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Island and the Pipeline
Gotland Facing the Geopolitical Power of Nord Stream

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Abstract

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In 2005, the Nord Stream Consortium launched a pipeline project with the intention to bring Russian natural gas to Germany across the Baltic Sea. Although this raised crucial issues of Russia-EU-Sweden relations on security, energy and the environment the focus of this report is on the Gotland local government response to the Nord Stream approach, thus illustrating the need for a transversal human geography-political studies perspective. Situated in the heart of the Baltic Sea, and in line with the established Swedish governmental “remiss” procedure of commission and referral for consideration the Gotland authority was requested by the Swedish Government to make a statement about the pipeline. However, before the government was even asked for permission the Nord Stream Consortium with Russian Gazprom as the major shareholder turned to the Gotland authority with an offer they after some conflict-ridden twists and turns, manifested in three policy lines as described in the report, decided not to refuse. A narrative inspired analytical approach is applied to dissect the more or less contradictory standpoints and legitimating arguments posed by the actors in the political process preceding the local authority decision to accept the Nord Stream offer, i.e. the local scale actors were provoked to take a stand on a big issue raised by a huge multinational company. By in detail examining the local political repercussions of the energy project the case study contributes to a trans-disciplinary understanding of multi-scalar/multi-level governance. In an epilogue the report also highlights the sudden turnaround of the local narrative in autumn 2016 when Gotland Regional Authority was on the brink of making a deal with Nord Stream II. The turnaround flashlights the geopolitical position of the island in the crossfire of interests concerning the Baltic Sea Region.

Keywords: Baltic Sea, Gotland, Nord Stream, local government, multi-scalar governance, narrative, legitimation, natural gas pipeline.

Foreword

This report is an extended version of a study by Karin Edberg and Anna-Lisa Fransson, based on extensive fieldwork by the two at Gotland during 2012–2013. As a sub-author, Ingemar Elander has contributed some overall contextual information, and drawn attention to the sudden turnaround of the local policy narrative when approached by Nord Stream II (the epilogue section). We are grateful to all interviewees who kindly shared their stories with us.

About the authors

Karin Edberg is a PhD student in sociology at Södertörn University. Her PhD thesis in progress concerns how local actors frame contemporary energy challenges when they substantialize in the form of infrastructural siting, for instance the Nord Stream gas pipeline or wind power. The multi-level and complex nature of the framing is of particular interest.

Anna-Lisa Fransson is a PhD student in politics at Örebro University. Her PhD thesis in progress concerns multi-scalar, multi-level politics around the Nord Stream gas pipeline project, and takes a narrative approach to the project with its load of tensions concerning the Baltic Sea environment, EU-Russia energy relations, and national security.

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Abbreviations

When referred to in the running text interviewed persons listed in Appendix II are referred to as R1, R2 etc.

The three local policy lines are referred to as PL1, PL2 and PL3.

INTRODUCTION

In September 2005, the Nord Stream I¹ gas pipeline was launched under the name North European Gas Pipeline, with the aim of bringing Russian gas to Germany across the Baltic Sea (see map, Appendix I)². In the midst of alarms and gatherings regarding the poor health of the sea, the application of the Nord Stream I gas pipeline was considered, reviewed over several rounds and eventually approved by the Swedish Government. Although 40 percent of the Nord Stream I route was planned to run through Sweden's exclusive economic zone, the government expressed no interest in buying and using the gas. However, according to international law, government permission for the project was required, and it turned out to be based on an official interpretation exclusively in terms of environmental arguments (Langlet 2014). As part of an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), a *remiss* was sent out asking for comments from governmental agencies, local authorities and NGOs.³ After several application

¹ We use the term Nord Stream I to refer to the pipeline project finished in 2011, whereas the second one is labelled Nord Stream II, which the Nord Stream Consortium plans to be implemented during 2017 – 2019. When specifically referring to the company as such we sometimes use the terms Nord Stream Consortium or Nord Stream AG.

² Basic official information about the pipeline is available in a fact sheet on the internet (Nord Stream 2016), and via this site, lots of other information given by the consortium is also available. The pipeline project was initially promoted by former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Schröder was appointed chairman of the Nord Stream I board ten years ago and was recently given with the same position in the Nord Stream II board (Salzen 2016). Nord Stream I and Nord Stream II are legally two separate companies. The Russian majority shareholder OAO Gazprom holds a 51 percent stake in Nord Stream I, with leading German energy companies Wintershall Holding GmbH and E.ON SE holding 15.5 percent each and the Dutch natural gas infrastructure company N.V. Nederlandse Gasunie and the leading French energy provider GDF SUEZ SA each holding a 9 percent stake (Nord Stream 2016). Nord Stream II AG, however, is owned equally by the Dutch Gazprom Gerosgaz Holdings B.V. [Besloten vennootschap met beperkte aansprakelijkheid/Public Limited Liability Company], an affiliate of PJSC [Public Joint Stock Company] Gazprom, and PJSC Gazprom. “An ownership structure of equal EU and Russian interests in the project is envisaged, which reflects the significance of this new infrastructure for Europe's future energy supply needs” (Nord Stream II 2016b).

³ The unique Swedish governmental process of commission and referral for consideration [*remiss*] “underpins a close and systematic contact mechanism between the government and the third sector. It is the *default* way of dealing with legislation, while also creating knowledge and procedures within third sector organizations that allow them to participate in and influence the policy-making process” (Olsson et al. 2009, 169; italics in original).

rounds, the Swedish government finally decided to grant permission on 5 November 2009 (Fransson 2014a).

As the strategy and narrative used by the Swedish Government to make the pipeline possible have recently been analysed by one of the authors (Fransson 2014a), in this report, we will focus upon the role of *local government* – the local authority of Gotland island⁴ – in the process of finally opening the door to the Nord Stream I Consortium and accepting the construction of a gas pipeline. In a world increasingly characterized by multi-scalar, multi-level, and transnational governance, local politics is “influenced by courses of events at other societal levels, events that contribute to the formation of a contextual setting where the concrete actions are staged and played out” (Granberg 2008: 372; see also Bulkeley et al. 2014; Gustavsson, Elander & Lundmark 2009). Or, as formulated by Lejano et al. (2013: 173):

Through stories, narrators link themselves and their actions to a perceived larger system. Through narrative we get a sense of how the whole is determined by the actors and perspectives of the parts – literally, how the plot emerges from events and the actions of characters.

Arguably, the case of the Gotland local authority facing the mighty Nord Stream I Consortium on the gas pipeline issue is an illustrative case in this respect, not least when considering the strong muscles of the Consortium, which comprises the Russian Gazprom as the major shareholder (51 per cent) and other shareholders situated in Germany, the Netherlands, and France.

Situated in the heart of the Baltic Sea Region and highly dependent on the security and health of the sea, the local authority of Gotland was one actor requested by the Swedish Government to make a statement about the prospected pipeline. However, even before permission by the government was granted – or even requested – the Nord Stream Consortium turned to the Gotland local authority with an offer they, after conflict-ridden twists and turns, finally accepted. The offer consisted of a million-euro investment

⁴ In the report, we use the political-administrative terms ‘local government’ and ‘local authority’ interchangeably. For the period before 2011, we use the term ‘municipality’ [kommun] when the island of Gotland as a basic geopolitical entity is referenced. After that, we use the since-then official term Region Gotland or the Regional Authority.

in Slite⁵, a small community with a worn-down harbour on the northeast coast of the island. The offer was such that in the case that *permission* for the pipeline was granted, the developer would have exclusive and free access to the port for storage and shipping during construction work on the pipeline. However, in the case of *rejection*, the company would nevertheless stand by its offer and allow access to the equipment of the port, though it would be of no use to the company. The only restraining requirement in the developer's offer to the local authority was a *prompt answer*. As Nord Stream wanted the harbour to be in use by the time that (possible) permission was granted, it required an answer from the local authorities *ahead* of the national decision regarding permission. After many turns, the complex issue was managed by the local authority in favour of the harbour deal, although it was also reluctant about the gas pipeline project.

On the surface, the issue might look quite simple, following an outright rational logic. Why should the local authority refuse an offer by Nord Stream to receive a renovated and expanded harbour in the Slite community? However, a closer look at the local policy process reveals a pattern that was complex and often contradictory, including environmental as well as geopolitical concerns. *The aim of this report is to understand how the local authority, as displayed in its narration, managed to legitimate the closing of a local harbour deal with the Russian Gazprom dominated the Nord Stream Consortium while still criticizing the construction of a nearby transnational gas pipeline that was dependent on the same deal, i.e., to have it both ways.*

By analysing the policy process along the logic of a narrative, the study will reconstruct the string of events as told in interviews, municipal debates and written documents. The reconstruction of such events will account for local actors' positioning in three policy lines/narratives and identify the arguments used by the actors to legitimize their own positioning. In doing so, we reconstruct a comprehensive narrative about the Gotland municipality harbour and the Nord Stream I gas pipeline, corresponding to what some narrative-orientated scholars call a *fabula*, which is "reconstructed by the analyst and is found wholly only in the reconstruction" (Lejano et al. 2013: 75). *What is the policy narrative (the fabula) read and re-constructed through three local authority policy lines that led up to the harbour agree-*

⁵ A semi-urban community with approximately 1500 inhabitants in 2010 (SCB 2013).

ment and the Gotland municipality's official positioning in the pipeline matter? How and by what arguments were the three positions narrated and legitimized in the process leading up to the final decision?

Following this introduction, we sketch the geopolitical setting within which the Gotland political process took place. The topic of the third section will be our narratively inspired methodological approach. Then, we go section by section through the pipeline case as told by three different and partly overlapping policy lines, from the setting/beginning via solution to the ending equilibrium. In a concluding section, we reflect on our findings in the broader framework of multi-scalar/multi-level and transnational relations with focus on the importance of security, energy and the environment in the Baltic Sea Region. We finally add an epilogue highlighting the dramatic turnaround of policy positions in front of the planned Nord Stream II in autumn 2016, which mainly occurred because of a Swedish re-interpretation of Russian foreign and energy policies in relation to the Baltic Region and the EU.

GOTLAND AND THE BALTIC SEA REGION – THE LOCAL/REGIONAL AUTHORITY IN CONTEXT

Gotland is the largest island of Sweden, administratively comprising one single municipality [kommun] and about 57 400 inhabitants (SCB 2015).⁶ 'Municipality' is the common legal label of all 290 basic, local, self-governing units in Sweden, regardless of their size and geographical location. Elected by the people every fourth year, the municipal council is the basic representative body. Gotland municipality is unique in the sense that it also has the responsibilities and tasks associated with a regional county council [landsting], and since 2011, it has been officially called Region Gotland (SKL 2016, Region Gotland 2016). Obviously, the local/regional authority has a precarious geopolitical position in the crossfire of interests concerning the Baltic Sea Region (see map, Appendix I).

