Edgar Kant
1902–1978

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Into a cordial and well-to-do home in Tallinn, Estonia, Edgar Kant was born on 21 February 1902. His father, Jüri Kant, was a merchant and his mother, née Elise Ruval, had a rural background. From the wide circle of friends and associates who found hospitality at the Kant home young Edgar apparently imbibed a global perspective on life and a curiosity about languages and different styles of thought. From his mother he learned about the rich Estonian record of folk lore, its history, culture, and geography. Liberal in politics yet staunchly patriotic, the atmosphere of Kant's childhood was one which encouraged study of international affairs, science, a rational attitude toward economic and social matters, and a strong love for nature. All of these values shine through in Edgar Kant's life and work. A geographer he became and a conscientious citizen, Rector of Tartu's University, fully embarked on a potentially brilliant scholarly career when his country was occupied by the Soviet Union in 1944. As an involuntary exile in Sweden, however, he was an inspiration to students and colleagues at the University of Lund, where he spent the rest of his life, from 1944 to 1978.

1. *EDUCATION, LIFE AND WORK*

The chequered history of Kant's native land took a dramatic turn during his teenage years. In April 1917, on the abdication of Tsar Nikolaus II, a short-lived democratic regime in Russia acknowledged the autonomy of Estonia. In less than a year there was a liberation war against the Soviet Union (1918-20) and the then sixteen-year-old Edgar Kant volunteered for service at the front. When the conflict subsided he set about completing his secondary studies at Tallinn, and matriculated at the University of Tartu in the Autumn of 1921. It was in Tartu that the first peace treaty was signed by the USSR: in 1920 Estonia's independence was recognized and a few months later that of Finland. These events held enduring significance for Edgar Kant.

Enrolled in the geography department at Tartu, Kant quickly won favour with Professor J.G. Granö, the renowned Finnish scholar who had, in many ways, made Estonia his *pied-à-terre* for launching a fresh perspective on geography. His *Reine Geographie*, the German version of which appeared in 1928, held an appeal for Kant in at least three major ways: (1) that 'human' dimensions of geographical enquiry could be conducted with a rigour and precision comparable to that which had become standard practice in fields such as geomorphology or climatology; (2) that this 'human' dimension could be explored in minute detail, including the documentation of characteristic rhythms of activity and leisure, economic and social life, architectural forms and circulation; even sensory perceptions of nature and the environment within reach could be mapped in micro-residential settings; and (3) that geography as a whole could cultivate an integrated perspective on population and milieu and hence regional geography (as an art or as a science) could provide the optimal

[Numbers in square brackets throughout the text refer to numbered items in the Bibliography and Sources section]

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framework for *heimatkunde*, and so yield an understanding of life in the home areas of Estonia. Though his own basic fields of training were in physical science, botany, chemistry, and climatology, Kant became an eager reader of philosophy, history, and social science. Among his favourite authors were Goethe, Le Play and Kropotkin.

During Kant's undergraduate years there appeared to be basic life commitments to scholarship and to the nation. In *Reine Geographie* he found a view of human geography that was analytical and practical, and at the same time inevitably linked to the natural world. It could be global or it could be local, dealing with the here and now of practical experience. Such a *heimatkunde* could therefore also satisfy his second aspiration of service to his own country of Estonia: and this drew a response from students who volunteered for work on summer projects all over the country and in their studies sought to document the physiographic, historical, bio-ecological and ethnic features of Estonia (Granö, 1923; Rumma, 1925). Kant, as *amanuens* (1923-4), was in charge of field work in towns and cities, and his first thesis on Tartu [3], with its graphic illustrations on everyday life, rhythms of light and dark, warm and cold, circulation in and out of the city, was a masterpiece. It merited the Edouard Gaudy Medal from the Société de Géographie Commerciale (Paris) in 1928. Had it appeared in English, French, or German, it might very well have been acclaimed as a prototype for dynamic urban geography (Hägerstrand, 1978). From 1927 to 1936 Kant was Editor-in-Chief for the entire collection of *heimat* studies *Eesti*; later on, from 1938 to 1940, he was Chief Editor of the *Eesti Atlas (Atlas of Estonia)*.

