation. Most sources issue statements that either call for action or say that the situation is under control. The “need for closure” is therefore not only a feature of journalists’ work, but of the mediated dramaturgy as it is constructed in the interplay among journalists, sources, and events.

The term “closure” does not imply that an actual solution has been reached, or that problems of risk need to be solved in any sense, but rather that the manifest expression of the problem ceases. The solutions proposed therefore need not be new or have actual political consequences. In the case of Ignalina, for example, there have been consultations in Parliament, and critical

questions have been posed to the Minister of the Environment, yet the Danish policies towards Lithuania do not change. And neither do the administrative-technical authorities change their assessment of the risk posed by Ignalina. Apparently, the conclusion to the Ignalina story is that Denmark already had accounted for the risks posed by Ignalina, and has adopted rational solutions to the problem.

Since we have not analyzed the question of actual risks, but rather the mediated version of them, we cannot judge whether the (lack of re)action on part of the authorities is justified and rational, nor whether their risk assessments, when seen from a political or a technical perspective, are in fact sound. We can simply demonstrate that in the drama staged by the mass media, there seems to be an internal dynamic driving the story towards a need for closure in the form of plausible reasons to believe that somebody is taking care of problems that may eventually arise. In this way, the risk dramaturgy seems to subscribe to a notion that society is somehow ordered in a sensible, responsible way.

A Technical Hegemony in Risk Assessment?

Both Douglas (1996) and Luhmann (1991) stress that, in principle, all potential dangers can be subject to risk assessment in modern Western societies, whether or not it is realistic to think that it is humanly possible to control them. It could be argued that this tendency can actually lure the public into a false sense of security. Instead of facing the fact that life is dangerous, we attempt to assuage our fears of the dangers around us through rational risk assessment, because this gives a sense of control over the way the world turns. Seen from this perspective, high-profile risk stories can be seen as inscribed in a techno-rational hegemony, which sustains a spiral of risk assessment. The more we are aware of risks and try to control them, the more uncertainty we have to take into account and the more we become aware of the risk implied in this uncertainty, because it becomes clear that everything can turn out differently than expected.

A consequence of this hegemony of technical risk assessment is that it privileges particular sources and explanations. In the Ignalina story, scientific and technical experts are granted a privileged position, just as technical assessments are presented as the objective truth about risk. On the other hand, we should be aware that scientific experts are not unchallenged or the only sources able to offer possible models for closure (Allan, 2002; Friedman, Dunwoody, & Rogers, 1999). With regard to the Ignalina case, we have shown that along with the technological framing, the political frame, and the rhetorical frame which surrounds the credibility of the sources.

This points to the fact that technical assessments of risk will not necessarily be sufficient to reach closure, since the issues are not limited to the tech-

nical assessment of the magnitude of the risk. They also include the question of whether this risk is acceptable. And this will always be at least partly a political question. In this perspective, politicians can be seen to have an equally privileged position in the mass-mediated dramatization of risk, since they are a primary source regarding the issue of the distribution of risk. The point, however, is not to predict which sources will be able to say what, since this is basically indeterminable due to the broad dramatic potential in risk stories, but rather to emphasize that risk stories will often be staged in settings of conflict. There is no reason to assume that experts' assessments will be the sole input that forms politicians' statements about risk. Instead, politicians may have political reasons for opposing technical assessments, but both political and technical assessments can be argued to be rational in relation to their own standards. In light of this, our notion of a technical hegemony must be modified to the extent that although mediated coverage partly follows a techno-rationality, this will constantly be opposed by political assessments, such as the assessment of the acceptability of a risk.

To complicate matters further, it is often the case in mediated risk stories that the lines of conflict separate both technical experts and politicians, so that some politicians rely on one set of experts, while others base their evaluations of the acceptability of a risk on a different set of experts. It is common to see mediated risk stories dramatized along the lines of "one expert contradicting another expert". This has been very common in environmental controversies, for example the controversy over global warming or genetically modified foods, where both sides of the controversies can be seen to base their assessments on "scientific evidence" and "expert advice" (See for example Allan, 2002; Irwin & Michael, 2003). This is also the case in the story about Ignalina, where some international nuclear power experts apparently support Safonov, whereas most Danish experts do not. And while the Danish Minister for the Environment apparently relies on Danish expertise, the left-wing opposition seems to place more trust in Safonov and his supporters. In this way, the story about Ignalina illustrates a more general point about the role of scientific experts: seeing how much these experts disagree, problematizes their traditional role as those who provide dispassionate scientific advice. Instead, the very generation of expert advice is seen to be an integral part of the policy process (Hellström & Jacob, 2001; Miller, 1999; Weingart, 1999).

In itself, this notion of self-contradictory expertise points to the inherent political dimension of risk stories. Mass-mediation of risk is never devoid of political implications, rather, they can be seen to invoke basic political values and notions of justice and the fair distribution of privileges and obligations. In the context of the present case, it seems obvious that the fact that Ignalina has been handed down from the former Soviet empire, and is now in the hands of a relatively new, and hence potentially fragile, Baltic democracy, reinforces the sense of unease posed by the risk.

In comparison, Swedish nuclear power plants, and especially Barsebäck, with its close proximity to the Danish capital, are looked upon as annoying, because they pose a risk that the Danish people have chosen to avoid despite the benefits of nuclear power. But still, Barsebäck is Swedish, and despite the cultural differences between Denmark and Sweden (differences which are in a way part of the mutual understanding between the two countries), the Swedish authorities are perceived as relatively well-known, culturally close, and therefore comparatively trustworthy. In contrast, the Lithuanian response to potentially dangerous technologies appears far more culturally distant, unknown, and therefore less trustworthy. Can we really trust that these people know what they are doing, when we don't know very much about them in general? The knowledge about the dissolution of the Soviet Union probably also plays a role here, since it conveys images of instability, radical change, and lack of control. These are all features that would serve to increase rather than diminish the sense of risk posed by nuclear power plants.

