



Nordic Modernities

From Historical Region to Five Exceptions

Jani Marjanen

HCM 3 (1): 91–106

URN:NBN:NL:UI:10-1-117040

Abstract

Several recent books discuss issues of Nordic modernity. While Nordic history often tends to emphasize the similarities between the five countries, these recent books present the Nordic countries as less of a unitary region that nonetheless lends itself to broader international comparisons. Economic, cultural and political modernity come across as processes that have not been predetermined, but rather are the result of many competing visions and trajectories of the future. These processes have been different in the five Nordic countries. At the same time, the developments in different spheres of society were interwoven due to the practice of comparison and exchange between key agents in politics, culture and economy.

Keywords: Scandinavia, modernity, empire, nation-state, historical region

Review of: Jóhann Páll Árnason & Björn Wittrock (eds), *Nordic Paths to Modernity* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012) 288 pp., ISBN 978-0-85745-269-6; Julie K. Allen, *Icons of Danish Modernity: Georg Brandes and Asta Nielsen* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012) 283 pp., ISBN 978-0-295-99220-4; Pasi Ihalainen, Michael Bregnsbo, Karin Sennefelt & Patrik Winton (eds), *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution: Nordic Political Cultures, 1740–1820* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 381 pp., ISBN 978-1-4094-0019-6; Magdalena Naum & Jonas M. Nordin, *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena* (New York: Springer, 2013) 327 pp., ISBN 978-1-4614-6202-6.

Introduction

Every English-language historical account of the Nordic countries must inevitably discuss the terms Scandinavia, *Norden*, and the Nordic countries.¹ The terms entail different historical layers and have different meanings depending on the whereabouts of the user. In an English text, more often than not, the terms are used interchangeably, and refer rather ahistorically to the five Nordic countries Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, as well as the autonomous territories Greenland, the Faroe Islands, and Åland.

A plausible historical account requires the definition of a historical region, but an analysis of the historical terms and their development reveals how the formation of the region has been shaped by a struggle over terms, political allegiances and cultural influences. Looking at the history of the concepts themselves reveals a much less evident historical region. Scandinavia as a concept owed much to the need to distinguish the Danish and Swedish empires from the rest of the North (primarily Russia and Prussia). The term *Norden*, a common word in the Scandinavian languages meaning literally the North, gained popularity toward the end of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century and had the aim of reconceptualizing the region in a way that allowed the inclusion of Finland and Iceland in the Nordic group, but more importantly also enabled political discourse about national politics that was both national and international at the same time.² The phrase ‘the Nordic countries’ is a newer translation of *Norden* aimed (in conjunction with the phrase ‘the Nordic model’) toward allowing the Nordic countries to act as a common Nordic bloc in international politics. In the case of Nordic models, the Nordic welfare state, Nordic political culture, and Nordic modernity an interesting form of conceptual stretching takes place. Sometimes these concepts denote the whole region, but more often, they refer to one of the national political cultures with an added transnational layer on top. In a way, the national case includes a comparative dimension only when regarded as Nordic.³

At the time, the outcomes of the conceptual struggles were unknown, but for the present it is possible to study the Nordic region as an entity and to equate the above-mentioned terms. This does not mean, however, that the tensions within the concepts are swept away. What Scandinavia or *Norden* refers to is still debatable.

Several tensions are readily apparent between the countries. Old empires (Sweden and Denmark) can be juxtaposed to new nation-states (Norway, Finland and Iceland). Geographical and cultural differences are expressed in the labels of East *Norden* (Sweden and Finland) versus West *Norden* (Denmark, Norway, and Iceland), of core Scandinavian countries (Sweden, Denmark, and Norway) versus peripheral countries (Iceland and Finland) and of big countries (Finland, Sweden, Denmark, and Norway) versus much smaller Iceland as well as the autonomous and even smaller entities of Greenland, Faroe Islands and Åland. Linguistic (sub)divisions are made between countries with a Scandinavian language as the main language (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Iceland) and Finland with its Fenno-Ugric main language and Swedish-speaking minority. Also there is the notion of European Denmark versus the more Nordic rest. Political affiliations too are complex. NATO members (Denmark, Norway, and Iceland) versus the non-allied (Sweden and Finland); EU members (Denmark, Sweden, and Finland) versus non-EU members (Norway and Iceland); nation-states versus the often-forgotten autonomous units of Åland, the Faroe Islands, and Greenland as well as minorities such as the Sami or the Roma.

