

**S. 11. 4. – MARITIME HERITAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY  
IN SCANDINAVIA, C 1800-2000**

**Chair: Leos Müller**

(Department of History, Stockholm University)

**Abstract**

The Scandinavian countries are maritime countries. The sea has played a great role in their economic development, in their political history and cultural identity. Danish and Swedish navies were key components of their state-building processes. Fishing, sea-borne trade, cross trades, shipbuilding, and shipping have been and are important economic sectors. The sea is embedded in the construction of modern national identities in Scandinavia—but in different ways. The proposed panel will discuss the different trajectories of the connection between the maritime past/heritage and national identity in Sweden, Denmark, and Finland. The focus of the panel is the period between the mid-to-late 19th century and present, a period in which modern Scandinavian identities appeared based on national historical narratives and when the maritime sectors of the countries went through revolutionary changes. We will specifically look at the connections between modern national identities and shipping sectors, navies and mariners.

**Biography**

Leos Müller is professor of history and head of the Centre for Maritime Studies, Stockholm University. He has published widely on Swedish maritime history in the eighteenth century, e.g. *Consuls, corsairs, and commerce. The Swedish consular service and long-distance shipping, 1720-1815* (2004) and *Sveriges första globala århundrade. En 1700-talshistoria* (2018). His most recent research interest concerns the roles of naval warfare, privateering and maritime neutrality in shaping international order and early modern global trade. He has long experience of collaboration with maritime heritage sector in Sweden.

## *Denmark as a maritime nation: Narratives, interests and identities through 250 years*

ANDERS RAVN SØRENSEN (Copenhagen Business School. Center for Business History)

### **Abstract**

The paper aims to analyze how the narrative of Denmark as a maritime nation has developed from the late seventeenth century until today. While the narrative of Denmark as an outreaching, explorative maritime nation has long historical roots, this narrative was – after the loss of Norway in 1814 and the nationally traumatizing Prussian wars in the middle of the nineteenth century – dwarfed by a stronger narrative of Denmark as a small, inwards looking agricultural nation. The paper shows how maritime organizations and actors have continuously used and reproduced the ideas of Denmark as a maritime nation in order to strengthen the legitimacy and economic power of the industry. The paper argues that the maritime narrative have gone through ups and downs (often correlating with periods of increased globalization) and that the recent decades' shift from an inwards looking agricultural narrative to an externally oriented and reactive maritime one, must be understood as a consequence of increasing cultural and political globalization. Furthermore, the paper investigates the political and economic legitimacy that are potentially conferred upon certain industries because of their entwinement in historically routed narratives.

### **Keywords**

Maritime identity, narratives, Denmark, industry legitimacy, uses of history.

### **Biography**

Anders Ravn Sørensen is assistant professor at the Department of Management, Politics and Philosophy at Copenhagen Business School. His research interests focus on maritime history and historical sociology. He has published in international journals such as *American Historical Review* and *National Identities*.

## *Swedish naval officers and Swedish national identity in the early 1900s*

ANDREAS LINDEROTH (Swedish Naval Museum, Karlskrona)

### Abstract

The historical and social sciences have shown a relatively great interest in the formation of the Swedish national identity. It has been analyzed from many different perspectives. But maritime matters have been quite absent from this research. This paper tries to open a window into this almost unknown field of Swedish national identity formation by looking into how Swedish naval officers regarded Sweden and Swedish national identity in the early 1900s. What kind of Sweden and Swedes did they want? How did they promote the forming of a Swedish national identity? The main source is the journal "Vår flotta", for the years 1905-1920. The journal tried mainly to promote and popularize the interests of the Swedish navy, but also those of the Swedish merchant fleet.

### Biography

Andreas Linderoth is a historian working as a research coordinator at the Swedish Naval Museum, Karlskrona. His research focuses on naval history, especially the Swedish navy in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### Keywords

national identity, Swedish navy, naval officers

## *National Narratives of Nordic Mariners*

MICHAEL BENNEDSEN HANSEN (PhD Fellow, Copenhagen Business School)

### **Abstract**

International shipping went through fundamental technological and institutional changes in the later part of the 20th Century. Containerization, out flagging and International Ship Registers changed global trade, but also challenged old practices, national identity and maritime culture on the ships. The Nordic countries, all old maritime nations, were front and center in this development, forcing them and the Nordic Shipping Companies to adapt to an increasingly globalized industry. This paper explores how this transformation of shipping is being remembered and narrated by the Nordic mariners experiencing the changes first hand on the new container ships. Through oral history and narrative theory, the paper investigates how the mariners apply meaning to their identity as *Nordic Mariners* in specific *national companies* in a time of globalization.

### **Keyword**

National identity, narratives, oral history, globalization, containerization

### **Biography**

Michael Bennedsen Hansen is currently a PhD Fellow at *Copenhagen Business School*, at the *Center for Business History*. After graduating in History and Religious Studies from *Copenhagen University*, he taught for several years at the upper secondary level at *Copenhagen Adult Education Centre*.

# *A New Nation in a Global World. National identity, Naval Diplomacy, Trade and the Portrayal of Finland in the International Missions of the Frigate Suomen Joutsen (1931 - 1939)*

ANDREA RIZZI (Independent researcher, Ph.D. Italian Studies)

## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to analyse the role of maritime identity and identity-making, in promoting the international perception of the Finnish republic, using the case-study of the Finnish frigate *Suomen Joutsen*. The Scandinavian nations developed their own merchant and naval fleets down through many centuries, the Finnish case distinguishes itself due to its size in the 1900s. During the steam era, Finland, without a powerful naval fleet, chose to be represented in international waters by an elegant white sailing ship, the school-ship *Suomen Joutsen*, thereby inaugurating a decade of cruises which were useful for getting the country known in the world. In contrast to the navies of great powers, which displayed prestige and power, the *Suomen Joutsen* was presented as an ambassador of Finland abroad, as a symbol of a small but proud nation which had recently become independent. The first missions, from the middle of the 1930s, served to “fly the flag” with a display of national products on board, it was possible to establish commercial contacts with peripheral markets and also to promote the many and varied production sectors in the country.

The rituals and ceremonies of the naval diplomacy meant that political and diplomatic authorities of the nations visited were brought on board the ship, the characteristic traits of Finland were presented to the international press, contact was made with the recently established consular network and, finally, greetings were brought to the Finnish community abroad who had emigrated between 1860 and 1930.

Hence, the international cruises of the *Suomen Joutsen* functioned as the fundamental channels of political and commercial promotion of the young Finnish nation, before the tragic Finnish-Russian war of 1939-1940.

Keywords: frigate *Suomen Joutsen*, Finnish navy, diplomatic relations

## **Biography**

Andrea Rizzi is an Independent researcher. After graduating in history, he recently completed his PhD in Italian Studies at the University of Turku on the Italian-Finnish relations, 1929-1935. His research focuses on topics relating to International history, especially regarding the political and cultural role of Italy in Northern Europe, and Naval and Maritime history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.