Like many another of his generation, however, Kant's horizons were not confined to those of his native land. In 1926 he studied at the University of Szeged (Hungary) and in 1928 graduated at Tartu with an M.A. (mag. geo.) degree. His research curiosities led to further travel. In 1928 he studied at the Hochschule für Welthandel in Vienna, and in the following year at the Handelshochschule of St.-Gallen and the Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv in Hamburg (Kauri, 1980). During these years he was Assistant Lecturer in Economic Geography at Tartu (1936-8) and apparently a star performer, 'the most fascinating and impressive lecturer I've ever met', one of his former students reported in 1986. 'He used to lecture in that large auditorium of the Department of Geography and Natural Sciences at Tartu and the auditorium was always packed full with students. Kant never put any pressure on anybody to attend, they came there out of spontaneous interest' (personal communication of Rudolf Jalakas, 22 October 1986). In 1931-2 he was on the road again with a Rockefeller grant for research and study at the universities of Paris, Grenoble, and Amsterdam, and possibilities also for visiting Algiers and other North African milieux. The intensity and variety of encounters with leading scholars at each of these sites marked all Kant's subsequent works. He spoke at least eight European languages and by the time he was to undertake his monumental lexicon of geographical terms he could obviously read fifteen of them. Even before the publication of his doctoral dissertation in 1934 his publications list included articles in French, English, Finnish, Dutch and Estonian.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s at Tartu Kant remained closely attuned to the actual social and political realities of his country. On the wake of Estonian independence, it seems, an ultra-democratic political climate had fostered a great variety of individual parties and movements. Veterans of the 1918-20 Liberation War began to form a 'freedom' movement, winning the support of people from various walks of life, and seeking to introduce more rationality to the political landscape. Among their projects was the writing of a State Constitution for Estonia. This was adopted in 1933 and later revised in 1937. But there was a growing conservatism in this war veterans' movement, and hence Kant, together with others, helped to initiate a more liberal association, Eesti Rahvuslaste Klubi (Estonian Patriotic Club) in 1930. In this context alternative ideas were aired about the State Constitution and other policy matters. An alternative Constitution was actually proposed. As scholar and citizen Kant assumed editorial responsibilities for the *ERK* (Eesti Rahvuslaste Klubi's journal), and also invested time and material resources for the launching of a more popular newspaper, *Vaba Sona* (*Free Word*) 1933-4, and of its successor, *Uus Sona* (*Our Word*) 1934-5. In all of these editorial challenges, Kant helped to publish views and reviews on economic, cultural, historical and social questions encouraging liberal and democractic stances on the political challenges of the 1930s in Estonia.

In 1934 Kant defended his doctoral dissertation on *Population and Environment in Estonia* [9]. A revised version of this work was published the following year in a book entitled *Bevölkerung und Lebensraum Estlands* [11] which was decorated with a special medal from the Estonian Literary Society. He became an associate professor in Economic Geography at Tartu (1934-6) and then Ordinary Professor of Economic Geography in 1936. One of the first practical applications for his exhaustive field studies of *lebensräume*, population and agriculture in Estonia was a plan for the rationalization of regional administrative units in the land. He presented his project, supported with the results of anthropogeographical research, to the Ministry of the Interior at Tallinn on 10 September 1935 (*Uus Sona*, 1935). Meanwhile there was another project under way, that of Balto-Skandia, a geopolitical unit based on the common cultural and ecological features of the lands surrounding the Baltic shores [10, 12]. This idea, first articulated by Sten De Geer (1928), was especially dear to Kant, who sought to broaden the horizons of his compatriots of whom some appeared to be adopting more circumscribed and chauvinistic views at the time. Already apparent, then, was Kant's vision of rationality in the geopolitical landscape for *lebensraum*, which was scarcely conceivable without concern for the larger horizon: site and situation, home and reach, were latent melodies in his research on Balto-Skandia.

The mid-thirties brought a whole variety of new challenges, academic as well as civic, to Edgar Kant. By then chairman of the Society for Economic Sciences (1936-9), he directed the Tartu Regional Industrial Inventory (1937) and lectured at the Tallinn Military Academy during the years 1937-1939. Between 1937 and

1940 he also served on the Advisory Board of the Estonian Institute for Economic Forecasting, led the Labour Market Survey for the Ministry of the Economy in 1939, and was a member of the Estonian Institute for Natural Resources between 1938 and 1940. In 1938 he was appointed as Pro-Rector of the University of Tartu and president of the Humanities Section of the Estonian Academy of Sciences. Between 1938 and 1940 he formed part of the Collegium of the Estonian Cultural Foundation. In addition to all these professional commitments, Kant maintained his commitment to civic challenges. Through articles, reviews, editorial notes and public debates, he strove to counter political extremism with a Mannheimian faith in reason throughout the turbulent years of the late 1930s and early 1940s.

Russian occupation of the city in 1940 brought sudden changes, including the deportation of many ERK associates, signatories to the 1933 Constitution, a number of whom were scientists and professors, leaders in political and military life as well as in agriculture, industry, and trade. Kant, whose scientific theory and practice were not deemed reconcileable with the orthodox Marxism of the day, was divested of rank, tenure, and status. Nor was he willing to accept the terms of a 'Friendship Association' offered to him and his lifetime friend Kaho, then Rector of the University. When the Germans took over the city in 1941, however, normal scientific work could continue, and Kant was appointed Rector of the Universitas Tartuensis, where all the protocol and routines of the Independence Period could be re-instated, despite occasional disapproval from the occupying authorities. 'None of this could have been possible', a former associate recalled, 'without the ingenious diplomacy and scientific authority of Professor Edgar Kant' (personal communication). He held the position of Rektor until 1944 when the Soviet Union once more occupied Estonia.