The Nord Stream pipelines raise issues of multi-scalar/multi-level, multi-jurisdictional, and transnational governance in the Baltic Sea Region, including military security, energy, and the environment as three policy areas of outstanding relevance (Gilek et al. 2016; Jonter & Viktorov 2011; Kern & Loffelsend 2004). Cutting through the notoriously sensitive and ecologically challenged Baltic Sea, the pipeline constitutes an immensely extended infrastructure for natural gas to satisfy West European energy demand but also to prolong European use of and dependence on fossil fuels to be delivered to Europe for the next 50 to 80 years despite priorities for CO₂ reduction (Bouzarovski & Konieczny 2010; Karm 2008; Whist 2008; Larsson 2007). The gas originates from Siberia, making Russia an interdependent trading partner and empowered actor on the European political scene. Germany and other European states essentially rely on Russia for their gas supplies (Malmborg 2014).

⁶ Local government in Sweden has a strong constitutional-legal foundation, backed up by a set of laws regulating relations with the central government and the citizens. It has its own fiscal rights, and its political organization is based on direct and proportional elections, thus giving local government political legitimacy in a more qualified sense than a purely de-concentrated state administration. In addition, local government administrators and field-workers have strong professional competence. Overall, local governments in Sweden have a broad set of social and infrastructural functions and dispose of enough crucial resources to qualify as a local *self-government* (Montin & Granberg 2013; Elander 1991).

As the major share of ownership is held by the state-owned Russian gas company Gazprom, the Nord Stream pipelines have become a substantial source of geopolitical tension in the region (Bouzarovski & Koniczny 2010). The ongoing conflict with Ukraine makes the gas pipeline loaded with even more political gunpowder. However, despite fears of increasing energy dependence on Russia, the rationale behind the Nord Stream pipelines has also been described as an issue of mutual interest between energy providers and consumers, i.e., to “guarantee Europe’s energy security and the formation of reliable, strategic partnership between Russia and the EU in the Baltic Sea Region” (Lagutina 2011: 74). In line with this, there is also an argument raised that “it is too simplistic to view Russia only through a geopolitical lens [...] Moscow has made good use of legal and technocratic instruments, which fall into the market approach, without embracing the market approach at the paradigmatic level” (Romanova 2016: 871). Reflecting on the balancing of rights and interests in “transboundary transit pipelines”, the legal scholar Langlet states that Nord Stream is “fundamentally about connecting Western European consumers with Russian natural gas fields”. Notably, the pipelines are operated and monitored from a control centre situated in Zug, Switzerland, meaning that Nord Stream AG “is to be regarded as a national of Switzerland and subject to Swiss jurisdiction in accordance with the nationality principle” (Langlet 2014: 980; Fransson 2014a). However, the Nord Stream pipelines have raised not only issues in terms of energy and geopolitical security but also serious concerns in terms of threats to the environment.

After half a century of steadily failing health, the UN International Maritime Organisation, in 2005, designated the Baltic Sea a Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA), creating possibilities for extended environmental protection and placing the Baltic among the top ten most threatened waters in the world, alongside the Great Barrier Reef in Australia, Florida Keys in the US and the Galapagos Archipelago in Ecuador (Fransson et al. 2011; Government Commission Report 2008: 76; Uggla 2007). A Swedish narrative painting the Baltic Sea in a state of deterioration is well documented over half a decade, in official documents (MEPC 2010; Government Commission Report 2008; HELCOM 2007;), media (Nilsson 2011; Hammargren 1985; Dahl 1955), scientific works (Kern 2011; Hansson 2009; Räsänen & Laakonen 2008; SEPA 2004; Durinck et al. 1994), popular culture and social media.

The company itself described the Nord Stream pipeline as an “undersea highway” for natural gas (Nord Stream 2010)⁷ The project idea, however, flew in the face of previous conservation efforts, as laying a gas pipeline involved a range of activities not recommended for the sea and its wildlife. Detonating mines, dumping Nazi German chemical weapons, and blasting, dredging, and filling the seabed to accommodate the pipes were activities that would stir up phosphorus and toxins embedded in the seafloor sediment and disturb and confuse sensitive wildlife (SEPA 2009). Because of the sea’s slow rate of circulation, they would stay in the water column for tens of years, adding to the already poor state of the water (Myrberg & Andrejev 2006).

When Sweden was chairing the European Union (EU) in November 2009 and four years after the announcement of the project - notably despite remaining concerns by some of its agencies - the Swedish Government approved of Nord Stream’s gas pipeline route, which extends 480 kilometres along the seabed of the Swedish economic zone in the Baltic Sea. The argument for approval was that after years of consultation and several rounds of environmental impact assessments, all environmental requirements had been met (Fransson 2014a; Fransson et al. 2011). Construction on the first pipeline started in April 2010, and by 2012, a second parallel line was in

⁷ There is no mistaking of the strong energy and geopolitical load of the project (and its potential follower Nord Stream II) in the following statement of the Managing Director Mattias Warnig in the foreword of an extensive, official description of the project: “We have built something that could well reach beyond many of our own lifespans, and we have made a contribution toward Europe’s long-term energy security. The demand for gas in Europe will clearly continue to grow. *If Europe wishes to compete globally, it will not succeed without gas and, in particular, not without gas from Russia. Nord Stream is Russia’s promise, welded in steel, to deliver the most important transition fuel for today, tomorrow, and years to come. These pipelines represent a means for the EU to create a competitive and sustainable energy mix*” (Warnig 2014: 5; our italics). We will highlight these aspects in our epilogue.

operation⁸. At the time of writing (November-December 2016), the notifying process for a third and fourth pipeline, called Nord Stream II, is ongoing, with completion calculated to occur at the end of 2019.⁹

⁸ “The twin pipelines, which have been operational since 2011 and 2012 respectively, have the capacity to transport a combined total of about 55 bcm of gas a year – that’s enough to satisfy the energy demand of more than 26 million European households. Nord Stream has designed the pipelines to operate for at least 50 years”. (Source: Nord Stream, Who we are. Online: <http://www.nord-stream.com/about-us/>) [Accessed: 2016-04-07]

⁹ However, as will be highlighted in the epilogue section of this report, Nord Stream II has become strongly contested in “high politics” owing to Russian aggression in Crimea and Ukraine and its use of natural gas as an economic and political instrument not just in the Baltic Sea Region.

METHOD – READING STORY AS NARRATIVE

Politics, however defined, is in one way or another an activity that creates meaning in the course of an event. In a self-reflecting article, the much cited scholar in governance studies Rod W. Rhodes argues in favour of

[...] a shift of topos from institutions to meanings in action. It explains shifting patterns of governance by focusing on the actors' own interpretations of their beliefs and practices. The everyday practices arise from agents whose beliefs and actions are informed by traditions and expressed in stories [...] It reveals the contingency and contestability of narratives. (Rhodes 2007, 1259; italics in original)

The use of narrative is based on theories claiming that narrative, or story, can not only describe but also contribute to the explanation of processes of public administration and governance (Fransson 2014a; Bevir 2011; Rhodes 2011; Andrews, Squire & Tamboukou 2008; Robertson 2005; Czarniawska 2004). Following the French structuralist Todorov (1977 [1971]), in this report, we methodologically depart from a traditional structure of a story, the plot, which builds on a sequential order of events, where one step (stage or story element) leads to another (Fransson 2014a; Riessman 2008; Labov & Waletzky 1967). The analytical act of reproducing the policy process will be referred to as *emplotment* (White 1973). The elements are analytically connected in a sequence that will now be presented and then guide our empirical analysis.

Setting, or orientation, describes the scene and its prerequisites. It answers the question “who is this story about, and what is the scene like where the story will unfold?” (Patterson 2008: 25). We will refer to setting also as the “beginning equilibrium” (Czarniawska 2004: 85). *Complication* is the main sequence or the “spine” of the narrative (Patterson 2008: 26). It describes an obstruction, a disturbing force that upheavals equilibrium. In the Gotland local process, this is where a conflict of interest emerges and parallel policy stories with different understandings of the problem are told. *Solution* is the climax of the narrative – in this case, the policy outcome in terms of a local authority decision. The solution is followed by an *ending equilibrium*, i.e., a balanced condition that is not marked by turbulence. Needless to say, the narrative, or *fabula*, told by us as analysts is a construction, and there is always “an act of interpretation involved. Even the barest

narrative account requires interpretation on the part of the bearer” (Lejano et al. 2013: 74).

Organizing parallel narratives in a critical stage of the policy process under study gives us three distinct stories or policy lines in terms of understanding. The policy lines are based on different actors’ positioning and legitimization of positions, as framed by the port decision in relation to the pipeline issue. To understand the process, we supplement the *frame extension* strategy, as explained by Snow et al. (1986; see also Verloo & Lombardo 2007), with its counterpart, the *frame contraction* strategy, indicating that an actor may sometimes tighten the frame to further reduce the scope of the issue and exclude particular consequences. The former makes the frame more inclusive and spacious while also less precise (Eriksson 2011), whereas the latter narrows the policy issue and tightens the frame. For example, when caught between competing and parallel stories on different scales, local authorities may contract their frame to be able to decide on complicated issues (Fraser 2008).

For our study, we conducted interviews with eight local politicians and four civil servants, all of whom had taken an explicit stand in the policy process leading up to the final statement by the local council. The interviews were conducted face to face in Gotland during 2012-2013. All interviews were recorded and, similar to the municipality debates, transcribed, analysed, and cross-checked by the authors. All interviewees are presented in Appendix II. Well aware of the uncertainties about asking people to tell ‘what really happened’; our aim was not really to ask about that but rather to encourage the interviewees to reconstruct their memories in terms of attitudes with regard to the Nord Stream I proposal. In this way, we adopt a pragmatic view, acknowledging that “a research interview is an interaction between participant and researcher, and this interaction will shape the form and features of the data generated” (Yeo et al. 2014: 180).

Supported by official documents and recorded debates, we interpret and re-produce the policy process as a sequential chronology of a story consisting of three different policy lines (see figure 1 and table 1 below). This is our reconstruction of the local gas pipeline process (our fabula). Included in the analysis are also two political debates performed in the municipal council in 2008 and broadcasted on Swedish Radio Gotland¹⁰. In Appendix

¹⁰ For details, see the reference list, under the subtitle “Gotland Municipality official documents”.

