

Urbanity in the Periphery

Nordic Town History in a Comparative Perspective

International Conference on Nordic Town History, Stockholm, August 28-30, 2019

In 2019, the Institute of Urban history at Stockholm university will celebrate its 100th anniversary. Founded in 1919 by representatives of the Swedish towns who wanted their history researched properly, the Institute focused since then on Swedish towns and municipalities, in a long-term as well as international perspective. However, since then both the interest in towns as well as their functions changed considerably. In recent years, the concept of urbanity re-emerged, crediting especially the bigger cities with a leading role in their societies' modernisation. At the same time, the urbanity of smaller towns is in debate. What is their role and future in times of de-industrialisation and de-urbanisation?

These questions are best to be answered in a comparative perspective as well as by way of a dialogue between town historians from different backgrounds, but with a common history in mind. We can call this common history for the North. The North is a region in Europe, which always found itself in the periphery and which despite its importance in economic terms perceived itself as lacking, not the least with regards to its urbanity.

The North comprises of different historical regions, which always stayed in close geographical contact. It was marked by economical, political and cultural empires like the German and Danish colonization, the Hansa, the Swedish and Russian Empires. At long last, it was divided during the Cold War. After 1989, the North was re-shaped, filled with new meanings, referring to its role in the past as a kind of role model for the future.

This conference is meant to explore the role of Nordic towns in a historical and comparative perspective. There might not be a typical "Nordic town", but there are certainly similarities, due to exchange relations, common for many towns in the North.

The conference is also meant to initialize a dialogue and a long-term cooperation between town historians from different nations, belonging to the North. Their different historical interests and backgrounds in town cultures will help to intensify the dialogue and the common interest in town history.

The conference invites papers on town history of the North, from all historical periods, preferably with a comparative approach. The conference will take place on August 28-30, 2019, in Stockholm. The conference language is English, the conference will be free-of-charge. The organizers will try to subsidize the participation of younger scholars and lecturers. For more information, ask the organizers.

Organizers: Institute of Urban History, Stockholm University, <http://urbanhistory.historia.su.se/>

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The call for paper ends on December 1, 2018. Please write also, if you are interested in the idea of a stronger cooperation between Nordic town historians.