Depending on the point of view, this list of tensions can be viewed as surprisingly long or relatively short. The tensions have different qualities to them. Some of them can be seen as inter-Nordic, while others depend on a strong extra-Nordic feature (NATO, the EU, or Europe). Additionally, they are certainly seen differently within each Nordic country.

Nordic history has traditionally been written to emphasize the similarities and unity of *Norden* rather than accentuating the differences and tensions. In the past few years several new books on the history of the Nordic region have turned their focus toward the differences between the countries. In doing so, they use the Nordic framework as a point of departure when analyzing the Nordic countries in international comparison. This signifies a shift in what kind of construction of *Norden* academic literature contributes to. Modernity is treated very differently in these books. Each approach has its merits. An approach that is couched in theories of modernity frames very interesting questions about what *Norden* is and how Nordic modernity compares to developments in other parts of Europe, whereas the more historically oriented studies

tend to complicate the narratives and put focus on the contingent character of historical trajectories.

Five National Exceptions

Nordic Paths to Modernity, edited by Jóhann Páll Árnason and Björn Wittrock, utilizes the perspective of a particular Nordic modernity (with five national variants).⁴ The book devotes two chapters to each of the five Nordic countries. Apart from these ten chapters, all five countries are discussed together in an introduction by the editors and an insightful overview of ‘Nordic modernity’ by Bo Stråth. All of the authors deploy a comparative perspective in their nationally delineated chapters, and are quite obviously well acquainted with the previous work of their co-authors.

The volume is theoretically couched in a tradition of studying multiple modernities as varying configurations of political, economic, and cultural factors that mark the different ‘paths’ to modernity in the Nordic countries.⁵ The book’s introduction calls for a pluralistic take on modernity as an epoch and socio-cultural condition. The dominant narrative in the individual chapters is, however, more rigid. It revolves around the process of modernity through the transformation of the Danish and Swedish empires (although the word empire is not used) into five nation-states over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nation building stands out as a key theme that combines industrialization, political ruptures, and the cultural construction of collective identity.

Interestingly, many of the national chapters are inclined to explain how and why the respective countries differ from the rest of *Norden*. This highlights the well-known fact that Nordicism has been regarded somewhat differently in the respective Nordic countries and that the apparent asymmetrical political and cultural relations between different intellectual centres in the Nordic countries also play a role in the assessment of Nordicism. For an analysis of Finland, the relationship to Sweden as a ‘big brother’ is always present, as is the mixture of a colonial past and a cultural debt when dealing with Iceland’s complex relations to Denmark. Henrik Stenius discusses this in terms of ‘old and

new states' in his attempt to explain how Finland differs from the rest, yet is the same.

One tempting idea is to see these asymmetries as less tied to national political cultures and more to particular persons or intellectual fields. Studies in intellectual history can clearly show how intellectuals from smaller countries, cities, or universities are often in an underdog position while visiting the larger intellectual centres, but also have an outsider position in which they can better distance themselves from the academic quibbles in the centre. Furthermore, a visit to the centre is hard currency when coming back to one's local intellectual field.⁶ Could this perspective also have been used to understand the relation between the Nordic countries, and perhaps more, the way in which intellectuals in the different countries related to each other?

Any study concerning the Nordic region, *Norden* or Scandinavia is bound to participate in a construction of what *Norden* is or should be. In the classic analysis in the textbook *The Cultural Construction of Norden* this was done by taking myths about *Norden* seriously by analyzing processes of how the myths were made Nordic. The volume itself studied a Nordic *Sonderweg* that was explained through the myth of the Nordic peasant at the core of a Nordic type of Enlightenment and which helped control the tension between freedom and equality.⁷