III, we show the distribution of council seats for political parties during 2007-2018.

SETTING AND BEGINNING

According to the scholar of planning John Forester (2016: 169),

we all know that whatever we might be able to achieve or accomplish will ‘depend on the context’, but especially when we are talking about spatial, social or political change, it seems all the more important to be clear just what about ‘the context’ actually matters.

So, how do we specify the context in the narrative regarding Nord Stream I with respect to the Island of Gotland? Located in the heart of the Baltic Sea, Gotland is “the natural venue” [den naturliga mötesplatsen] of the region (as described by the municipality itself; Gotland Municipality 2008b). The island saw world wars up close and was situated right in the space that divided the Great Powers during the cold war. In many aspects, it is part of the Post-Soviet sphere, with tensions related to “the East” in fresh memory and repeatedly noted by many Gotlanders.

Widely considered a forerunner in environmental policy and one of the most ecologically modernized countries in the world (Hysing 2014; Lidskog & Elander 2012; Lafferty & Meadowcroft 2000)¹¹, both left- and right wing orientated Swedish Governments have expressed a special concern for the Baltic Sea that is deeply rooted in society and visible even in Swedish popular culture (Fransson 2014b). As a self-acclaimed eco-friendly municipality, Gotland itself has been building an identity as an advocate of wind power and the use of non-fossil fuels (Gotland Municipality 2014; 2008a; 2008b). Heavily dependent on tourism and directly affected by changes concerning the water, Gotland constitutes an important voice nationally and an advisory party in governmental commissions concerning the protection of the Baltic waters (SEPA 2009). This was also the case when the Baltic Sea gas pipeline entered the agenda.

¹¹ Taking into account emissions from the production of goods and services in other countries for end use in Sweden (import), as well as emissions from the domestic production of goods and services for end uses abroad (export), the picture is not quite that positive in terms of the country’s contribution to the amount of CO₂ emitted (Gustavsson & Elander 2016).

When plans for a natural gas pipeline through the Baltic were announced in the mid-2000s, Gotland turned out to be both close to the intended route and close to the action itself. Though most politicians, both from the opposition and the majority (Appendix III), declare that they were not made aware of the pipeline until the developer Nord Stream years later was found to have an interest in the municipality, a handful of actors had heard of or reacted to the plans years earlier.

In 2005, when I first got engaged in the [gas pipeline] issue, it was out of a minor notice in the paper stating that this [project] was underway. [I] thought it was interesting and made some research and realized that it was a non-topical issue in Sweden, whereas I thought it was huge. And then [...] I think I started to write about it and to bring the issue to the Green Party on a national [level]. (R1)

National media at the time noted the geopolitical imprint of the pipeline on the Baltic Region and largely concerned the natural gas that was to be transported between Russia and the EU, whereas local politics framed the issue as constituting a highly uncertain risk to the marine environment. The Social Democratic former chairman of the Gotland Municipal Council suggested that

[w]ith [an environmental] focus, a Swedish position must surely be directly critical of the planned gas pipeline. (...) The risks to fisheries and marine environmental consequences are not fully known but significant. (...) Anyway, I strongly disagree with this venture in the environment of our Baltic Sea. (Lundgren 2006)

With national and municipal elections in the offing, a Centre Party politician in opposition submitted a proposal¹² to the municipal council suggesting that the municipality to take action against the proposed seabed pipeline. The authenticity of the call was strongly questioned by other politicians, who called it “vote-catching” (R1, R10; Municipal Council 2008a), and the author itself, who later developed a more complex standpoint on the pipeline, excusing it as “a lack of knowledge” in a later interview (R6). Vote-catching or not, the Centre Party proposal and the Social Democratic statement show that early local positioning on both sides of the left-right

¹² A written proposal by one or several individual members of parliament or a local/regional council is officially labelled a ‘motion’ in Swedish.

division was negative concerning the pipeline plans – with respect to the environment.

We will diversify the opening scene with a municipal official’s narrative selected from the interviews, which reveals who possibly learned about the pipeline plans first.

I was in Brussels quite early in the 2000s, and it was actually the case that this project, Nord Stream and South Stream, were priority energy projects in EU planning. And that’s where I first encountered it. [...] When could that have been? 2002-2003 something. (R11)

This former administrative port manager thus claims that he, already in the early 2000s, saw the connection between Gotland and the pipeline project. The interviewee, who was to become a vital key player in the port deal and a driving force in the process, further pointed out that he “all the time claimed that in some way, we on Gotland have to get some benefits from this pipeline project” (R11). The official advanced to technical administrative manager, a position that is referred to by all municipal interviewees as important for local development in general.

A newly recruited Green Party politician became an active opponent, self-reporting to be the initiator of activating the party on the pipeline issue at the national level. Another politician who became a strong local opponent, though with a conservative party affiliation (*Moderaterna* in Swedish), recalls the first encounter with the pipeline plans.

Where was it? I read newspapers on the Net. I can’t recall where I got the information from, but I reacted immediately when I got the news. It might have been due to my national security interest, and because that already then, you could tell that Russia was heading the wrong way. There wasn’t more democracy but less when Putin took over the presidency.... (R2)

Environmental and energy matters are of great concern, thus making natural gas delivery a hot issue in the relations between EU member states and Russia (Schmidt-Feltzmann 2011). However, the statement in the quote above (R2) was at the time regarded as quixotic and a caricature of “fear of the Russians”. Subsequent events in Ukraine, however, certainly throw another light on the quote (Götz 2015). Thus, the outcome of the story is not only based on a certain place-based context but also strongly time dependent. Another Conservative Party politician and later a distinct proponent of the pipeline was also informed of the plans at an early stage.

I read German media, so I knew what was in store. It had been European news long before it was actualized here. (R3)

In comparison to foreign media, the transnational pipeline plans did not emerge in earnest in Gotland media until 2006-2007 and came to a peek in 2008 (Edberg, PhD thesis in progress)

COMPLICATION – GOING LOCAL

In 2007, the pipeline was partially reframed in the public debate because of its local implications. During the construction phase, the developers needed five shipping ports and marshalling yards around the Baltic – one of which was the Slite port¹³. Local authorities thus suddenly had to address the gas pipeline issue on several fronts and scales: as a representative of the local population, as a consultative body for national authorities that now requested an official local standpoint, and as a potential harbour renter conducting business with a transnational corporation. In terms of our analytical model (figure 1), the local dimension (a harbour) is identified as a *bridge*, transitioning the policy process - and thus our reconstructed story (fabula) - from the beginning/equilibrium into the complication phase, where the pipeline issue now had to be managed on multiple scales and levels.

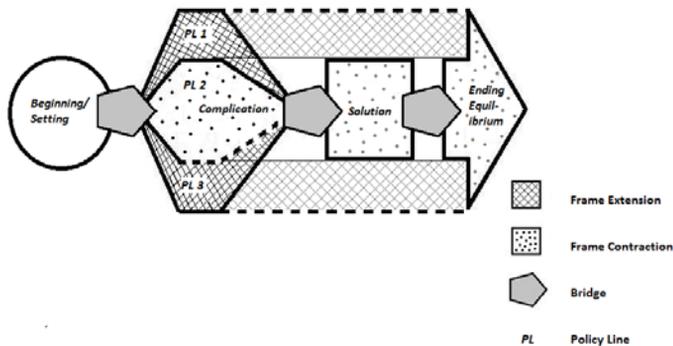


Figure 1. Reading the story as narrative – the analytical framework and the three identified policy lines visualized.

¹³ The other ones being Karlskrona (Sweden), Kotka and Hanko (Finland) and Mukran (Germany) (Nord Stream 2010).

Each cluster of positioning, or policy line, includes a common narrative, a common understanding of the issue at stake. In every line, however, there is a variety of legitimating grounds of how and why the actor has taken its position. How the policy lines relate to each other is illustrated in the figure. A dashed border between Line 1 and Line 2 denotes that the two groups have a large part of their political viewpoints in common, except that actors of Line 1 are outspokenly in favour of the pipeline. During the course of time, some actors will move in between the two groups. Lines 1 and 3 expand the framing by including transnational dimensions, which we will refer to as frame extension, whereas for Line 2, the political majority and the established opposition call for a contraction of the frame.

Nord Stream requested to use Slite harbour for shipping and storing for future construction work. The harbour is strategically located for transport, trade and infrastructural reasons (Appendix I) and was formerly used for ferry traffic to and from mainland Sweden, Finland and the Baltic States. In the mid-2000s, the technical administration closed the port for renovation, and at the time of the Nord Stream offer, it was set aside because of a lack of municipal economic means (R11, R12, R14). Thus, the equipment and preparation needed to enable rental for the extraordinary customer were much too expensive for the municipality to accommodate, and it initially had to decline the offer. At this time, the technical committee¹⁴ of the municipality handled the affair. A Centre Party member of the committee recalls the time:

We arrived quite fast in the political discussion (...); it isn't possible; this money doesn't exist, investing SEK 70 million [EUR 7.4 million] or wherever we were at the time (...); it didn't exist. So, it was "no thanks" again, back to Nord Stream. (R8)

¹⁴ The municipal (after 2011 regional) committees [nämnder], which are equivalent to local/regional political departments, are assemblies of elected politicians who are politically responsible for specific administrative tasks. Decisions of smaller scope may be taken in the committees without involving the Gotland Municipal Council, called Gotland Regional Council [regionfullmäktige] after 2011, as all parties are commonly also represented in the committees. The chairman of each committee is normally from the majority party or parties. Economically, the technical administration composes the largest unit of the municipal organization, which is responsible for public buildings, ports, maintenance, etc. (Gotland in Figures. Facts and Statistics. 2015).

To solve the situation and enable business, an “unusual offer” was presented.

That’s really when they came and brought this other discussion (...) if they could go in and help in any way. That’s when this quite (...) brilliant idea, or calculus, arrived. (R8)

“The calculus” or “unusual offer” refers to is the collaboration between the manager of the municipal technical administration and Nord Stream. The company would pay for the renovation of the harbour, but the money would be administrated as rent charged in advance.

Yes, it [the turn of the discussion] was when they came in and said that ‘we want to finance the reconstruction of the port’. (R2)

And I guess it was me who came up with the solution that you could charge as you would do normally; [money] will be advanced and used directly into a quay project, in which we are renovating the dock. (R11)

There was then an attempt to quietly close the deal in the technical committee (Municipal Technical Committee 2007). It was made so discretely that the deciding members of the committee were not informed about the affair beforehand, and they were shown the contract on the very same day that they were to decide on the deal, with the estimated total sum omitted (Municipal Executive Board 2008). This *modus operandi* was largely criticized by the Green Party and by individual members of other parties as invoking a democratic deficit. The procedure was appealed, and reports to the county court were filed with reference to the distinction of the deal, meaning that an affair of this size should be democratically anchored in the municipal council.

