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The Context of the High-Industrial periods in the Nordic and Baltic countries

Introduction

The 20th Century in the Nordic and Baltic countries could be described as the era of industrialism, even if it took different forms and followed divergent paths in each country. The effects of industrial change extended into all aspects of society, it altered social structures, ways of life, ideologies and values. Modernisation transformed societies. Industrial companies and industrial culture have been instruments that have constructed and transformed not only the modes of production and the built environment but also cultural identities. Moreover, during this period industry was seen not only as useful but also as something beautiful; the ideal image of a modern society and contemporary ways of life.

The point of departure in the project Industry and Modernism was the concept of the high-industrial period and its connection with modernisation and modernistic ideologies in the Nordic and Baltic countries. One of the aims was to obtain a detailed picture of the different forms and expressions of modernism and modernity during the high-industrial epoch. In this paper we will discuss whether the concept high industrial period is a useful concept when it comes to the Nordic and the Baltic countries. Maths Isacson has in studies on the Swedish economic history used the concept and he has shown that Sweden can be seen as having gone through such a phase. Is this the case also in the other six Nordic and Baltic countries? And if so what was the context in which this kind of ideology or discourse emerged. Moreover, we will connect the high industrial period to the modernistic ideology.

Ideas and ideologies are international and it appears that similar ways of thinking can be traced irrespective of the stage of economic development, economic structure or even economic and political system. Similar modernisation ideologies are to be found

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1 This paper is based on an article written within the project Industry and Modernism – Companies, Architecture and Identity in the Nordic and Baltic Countries During the High-Industrial Period. The article will be published in a book from the project in spring 2007.
3 Island is not included in this study.
in all these countries at about the same time, although also national patterns and varieties are perceived.

In this paper we are, unfortunately, not able to go into any detailed comparisons, due to the difficulties to receive quantitative data about industrialisation and growth which is strictly comparable. The lack of reliable data is particularly the case for the Baltic countries, where the national accounts statistics are unreliable for the Soviet period and probably also rather shaky for the period before. Furthermore, as the concept of the high industrial period first of all focus on the main thinking, the discourse, of a special period of the 20th century, we have to include the whole society, not only the manufactory sector. Then we are faced with data problems if we want to broaden our focus and compare also other indicators in order to form a more profound and complete picture about the existence of and the characteristics of a high industrial period and the modernistic ideology in the individual countries. Thus, although macro economic data for the Nordic countries are fairly compatible, other types of figures which would provide evidence for other aspects, like urbanisation, are much more ambiguous and problematic, where both the methods of collection and the system of classification differ between countries and over time. Our comparison is consequently on a more qualitative level. In this paper we will introduce the concept ‘high-industrial society’ or ‘high-industrial period’ and its connection to modernism in this set of countries. Furthermore we will provide a first attempt to formulate and discuss how further comparative research about the Nordic and Baltic countries could be carried out, in the purpose to get a more profound and elaborate picture of the various aspects and manifestations of the high industrial and modernistic period.

The Area

The geographical area in focus in this paper is the seven Nordic and Baltic countries, which form a fascinating group, although one seldom dealt with in international literature. These small, and to some extent peripheral, industrial latecomers with their own specific economic and institutional systems may highlight economic development and phenomena connected to the modernisation process from an angle different from that of larger nations who lead the development. The Nordic countries in particular, and to some extent the Baltic countries also, show some internal similarities. The Lutheran religious belief is, or has been, strong in all of the countries, except Lithuania. This is not unimportant with relation to economic behaviour. At the same time it will be evident that they do not form homogenous entities. There are clear divergences between for example the individual Nordic countries with respect to economic structure and development path, and also with respect to institutional setting and ideological heritage. The same can be claimed about the Baltic States. The variety of institutional and economic settings in these countries may thus show that there is more than one way to growth and development. The development process is heavily dependent on local and national institutions and contemporary circumstances.

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Still, some common characteristics for all the countries are evident. The industrialisation in the Nordic-Baltic region was deeply influenced by political conditions, although in different fashions. Sweden and Denmark have long been established stable nations. Norway and Finland achieved their independence early in the 20th century, in 1905 and in 1917 respectively, and have enjoyed political stability since then. As former provinces of Tsarist Russia Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania gained their independence after the First World War. At the end of the Second World War Soviet Union occupied the Baltic countries and they regained their independence only in 1991. Economically it meant three new states with new owners and a new political and institutional system. For Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania the last fifteen years has been a period of dramatic interruptions.