In 1944 Edgar Kant found himself joining a refugee stream westwards across the Baltic Sea. Estonia's loss became Sweden's gain. In 1945 Helge Nelson, Chairman of Lund University's Geography department, offered him a position as archivist (1945-7). He graduated to a Research position (1947-50), and finally a teaching position in economic geography (1950). In 1944, three years before the statutory retirement age, Edgar Kant became once more a Professor of Economic Geography.

For students and colleagues at Lund, in spite of major language difficulties, Kant was an invaluable resource, a walking encyclopedia of information and insight on conceptual, methodological, and historical aspects of geography. 'Kant opened the doors of Europe for us', Hägerstrand acknowledged, 'One got the impression that there wasn't a single book or major article in geography and related fields which he hadn't a grasp of, nor was there a single geographer whose biographical details he didn't know' (Hägerstrand, 1978, p 96). The late 40s and early 50s must certainly have been a creative time at Lund: many of Kant's earlier ideas and suggestions on urban and social geography, migration, and regional development could now be rearticulated and tested on new soil. It must have indeed been gratifying for him to witness the Halcyon Days of Lund geography, the launching of the *Lund Studies* series, the preparations for the IGU Congress in Stockholm (1960), the massive challenge for applied geographical research launched (1961) in preparation for Sweden's *kommunindelning* (revision of local government areas) and the enthusiasm surrounding the plans for regional development.

But the move to Sweden was emotionally traumatic for a man so devoted to his native land. A motor cycle accident had caused him a leg injury which meant that his favoured recreation of long walks and travels had to be curtailed. He always hoped to return home once peace was established. He maintained contacts with Estonian colleagues and helped to revivify the Svensk-Estniska Samfundet (Swedish-Estonian Society), founded in 1934 at Tartu, whose *Yearbooks* (1934-71) provided a publication outlet for émigré scientists in Sweden [18]. From any direct involvement in politics, however, he withdrew. Geography became his *heimat*, and from a smoke-filled room on Sölvegatan 13, Lund, long into the night he would read, reflect, and write on people and places, on ideas and their genesis, on frameworks and methods for geographical analysis and the presentation of results. His list of published works in diverse languages covers over 100 titles and the range of his correspondence was enormous. He was a member or corresponding member of many scholarly associations: the Swedish-Estonian Society, the Finnish Geographical Society, the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography, the Baltic Research Institute (Bonn), the Akademi für Raumforschung und Landesplanung (Hannover), the Académie internationale libre des sciences et des lettres (Paris), the Société Neûchateloise de géographie, the Société de géographie de Genève, the International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, the International Institute of Sociology, and the Koninklijk Nederlandsch Aardijkskundig Genootschap (Amsterdam).

Former students and research associates from his Tartu days speak of Kant as a hard worker and loyal friend, as someone who rarely took a vacation but loved to take long walks in the woods, or to explore new urban landscapes. His final monumental enterprise was a dictionary of geographical terms, in thirteen different languages, as well as a special volume on regional terms. Though it contained 20,000 items at the time of his retirement, this work remained unfinished. Edgar Kant died in Lund on 16 October 1978.

2. *SCIENTIFIC IDEAS AND GEOGRAPHICAL THOUGHT*

The volume and diversity of Edgar Kant's published works make generalizations hazardous. Many were written in Estonian, so judgements are based on summaries (English, German, French, Dutch or Swedish), on graphic illustrations and maps (frequently with translated legends), and on some translations offered by his former students or associates. Add to this the oral evidence afforded by former friends and associates that Kant, in fact, communicated many of his ideas face-to-face in seminars, letters, meetings of clubs and societies, or in the public press. The archival record, however, reveals a fairly consistent style of thought and practice, a world view which admitted precise analysis of particular topics as well as the quest for grand generalizations and theory.

Edgar Kant was an anthropogeographer with an organic conception of humanity and milieu. Having a formal training in natural science, he educated himself in philosophy and social thought. He admired, and in some ways emulated, Kropotkin, Ratzel, Kjellen, Vidal de la Blache and Jean Brunhes, and he was impressed by both de Vooys and Steinmetz. The horizons of care were not confined to his native land for Estonia, a mosiac of differentiated regions, was still regarded as part of Balto-Skandia, itself part of a world community. Anthropogeographic insight, he hoped, could help to bring about such an awareness. Equally universal were his attitudes toward science and scholarly communication for documenting the origins and evolution of ideas was a steady interest throughout his life. 'He always traced ideas back to their sources', Torsten Hägerstrand related, 'to read the preamble to articles where he dutifully acknowledged all those who had made contributions to the theme, was an education in itself. Often the editor cut these preambles out before printing the article' (Hägerstrand, 1978). The history of ideas, archival sources, international communication to be facilitated through the standardization (or multi-lingual glossaries) of terminology--all these preoccupations could be best understood in the light of Kant's overall organic conception of thought and life.