At this stage of the pipeline and harbour process (in 2007/2008), all previously uninformed local politicians learned about the developer Nord Stream, the pipeline through the Baltic and the harbour offer. The offer was framed as a local infrastructural once-in-a-lifetime offer by the technical administration and committee. The need for a backup port for daily ferries was tangible, but the request from the pipeline developer brought horizons for more far-reaching visions such as re-establishing a ferry service to other Baltic countries. This and prospects for local work opportunities were often repeated in the interviews.

Two elements, which will repeatedly intertwine, were now at hand for the local authority. One was to provide an official statement about the pipeline project to the national government. The other was both to decide on

the port deal (which still lacked a formal permit) in the due political instance and to decide whether the harbour deal could and should be closed even if the municipality still disagreed about the pipeline. The tangible local benefits that the transnational project would involve had an effect on the local statement to the national government and might even be regarded to constitute a case of ‘bribery’ offered by the Nord Stream Consortium. Thus, the complication stage is characterized by the geopolitical encounter between the transnational, national and local scales and levels and their respective institutional spokesmen. It was a delicate situation. Local politicians found themselves obliged to consider the two issues not only separately but also in relation to each other. There was great political confusion. Some actors changed position for pragmatic reasons, whereas others reinforced or nuanced their positions. Standing on what we – in analytical terms – call a *bridge*, there was now no return.

Forming three policy lines

The issue(s) at stake cut through political alliances and party lines, making the classical left-right division futile. Instead, three parallel policy lines or narratives can be discerned/reconstructed, based on different understandings of the complication. Notably, these “lines” never existed as stable coalitions in local politics, as party affiliations were not strictly followed. They are analytically constructed policy lines based on arguments and statements selected from documents and narration in the interviews. The lines, based on actors’ communicated understanding of the two issues (pipeline and port), are developed to scrutinize how local positioning took place.

A first divide concerns what constitutional right the local authority had to decide on either of the issues. *Were the port and the pipeline to be managed as associated phenomena or to be handled separately?* Depending on the answers, two positions appeared: (a) Those who considered that the pipeline issue should not at all be handled by the local authority; i.e., that it was outside the municipal competence not obliging the municipality to take a stand. Holders of this position advocated that the issues could be handled separately. (b) Those who considered that the municipality not only could but also should make a statement about the pipeline and that the two issues were so interconnected that they were undistinguishable.

In the latter group, there is still a division with regard to the two projects: those in favour of and those against the pipeline. It is therefore possible to

regroup the positioning into three lines as described below. Each line includes a distinct narrative, i.e., a specific understanding of the policy issue at stake. In every policy line, however, there is a variety of legitimating grounds regarding how and why an actor has taken a position. How the policy lines relate to each other is illustrated in the complication part of figure 1.

Policy Line 1 (PL1) is in favour of the pipeline. They consider the developers to have followed all environmental requirements and that the construction of a pipeline was justified by Europe's increasing energy needs. In Nord Stream AG's final application, they saw no obstacles, neither political nor environmental, against the project. They argued that the port deal was a strictly commercial arrangement that was very beneficial for the island and that it should be considered together with the pipeline issue.

It is natural that it is discussed together. One should not separate them from each other; it is exactly the task for the municipal council and executive board to see the wholeness. (R3)

Therefore, PL1 is in favour of the Slite port being leased to the consortium in exchange for the advance payment for port charges and ship calls that will be used to fund the port restoration. PL1 thus performs a *frame extension* (Snow et al. 1986) by including both the pipeline and the port in the policy story, thus recognizing them as associated.

Policy Line (PL2) shares the view of the previous line on the port deal. As the deal was considered strictly a matter of business, the proper way to manage it was considered to do so within the technical committee. PL1 and PL2 thus share the view of local benefits that the port deal would bring. What sets them apart is that PL1 openly supports the pipeline, whereas PL2 avoids taking a position on the matter, as exemplified in the following quote.

The pipeline is to be or not to be, whether to have it. But, we have a deal in Slite where we have a company that wants to run pipes in and out. We keep it apart. I have totally kept it apart. (R11)

In interviews, politicians and officials of PL2 express personal opinions both for and against the pipeline and sometimes ambivalent approaches, including advantages and disadvantages. However, they always insisted that the two projects were to be treated separately. According to them, the port deal was a strictly commercial arrangement, including no obligation for the

municipality to make a statement about the pipeline outside the port agreement as such. Thus, unlike PL1, PL2 delimits the issue by excluding the pipeline from the discussion, thus applying a *frame contraction*.

Policy Line 3 (PL3) comprises the political actors who oppose the pipeline, regardless of motives. Some suggest that the pipeline would have a possible negative impact on the marine environment and that it would lead to a lock-in dependence on fossil fuel. Others highlight a security aspect, mainly that the pipeline would mean unwanted greater Russian power in the region. Although the need for a renovated harbour is recognized, political and moral values are considered to make approval impossible, either for environmental or military reasons. PL3 thus claim that the pipeline and port issues have to be considered together, as illustrated in the quote below:

You can't look at it in isolation. I mean, here, you can draw parallels to the Nazi era or something similar. I mean, sure, we delivered ore to Germany, but we do not like the extermination of the Jews; they have nothing to do with each other. It was shameful to do so at the time. Clearly, one has to do with the other. You can't isolate them. Everything is linked in some way.
(R2)

By including parameters outside the local scale, PL3 perform *frame extension*.

LEGITIMATION ARGUMENTS

The pipeline story is largely a matter of power and legitimacy (Fransson 2014a). Needless to say, as a company dominated by Russian and German financial and political interests, Nord Stream is a huge player for the Gotland local authority to face. However, the local authority also had to consider its relation with the citizens on the island. *How did the three policy lines justify their standpoints in front of themselves, the citizens and the outside world?* Considering the basic definition of legitimacy as “the foundation of such governmental power as is exercised both with a consciousness on the government’s part that it has a right to govern and with some recognition by the governed of that right” (Sternberger 1972: 244), narrative power becomes crucial; i.e., the decisions taken and actions pursued by policy-makers have to be justified by words. The individuals adopting the three policy lines motivated their standpoints by using different legitimation arguments,¹⁵ as will now be illustrated and then summarized in table 1.

Knowledge

Several interviewees used knowledge as legitimation in favour of a pipeline. One interviewee stressed that pipeline opponents were rarely seen at these informative meetings. Asked why s/he thinks that the opponents did not go to the meetings, the politician responded that opponents probably did not want more information, as they had already made up their minds (R3). This way of using information and knowledge to legitimate one’s own position and to question the opponents’ position implies a belief that opponents were uninformed and that information might have changed their standpoint. This is a rational way of seeing information transferred and communicated straightforwardly from one sender to a receiver.

I think they [Nord Stream] know better than anyone what lies at the bottom of the Baltic by now. So, given how much ground survey has been done, that [environmental harm etc.] was not a concern of mine. (R3)

¹⁵ Related concepts in the literature are “legitimation signs”, “symbols of legitimation”, “master symbols”, “symbols of justifications”, etc. (Gerth & Mills (1969: 276; Sternberger 1972: 244-248; Edelman 1964: 1-21). Our approach has also been inspired by authors such as Swyngedouw (2011), and Blühdorn (2009). We prefer not to dig deeper into this literature, as our main points will, arguably, still be taken.

Strikingly, pipeline proponents use the same language and arguments as the developer. One proponent who had become critical to the pipeline in the final round voted against his/her own proposal, based on the argument that s/he had now become better informed than before:

Interviewer: But, if you look back, some years have passed; do you have the same positioning [concerning the gas pipeline] today that you had then? And, did you stick to the same position during the entire process?

R6: Yes, I guess. There was a divide, if you wish, when I learnt more about the project and what international regime that was at work. Before that, I wrote that proposal, which was more in ignorance.

This is the (uncritical) approach to information that supported the process granting a major advantage to the developer's version of the narrative, but here, it is used explicitly by people who once took another standpoint. The above interviewee, an outright pipeline devotee in the 2008 debate, now showed maps on other cables and lines crossing the Baltic and the great number of gas pipelines already existing in the North Sea (Municipal Council 2008a). At the same time, the politician asserted that s/he is not in favour of the pipeline, just *informed* about it, and based on that logic, s/he is an advocate of it in debates and interviews.

Emotions

The rational, “informed” pro-positioning is contrasted with a narrative about the pipeline opponent's argumentation being based on emotion, i.e., the opposite of reason. This is a downplaying strategy also used in early stages by representatives of the consortium (Fransson et al. 2011). Five years down the line, *all* pipeline proponents in interviews still refer to the opponents negative positioning to the pipeline as being based on “emotions”. One interviewee took it one step further, in terms of both vocabulary and substance:

So, how is it now, about these touching sentiments [beröringskänslor]. It happens easily that it spreads “I've heard that” and then something fanciful. (R3)

This politician transforms the emotions of the pipeline opponents into physical experiences, adding “touching” to the usually mentioned feelings. However, then s/he overrides the opponents' “emotional” arguments by dismissing them as imaginary, plain rumours. It is a superior attitude that was explicitly adopted by consortium representatives, who referred to pipeline

resistance as “public noise” stemming from emotions and ignorance due to Swedish unfamiliarity with gas pipelines (Fransson et al. 2011). When proponents downplay their antagonists’ arguments as being based on “emotions”, there is a corresponding tendency among pipeline opponents to distrust the proponents’ arguments for duplicity and insincerity and, at times, to even imply suspicions of corruption. Usually, these are allegations of the conscious positioning of the other rather than of ignorance or naivety. Overall, little understanding of the other’s positioning is expressed in the pipeline case.

Local economic rationality

Within PL1 and PL2, a notion of local economic rationality is apparent. A harbour is considered highly necessary for local development, and the deal with the pipeline constructor would have had benefits:

We would get a port that we never could have paid for ourselves, an increase in quality and opportunities it would bring to establish both cruise ships and ferries. (R3)

We then thought that this was a way to bring at least SEK 100 million [EUR 94 million] to Gotland; why should we say no to that? We thought we could do it in a morally correct way, and then, what did we have, to say let’s counteract the development of the island, if it [the port deal] doesn’t happen? It would have been a loss of prestige in that sense. (R8)

Thus, both PL1 and PL2 downscale the political aura surrounding the pipeline constructor in media around the Baltic Sea Region and instead assess the port deal as strictly business. In other words, the pipeline constructor is to be regarded as any other actor wanting to use the harbour.