The development of all seven countries has been highly affected by outside influences, although the patterns varied. The Nordic-Baltic countries experienced Second World War in rather different ways. There were no big losses in Norway and Denmark, and neutral Sweden even made a profit of war economy, while Finland and the three Baltic countries lost significant amount of human resources and territories. Estonia and Latvia being particularly had hit. At the same time, the occupation by Nazi-Germany during the War left its mark on ideas and ways of thinking in Denmark and Norway. After the War the Baltic countries became under the Soviet rule, and Finland too was under heavy pressure from its eastern neighbour. Meanwhile, the three other Nordic countries turned their faces toward west, but not exactly on the same level. Moreover, in all these countries, irrespective of direct or indirect political pressure from superpowers, the economic situation and development have been highly dependent on the international economic and political development.

A Concept and a Period

When studying economic growth and development over long periods of time, attempts are often made to divide economic development into stages. One such division has been the idea of three industrial revolutions. Countries follow however their own unique paths, which are not necessarily easily “squeezed” into simplified models. Although individual countries show specific and individual development patterns, efforts to generalise and to use common concepts may still make it easier to understand something of the underlying forces in the development process. General concepts and models also facilitate comparative studies, as they form a “measure” against which individual cases can be calibrated.

The concept “the high-industrial period” is first and foremost used to discuss a period of rapid industrial development, when the secondary sector is growing rapidly and has a dominating position and is, thus, crucial to the growth process and the development of the whole society. The high-industrial period represents the most intensive period of growth in the industrialisation process, which results in a tremendous increase in living standards.

As mentioned above, the concept is also an ideology or a discourse. During this period the manufacturing sector, preferably based on mass production in large-scale

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units, with a high division of labour, producing standardized products for mass consumption is seen as the road to prosperity and growth of the country. However, such a discourse appears to coincide with the period of rapid growth of the secondary sector and catching up. For instance in Sweden, Isacson has dated the start of the period between the 1930s and 1970s, when also the average annual growth of the Swedish GNP was 3.2 percent, a rate two and a half times higher than during the rest of the 20th century. In Finland the period started somewhat later and was particularly pregnant in the post-war decades, but the period can be seen as having begun already in the interwar period, when the so called “break-through” in Finnish industrialisation also occurred. During this period, industrial buildings dominated the skyline in many towns and regions, people moved from the countryside to towns, and the number of gainfully employed people increased rapidly.

One of the cornerstones of this new rational and efficient society was the large scale, which as close connected with abstract trust. Development and prosperity were considered dependent on large-scale enterprises and organisations using formalized instructions describing the performance of tasks and how to communicate between departments and people. Looking at the architecture of the factories, it had, moreover, to be rational and efficient, or in other words “functional, constructive, additive, hygienic and anonymous”. In architecture, form should interplay with and support function: the “practical became the beautiful”. The big industrial companies applied the principles of scientific management and standardised production, and used assembly lines and mass-produced goods to supply the growing domestic and foreign markets. Small enterprises that were unable to invest in modern technology and pay acceptable wages were driven out of business. The wage earner was the ideal and the number of industrial blue-collar and white-collar workers grew and wage-work became in general to be seen as the ‘normal’ form of employment. The share of employees grew rapidly, and in 1990 Sweden had the highest ratio of wage earners in the Western world, over 90 percent.

The period also involved a fairly strict gender division. Men worked in industry in superior positions, often operating machines, while women worked in subordinated positions, and in doing the housework and caring for the elderly, the young and the sick. However, in spite of a strict gender division on the labour market, the idea of female participation in wage labour clearly gained ground in the Nordic countries. The welfare system not only provided wage-earning opportunities for women, but also aimed to free women for “productive” work outside the household sphere.