The authors of *Nordic Paths to Modernity* seem overall less keen to talk about *Norden* as a unit (although three of the contributors also wrote chapters in *The Cultural Construction of Norden*). They have a less constructionist approach (inasmuch as they have a common approach), and are mostly interested in the political realities of the Swedish and Danish composite states during their transition into five different nation-states and in the breakthrough of political modernity. They are to a lesser degree intrigued by the idea of *Norden* as a unit and end up stressing the differences rather than the similarities of the five Nordic countries. Here, the construction of Nordicism is made through the imagination of an ideal type of *Norden* from which the national cases then deviate. This is perhaps symptomatic of the decline of interest in the Nordic project since the 1990s (although the past few years have witnessed some renewed interest). The Nordic paths to modernity apparently need to be explained through a set of common questions and historical developments, but a common interwoven future for the Nordic bloc seems less evident. It is also increasingly evident that the

tradition of writing a sort of internal history of Nordic modernity has to be challenged by interpretations that address more diligently the external relations to great European powers, a point made in Bo Stråth's overview and demonstrated in Risto Alapuro's chapter on Finland.

The shift in analyzing the Nordic countries through exceptions entails a sort of Europeanization of the analysis of *Norden* – not in the sense that the Nordic countries have become more European (what would that even mean!), but in the sense that the analysis of *Norden* as a unit is not as compelling anymore. Instead *Norden*, like Europe, is seen as a more fluid sum of exceptions and variations.

The focus on the five exceptions sometimes loses sight of the strong tradition of Nordic cooperation. The book might have benefitted from a discussion of the role of how processes relating to modernity, especially in the period 1930–1990, were negotiated among intellectuals, civil servants, politicians, and enthusiasts within the framework of official and unofficial Nordic cooperation. These processes certainly had their own national trajectories in the sense that Nordic cooperation was not equally significant in all Nordic countries, but the primary comparative space for negotiating these processes was still the Nordic one.⁸

Throughout the book, and throughout political and intellectual discourse, phrases along the lines of 'typically Scandinavian' or 'Nordic' are used by the authors to describe popular movements, popular education, the class-compromises of the 1930s between social democrats and the agrarians, the role of the welfare state and social democratic politics, and so on. In these phrases, Scandinavia or *Norden* is both national and transnational at the same time – it is a way of indirectly talking about one's home country. An interesting point of departure for future research is to trace the history of discussions about 'Nordic welfare states' or the 'Nordic tradition of *bildning/dannelse*' and to study this type of language as a new way of framing the questions at hand.⁹ In his chapter, Henrik Stenius raises the question of a particular Finnish way of being Nordic in the nineteenth century, but then stresses that the historical actors themselves did not consciously recognize their activities as Nordic. Would it not be of interest to also study when this type of notion was first formulated and how the discourse of what can be called typically Nordic gained momentum?

Another, and partly contradictory topos, is an ideal type of the Nordic or Scandinavian that often refers to the paradigmatic case of

Sweden (but sometimes also Norway or Denmark). These ideal types are based on one particular country and are then transnationalized. In the descriptions of Iceland and Finland, the general Scandinavian or Nordic narrative often takes the perspective of the outsider. In the latter cases, the question is to which extent Iceland and Finland have followed a Nordic model in the first place. When, for example, Jóhann Páll Árnason writes about Iceland compared to the rest, the other Nordic countries are lumped together into an ideal type that serves the purpose of highlighting Icelandic exceptionalism.

The political relevance of being a Nordic country is in flux. Alapuro notes in his comparative chapter on Finnish and Nordic modernity that the Nordic model is undermined by the politics of global competition and the need for each country to separately respond to global challenges, but at the same time globalization pushes us to think in terms of models, including the Nordic one.¹⁰ The synchronicity of a weakened internal pressure to see politics, economy, and culture in a Nordic frame and the comparative external pressure to do just this, can be discerned by looking at the present-day politics of Nordic cooperation. Nordic cooperation suffers from a lack of interest among citizens, but the outside surge for information about *Norden* is evident. This is also visible in the way scholarship regarding *Norden* is conducted today. Framing books as Scandinavian or Nordic is popular, but the books themselves are less interested in portraying the Nordic countries as a unit.

Scandinavian Empires and Eighteenth-Century Steps toward Modernity

The study of Nordic political culture may also take place without the ambition to discuss *Norden* as an entity at all, which is done in two recent volumes on eighteenth-century political culture in the Swedish and Danish empires. In *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity* edited by Magdalena Naum and Jonas Nordin, Scandinavia is simply framed through the lens of ‘small-time players’ in the international field of colonies and trade. In this exceptionally coherent, edited volume the objects of study are the different colonial projects that took place within the Danish and Swedish empires.