It could have been any corporation really that got in contact and wanted to use the port of Slite. (R5)

[S]o then, I saw it as a client showing interest for a partnership in a major project. I made no difference with regard to this customer or to any other customer, whether it came from Denmark or elsewhere. (R8)

National security and the environment

In PL3, the tendency was the opposite of characterizing the deal as “strictly business”; i.e., it was a matter of politicization. Thus, the approach to the

port deal and the pipeline was legitimized by national security and/or environmental implications. Environmental arguments concerned the situation in the Baltic Sea and climate change caused by fossil fuel.

That was my approach in the debate; I thought there were so many indications suggesting that the pipeline should be routed onshore. Because pipelines already exist on the other side [of the Baltic], all you have to do is to put it next to them, from an environmental point of view. (R1)

We cannot replace coal with something else that is also coal but a bit better. (R10)

National security and tricky international relations were arguments against the pipeline that were raised by other actors within PL3, emphasizing that the pipeline would increase Russian power in the region.

There were many with me who said that, it's no good that you, to a country that [you] do not know where it's heading. It may end up well, or it may end up awkwardly if you give them control over something as important as energy, really. And, all the time, we found that we mustn't see it as an isolated issue. We said this in the council, too. If we say yes to the port in Slite, then we say yes to Putin's foreign policy. You simply cannot claim that these two aren't related. (R2)

It was mainly security policy reasons [for me]. Letting Russians build a harbour that is. It should have been better to borrow money to build the harbour and then get it back in charges. Then, you would be in another situation, [not in] a dependency situation. (R16)

Extensive municipal competence

The previous argument is well in line with the argument that the municipality can comment and have an opinion on the pipeline, i.e., a basis of legitimation.

That we fail to write a letter to Putin and Medvedev, I understand that we can't do that, however, to our government; we need to be clear. So, I urge [...] that the municipality of Gotland makes a statement to the government and to our members of parliament that Gotland municipality wishes that they use every opportunity [...] to prevent a gas pipeline from being built through the Baltic Sea. (Green Party member of the municipal council, Municipal Council 2008a)

Limited municipal competence

In opposition, interviewees adopting PL2 focused on the limited municipal competence by stressing that decisions about the pipeline are to be taken on a higher level. The municipality is not considered the right forum for making statements about large-scale energy infrastructure.

When it comes to the gas pipeline, the decisions are guided by international agreements, both within the UN and the EU, and it is governed by Swedish law, and the decision lies on the government's table, and it is a foreign policy issue, which no council can make decisions about. (Centre Party member, chair of Municipal Executive Board, Municipal Council 2008a)

The chairman of the board and the leader of the opposition are remarkably consistent in the PL2 approach that the pipeline cannot be addressed by the municipality.

The gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea is not a municipal issue. We lack decision-making power. (Social Democrat leader of the opposition, Municipal Council 2008a)

No, we concluded that this is partly because of incompetence on it and partly because the decision is not on our table. No, so I didn't even want to go into that debate when it was brought up about what we thought about the pipeline in the sea. (R8)

Fairness and democratic consistency

All PL3 advocates argued that the municipality could not accept the Nord Stream I pipeline port offer before the pipeline issue was settled at the national level; i.e., it would be morally wrong to accept the port offer without also approving of the pipeline. This could be labelled an argument of fairness and democratic consistency.

We landed in a conviction that we cannot precede a [national] decision. It's the government that, somehow, needs to say yes or no to this, together with an environmental impact assessment. But, if we intervene and justify that Slite harbour is rehabilitated with Nord Stream money, we take a stand and think it is a good project. So, I guess that was our [the Party's] approach; we preferred waiting until everything is ready, and then, of course, we can begin to discuss the renovation of Slite port. (R10)

Contracting or extending the frame?

As illustrated, individual actors representing the local authority as administrators or elected politicians used a variety of legitimating arguments to explain and defend their standpoints, and some actors shifted arguments from time to time depending on the situation. The three policy lines differed with regard to policy level, geographical scale, and issue scope. The pipeline opponents deliberately extended the frame politically, geographically and substantially to allow greater local responsibility, i.e., to advocate caution or attempt to avert the project. Proponents did not consider the pipeline a problem as soon as the formal requirements in the Environmental Impact Assessment were achieved, and actors who had no official standing contracted the frame, focused on the limited municipal competence and responsibility, and strictly narrowed the harbour deal to concern only the pipeline. The contraction strategy was a calculated solution to the local complication. “We established that we couldn’t decide on the gas pipeline. (...) That’s how we managed that part” (R4). One interviewee took credit for this local positioning based on this frame contraction strategy, having “rubbed off” the issue for a higher authority level to handle the pipeline assessment (R8). A summary of the actors, their positioning and legitimation arguments according to the three policy lines is given in table 1.

Table 1. Actors and legitimation arguments according to the three policy lines.

	Policy Line 1	Policy Line 2	Policy Line 3
Actors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Politicians with a local, rational economic approach. - Members of the Municipal Technical Committee, regardless of political affiliation. - Officials in the technical management, directly involved in the port deal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Members of the Municipal Technical Committee, regardless of political affiliation. - Officials in the technical management, directly involved in port deal. - Representatives of the two largest political parties of the municipality, the in-majority Centre Party and the oppositional Social Democrats. - Representatives of the Municipal Executive Board. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The Green Party constitutes the only party with a unified positioning within PL3, but there are also other individual members with strong environmental approach. - Most of the Left Party politicians. - Individual politicians with a strong national security approach, especially Conservatives and Liberals.
Legitimation arguments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The gas pipeline does more good than harm. - Gotland needs a new port. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gotland needs a new port. -The port and the gas pipeline are to be treated as two separate issues -The municipality cannot comment on matters such as the gas pipeline, nor should it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It would be morally wrong to accept the port offer before the gas pipeline matter is settled. - There is a democracy deficit in local politics. -The pipeline should be rejected on grounds related to the environment, energy and/or national security.
Extension/contraction of arguments	Extension	Contraction	Extension

SOLUTION – SETTING THE PORT DEAL

The next decisive event in the policy story – a new *bridge* – which led to a new equilibrium (see figure 1 above), was when the port deal was decided upon and approved by the municipal council in 2008. According to PL1 and PL3, it was thereafter unacceptable to criticize the pipeline. In 2007, the head of the municipal technical committee and Nord Stream had signed a contract about the harbour – a deal that was appealed, (see above page 22). After a number of rounds in different committees, the municipal board and the county court, it was decided in early 2008 to vote on the harbour agreement in the council instead of waiting for the order from the county court¹⁶. As a member of the technical committee recalls,

And, then you had to hear, it's a hurry; they [Nord Stream] must get this; it takes a long start-up time, which means that they need to have an agreement quickly. (R10)

On the day for voting, the council also voted on the proposal against the submarine pipeline written almost two years earlier by a member of the Centre Party in opposition. This time, the Centre Party, now in a majority coalition, voted against its earlier proposal. After a heated debate, the proposal was voted down by 58 to 13 votes, meaning that the municipality would not engage in having the pipeline routed onshore (Municipal Council 2008a; Municipal Council 2008c). An hour later, the port deal was approved by 52 votes for to 19 against, thereby confirming the deal agreed upon in the technical committee (Municipal Council 2008b; Municipal Council 2008d).

Actors voting in favour of the port deal persistently claimed that the pipeline was a non-issue for local politics (PL2). Typically, however, along with praise or support for the local contraction strategy, there was additional reassurance, expressed in both the interviews and debates, that the speaker – as a person – was not a great enthusiast of the pipeline. *The frame contraction factor was the single most important legitimation argument for local decision and positioning.* More than anything, contraction seems to have

¹⁶ The county court decided that the technical committee exceeded its powers (i.e., that because of its size and political character, the contract should have been a matter for the municipal council). The committee, however, appealed the decision to the Administrative Court of Appeal, which ultimately annulled the county court decision (Region Gotland 2008; Hela Gotland 2008; SVT 2008). At that point, however, the decision was already taken in the municipal council.

functioned as a strategy to justify *for oneself* the pro-pipeline decisions that the local authorities were to make, thus illustrating legitimization as a process with an internal and external reference.

That's how you go about in politics sometimes. Your own conviction, you have to, so to speak, you have to handle it. (R4)

In the 2008 local debates, the contraction strategy was taken to the absurd, when leading majority politicians and leading oppositional politicians virtually depoliticized the local council itself in their attempts to contract the frame.

Using the municipal council or in that case the board or other committees for political manoeuvring in order to win public opinion in individual party issues, I think, often can be irresponsible and also short-sighted, and it would be wrong if we started to cut back on these things. (Social Democratic leader of the opposition; Municipal Council 2008a)

An example of the strength of this local belief occurred in the 2008 municipality debate when a pipeline opponent was interrupted and corrected by the council chairman. It is also a typical example of how a hot political issue can be framed either through extension or contraction:

Opponent: Is there anyone who has missed the international news during the last 3-4 years? What has happened in Ukraine, Georgia and in distant parts of Asia, how Russia conducts a foreign policy based on energy and above all on gas. It is quite obvious that this [the gas pipeline and the port offer] is a step in, just as NN says, in their foreign policy (...) [is interrupted by the Chair]

The Chair: Now, I will ask you to go back, this is a port issue we're talking about, not Russian politics. (Municipal Council 2008b)

While PL2 proponents did not want to be associated with the approval of a pipeline, they also did not want to be associated with the positioning of PL1. Although many of these actors defended the pipeline, five years down the line, they still claim to have said yes to the port and “no comment” to the pipeline. In our study, however, one interviewee, recalling the pipeline aftermath in an interview, challenged this narrative version. It's a strong narrative, highlighting the stark pressure individual dissidents were subjected to.