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9 Brunström 1990, 217.
It was not just the production of industrial goods that had to be organised on a large scale. This was an ideal also in other areas of society – consumption, transportation, agriculture, health care, education and housing. The customers were to buy their goods in a rational manner in supermarkets, using their cars to transport their purchases home. It was a period both of mass production and mass consumption. People had in general a great trust in large organisations, big companies and cities, and because largeness had many obvious advantages, hardly anyone thought of its possible negative effects or questioned what was seen as the only way to prosperity and welfare. In Sweden, for example, all the political parties, especially the left and the right wing parties, embraced this ideology, although they quarrelled about certain questions like the level of taxes and the degree of state intervention in the economy, and it became a cornerstone in the famous Swedish – and Nordic - model. The same development path can be seen for instance in Finland in the post war era with large corporations, large organisations and large cartels dominating the markets and the agenda-setting in the economic policy area.

Problems in the Society

For a long time, the effects of the rigid production system and industrial and traffic pollution on human health were not considered a problem. Or they were viewed either as minor technical questions that could be solved rationally with new technology and instructions, or as something that we had to accept for the sake of greater prosperity. The standardised hospitals, industrial installations, transportation systems, shops, schools and offices were hardly seen as something problematic before the 1970s. Furthermore, it took some years before the discourse changed in favour of a more flexible and small-scale solutions of the economy and the society.

Only in two areas, family life and private travel, did the small scale survive. There it not only survived, it prospered. From the beginning of the 1950s the nuclear family and the private car became two important “safety valves” in the regulated large-scale society that was established step-by-step after the middle of the 1930s.

The High-Industrial Period in the Nordic Region

As mentioned in the introduction, Maths Isacson has previously outlined how Sweden has gone through a high industrial period. Below we will have a closer look at the Swedish case and then reflect on the other Nordic countries in our study before we turn to the Baltic States. Did they all go through such a phase, and what shape and characteristics did it take in the individual country? What was the context within which the development path followed?

The industrialisation of the Nordic countries started at the second half of the 19th century. Iron and timber were two important products with a fast growing international market. Soon also other kind of industries started to develop, for instance textile, mechanical and pulp and paper, as well as industries that produced food, clothes and other goods for the rapid growing urban population.

The majority of industrial companies, at least in the Nordic countries, were by international standard quite small, and there were only a few very large ones, mostly
in the iron- and steel, pulp and paper industries and in shipbuilding. Despite their small number from an international perspective, the large companies in Sweden (Volvo, SAAB, Atlas Copco, Sandvik, Ericsson, SKF, Algot, Facit, Stora Kopparberg and others) employed a growing workforce, were economically and politically powerful and were seen as an ideal in society. In Finland the large-scale export-oriented manufacturing firms, particularly within the pulp and paper industry, formed the base for the rapidly growing economy in the both inter-war and post-war decades. This gave the sector a strong position in Finnish society, its interests strongly influencing the economic policy.

In Sweden the start of the “high-industrialised period” can be dated to the beginning of the 1930s, after the Great Depression. Then the economy started to grow, the new Social Democratic government launched a program of political reforms and management and labour (SAF and LO) signed a general agreement in 1938. The period came to an end after an economically and politically unstable period that continued until the Social Democrats had recaptured political power in the early 1980s. This may be compared with growth figures. From 1930 to 1970 the average annual growth of the Swedish GNP was 3.2 percent, a rate two and a half times higher than during the rest of the 20th century. However, to put a definite time limit to this period is not easy, and if such a period is to be found its occurrence varies between the individual countries. In Sweden the stage was reached approximately half a century after the industrial breakthrough.

Of the Nordic countries, Finland was the second, after Sweden, to become a high-industrialised nation. In Finland the period can be seen as having lasted from the beginning of the fifties, until the demise of the Soviet Union in 1989. According to some researchers of the “traditional industrial society” (perinteinen teollisuusyhteiskunta) may be seen in Finland as having ended in the early 1980s. From this point, the proportion of employment provided by the manufacturing sector showed a rapid decrease. This trend accelerated after the collapse of Soviet trade and the deep depression in the early nineties, when the last regulations of the capital market were removed and in general a more market-oriented outlook took root. This was enforced by EU-membership in 1995.