In *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution* edited by Pasi Ihalainen, Michael Bregnsbo, Karin Sennefelt, and Patrik Winton, eighteenth-century political culture is viewed through the lens of the ‘age of revolution’. Here, Scandinavian developments are seen as part of general European or Western trends of quick and violent political transformations in the late eighteenth century. Scandinavia is seen as tightly embedded in general political and economic developments of the era, yet as a particularly peaceful example of how transformations in political cultures took place.

In both of these books, Scandinavia or the Nordic countries is to a lesser degree a problematized entity. The empires in the North provide Lutheran political units with many similarities (including their small size), but neither of the books is interested in explaining what makes *Norden* Nordic or assessing the common features in the modernization of political cultures in these countries. Instead, Scandinavia is simply a good location for analyzing modern political cultures from a comparative perspective.

Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity covers the colonial projects of the Danish and Swedish empires, analyzes their intellectual background and their practical organization, and puts this into a global perspective of colonialism. The authors include the best experts on the topic. Apart from individual studies on the historiography and self-perception of the Scandinavian empires as colonial powers as well as specific colonial projects on the Guinea coast, the Caribbean, the Delaware, Sàpmi, and Greenland, the book also engages researchers such as Audrey Horning and James Symonds who wrap up the discussion on Scandinavia and contrast it to the general trends of colonialism in the period.

Scandinavian colonial history differs from the British or French colonial projects. As C. A. Bayly points out in his influential *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914*, in the late eighteenth century the Chinese Empire and Ottoman Empire were still very powerful, and most of Africa and the Pacific were still indigenously ruled. In 1914, European powers had either taken over or dominated almost the whole globe, leaving little space for great powers in other parts of the world. The seaborne empires of Britain and France had expanded enormously in this period we usually associate with the modern age.¹¹ The small Scandinavian empires were not part of this global conquest. They lost

their colonies and were divided into smaller entities. They did, however, develop economically and politically, and moved toward political modernity, but did so through internal reform, not by the acquisition of colonies and the development of an economy based on colonial exploitation. It is precisely this that makes *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity* an exceptional book as it tells a story of a completely different prospected path toward modernity for the Nordic empires. This path was still in the cards before the Napoleonic era, but disappeared from the horizon by the early nineteenth century.

The reference to the ‘rise of modernity’ that is included in the title of the book promises too much. The discussion on modernity as a theoretical question and the effects of colonial projects on the modernization of the Scandinavian powers are not really elaborated in the book, but in highlighting the colonial projects the book shows that the development of the Nordic countries into modern, democratic, and tolerant nation-states was far from evident. Further, this development is constantly questioned in present-day politics that can draw from other types of historical experiences. The book also succeeds in putting the Nordic development in a global perspective without losing sight of the concrete historical narratives.

In *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution* the focus is more strictly on the political institutions of the eighteenth century. The book collects twenty-six short chapters written by more than twenty authors and grouped under four sections: ‘Crisis and Renewal of Monarchy’, ‘Transformation of Political Debate’, ‘Commercial Interests and Politics’, and ‘Shifting Boundaries of Political Participation’. Each section has a separate introduction that provides an overview of the particular issue in eighteenth-century Scandinavia. Many of the chapters are based on monographic studies already published by the authors. They would only remain teasers to the already published larger studies, had they not been rigorously edited and nicely packaged in the volume with similar studies from the neighbouring countries or disciplines. The volume is a sort of state of the art of studies recently conducted on eighteenth-century Scandinavian political culture.¹²

The book links directly to the take on political modernity that is present in *Nordic Paths to Modernity* by discussing issues such as freedom of print and political modernization, changing roles of the monarchy, religious language and politics, and political participation of women

and peasant farmers. This is done without referring to explicit theoretical discussions about modernity. In doing this, the book highlights how the key themes in the scholarship on modernity are often analyzed through the lens of social history and looked at in nineteenth and twentieth-century settings, but were very much part of the political and economic debate as early as the eighteenth century.