News: Information, or Ritual?

The reflections developed in this chapter have sought to deepen our understanding of the specifically *dramaturgical* need for closure. On the one hand, we claim that there is an internal dynamic in the mass-mediated risk stories that drives these stories towards closure, in order that the audience can rest assured that somebody is taking responsibility. On the other hand, we also claim that the stories are staged to setting up a conflict where diverse notions of rationality prevail. This apparent contradiction can be resolved if we give up any impression that the media will present a “genuinely” rational (and only one) version of closure. Instead we must accept that the important feature is not whether the solution is objectively rational according to some universal definition, but rather that different audiences, or more precisely, journalists acting on behalf of these audiences, perceive it as a satisfying closure. The dramaturgical need for closure represents the effort to present a kind of closure that an imagined audience will accept as satisfying, in order to dampen the fear initially created by the story of risk.

Secondly, mass-mediated risk stories do not always present the most accurate or most significant information about the kind of risks that the public is subjected to. But this does not mean that stories about risks do not perform an important role. We would argue that stories like the one about Ignalina play an important ritualistic role, because they can be seen as a social way of dealing with the fear of accidents and anxiety about the unknown. In this case, the fear of the great unknown in Eastern Europe after the dissolution of the Soviet Union can be seen to be subdued or even “domesticated”, since it is transformed into relatively more controllable questions such as those

that might be dealt with by technical evaluations, relief funds, and European control measures.

This is the reason for arguing that the dramaturgical need for closure points to the need for reassurance of the existence a basic rationality in political decision-making. Precisely because the staging of risk is usually followed by a movement towards possible closure, the recipients of news have the possibility of familiarizing themselves with these anxieties. We can speak of the Devil precisely because somebody is ready to mollify us and tell us that the Devil doesn't exist, or that we have taken precautions to keep the Devil at distance. In this way, the mediated stories about risks also have the possibility of creating or sustaining the notion of society as an ordered place, where authorities are accountable, and act responsibly towards any risk that threatens the nation.

Notes

1. The present analysis builds on the total number of news items in the national media (excluding radio) which covered this story during the following seven days (i.e. 27 newspaper articles and 4 electronic news items). We have also included telegrams from the Danish wire service, Ritzau, as well as press releases from the relevant actors. This material was collected through the Danish research project "A News Week in Denmark" headed by Anker Brink Lund. For the present analysis we have also included articles from four national newspapers (*Politiken*, *Jyllandsposten*, *Information* and *Ekstra Bladet*) that mention "Ignalina" in the following 6 months (12 articles). Furthermore, we conducted semi-structured interviews in June 2000 with the journalists and sources involved in this story.
2. Headline in the Liberal broadsheet, *Politiken*, November 15, 1999, page 8.
3. Kaare Skovmand "Auken Will Investigate Nuclear Power Plant" *Politiken* November 15, 1999, p. 2.
4. See, for example, the editorial in *Politiken*: "Close Ignalina" November 15, 1999, Section, 2 p. 2.
5. Anders Böye: "Poor Nuclear Security Threatens Denmark" in the tabloid *B.T.*, November 15, 1999, p. 8.
6. *Aktuelt*, November 16, 1999, p. 5.
7. Anton Rasmussen: "Accused of Fraud – Hero in Denmark" in *Ekstra Bladet*, November 16, 1999, p. 18.
8. Pauli Andersen: "Warnings Received with Calm" in *Berlingske Tidende*, November 17, 1999, p. 7.
9. www.netproduction.dk, June 2000.
10. Dan Jensen: "The Devil Has to Be Set Loose" in *Ekstra Bladet*, April 20, 2000, p. 3.
11. www.netproduction.dk, June 2000.
12. The interviews conducted with key actors in June 2000 revealed that the Danish embassy in Lithuania, who had assisted the film crew, had given the Danish authorities a copy of the documentary prior to its broadcast.
13. Pauli Andersen: "Warnings Received with Calm" in *Berlingske Tidende*, November 17, 1999, p. 7.
14. Jesper Tornbjerg: "Disagreement over Attitude to Nuclear Power Plant" *Politiken*, November 25, 1999, p. 8.

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Have the changes taking place in the Baltic Sea Region since 1989 altered Cold War frameworks, Orientalist stereotypes, and sporadic news of threats and crises from the East? The studies in this volume demonstrate a startling continuity in the depiction of our eastern Baltic neighbors as fundamentally different from us, as "backward" or as harbingers of potential threats. The authors demonstrate that journalism is still closely tied to national perspectives of the world, which in turn is related to a broader Western discourse about the Other. Some authors locate identity through journalism's ritualistic dimensions – providing a sense of safety and security as well as warnings of risk and threats – whereas others find it in taken-for-granted strategies of Othering. This is not the whole story, however, for the authors demonstrate that globalization is changing the national context on which journalism is based, thus local news of the Baltic Sea region differs significantly from national news, and EU journalism blurs the boundaries between the national "we" and its Others. This volume describes, analyzes and compares the manner in which identity is constructed in Swedish, Danish, Finnish and German news about events, people and issues in the eastern Baltic Sea Region at the beginning and the end of the 20th century.

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www.nordicom.gu.se

ISSN 1650-5131

ISBN 91-89471-26-1



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Nordic Council of Ministers



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