To monitor the average size of hospitals, schools and other public service institutions over time is too difficult a task. The degree of urbanisation is, however, a more accessible variable and gives us an indication of the level of high-industrialisation. At the beginning of the 20th century, no more than 21 percent of Sweden’s population lived in towns and other urban centres. By 1935 the figure was 34 percent. At the end of the 20th century, 85 percent of the population lived in densely populated areas while only a shrinking fraction of people still lived in the countryside. Urbanisation figures for Finland show similar trends; the development seems to start later, but at the same time to be a little swifter, reflecting the later, but rapid catching-up. In the mid-1930s only some 20 per cent of the population lived in towns, while by the end of the 20th century nearly 80 per cent of the population lived in urban or semi-urban areas. From the middle of 1940s up to the end of the century the number of farms in Sweden decreased from 290,000 to 77,000, of which one-third were used full-time. At the same time the average size of farms grew rapidly, especially from the end of the fifties. In Finland small-scale family farming was seen for longer as some sort of ideal, but here also the number employed in the agricultural sector decreased rapidly, particularly from the 1960s onwards.

Denmark is an interesting case. It had many large industrial companies particularly in the Copenhagen area and some other larger cities, and some influential policy makers embraced the large-scale rhetoric. At the same time Denmark had a large and important agricultural sector throughout the 20th century, as well as many small-scale enterprises on the periphery. The typical Danish firm has usually been seen as the small metal workshop. We would say that Denmark never went through a phase that wholly fits the description of a high-industrialised period, in the sense that Sweden and Finland did. On the other hand, the large-scale rhetoric was clearly present in Denmark as well. Moreover, the large-scale, productive and very business-oriented Danish agricultural sector could be seen as having taken a form consistent with the high-industrial rhetoric in the manufacturing sector. In this Denmark differs from Finland and Norway, where the small independent family farm was seen as having its own value.

Norway’s situation was even more multi-faceted. There were very large companies in the pulp and paper industry, and electro-metallurgic industries. The power stations were also constituted a highly concentrated sector based on large-scale production and with a distinctive architecture, which underlined their importance in the modern Norwegian society. At the same time, the policy in Norway made it possible to survive on small farms and in villages along the coast as well as far up in the mountains and in the northermost parts of the country. Thus, the high-industrial ideal was never fully implemented, certainly not to the same extent as in Sweden from the 1930s and in Finland from the 1950s onwards.

17 The compilation of statistics has changed in this respect which overemphasises the speed of the development. The data for the 1930s is strictly based on persons living in small towns or larger cities, while the data for the year 2000 the concept “urban or semi-urban areas” forms the basis. Finnish Statistical Yearbook, Statistics Finland, 1936, 2001.
19 Statistical Yearbook 1990, Statistics Finland.
After the Second World War, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland experienced a fast industrial growth. People moved from the countryside to growing the towns and both the industrial and the service sector developed. The old flexible work- and maintenance-pattern in the countryside, as well as among casual labourers in towns, was replaced by permanent jobs in factories, and soon also in the public sector (schools, hospitals, etc) and the service sector in general. The industrial companies renewed their technology and working methods in their enlarged factories. Assembly lines became common and the pace of work rose, as did productivity and profits. A tax-based welfare system emerged and through centralised negotiations between the big parties on the labour market the wages increased. Another important characteristic of the Nordic model was the high female gainful employment, still with a clear gender division of labour. The Nordic model, with its solid labour relations, reformism, cooperation and public welfare policy, stood out as an alternative to communism in East and capitalism in West, and served as a model for many poorer developing countries.

The Baltic Countries

If we look strictly at employment rates, company size and urbanisation, we are not completely convinced that all seven countries in the Nordic-Baltic region have gone through this kind of period. However, if we turn to the central values and the official rhetoric of these societies, we see that they all, at least to some extent, have had a distinct period that we can designate as ‘high-industrialised’. The conclusion is the same when we look at their economies. Large industry was the driving force in society and had an influence on the living conditions, the architecture, the landscape, and people’s conceptions of the past, present and future. However, there are differences between the countries in industrial development over time, and in the importance awarded to big industry. The industrialisation of the Baltic countries started at the end of the 19th century. The former provinces of Eastland, Livland and Courland, the so-called Ostseeprovinzen on the territory of native Estonians and Latvians, became industrially the most advanced part of Tsarist Russia. The big seaports of Riga, Tallinn (Reval) and Liepaja (Libau) developed rapidly thanks to the railway connection to vast hinterland of inner Russia, the important source of raw materials for Baltic industries but also the main market for their products and for imported ones. This illustrates the colonial nature of industry in Estonia and Latvia. The most booming industrial city was Riga with lively multicultural atmosphere of Baltic Germans, Jews, Latvians and Russians. At the beginning of the 20th century, the engineering and textile industries, sawmills, and a number of small food processing plants employed more than 80 000 people. In Estonia the proportion of large-scale industries was very high, for instance the Kreenholm Cotton Manufacture in Narva alone employed over 10 000 workers.