Rupture of Kant's career at the age of forty-two must certainly have occasioned fundamental changes in the nature and scope of his research, yet there seems to be a remarkable consistency in its central motifs. The penchant for exhaustive field surveys and empirical data-gathering virtually disappeared after his move to Lund; rare also are homilies about geography and social action. Yet many ideas, tentatively aired in reports and articles during the 1920s and 1930s, found fertile soil for further development during his years in Sweden. This had very much to do with the immediate social context of the newly-constituted department of *kulturgeografi* (divorced from *naturgeograpfi* in 1950) at Lund, where eager young graduate students consulted him and learned some of his 'foreign' theoretical ideas. Chronologically speaking one could discern a general movement in Kant's practice of geography from the early bio-ecological (anthropogeographical) studies of *heimat* and *lebensraum* in Balto-Skandia through the more systematic, topically-oriented investigations of migration flows, indices of centrality, and urban fields of influence, to the historical and archival interests in geographical terms and language which dominated his later years. Yet a thematic rather than a chronological frame seems more feasible when one seeks to understand the life and work of this great scholar: (1) anthropogeography, (2) social and economic geography, and (3) intellectual history, language and methods. Several of his works span all three interests; ideas born in one context were frequently transposed to another. In the progression of his work, too, one notes a balancing of analytical and reflective movements: for each stride forward in the analytical exploration of topics, he would take time to scrutinize its conceptual, methodological, and practical implications.

a. Anthropogeography

Local area studies conducted or supervised by Kant in the early 1920s reveal a tension between two opposing tendencies in the regional geography of the times, the chorological and the ecological. While *Reine Geographie* was methodologically more akin to the former, Kant expresses deep sympathy for the latter, sometimes even daring to disagree with his mentor [5]. This ecological perspective was obviously deemed relevant in studies of population and environment, agriculture and rural life, but Kant also used organic analogies when he described the *lebensräume* of towns and cities. Summarizing the massive study of Tartu (at the age of twenty-two), his metaphors for identifying the basic divisions of the city were organicist: (a) the heart (centre); (b) the lungs (green areas, hospitals, sanatoria); (c) the limbs (suburbs); (d) the torso (basic ground plan); (e) to (h) the extremities [3, p 261-2]. The body of this work also reveals his concern for sound empirical analysis, with its minutely detailed mapping of streets and buildings, daily and seasonal activity patterns, all set within the bio-ecological, hydrographic, demographic, economic, aesthetic, and social aspects of Tartu's history and geography, 180 figures and 42 maps. At an early stage in his career Kant demonstrated keen interest in the geography of population, discussing its analysis and interpretation, and succinctly representing demographic patterns [8, 14, 22]. He was impressed with Vidal de la Blache's work on world population and Max Sorre's treatises on the ecology of health and disease and was a lifelong friend and correspondent of Albert Demangeon. His own regional vignettes, ranging in scale from local to continental and written at various points in his career, all reveal his fondness for the classical tradition of *la géographie humaine* [6, 7, 23, 24].

Quite early in the 1920s there was a strong patriotic flavour in Kant's works on his homeland and its region. Researching the botanical, physiographic, and demographic details of the Baltic region's history was regarded as an essential pedagogy of consciousness-raising about the integrity of Estonian civilization. Anthropogeographic research was thus oriented toward building a sense of local and regional identity as well as that of evoking responsibility for social life among the people themselves. It was indeed ironic that the same rhetoric would be used for geopolitical ends quite contrary to those envisioned by the Tartu geographers! One of Kant's greatest contributions to cross-disciplinary research was his anthropo-ecological (synoecological) approach to the question of Balto-Skandia; the oral testimony of former research associates from that time proclaims the value--scientifically as well as pedagogically--of Kant's organic conceptions of geography and politics (Kauri, 1980). A tangible echo of this work can be read in *Omstridd Mark I* (1948), one of his first publications, after reaching Sweden, where he tells the story of the area of Peipus lake with Estonian settlement from the time of the Swedish occupation in the seventeenth century.

Given the ideological climate in Sweden after World War II, it is not surprising that his earlier

anthropogeographical interests had to remain latent. Yet the holism, and organic quality, of his overall definition of geography shine through in several substantive essays he wrote in the *Svensk Uppslagsbok* (over 300 items), and also in his necrological essays on older colleagues, for example, Tammekann (1959), Sepp (1948), Parts (1960) [19, 39, 4]. In his eulogy on Romer [35] he made a special point about patriotism and his vision of future society where 'human reason could overcome the deadening grip of materialism'. In his mainstream teaching and research activities during the time in Sweden, however, energies were necessarily addressed to matters more mundane, or at least to research of a more positivist nature. It was on the basis of his original *lebensraum* framework for regional analysis that the research on *kommunindelning* (revision of administrative regions) in Sweden was designed. In the implementation, however, the physical and bio-ecological aspects of regional life were excluded; it became entirely an exercise in applied social and economic geography.