Marie Christine Skuncke's chapter on Swedish freedom of the press from 1766 to 1772 and Henrik Horstbøll's chapter on Danish freedom of the press from 1770 to 1773 provide an illuminating example. The uniqueness of freedom of print in this period is in itself interesting, but the fact that the Swedish liberties sprang out of a strong estate politics, whereas the Danish freedom was established during the absolute monarchy under the *de facto* reign of Johann Friedrich Struensee shows how complicated and contingent shifts in politics can be. Detailed examples of the contestedness of political and social reform do not undermine long-term analyses of modernity, but certainly help diversify the narrative of Nordic modernities as self-evident processes. The contingency of historical development is often emphasized in *Nordic Paths to Modernity* but the authors of *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution* make this much more clear by making contradictory and surprising historical developments visible.

There is one particularly important way in which the volumes *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution* and *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity* contribute to the view of Norden. Namely, they highlight the imperial character of Sweden and Denmark in the pre-Napoleonic era. This legacy is not paid sufficient attention in *Nordic Paths to Modernity*. Wittrock and Árnason even refute the idea that Sweden in the eighteenth century could have been seen as an empire. In this vein, one should bear in mind, like Iver B. Neumann has pointed out, that the modern states of Norway, Iceland, and Finland are also part of (not the objects of) this imperial tradition.¹³

Signs of Modernity

Modernity can also be a point of reference for the study of individuals. This is the case in Julie K. Allen's *Icons of Modernity*, a book that in an intriguing way labels Georg Brandes and Asta Nielsen as key figures

of the breakthrough of the modern. Brandes is perhaps the most well-known Nordic intellectual in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Europe, whereas the one generation younger Nielsen was one of the most prominent silent-film actors of the early twentieth century. Their relationship to their native Denmark was a conflicted one. They were first cherished, then outsiders, and finally made into icons of Danish culture.

Allen's perspective relies on two assumptions. First, Brandes and Nielsen were vehicles for modernity in intellectual life and in cinema in their homeland. Brandes especially became a key figure in representing modern individualism in the Nordic countries and Europe. Second, they were held as central representatives of Denmark abroad, thus contributing to an image of Denmark as an exceptionally modern country in early twentieth-century Europe. These two assumptions make it logical to study these figures as icons of modernity, but raise obvious questions about representativeness.

The focus on individuals is a very convincing way of showing the significance of not only studying modernity as a heuristic model for historical development (be it a simple model of modernization or a more complex model of multiple modernities as in the case of Wittrock and Árnason), but also to look at how past perceptions of the modern changed. Allen also shows how these were negotiated as features of national self-perceptions or the image of other nations. Allen writes about endo- and exo-stereotypes, but it is perhaps more fruitful to see these as competing or contested images of how different people have wanted to see a national 'we' or a national 'they'. In the end, these stereotypical images have not been static and, more importantly, they have been rhetorically significant in given political debates.

Allen mentions that the exo-stereotype that in part drew from Brandes' and Nielsen's oeuvre often included the whole of Scandinavia. From the point of view of a discussion about Nordic modernity, this seems important. The endo- and exo-stereotypes (to use Allen's terminology) were not only contested, but also often asymmetrical in the sense that the exo-stereotypes tended to be much more general and bundle together all of Scandinavia. As discussed above, the outside conceptualization of images of the Nordic countries was influential in the target countries themselves.¹⁴

The period Allen studies is often termed as a golden age of Danish culture. It followed the rather quick loss of Norway, Schleswig-Holstein, and Danish colonies in West Africa and India. A future of improvement after these losses was formulated in a slogan ‘Outward losses shall be regained inwardly’.¹⁵ The slogan did have a Swedish predecessor in Esaias Tegnér’s famous poem *Svea* (1812): ‘to conquer Finland back within the borders of Sweden!’¹⁶ This formulation provided a redescription of how Sweden could, even after a loss of a third of its ground area, move forward and develop itself in comparison to its neighbouring countries. Both in Sweden and Denmark this inward turn meant an internal reflexivity in terms of economic development, culture, and politics that we often are accustomed to associate with a conscious striving to develop one’s country – a path toward modernity within a nation-state.