Compare to Estonia and Latvia, the industrialisation of Lithuania was much slower and it was based on small-scale basis.

After the First World War, the Baltic States became independent and were faced with serious economic problems. Many industrial plants, especially in Riga, had been destroyed or relocated into the Russian interior. In consequence the rural population and the agrarian sector grew in relative terms. Admittedly there were some new industrial undertakings during the 1920s. A sizeable electronics industry developed in Latvia. The industrial sector was small, especially in Lithuania, and employed only a fraction of the labour force.

By the second half of the 1930s the economies of all Baltic States had stabilized and in the wake of the general European boom the enjoyed a quick rise in living standard. In Estonia state-owned industries and monopolies played a rather important role. Autochthonous nationalist policy favoured the processing of local natural resources (oil-shale, peat, sulphate-cellulose, phosphorite and building materials). In 1939, Latvia, with 2 million inhabitants, had 114 000 industrial workers. Estonia, with a smaller population of 1.13 million, had 73 000. At that time the oil-shale industry in the region of Kohtla-Järve was very important. It had been growing rapidly since the beginning of the 1920s. Lithuania, the largest of the Baltic States, was the most agrarian of the three Baltic States, but did also experience industrial growth from the 1920s onwards. Light industry and food processing dominated the industrial sector.

The results of the Second World War were catastrophic for the Baltic countries. Not only did they lose their independence but warfare ravaged their territories. The cities in Estonia and Latvia were badly damaged, and they lost a considerable part of their human populations. For the Baltic countries, becoming Soviet republics meant liquidation of private property and total nationalisation of land and enterprises. These socialist reforms radically transformed the economy. A loosely directed market economy was replaced by rigidly regulated command economy where the main task of state-owned enterprises was to complete the five-year plan, but the centralised system suffered from inefficiencies and miscalculations.

Industrialisation was the basic economic doctrine in the Soviet Union starting from the late 1920s onwards. Reconstruction soon began, and the countries industry was once again adapted to the Soviet requirements. In Estonian the oil-shale processing centre Kohtla-Järve had been an enormously important to the German army during the Second World War. After the war a new gas-pipe was built to Leningrad in 1948 and to Tallinn in 1953. In the race to develop the atomic bomb the Sillamäe uranium enrichment plant with a company town sprang up rapidly (1946-50) in the North-east of Estonia. This typifies the speedy exploitation of natural resources of recently seized Baltic countries in the service of the imperialist ambitions of the Soviet Union in the Cold War.

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22 Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, App B.
All three countries were strongly subordinated to the interests of the Soviet Union. “It was an industry based on Russian investment and Russian labour, managed by Russians according to goals set by Russians, importing a large part of the raw materials from Russia and exporting most of its products”.\textsuperscript{24} Five and seven years plans were used by the Soviet regime to rule the economy and everyday life in the Union.

After the death of Stalin in 1953 some liberalisation was set in with the “thaw” of Nikita Khrushchiov. A reorganisation was necessary, and in 1958, regional economic councils (sovnarkhozy) were established. Each republic became a unit of economic administration. The interference from the Soviet ministries decreased. This reorganisation was especially beneficial to Lithuania, which, unlike Latvia and Estonia, had not been subjected to rapid, centrally directed industrialisation after the Second World War.\textsuperscript{25} However, in 1964 the new leaders in Moscow abolished the sovnarkhoz. They replaced the territorial units with production-based branches.\textsuperscript{26} Subsequently there were only cosmetic changes in the Soviet economy and the period until the mid-1980s is referred to as the “stagnation.”