And then, it was, in 2010¹⁷, one very strange gathering. You notice when you come into a room, fifteen people or so, if they have already talked to each other. You can feel it. And, this was a beautiful Sunday afternoon, and they had called a meeting. And, there was sunshine, and it was warm, but [still] there were a lot of people there, called in. And, then they sat there one by one, testifying about the benefits of this gas pipeline, except [another dissident] and I. And, those who had been against the pipeline the day before were suddenly in favour of it. Something had happened. [---] And, there were personal attacks and ridicule, and [they told me] I had problems with my emotions for being upset about environmental issues [...]. And, this was all about a statement that the municipal executive board would make on Monday whether they were for or against the pipeline. Neither [the other dissident] nor I was part of the municipal executive board. But still, we had to be executed. Apparently, it was so important to say yes to the pipeline. (R15)

The interviewee refers to a Sunday Party meeting preceding a municipal board meeting the day after, where an official statement to the government discretely was to be reported. The official statement consisted of a surprising announcement, at least to the interviewee quoted above. The quote continues:

Then, at one o'clock the day after [the Sunday Party meeting], a unanimous municipality executive board came out of the meeting room and said they were basically against the pipeline but that, yes, they nevertheless had signed a contract [about the harbour]. I don't get it; what happened between four or five o'clock on Sunday afternoon and Monday at one? Who was it that created such pressure, or what happened that made the municipal executive board suddenly in complete agreement that they were against the pipeline? From basically having executed people who were against the pipeline few hours earlier. [The other dissident] and I wrote a joint e-mail and asked them why [...]. We still haven't received an answer. And, that was the last meeting I went to with [my political Party]. (R15)

This is the narrative of one actor – which clearly belongs to PL 3 – telling the scenario from that persons' experience. The narrative is nevertheless suggestive for the general story. The twist of the story is strikingly paradoxical. Was the rapid turn due to calls straight from the government? Or, is

¹⁷ [Sic!] The events the interviewee refers to took place in 2009. As Czarniawska (2004:48) states, "an unaided memory always falters: people do not remember dates and numbers. There are documents where such facts can be found". According to municipal documents and local media, the events took place in 2009.

the negative statement a convenient political disclaimer once the port restoration deal was secured?

Towards a new equilibrium?

As presented below, the turnaround from offering “no comment” to being critical towards the pipeline occurred in different political bodies during 2009. This marks the *bridge* towards a new *equilibrium* in our story. The sudden prompt dislike of the pipeline was consolidated in PL2, as it proved that the advocates of the port offer did not favour the pipeline and that the pipeline and the harbour were to be considered separate issues. At the same time, the statement reframes¹⁸ PL2, as its actors are now forced to take a stance on the pipeline. Interestingly enough, the majority of our interviewees, adopting to all three lines, have problems recalling the statement.

The statement by the municipal board [kommunstyrelsen] followed the same line of thought as the environmental and health protection committee [miljö- och hälsoskyddsämnden] when commenting on a request from Nord Stream to the Ministry of Enterprise [Näringsdepartementet] to locate a pipeline system for gas transport in accordance with the law of the continental shelf. In spring 2009, the environmental and health protection committee and its aligned administrative unit articulated a critical comment regarding the pipeline in a response to national authorities, in which they argued that natural gas was not an appropriate energy source:

The Environmental and Health Protection Committee through an overall assessment opposes the application permit. Energy projects within the EU should focus on long-term sustainable energy sources. [...]. Gotland Municipality has in its energy plan (Energi 2010) adopted a climate strategy with the goal to shift to a sustainable and carbon-neutral energy supply. Natural gas is not a long-term sustainable energy source, even if emissions are less than for other types of energy. *It is regrettable that the EU invests in such a huge project to increase the use of natural gas instead of developing sustainable energy sources.* (Environment and Health Protection Committee 2009, 45, 49, italics added by authors)

This standpoint was not surprising, as the committee had expressed similar thoughts earlier during the process. More surprisingly, some months later, the municipal board showed opposition to the pipeline request, noting

¹⁸ See Schön & Rein (1994: 38 ff.) for an elaboration of the reframing mechanism.

that “we instead of natural gas prefer seeing investments in long-term sustainable energy sources”. They added that if the pipeline still materializes,

the municipal board wants to stress that the Baltic Sea is an inner sea with extremely vulnerable eco-systems, where any bad effect or risk of a bad effect constitutes a potential threat to the water environment”. (Municipal Executive Board 2009:1)

Thus, the frame is no longer contracted but rather extended, as the municipal responsibility for the environment is now highlighted, including a critique against EU energy policy. However, the pipeline and port issues are still kept apart, and the board tries to keep the issue local by emphasizing local energy transitions. The frame is thus continuously contracted.

The *ending equilibrium* of the story (see figure 1) is thus that the Gotland local government advised against the pipeline project in general but that Nord Stream was welcome to use the harbour of Slite if the project was approved. In fact, the reconstruction of the harbour, which was mostly financed by Nord Stream, was already in progress at the time¹⁹! However, later the same year, in December 2009, all the concerned national actors, including the Swedish government, approved the construction of the pipeline. The Swedish Government legitimated its approval of Nord Stream’s application by referring to its Environmental Impact Assessment, which concluded that the pipeline would *not* pose an environmental threat²⁰. The argument was that no kind of issue other than environmental issues would lead to rejection according to international law (Fransson 2014a; Langlet 2014; Carlgren 2009). One of the three local policy lines (PL3) nevertheless reflected a different view, raising national security concerns about potential geopolitical developments in the Baltic Region (“the fear of Russia” argument), which was ridiculed by the majority in the Gotland council at the time. In early 2010, pipes were transported to the newly refurbished port of Slite, and the construction of the pipeline began. Two and a half years later, the twin pipes of Nord Stream I were in operation (Nord Stream 2013). In early 2013, Nord Stream launched plans for another twin pipeline.

If the 2009 statement was accurate, the Gotland Local Authority would also discourage the construction of future projects. However, would the

¹⁹ The re-construction of the port of Slite started in December 2008 (Nord Stream 2013: 121).

²⁰ The then-Minister of the Environment, Andreas Carlgren, stated that “now the government’s conclusion is clear: no serious government can refuse an application for a pipeline when the environmental provisions have been satisfied” (Carlgren 2009).

current Regional Authority approve of the utilization of the harbour again, and would the pipeline constructor be interested in using a harbour in a municipality/region with a negative view of its product? Would the Gotland Region's commitment to national and regional climate change discourses prompting energy transition and its identity as an eco-region be so important that future business with the pipeline constructor could be jeopardized? Or, would the municipality act as an influential civil servant expresses it – “when it just passes outside [the pipeline, without working from the island], we just get possible disadvantages, no bonus in any way” (R11) – thereby reframing its stance again to be able to welcome the pipeline constructor once more? We will, in the epilogue section, briefly return to this issue (Nord Stream II) and answer these questions.

The situation is of immediate concern considering the “hybrid war” in Ukraine, and the current conflict-ridden relations between Russian and European governments. In Sweden, an enlarged military presence in the Baltic Sea in general and on Gotland in particular is prompted, and in EU, the dependence on Russian energy is in focus (Götz 2015; Schmidt-Feltzmann 2011). In the 2013 interviews, actors voicing resistance owing to national security reasons were considered conspiracy makers and laughed at. Being hesitant to a Russian presence in the region was not regarded as acceptable in the hegemonic Swedish discourse.²¹ Notably, the culture of making fun of colleagues expressing “fears of Russia” was so established at the time that the interviewees expected the interviewers to laugh along with them in interviews five years later. This strong culture of consensus borders on victimization, as expressed in an individual narrative by another pipeline opponent, who chose to leave politics altogether during the process. A political culture that seems to demand silence on such a large issue triggers severe questions about the norms of an open, democratic society. It also illustrates “the power of silence”, as a mechanism of de-politicization (Fransson 2014b), if it is carried to its extreme, a “convenient mechanism for disarming opposition, swiping under the carpet potentially contentious issues” Hay (2007: 92).

²¹ However, one PL2 politician reported a similar “fear of Russia” among Estonian colleagues, thus indicating that the Gotland local culture of making fun of pipeline opponents did not pertain to colleagues in the post-Soviet sphere. The interviewee completely dismissed, however, the Estonian colleagues’ conviction that the gas pipeline project could be averted altogether by a no from Gotland.

CONCLUSIONS

The presence of a transnational gas pipeline affair complicated political life on the island. The developer's call for a prompt answer – the port offer was understood to expire and go to another municipality if an answer was not given sufficiently quickly– provoked a stressful and conflict-ridden course of action. In the encounter with the transnational business logic, the municipality was not sufficiently strong to request the time for the Swedish Government to make a clear-cut decision. In a way, the municipality acted as a vanguard for the latter, i.e., by preparing the local and national opinion for a government decision that may, wrongly, be seen as inevitable in hindsight. The port offer given by Nord Stream became “impossible” to refuse, yes, but certainly not without a stressful and complicated political process in the municipality that preceded it. In other words, according to the narrative approach, there are always alternative solutions, although a deterministic impression may prevail without a detailed reconstruction.

An analytical model based on narrative methodology was applied to reconstruct three stories/policy lines (see figure 1). Through the whole process, PL1 actors were in favour of the construction of both the pipeline and the harbour. PL2 actors advocated for the developer's disposal of the harbour in exchange for a substantial fee while stressing that the local deal and the gas pipeline construction as such were to be treated separately. PL3 actors opposed both the local harbour deal and the pipeline project, claiming that they neither could nor should be assessed separately. In the end, PL2 was identified as the “winning” story, even though it was reframed little by little, as the actors were forced to take a stance on the pipeline issue but still tried to keep the two issues apart. Why was that?

The success of PL2 stems from a combination of several elements. Urgent action and a quick decision were deemed necessary to satisfy the company's demand, triggering the three policy lines to formulate the actors' legitimating arguments. The assessment of a “rational, objective and knowledge-based decision” above a “moral and emotional decision” was one such legitimating argument driven by PL1 and partly by PL2. Proponents of these two lines perceived PL3 to be driven by emotions, but at the same time, they did not acknowledge any element of emotion in their own positioning.

The national security reason for opposing the pipeline was considered obsolete and conspiratorial – an exceptional assessment in light of today's sentiments reflecting “fear of Russia” in Swedish society (see the Epilogue section in this report). Negative environmental concerns for the seabed were

considered non-scientific and were disaffirmed by the extensive Environmental Impact Assessment. Despite this, energy and climate change concerns were ultimately considered legitimate in PL2. This proved successful, as the final decision by the municipal executive board was explicitly motivated by an urge for sustainable development, particularly by a desire to not increase fossil fuel usage. That is, the argument served as a paradoxical excuse for combining a principal stance *against* the pipeline with one in *favour* of leasing the harbour to Nord Stream I.

