

PhD-topic Sven Ristau

Economic integration and debordering processes in the Baltic Sea Region initiated by steamships in the 19th century

Research Fields: economic history, maritime history, economic geography, border studies

Fundamental changes in political, social and economic spheres appeared during the 19th century, visible for e.g. in industrial regions, urban centres and strengthened or newly organized trading networks. The focus of my PhD lies on processes in the transport sector that attend these changes. Hence the steamship is my medium of special importance due to its ability to revolutionize time-, space- and communication patterns. Therefore ports, connecting maritime space and land, will serve as points of origin. My PhD approaches this research in different steps:

- identify the Baltic Sea Region (BSR)-ports that are fundamental for cross-border
- interactions across the Baltic Sea and its connected waterways
- analyze the port network in regard to its interaction with fore- and hinterlands
- shape economic regions that are closely connected and influenced by port activities
- delimit these territories from their adjacent regions and form economic borderlands
- investigate the development of these borderlands bounded to the adaption of
- steamship- technology during time and space

The identification of the important BSR-ports is linked to economic-historical approaches and can be outlined for e.g. by comparison of import and export rates and information provided by statistical or traffic offices. Afterwards the focus lies on spatial research of the fore- and hinterland connections as well as network analysis and influencing factors like state protectionism or liberalization processes. A combination of morphological and operational models of port analysis will be applied to provide comparable results and to shape port bounded economic zones. This in consequence forms borderlands of economic interaction and interdependent relations. Shifts in production and transport by the use of new technology should reshape the economic borderlands in the BSR and will be outlined. Especially the steamship adaption creates connections and changes at the same time in this region and is seen as a linkage in the various developments in the BSR.

By analyzing the spatial development of the economic borderlands and its integrative abilities provided by the space- and time shrinking capacities of the steamship technology, the economic integration and debordering processes by this innovation will be clearly outlined.