Soviet post-war economic policy transformed all three Baltic States from, at least according to Soviet propaganda, rural societies into urbanised and industrialised countries. In 1980, between 62 percent (Lithuania) and 70 percent (Estonia) of the population in the Baltic States were living in cities and towns, compared to between 24 to 35 percent in 1940.\textsuperscript{27}

During the first post-war decades, economic growth was high and the standard of living improved. Men and women earned their living as labourers in collectively owned large industries, farms, hospitals and state agencies. The most violent implementation of the large-scale production model was the forced collectivisation of agriculture. The number of industrial employees increased during the 1960s and 1970s, especially in Lithuania. When the Soviet regime collapsed, the Baltic States were the most urbanised republics of the USSR, with many big industries, although with a large agricultural sector.\textsuperscript{28}

The main motto during these decades of Soviet rule was the “bigger the better”. A rational and competitive socialist society needed large and effective industries, harbours, farms, housing districts, hospitals, schools etc. Thus, it is no surprise that the world’s biggest nuclear power station was built in the mid-1980s in Ignalina, Lithuania, close to the border of Belarus and Latvia. The ports of Klaipeda, Liepaja, Ventspils and Tallinn were expanded. The new port of Tallinn was the largest and deepest port on the Soviet Baltic coast and a “dinosaur of a harbour”.\textsuperscript{29}

In the Soviet society largeness of scale also concealed poverty and unsolved problems; there was an absence of network of convenient services (corner shops, cafés, barbershops etc.) for which a few huge service centres for the whole city did

\textsuperscript{24} Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, 111.
\textsuperscript{25} Dremaite, Marija in the coming book from the project Industry & Modernism (2007).
\textsuperscript{26} Misiunas and Taagepera 1993, 187 and 227.
\textsuperscript{27} Misiunen and Taagepera 1993, 364.
\textsuperscript{28} Misiunen and Taagepera 1993, 230–233, 288–291.
\textsuperscript{29} Misiunen and Taagepera 1993, 289–90.
not compensate. One of the main mysteries of the Soviet life was that despite the allegedly rational large-scale production consumption was minimal. There was simply not much available. However, there were some important differences between the three Baltic States in the extent to which the large-scale model was implemented. Its effects were considerable in Estonia and especially in Latvia, but less so in Lithuania.

Soviet society brutally equalized gender under the slogan of liberating woman from the slavery of housework. The position of housewife was despised as a parasitic and women were fully employed. In reality it meant a double load for them.

The criticism of largeness started in Estonia during the 1970s with the advent of post-modern ideas about architecture. Young angry architects of the Tallinn school pointed out the monotony and poor environment of huge prefabricated housing districts. As the criticism of Soviet society had always to be constructive, i.e. offering ways of improvement, they proposed the demolition of cosy old districts to renovate them and a return to traditional street patterns and historicist motifs in design. The only thing this criticism achieved was popularity.

It is also important to underline that although the industrialisation in Latvia and Estonia started early the indirect equivalent of the high-industrial period according to the model in Sweden, or a distorted Soviet version of it, is only partly discernible in Baltic republics during the period from 1960s until the collapse of Soviet economy in the perestroika of the second half of the 1980s.

**The High-Industrial Period: a Challenge for Future Research**

This paper is first of all tentative and not definitive. That explain why we also want to discuss possible ways to develop the research in order to get a more solid base for a description of the “high-industrialised period” in the Nordic and Baltic countries.

There are three possibilities to develop the research, and they are all important. The first is the quantitative that is to make a critical investigation of the available statistics to be sure that they can be used in a comparison between the seven countries. Especially the statistics from the Baltic countries are shaky before the 1990s. We then also have to search for alternatives figures in archives and develop methods, which at least partly can help us to solve the problems with the official figures. This ought to be done in close collaborations with researchers from all the countries involved.

However, at the high-industrial period first of represent a special way of thinking, a discourse, it should consequently be defined – or at least described – by qualitative criteria, namely by undertaking a discursive analysis of the ways of referring to, evaluating and stratifying phenomena in society. In order to do this, one must read texts from different decades and sort out what was seen as important/not important. Reading contemporary literature written by social scientists can be of great help in the process. An in-depth investigation, however, requires first and foremost a close reading of journals, newspapers, official reports, parliamentary records, diaries etc. This is something we have not been able to do. Through the work done within the project Industry and Modernism, we have, been able to acquaint ourselves with interesting and valuable sources of various kinds, including key statements from the individual countries during the period with which we are dealing. These have enabled
us to form a clearer picture of the main developments paths, and also the variations and similarities in the individual countries. Moreover it is evident that some general features characterising this concept are to be found in all the countries, irrespective of stage of development or political system. This research has, however, to be continued on a much larger scale, also done in close collaboration between native researchers in the seven countries who are able to analyse and compare the linguistic rhetoric’s during different decades.