b. Social and Economic (Systematic) Geography

In one of Kant's first essays [4] a point is made about the conflict between economic and ecological aspects of humanity's *genres de vie*. An eager promoter of higher education at Tartu, he advocated a science of economics which would pay attention to social as well as ecological dimensions of everyday life. He made a special point about the geography of consumption, a topic, he noted, which economists tended to overlook. Yet the growing consumerism evident throughout Europe at the time should, in his opinion, be examined in the context of ecological and societal settings within specific regions [ibid.]. Economic geography could therefore not be divorced from a more general concern about population, livelihood, resources and space [13, 21]. Economic geography should base itself on thorough empirical analyses of actual life situations while at the same time availing itself of whatever might be relevant of economic theory. It was indeed a surprise for the seminar students at Lund later when he displayed maps on living standards from various countries in Europe, North Africa, North America and the Middle East (Hägerstrand, 1978).

Like Kropotkin he favoured an ecologically balanced policy on livelihood and area; this was the fundamental philosophy underlying his proposals for a reform of administrative area boundaries in Estonia in 1935 (Kauri, personal correspondence 1986). But he was fully aware of the dynamic processes of industrial development, transport and commerce, and their impact on space and ways of life; liberal economic theory was something he was evidently ready to accept as a 'given'. The challenge for regionalization was to design a formula which could allow for the geopolitical autonomy and social integrity of regions (*lebensräume*) and at the same time foster overall national development through an efficient localization of employment, services, and production. Central Place Theory (not then labelled as such) offered a conceptual basis for meeting this challenge [9, 11].

In his proposal to the Ministry of Tallinn on 10 September 1935 he laid out certain imperatives for rationality in the reform of communal boundaries: (a) that administrative structures should reflect the optimal hierarchical ordering of central places; (b) that taxation should promote rather than hinder rational development of that hierarchy; and (c) that change should begin with the larger units and only after the overall size and number of regions had been decided should one begin to unify the smaller ones (*Uus Sona*, 11 September 1935). In this normative schema, elements of which were later to be eagerly welcomed in Sweden's *kommunindelning* project, Kant appears to have graduated from his early empirical-inductive approach and now to have espoused a full-blown hypothetico-deductive approach to the study of spatial organization. It would scarcely be an exaggeration to claim that he, together with Walter Christaller, whose works he heralded for the Swedes, was one of the pioneering spirits behind Regional Science, a field in which the Lund School was to build its well-deserved reputation in the 1950s and 1960s.

There may be other explanations for Kant's movement away from empirical field research and his espousal of more abstract and theoretical models after his arrival in Sweden. Perhaps the field, not being his own home territory, did not hold the same emotional appeal; perhaps 'by the rivers of Babylon longing for home' it seemed more prudent to gaze around through the lenses of theoretical models? Lund afforded ample space for the refinement of several key ideas including mathematical formulations of migration flows, indices of centrality, and fields of influence around urban cores, all likely to win the eager cooperation of young doctoral candidates at Lund. For a generation schooled in morphological and chorological descriptions, the power and apparent sophistication of dynamic model-building and quantitative analysis of urban and regional systems must have held an enormous appeal.

In 1950 Kant participated in the symposium organized by Gerd Enequist on *Tätorter och Omland* (*Nucleated settlements and Hinterlands*), and made a crucial contribution to the symposium on *Migration in Sweden* (1954) which was to become one of the most widely acclaimed volumes in the Lund Series (Enequist, ed., 1951, Hannerberg, ed., 1957). In preparation for the IGU Congress held in Stockholm in 1960, he conducted a comparative study of city regions and their commuting fields--Stockholm, Copenhagen, and Chicago--and on the same occasion made an appeal for a standardization of terms in urban geography [43, 44]. But he was fully aware of the need to evaluate the relevance of models and theories in the light of particular contexts. To the conventional lore on rural-urban migration, for instance, to those theories of 'push and pull' and the assumed importance of large cities as magnets, he advanced countervailing evidence from his own field work in Estonia. He showed that there most actual moves were taken from rural areas to nearby small towns, or from one small town to a slightly bigger one close by [15]. Nor were migratory moves adequately explainable in terms of rational (economic) motives: images of the 'urban way of life' and upward social mobility were apparently more significant, for example, in the 'rurbanized' regions of Upper Estonia than in Lower Estonia [ibid.]. In the latter region the primary explanations were the mechanization of

agriculture, the employment of seasonal labour, and other cultural factors which differentiated the two major regions of Estonia. To the mythology of centralization--agglomeration and scale economies of big cities--he counterpoised data on social space and living standards which did not easily fit the gravity model, nor did they offer any evidence of even gradients in quality of life outwards from big cities. Intelligence tests among Estonian school children in the late 1930s showed a marked regional differentiation: the level of intelligence was highest in the city of Tartu, lowest in the communes near the city, and increasing again centrifugally toward the borders of the hinterland. 'With the exception of a geographically absolutely abstract and only theoretically imaginable Thünen's "isolated realm" there does not in reality exist anywhere a single town with a monopolized rural sphere of influence' [ibid., 123-4].