The contraction logic presented by the leader of the political opposition is remarkably similar to that of the majority leader, indicating a joint approach to the matter. The close collaboration between the political majority and the opposition is a power factor that is made visible in the narrative analysis. Several interviewees confirmed that local decision making in the municipality effectively takes place in working committees and informal meetings, reducing the official democratic procedure (e.g., voting in the council) to what one of our interviewees (IP8) referred to as “charades” [spel för gallerierna]. In a similar way, reaching a consensus among the chairmen in an informal working committee is palpably referred to as achieving “broad political support” (R8), i.e., an expression of strong support in the council. Of course, when assessing the outcome of the local policy process, one must not forget Nord Stream’s initial tempting offer with an attractive deal – which was too good to refuse as it turned out.

The pipeline and harbour policy process spanned over three mandate periods of alternating political majorities (2005-2014), which are locally referred to as “galloping majorities” (R11).²² The same individuals, more or less, alternate from time to time on political posts, implying that the factual decisions are taken in small working committees that include top rank people from political parties across the official majority-opposition divide. This informal consensus procedure, which is well documented in all parts of the material, creates a political culture that lacks control of power in the form of a real opposition, i.e., all leading politicians are equally responsible (or irresponsible?). Thus, despite a stressful and conflict ridden political process, the end result in hindsight may resemble the outcome of rational, a-political decision making. After all was said and done, the local/regional

²² For the distribution of council seats on political parties in the Region Gotland Council 2007-2018, see Appendix III.

authority received its redeveloped port, and it could even express its disapproval of the gas pipeline in line with its eco-municipal image while simultaneously regretting its own lack of legal power to obstruct the construction.

The limits of narrative power

By examining the local political repercussions of a huge multinational energy project in detail, the case study contributes to our understanding of multi-scalar/multi-level policy-making. Thus, our story – (the fabula) – has demonstrated the power of a narrative approach. It has revealed how three Gotland local policy lines are intricately related; how they developed over time, after a sequence beginning with the break of an equilibrium when the pipeline and the harbour were suddenly pushed onto the local authority agenda by the Nord Stream proposal; how the positions were legitimated; and how conflicts and heated debates occurred among local politicians and administrators, ultimately leading to a solution and a new equilibrium.

However, and most importantly, the strategic, political and financial muscles of the Nord Stream Consortium and its multinational owners, notably headed by the Russian Gazprom company as the majority owner, proved decisive for the outcome of Nord Stream I. The official story of the Swedish Government (Fransson 2014a), and that of the Gotland local/regional authority, must be seen in light of this huge, Russian-dominated transnational actor and its crucial role in natural gas delivery to Germany and other EU countries. Thus, although the descriptive power of the narrative approach has been demonstrated by our analysis, it must be embedded within a wider multi-scalar/multi-level political framework to make comprehensive power visible, something that will be underlined in the following epilogue.

EPILOGUE – NORD STREAM II IN QUESTION

Since the approval and construction of Nord Stream I, the geopolitical situation in the Baltic Region has become heated owing to Russia's annexation of Crimea, intervention in Ukraine and potential threats to other neighbouring countries (Götz 2015).²³ In autumn 2016, the re-localization of the Russian robot system Iskander to Kaliningrad (Blekinge Läns Tidning 13 October 2016), the arrival of nuclear-armed Russian warships in the Baltic Sea (Aftonbladet a; 27 October 2016), and other incidents, accompanied by media headlines such as "Taking Gotland and Blekinge – within twenty-four hours" (Aftonbladet b; 28 October 2016), were omen of a radical re-interpretation of how Russian foreign policy concerning the Baltic Sea Region should be assessed.

Whereas the leader of the Moderate Party delegation in the EU parliament and the Moderate Party representative in the Nordic Council, strongly argued against the approval of the planned Nord Stream II (Hökmark 2016a; Wallmark 2016), the Swedish Social Democratic-Green Party government long hesitated to take a clear stance on the issue, although it expressed a critical view of Russian expansionism in the region. In a parliamentary debate, Minister of Foreign Affairs Margot Wallström stated that "we are strongly determined to look after our national security interests, and if needed we will take to necessary measures [...] Sweden will on the basis of national security and environmental interests urge the EU to hinder the construction of the new gas pipeline" (Radio Sweden P 4, 8 September 2016). However, the government sent an (at least symbolic) message to Russia by deciding on an immediate small-scale re-militarization of Gotland by

²³ "There is a broader policy conflict issue that cannot be avoided being discussed in respect of Nord Stream II. In March 2014, the Russian Federation annexed Crimea, the first European annexation since World War II. In addition, eastern Ukraine was invaded and occupied by forces that were either supported or financed by the Russian state or were actually Russian military forces" (Riley 2016: 23). "The planned link, which would pump Russian gas directly to Germany, has met resistance from eastern EU members including Poland, Slovakia and the Baltic States. Those nations and Ukraine, which either get income from gas transit fees or wish to diversify their energy imports beyond Russia, have called Nord Stream II 'anti-European'" (Bauerova & Tomek 2016).

localizing 150 soldiers on the island. As stated by Colonel Anders Löfberg at the Swedish Ministry of Defence headquarters:

Energy resources and flows are always a matter of security policy interest, and we know that – from a Russian point of view – the gas pipeline is of great economic priority, thereby also implying a national security interest. Threats and disturbances to such big interests may imply a higher pitch of the voice [...] Gotland plays an important role in the Baltic Sea and has a key position in terms of geopolitical and military strategy. The one who rules over Gotland can have a big influence on what happens in the Baltic Sea. This is what the government has pointed out in its positional decision, Gotland's importance for sea and air lines to and from the Baltic Region and Finland. (Löfberg as quoted in Dagens Nyheter 2016)

In contrast to this, in autumn 2016, the Social Democratic chairman of the Gotland Regional Council repeatedly insisted that Nord Stream is a commercial company and *not* an instrument of the Russian government and thus saw no reason to stop Nord Stream from renting the harbour (see news articles and editorials in the local press, listed at the end of the reference section), which reflects a strict contraction argument after the original PL2. This is also very much in line with the official Nord Stream II standpoint:

Nord Stream 2 does not operate in a legal void – it is strictly regulated by EU law, international conventions and national legislation. [...] 'Equal treatment for equal cases' is a constituting principle of the rule-of-law, which is one of the fundamental values on which the EU is based. Arbitrary treatment for political reasons is the exact opposite of the rule-of-law. Nevertheless, that does not seem to stop some opponents from demanding special treatment for Nord Stream 2 – not because there would be legal grounds for such treatment but just because they are politically opposed to the project. (Lissek 2016: 2-3)²⁴

However, in mid-December 2016, Minister of Defence Peter Hultqvist and Minister of Foreign Policy Margot Wallström called upon the chairman of the Gotland Regional Council and the chairman of the Municipal Council of Karlshamn for information and discussion about the proposal of the Nord Stream Consortium to use the harbours in the two places to store pipeline tubes and provide services during the construction work. On the day after the talks, the technical committee of the Gotland Local Authority

²⁴ Ulrich Lissek is Head of Communications and Governmental Relations, Nord Stream II AG.

unanimously decided *not* to make a deal with Nord Stream II²⁵. Notably, the basic legal premises of Swedish local self-government cannot in a case like this enforce a central government decision on a local or regional self-government authority, but the chairman of the Regional Council declared that during the talks, information was presented that lead the Council's earlier position on the matter to be reconsidered.²⁶

It is *not* a case of a radical turnaround [...] I have wanted the full picture and now I have got it. It is an assessment about security policy that has sent a clear signal about how the government views the situation. If we had not changed our minds, the question would have been 'why don't they believe in the government'? (Chair of the Gotland Region Council as cited in Gotlands Allehanda 15 December 2016)

The reaction of Nord Stream II AG to the withdrawal of the Gotland Regional Council from the project is reflected in the following comment by the company's Swedish senior advisor, Lars Grönstedt:

To use the port of Slite for pipe storage is optimal from a logistics point of view. If this port cannot be used, another port will be used for pipe storage. It may be a bit more expensive and the environmental impact will be more significant, as it will lead to longer ship transports. It is always outrageous to waste resources. But, in a project with a total budget of about 8 billion euros (80 billion Swedish kronor), this additional cost is insignificant. (As cited from his debate article in the Swedish business newspaper Dagens Industri 8 December 2016; see Grönstedt (2016) in the reference list.)

At the time of finishing this report, there are even speculations in the media that other Baltic Sea harbour municipalities have signalled an interest in storing Nord Stream II pipeline tubes (Dagens Nyheter 8 January 2017).

²⁵ Thus, the decision was not taken in the council, i.e., in line with the corresponding decision regarding Nord Stream I (see above page 22 and 33).

²⁶ In the Karlshamn case, only one (!) member of the municipal council, a Moderate Party member, has been an adversary to Nord Stream II over the years (Aftonbladet 2016c). The port board [hamnstyrelsen] raised arguments in favour of making a deal with Nord Stream II anyway (Sydöstran 18 December 2016), and in the beginning of February the Karlshamn municipal board decided to make a "logistic deal" with the Wasco company (equal ownership by Gazprom and some European companies). The port will be used for storing the German-produced pipelines: "Our port employees will load the pipelines on ships that will be transported and put together out in the Baltic Sea. Thus, no offering of port, no Russian vessels, and no foreign staff involved." (Interview with Paul Hedlund, spokesman of the Liberal Party; Sydöstran 9 February 2017).

According to our conceptual framework, the local political equilibrium was once again shaken by “high politics”, thus challenging and re-defining the former local policy lines; i.e., there was a turnaround of attitudes (?) and official standpoints (yes, indeed) similar to what has happened at the national level. After the meeting with the government, not only members of the conservative and liberal parties in the Region Gotland Council are now reluctant to let Nord Stream rent the Slite harbour despite the offered substantial financial bait for port investments, i.e., the official standpoint of the council now aligns with PL3 in its extension argument, as defined in our previous analysis.²⁷

In other words, the security argument (“fear of Russia”) was suddenly also accepted by the current Social Democratic-Green Party majority in the Region Gotland Council, although not until the Minister of Defence (Peter Hultqvist) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs (Margot Wallström) “in plain language” gave representatives of the Gotland and Karlshamn authorities “secret information” (Aftonbladet 2016c). They said, “We don’t tramp into local government issues [...] But the clash between national security and local self-government is a new situation for the government” (Wallström), and “We have discovered problems in Swedish legislation and have to do something about it [...] If Nord Stream II is implemented according to the plans, it will have consequences for Swedish defence planning” (Hultqvist).²⁸

Thus, at the end of 2016, the narrative arrived at a crossroads where the clash between the deeply rooted, constitutional principle of local self-government collides with the national security argument and becomes critical, laying a heavy burden on the two chairmen as arbiters. They have not, however, revealed any details of the “secret information” that made them change their standpoints, neither to their colleagues in government nor to the general public.