The third possibility it to use the built environment as a source for research, that is the industrial buildings, the dwellings, the infrastructure, the machines and products, as well as the whole landscape. In the field of industrial heritage research these kinds of material traces are used together with memories and other immaterial sources. This is also possible when we want to get a deeper and better understanding of similarities and differences during the high-industrialised period in the Nordic and Baltic region. However, when using this kind of material, one have to complement it with the qualitative and quantitative approaches mentioned above. Thus, a multi- and cross-disciplinary approach is needed.

Conclusions

The large-scale ideal placed the state, the big industrial companies and the large organisations together on the frontline of the development of the modern welfare society. In Sweden and in many other countries, this model began to be questioned at the end of the 1960s and was seriously challenged after the international recession in the middle of the 1970s. Although many large industries were declining and some closed down unemployment was rising, there was no immediate threat to the large-scale model’s position as the foundation of modern society. Big industry and large-scale solutions remained the ideal up until about the mid-1980s, when a new ideal won official support and wide acclaim. The new ideal favoured individualistic behaviour and saw the entrepreneur and the small-scale service sector as the harbingers of a bright future. New technology, especially Internet, did of course also favour this transition. However, that does not mean that the large-scale manufacturing firm is not important in today’s global world. On the contrary, to some extent its role seems to have become stronger during the recent years, but they are organised in a somewhat different form, with a flexible way to communicate, produce and sell.

During the 20th century the high-industrial model was typical for the developed industrialised countries in the Nordic and Baltic Region. The time span and the extent of the process were however slightly different from country to country. The degree of abstract, rational, efficient large-scale thinking and carrying out did vary between the seven countries due to some important reasons.

As we have seen above, this obviously had to do with different political, institutional and economic circumstances in the countries. Obviously, these three factors are all closely connected and cannot be studied separately. Firstly, in all countries under investigation the economic base, for instance the role and size of the agricultural sector and the industrial structure, was one of the main factors influencing how

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significant a role the industrial sector had in the official rhetoric and in agenda setting. It also influenced the significance of the large-scale vs. small-scale in itself. If export-oriented firms in the metal and forest industry like in Sweden and Finland dominated the industrial sector, the large-scale got a very pronounced role.

Secondly, it is also evident that the industrialisation path and the forms of modernity were much influenced by the political situation. The Baltic States during the Soviet era are the most obvious examples, but the political context also heavily influenced the economic policy and agenda setting in the Nordic country, where one of the primary targets in the policy-making and in agenda setting was to promote the key sectors in the economy. This could be seen, as a form of economic nationalism, where Finland particularly in the post-war but also earlier, provides a particularly good example, but also in the other Nordic countries there has been similar tendencies. In the Baltic region, any kind of nationalism was forbidden by the Soviet regime, but it grew in the shadow and.

Moreover, the strong consensus policies leading up to the welfare society and a system of collective bargaining, besides building the modern society, also include an aspect of economic nationalism, as by creating stability and involving all groups in society in the making of the modern, and economically successful, state, based on a belief in what professor Pauli Kettunen has aptly called as the “virtuous circle”; a belief that social equality and increasing real wages, would promote continuous growth and prosperity. Moreover, the ideology of the high-industrial period was very much a project directed from above and a system well fitting the closed economies.

Finally, it, thus, is easy to observe that the transformations of the political and institutional context in the Nordic and in the Baltic countries since the late 1990s has largely also transformed the role of the large-scale, the view of the how to encourage growth and welfare and the building of the modern society. Although the ‘rumours of the death of the large-scale are greatly exaggerated’, the alternatives to large-scale and the stress of small-scale and entrepreneurship is a dominating discourse is today in most of these countries. Moreover, the idea of modernity and welfare being constructed through a common project, steered from above, has been replaced by much more fragmented ideologies.

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