On social geography, Kant was fully aware of the *fleurs du mal* in anthropogeography's history, from environmental determinism to totalitarian geopolitics. He insisted, however, on the importance of maintaining an ecological as well as a social dimension in geographical enquiry. Here he dared to disagree with his former mentor, J.G. Granö, who regarded human ecology as part of sociology, admissable in *heimat* study, but not in fact an integral part of geography. Kant, on the other hand, having studied the literature of Dutch, French and English schools, argued that the ecological dimensions should be an integral part of social geography [5, 17]. He admired the Le Play tradition and the work of Fleure, Geddes, and Mukerjee. He appreciated the nuances of debate articulated by Schlüter, Hassinger and Klute, and was especially impressed by the Dutch efforts (both in *sociografie* and in *social geografie*) to combine theoretical and practical interests in their studies of social space. In 1948, communicating these ideas in a Swedish (postwar) context, he added a full-blown account of regional (and rural) sociology in America, clearly fascinated by Zimmermann's empirical surveys and Baker's proposed regionalization of that continent's human geography [17].

On issues of social space and social time Kant pondered carefully. Never a disciplinary chauvinist he noted that there was a vacuum created through the conceptual war between anthropogeography and spatial science. Ample research had been done on the cultural landscape; ample, too, were studies of population, but the question of society--social structure, class, race, place identification and lifestyles--that whole domain, and its bio-physical and ecological associations, remained empty for the conventional geographers of his day. Schooling himself in the literature on developments in other fields of natural and social science he strove to outline a geographical perspective on synoecology, or anthropo-ecology, which would attune itself to the complex and diverse drama of people and localities, eager not only to harvest the fruits of specialized research but also to grasp an integrated understanding of life in context. The hazards of environmental determinism, as well as those of *ceteris paribus* science, were consistent cautions in his methodological essays. For both he counselled historical depth: social time, as defined by Zimmermann as 'epochs of closely related social practices' was something he felt any wellbred geographer should recognize and--as the French classical geographers had amply demonstrated--was the keystone for a possibilist interpretation of the relationships between people and milieux [ibid.].

Such conceptual and historical insight was not evidently what the audience was ready to receive, however; more appealing were his analytical ideas, his methods and models to guide field research on population, settlements, migrations, and the revision of local government areas. Questions of social space and social time which he articulated in 1948 were to remain virtually ignored, even after 'time geography' emerged in the early 1970s. Kant's philosophical concerns were to be subsumed under other rubrics, for example, geographical terms, language, history of ideas, and cartographic methods. All the time he seems to have cherished the vision of a community of scholars who could understand each other's work and build organically a more integrated perspective on humanity and milieu.

c. *Intellectual History, Philosophy, Language and Methods*

Throughout Kant's career, as previously noted, there seems to have been a reciprocity of analytical and reflective movements: each stride forward in the empirical investigation of phenomena was followed (indeed often preceded) by sound conceptual clarification on the origins, assumptions, and contextual relevance of his project, as well as by open self-questioning about the practical relevance of its results. Given his multilingual abilities, his wide network of correspondents, and careful reading of literature from various lands, he apparently enjoyed the challenge of balancing the ideographic and the nomothetic, the descriptive and the normative phases of research enquiry.

Methodologically-oriented essays abound during Kant's later years. Most intriguing among these are those dealing with the definition and classification of migration [31, 38], measures of urban influence [25, 42, 43], strengths and limitations of statistical data, and the prospects for thematic cartography [14, 25, 46]. On all of these Kant brought historical as well as epistemological insight. Discussing Central Place Theory, for example, he traced the origins of this idea to the eighteenth century--long pre-dating von Thünen and Losch--to a study on the size and spacing of towns and the approximately hexagonal structure of hinterlands by a Swedish economic historian, Carl Brunckman, in 1756. On the famous dot map of population, of which the originator was conventionally considered to be either Sten De Geer (1908) or O.E. Baker (1917), Kant delivered evidence of earlier efforts, for example, those of Frere de Montizon's 'Philosophical Map of French Population' (1830), Th. A. v. Mentzer's map of the population of Gotland (1859) and a government report on the natives of New Zealand (1863), all of which used measures of absolute population numbers, symbolizing them with a 'dot' technique [46]. Kant was no 'arsenic and old lace' archivist, however; his purpose was to clarify terms and encourage the international exchange of ideas, and to caution about the contextual implications of particular

theories and models.