Brandes and Nielsen were certainly key figures in developing Danish culture in such a period, but this role was not without its problems. They both became outsiders in their native lands and both reached a significant international position, which was not always a merit at home. However, it is clear that especially Brandes could use the different geographical contexts to his advantage. Rejection at home could be used abroad, and international fame could be translated into status at home.¹⁷ Furthermore, his time of international celebrity coincided with a so-called ‘Scandinavian moment in world literature’, as the Norwegian literary historian Tore Rem termed it.¹⁸ Ibsen, Andersen, Strindberg, and Brandes all struggled and triumphed as international authors, and later on also reached an almost hegemonic status in their home countries.

In Allen’s account Brandes and Nielsen stand as a sort of representatives for a liberal, secular and modern Denmark. In their time, this Danishness was not unanimously accepted, and for anyone following present-day Danish politics, it is clear that these issues remain disputed. Allen acknowledges the inherent contestedness of cultural identity and politics, but still argues that the acceptance of Nielsen and Brandes as iconic figures also on Danish soil is due to the modern, tolerant, and liberal Denmark that has emerged since. In a sense the exo-stereotype of Denmark has prevailed. For sure, the political climate has changed and can be seen as significantly less conservative than in the early twentieth century, but there are also other possible reasons to the shift in how Nielsen and Brandes have been perceived. Can it be that the distance

in time allows also present-day Danes with a conservative outlook to celebrate the past heroes through a sort of amnesia of the cultural battles of the early twentieth century? Has the value we place on being international changed so significantly that it is simply impossible to regard icons such as Brandes and Nielsen as foreign or non-Danish?

Modernities and Language

One of the lessons of these books is that Nordic modernities are best approached in the plural. The historical experience of being modern has not been the same in all the Nordic countries, nor have different strata in society experienced it in a similar fashion. It is also clear that the space in which these experiences have been negotiated have not only been national spaces. The practice of comparison between the Nordic countries has meant cross-fertilization between these countries and the individuals living in them. This has made it possible to understand modernity also as a Nordic phenomenon.

The focus on the discursive negotiations of concepts such as secularism, religion, progress, individualism, freedom, liberalism, socialism, conservatism, democracy, people, industrialization, economy – that is, concepts we associate with the modernization of culture, economy, and politics – are not at the fore of any of the books. They do figure in some of the chapters in *Scandinavia in the Age of Revolution* that frame the development of political discourse in eighteenth-century Sweden, in how Bo Stråth compares the trajectories of the five Nordic countries, and the way in which Julie K. Allen discusses Georg Brandes and Asta Nielsen's perception of themselves as carriers of cultural reform. Still, the majority of the cases discussed relate modernity in the Nordic countries to economic expansion and innovation, political ruptures (especially the diminishing of the Danish and Swedish empires), or the specificities of Nordic Lutheran political and religious culture. These perspectives are fundamental, but they are also surprisingly traditional. The interrelatedness of change in economy, politics, and society and the discourse on them, is not entirely absent in the books, but it plays only a small role.

In an influential take on modernity in Germany, Reinhart Koselleck famously suggested that a crucial change occurred in political and social language in the period 1750–1850, and that this change should

be studied historically to better understand the dynamics between language and the factors that language refers to.¹⁹ One of the questions that the books here raise is, how Nordic would crucial concepts of modernity appear if they were to be studied from a Koselleckian conceptual history point of view. Would the study of the conceptualization of individualism, religion, or other concepts that we associate with modernity be similar in the different Nordic countries? Would it be possible to talk about a Nordic conceptual universe of some sort and thus support the idea of a particular Nordic path to modernity? To be sure, the answers to these types of questions would be just as complex as the ones provided in the books discussed above, but asking them would supplement the study of Nordic modernities by taking into account how issues relating to modernity were tackled in the past and how those debates influenced the choices that individual agents made.