In other words, we are witnessing a narrative turnaround in favour of PL3, implying that Gotland does not want Nord Stream II and does not

²⁷ For the current election period (2015-2018), there is a majority for the Social Democrats-Green Party-Left Party, in the Region Gotland Council (see Appendix III).

²⁸ In an interview for Radio Sweden, Minister of Defense Peter Hultqvist repeated the need for new legislation to prevent similar clashes between national security policy and local self-government (Radio Sweden P 1, 7 January 2017).

want to rent Slite harbour²⁹. The turnaround also means a shift from a contraction to an extension framework, where the port and pipeline issues are now intimately connected, in line with the original PL3 position during the Nord Stream I process³⁰. The now broadly acknowledged security argument (“fear of Russia”) finally outweighed the financial argument to boost local development, including further investments in Slite harbour. In terms of our conceptual framework, the equilibrium state reached after the Nord Stream I decision was gradually undermined and complicated by the re-interpretation of a potential Russian threat.³¹ Maybe this will develop into a new equilibrium in the future, largely unifying earlier divergent opinions among the political representatives in the Gotland Regional Council. However, attitudes and final standpoints have not harmonized thus far. Strikingly, the environmental argument was largely absent in the final stage of the Nord Stream II debates, mentioned neither in terms of threats to the Baltic Sea nor in terms of prolonged European dependence on fossil fuel.

Again, our story (the Nord Stream fabula) shows that the Nord Stream pipelines have created a huge challenge for a local government in the context of complex, multi-scalar/multi-level governance. What is particularly puzzling (and worrying), however, is that crucial issues in the last round can only be answered by more or less informed guesses not least with respect to the following three items: (i) What are the real plans of the Russian government in terms of foreign and energy policy? (ii) What are the German and EU plans regarding future energy policy, including natural gas delivery from Russia? (iii) How will Russian-NATO-Sweden relations develop in the context of new, still largely unknown American foreign policy? Considering

²⁹ In a popular speech, the Slite port is called “the Putin quay” [Putinkajen] (Dagens Nyheter 2016).

³⁰ Frame extension was also used in the PLI position, although it was in favour of both the pipeline and the use of the port.

³¹ In a critical report to the Centre for Policy Analysis, Alan Riley (*Senior Fellow at the Institute for Statecraft, Temple Place, London*) concludes that “the speed with which the Nord Stream 2 project was decided upon meant that many legal and policy issues were overlooked. It may well be that the promoters thought that as Nord Stream 1 was brought into operation without too much difficulty so could Nord Stream 2. However [...] a lot has changed since Nord Stream 1 was conceived, promoted and executed. The third energy package, and in particular the Gas Directive came into force, and case law and decisional practice precedent has been established. Furthermore [...] the policy context has also radically changed, both in terms of the focus on supply security and in respect of relations with Russia. These legal and policy factors make the delivery of NS2 much more challenging than delivering NS1” (Riley 2016: 18-19).

crucial “high politics” issues such as these, the Gotland Regional Council may have been wise to drop responsibility for Swedish national security policy in this case, although at the price of losing a substantial financial addition to the local government’s purse and without the ability (and/or willingness) to inform the island citizenry about the details of information that made them change their minds.

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Bofride, Eva – Bra tillfälle för (S) att visa mod [Good opportunity for the Social Democrats showing courage] *Gotlands Tidningar* 19 October, p. 15.³³

Carlsson, Mikael – ÖB vill slippa rysk hyresgäst i Slite [Commander in Chief wants to avoid Russian renter at Slite] *Gotlands Tidningar* 18 October, p. 2.

Erfors, Erik – Det är så verklighetsfrämmande att jag baxnar [It is so far away from reality that I am perplexed] *Gotlands Tidningar* 21 October, p.8.

Eriksson, Lillebi & Carlsson, Mikael – M-politiker: Oansvarigt och naivt av Jansson [M-politician: Irresponsible and naive by Jansson] *Gotlands Tidningar* 19 October, p. 4.³⁴

Fransson, Erik – Hamnarna hamnar i fokus [Ports in focus]. *Gotlands Tidningar* 19 October, p.19.³⁵

Gotlands Allehanda 15 December 2016. Regionen vänder och nobbar [The Region turns around and quits].

³² Gotlands Tidningar is a merger of two former local newspapers, one supporting the Centre Party and the other the Social Democratic Party. News articles aside, the newspaper offers space for both political sides in editorials.

³³ Eva Bofride is the Centre Party Political Editor of Gotlands Tidningar.

³⁴ M-politician = Simon Härenstam, politician representing the Moderate Party. Jansson = Björn Jansson, Social Democratic chairman of the Gotland Region Council. Mikael Carlsson is News Editor of Gotlands Tidningar. Lillebi Eriksson is Assistant News Editor of the same newspaper.

³⁵ Erik Fransson is the Social Democratic Political Editor of Gotlands Tidningar.

Hökmark, Gunnar (2016b) Farligt att gå Gazprom till mötes [Dangerous accepting Gazprom] *Blekinge Läns Tidning* 25 October, p. 21.³⁶

Linder, Mats – Regering och region bör lyssna på ÖB [Government and Region should listen to Commander in Chief] *Gotlands Allehanda* 18 October, p.2.³⁷

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Sydöstran 18 December 2016. Hamnen avvaktar att skriva på avtal om lagring av rör [The port awaits signing a deal on storing of pipes]

Sydöstran 14 December 2016. Gotland säger nej till Nord Stream 2 [Gotland says no to Nord Stream II].

³⁶ Gunnar Hökmark is a Moderate Party member of the EU Parliament.

³⁷ Mats Linder is Political Editor of *Gotlands Allehanda*, a newspaper supporting the Moderate Party.

APPENDIX I – *Route of Nord Stream Gas Pipeline through the Baltic Sea from Vyborg, Russia to Lubmin/Greifswald, Germany.*



Source: (Modified from Gazprom website) Online: <http://www.gazprom.com/about/production/projects/pipelines/nord-stream/> [Accessed: 2015-04-27] Slite, Gotland, Karlskrona and Karlshamn marked by the authors. Like Slite the Karlskrona port was used by Nord Stream I under the construction phase. Karlshamn is wanted by Nord Stream II in a similar way as Slite and Karlskrona were, but the municipal board of Karlshamn decided to make a seemingly less compelling deal with Nord Stream; see footnote 26, page 44).

APPENDIX II – Interviews (conducted at Gotland 2012-2013 by Karin Edberg and Anna-Lisa Fransson)

	Interviewee, party affiliation and administrative position	Date	Location of interview
1	Member of the Green Party [Miljöpartiet]	February 2013	Municipal main building, Visby, Gotland
2	Member of the Conservative Party [Moderaterna]	February 2013	University Library, Visby, Gotland
3	Member of the Conservative Party	February 2013	Restaurant, Visby, Gotland
4	Member of the Social Democrats [Socialdemokraterna] Member of Municipal Executive Board 2006-2010	February 2013	Municipal main building, Visby, Gotland
5	Member of the Centre Party [Centerpartiet] Member of Municipal Executive Board 2006-2010	February, 2013	Centre Party office, Visby, Gotland
6	Member of the Centre Party Member of Municipal Executive Board 2006-2010	February, 2013	Interviewee's workplace, Visby, Gotland
7	Civil Servant, County Administrative Board [Länsstyrelsen]	February 2013	University Library, Visby, Gotland
8	Member of the Centre Party Member of Technical Committee [Tekniska nämnden] 2006-1010	February 2013	Interviewee's home, North Gotland
9	Civil Servant, County Administrative Board	February 2013	County Administrative Board, ing, Visby, Gotland
10	Member of the Green Party Member of Technical Committee 2006-2010	February 2013	Green Party office, Visby, Gotland
11	Civil Servant, Technical Administration [Tekniska förvaltningen]	February, 2013	Municipal main building, Visby, Gotland
12	Civil Servant, Technical Administration, Harbour division [Tekniska förvaltningen, hamnavdelningen]	February, 2013	Interviewee's workplace, Slite, Gotland
13	Member of the Left Party [Vänsterpartiet] Member of Technical Committee 2006-2010	February, 2013	Interviewee's workplace, Visby, Gotland
14	Civil Servant, Technical Administration, Harbour division	February 2012	Port of Visby, Gotland
15	Member of the Conservative Party	February 2012	Café, Visby
16	Member of the Liberal Party [Folkpartiet]	November 2013	University Library, Visby, Gotland

APPENDIX III – *The distribution of council seats on political parties in the Region Gotland Council 2007-2018*

Year	M	C	L	KD	S	V	MP	SD	FI
2003-06	11	13	4	3	28	7 ³⁸	4	-	-
2007-10	14	17	4	1	24	7	4	-	-
2011-14	15	15	4	-	24	6	7	-	-
2015-18	13	14	4	-	21	7	8	3	1

The council terms start on November 1 of the previous year.

Majority coalitions marked in bold.

M = Moderate Party [Moderaterna; Conservative]

C = Centre Party [Centerpartiet]

L= Liberal Party (before 2015 called the People’s Party [Folkpartiet]

V = Left Party [Vänsterpartiet]

MP = Green Party [Miljöpartiet]

KD = Christian Democrats [Kristdemokraterna]

SD = Sweden Democrats [Sverigedemokraterna; Nationalist/Populist]

FI = Feminist Party

Source: Gotland in Figures. Facts and Statistics 2015.

³⁸ One Left Party representative resigned 2005.

APPENDIX IV – *Nord Stream II on The Nord Stream II project (Dec. 15, 2016, Zug)*

We acknowledge the potential decisions of Region Gotland and the municipality Karlshamn not to sign an agreement for the utilization of their respective harbours – Slite and Karlshamn.

Both ports had until very recently signaled their commercial interest in cooperating on the project. The consequence of the decision would be that Wasco Coatings GmbH, the German unit of Dutch Wasco Coatings BV, would not be able to sign contracts for the use of these harbours for pipe transshipments.

If both Swedish municipalities take a formal decision preventing the use of the harbours, Nord Stream 2 and its contractor Wasco Coatings, will look for alternative logistics facilities around the Baltic Sea.

During the first Nord Stream project, the company, Swedish authorities, municipalities, suppliers and local communities all cooperated in an open, constructive and fruitful manner over a period of many years. Nord Stream 2 would like to continue such cooperation guided by the same principles.

Source: Nord Stream II (2016a). Online. <https://www.nord-stream2.com/media-info/news-events/statement-regarding-the-use-of-swedish-ports-for-contractors-of-the-nord-stream-2-project-35/> [Accessed: 2016-12-16] [Our italics]