From his diverse empirical studies in Estonia Kant offered ample evidence that each local situation should be understood in terms of its own historical and anthropogeographical situation, though in a unique essay on 'Experience, Reason, Faith and Scepticism' (actually a book review) he underlined the importance of rationality as lode star for the scientist [13]. In his normative statements about the optimal organization of space there is a strong belief in the rationality of economic processes. 'For modern theoretical study has proved that, with purely economic considerations as a starting point, it is also possible to divide the entirely uniform land surface into districts, not only representing rational constructions, but also forming an organic-economic structure' [25, p 46]. Acknowledging the need to fit such ideal constructions to the particularities of local situations, he proceeded to celebrate the value of analyses on, for example, the 'field intensity of central places'. But he also called for analyses of the 'blank districts, deserts, massifs and special points...on the anisotropical qualities of the *area geographica*...' [ibid., p 47] Rationality, transposed to spatial rationalization had, of course, an entirely different connotation in postwar Sweden than it might have had in pre-war Estonia. Kant must have pondered long on the irony of ideas and context.

In theory and practice, Kant sought to upgrade the quality of geographical analyses and theory. As one of the pioneers of quantification, he advocated caution about the appropriateness of mathematical models:

> One could suspect that economic and social geography, combined with mathematical methods, might be too much oriented toward a mechanical thrust and find itself on the same track as Viniarski's 'mechanical sociology' or Veinberg's 'energetics'--where one would regard society as a system of mathematical points...steered according to a Mayer-Helmholtz energy principle or Newton's law of gravitation... The mathematication of geography is possible and desirable as an instrument to further whatever research research method and render it more exact [25, p 43-4].

The extent to which his counsel was heeded is a matter for historians to discern.

On the communication of research results--making geography more accessible to the general public--Kant often expressed strong opinions. 'Why burden humanity with exhaustive chorological descriptions which could very well be summarized in graphical form?' [42]. Maps, graphs, models or equations should, in his view, provide far more succinct and understandable ways of representing the results of geographical analyses than volumes of prose. In his Inauguration Address (1964) as Professor of Economic Geography he defended the hypothetic-deductive approach to research, and his own published works certainly offer convincing evidence that he put his own principles into practice.

Kant's culminating monumental enterprise, which was to consume most of his energies during his final days in Lund, was a multilingual dictionary (lexicon) of geographical terms. This idea was welcomed by Helge Nelson in 1945 when Kant arrived at Lund. Originally the Lexicon was to be produced in six different languages besides Estonian: English, Swedish, German, French, Italian and Russian. Subsequent negotiations in the department led to the idea that six further languages should be added: Polish, Spanish, Danish, Norwegian, Finnish and Dutch, some even arguing that Portuguese should be included [26]. Between 1945 and 1951 Kant's original idea of a glossary had evolved considerably, and in 1951 he outlined his plan in the *Svensk Geografisk Årsbok* [ibid., p 165].

EXTRACT FROM
POLYGLOT GLOSSARY OF GEOGRAPHICAL TERMS.

The abbreviations used in this extract:
G = German; *Du* = Dutch; *Fr* = French; *I* = Italian; *Sp* = Spanish; *Pr* = Portuguese; *R* = Russian; *Po* = Polish; *Sw* = Swedish; *Da* = Danish; *N* = Norwegian; *F* = Finnish; *E* = Estonian; *Gk* = Greek; *L* = Latin; *OFr* = Old French; *Am* = Americanism; *Hind* = Hindi, Hindustani; *Skr* = Sanskrit; *Jap* = Japanese; *dial.* = dialectal; *f* = feminine; *m* = masculine; *n* = neuter; *u* = utrum (in Swedish and other Scandinavian languages); *pl* = plural; *fig.* = figurative &c.; f. = from; prob. = probable &c.; q.v. = quod vide; seq. = sequentes.

atoll [prob. f. *Malayalam aḍal* closing], coral atoll. A coral reef in the shape of a ring or horseshoe, enclosing a shallow lagoon. — C. R. Darwin 1842; J. D. Dana 1872; W. J. Sollas 1899: 389—406; J. S. Gardiner 1931; P. H. Kuenen 1933.

G Atoll *n*, Lagunenriff *n*; *Du* atol *m/f*; *Fr* atoll, attoll *m*; *I* atollo *m*; *Sp* atoll, atollón *m* (Maldive); *Pr* atoll *m*; *R* атолл *m*; *Po* atol *m*; *Sw* atoll *u*; *Da* atol *u*, ringö *u*; *N* atoll *u*; *Fi* atolli; *E* atoll, rõngassaar.

belt, vegetation. Vegetation regions homologous in their altitudinal position. — A. v. Humboldt 1817; G. Einar Du Rietz 1930: 498 seq.; G. Negri 1934: 684—687.