Notes

- 1 For a lucid example, see Mary Hilson, *The Nordic Model: Scandinavia since 1945* (London, 2008) 11–13. I thank Johan Strang for comments on the text.
- 2 See Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang, ‘Introduction: “Nordic Democracy” in a World of Tensions’, Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang (eds), *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy* (Helsinki, 2010).
- 3 Pauli Kettunen, ‘A Return to the Figure of the Free Nordic Peasant’, *Acta Sociologica* 42 (1999): 259–269.
- 4 For a similar take, see Niels Finn Christiansen & Klaus Petersen, ‘Preface’, *Scandinavian Journal of History* 26:3 (2001): 153–156; Niels Finn Christiansen, Klaus Petersen, Nils Edling and Peter Haave (eds), *The Nordic Model of Welfare: A Historical Reappraisal* (Copenhagen, 2006).
- 5 See Shmuel N. Eisenstadt (ed.), *Multiple Modernities* (New Brunswick, 2005), especially Eisenstadt’s introduction and Wittrock’s contribution to the volume.
- 6 Stefan Nygård and Johan Strang, ‘Facing Asymmetry: Nordic Intellectuals and Centre-Periphery Dynamics in European Cultural Space’, *Journal of the History of Ideas* (forthcoming).
- 7 Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth, ‘Introduction: The Cultural Construction of Norden’, Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth (eds), *Cultural Construction of Norden* (Oslo, 1997) 1–3.

- 8 See Norbert Götz and Heidi Haggrén (eds), *Regional Cooperation and International Organizations: The Nordic Model in Transnational Alignment* (London, 2009). For a comparative epistemology, see Pauli Kettunen, 'The Power of International Comparison: A Perspective on the Making and Challenging of the Nordic Welfare State', in N. F. Christiansen et al. (eds), *The Nordic Model of Welfare: A Historical Reappraisal* (Copenhagen, 2006) 31–65.
- 9 See Kurunmäki and Strang (eds), *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy*; Pauli Kettunen, 'The Nordic Welfare State in Finland', *Scandinavian Journal of History* 26:3 (2001): 225–247, particularly 233–234.
- 10 Global economic challenges and the evolving of global politics are obviously also an argument for closer cooperation, but this perspective is more present in ceremonial politics than actual economic and international policy. For an economic argument for the formation of a Nordic federation, see Gunnar Wetterberg, *The United Nordic Federation* (Copenhagen, 2010).
- 11 C.A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford, 2004) 1–3.
- 12 Marie-Christine Skuncke and Henrika Tandefelt (eds), *Riksdag, kaffehus och predikstol: Frihetstidens politiska kultur 1766–1772* (Stockholm & Helsingfors, 2003), is a similar companion to the state of the art, although with a focus on Sweden.
- 13 Iver B. Neumann, 'Imperializing Norden', *Cooperation and Conflict* 49:1 (2014): 119–129.
- 14 Peter Stadius, *Resan till Norr: Spanska Nordenbilder kring sekelskiftet 1900* (Helsingfors, 2005). The most influential outside report on Scandinavia is perhaps Marquis W. Childs, *Sweden: The Middle Way* (New Haven, 1936).
- 15 'Hvad udad tabes skal indad vindes' does not translate easily. Mine differs slightly from those provided by Allen (19) and Østergård (56).
- 16 The original 'inom Sverges gräns eröfra Finland åter!' is from: Esaias Tegnér, 'Svea', Fredrik Böök and Åke K.G. Lundquist (ed.), *Esaias Tegnér's Samlade dikter II, 1809–1816* (Lund, 1968) 66.
- 17 See Nygård and Strang, 'Facing Asymmetry'.
- 18 Tore Rem (ed.), *Henry Gibson/Henrik Ibsen: Den provinsielle verdensdikteren: Mottakelsen i Storbritannia 1872–1906* (Oslo, 2006).
- 19 Reinhart Koselleck, *Vergangene Zukunft* (Frankfurt am Main, 1974), see especially the chapters on *Neuzeit* and *Erfahrungsraum und Erwartungshorizont*.

About the Author

Jani Marjanen is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of Helsinki, Centre for Nordic Studies. His dissertation focused on the economic patriotism associated with eighteenth-century economic societies. Together with Koen Stapelbroek he edited *The Rise of Economic Societies in the Eighteenth Century: Patriotic Reform in Europe and North America* (2012). He is review editor of *Contributions to the History of Concepts*. In the academic year 2014–2015, he is a visiting researcher at the Max Planck Institute for Human Development, Center for the History of Emotions, Berlin. E-mail: jani.marjanen@helsinki.fi