G Vegetationsstufe *f*; *Du* vegetatietrap *m*, niveau *n* van plantengroei; *Fr* étage *m*

One of the ideas was to highlight particular terms which were born in specific milieux, for example, *caatinga*, *maquis*, *chaparral*, *risha*, *veld*, *kevir*, *blizzard*, *poroca*, *arête*, and had subsequently become metaphors or accepted professional terms in geography. Another idea was to facilitate easier communication and mutual understanding among specialists of geography in various lands. This was the main rationale for his proposal to the 1949 IGU Congress in Lisbon where he offered the following example [30]

Examples:

English — *gathering, collecting, collecting economy;*
German — Sammelwirtschaft;
Swedish — samlarhushallning, samlarkultur,
Danish — samlererhverv;
French — cueillette des produits naturels, économie de cueillette;
Italian — economia di raccolta, economia raccoglitrice;
Spanish — economía de recolección;
Portuguese — economia colectoria;
Russian — sobiratelstvo;
Polish — gospodarka zbieracza;
Finnish — anaistava talous;
Estonian — anastav majandus.

LITERATURE — A. E. Jenks 1897/98: 1.013 seq.; J. Friedl 1903: 123 seq., 269 seq.; P. J. Bischofs 1908: 33; E. Nordenskiöld 1912: 46 seq.; J. Brunhes 1925 I: 478 seq.; K. Sapper 1925: 9-10, 151 seq.; R. Numelin 1936: 70 seq., 170 seq.; T. Lynn Smith 1947: 162; Max. Sorre 1947 I: 249-51.

Colleagues from many lands apparently responded to his

request. A huge archive of partially-completed forms rest on the shelves of Sölvegatan 13, Lund. Kant's 'Geographical Lexicon' might today be considered as one of the great unfinished works of the century. Over 20,000 items are on file, terms whose scientific meaning have obviously changed since the 1960s, but whose diverse connotations throughout the world might well deserve attention.

The image of Edgar Kant, virtually buried in papers and letters during his latter years at Lund, stands in poignant contrast with the image of the young political activist of the early 1920s and 30s. Poignant, too, is the picture which emerges when one examines the diffusion of his thought among his colleagues internationally.

3. *INFLUENCE AND SPREAD OF IDEAS*

Kant travelled and read widely, and his range of personal contacts and correspondents was also enormous. It is extremely difficult to document the extent to which his ideas and works were actually acknowledged in print. For someone who took such care in documenting the sources of ideas, and heralding the work of others to colleagues, it seems ironic that his own writings have not been more widely acclaimed. Vicissitudes of language (very few of his works were published in English), emigration, and change of academic status, no doubt offer a partial explanation. It may be fair to claim, however, that his most enduring influence has been on certain individuals--notably students and colleagues--whom he helped orally, in face-to-face conversations, seminars and courses or through correspondence.

It should be recognized, too, that geography was only one part of Kant's overall sense of vocational meaning. Throughout the 20s and 30s he was a tirelessly dedicated scholar-citizen: geography was interesting as a science in itself, but it was also a sound base from which to address the social and civic challenges of Estonia during those years. A former associate said that 'There was always a long queue waiting outside his office door at the University of Tartu--long before he became Pro-Rector...not all were there to ask questions about geography courses'. Kant initiated and directed many ambitious plans for reform of educational curricula, administration, and taxation in his native land; the plan for a revision of regional boundaries (1935) was a culminating exercise in such applied endeavour.

After his arrival in Sweden, outlets for his social ideals of liberal democratic political life were few. He contributed articles to the *Yearbook* of the Swedish-Estonian Society (Svensk-Estniska Samfundet) and numerous articles to the *Svensk Uppslagsbok*. But his status now was that of archivist, researcher, later Lektor, which meant that his primary function was that of teaching and guiding students. Lecturing originally in German, and later from prepared scripts in Swedish, scarcely allowed him to articulate easily or to express the pedagogical charm of former days. He was far better, it seems, as counsellor, critic or director of thesis research. For several years he directed the Research Seminar at Lund University's geography department and undoubtedly those theses, a number of which were of Licenciat level, bear witness to his inspiration and direction. Those who proceeded to do doctoral theses have also amply acknowledged their debt of gratitude to Kant.

No attempt has been made here to trace the influence of Kant within those other language areas such as French, Finnish, German, Dutch, English or Hungarian on which scant information is available. One is tempted to speculate, however, what the outcome might have been if in 1945 he had found himself in England, France or in a setting where he would have not had to learn a new language? At any rate it seems clear that in many of his major ideas he was ahead of his times, and Sweden offered an ideal opening for his ideas on regional development and on the dynamics of urban systems, measures of migration and indices of centrality. If he had migrated to another land, the challenges and opportunities might have been quite other. What does seem tragic is that his later years were characterized more by social withdrawal rather than by social engagement; his energies became more focussed on the *lexicon* of geographical terms than on face-to-face dialogue or debate.

'Unless the grain of wheat falls into the ground...': in reality the enduring value of Kant's life and work is the inspiration it has afforded. Many were his dreams and visions for geography and a better world; some were partially achieved, some were aborted, some were impossible, and one at least remained unfulfilled. Even if in hindsight it appears that he was not adequately acclaimed by contemporaries, there seems little doubt about the personal debt of gratitude felt by those who had been associated with his work.

> We who had the honour of wandering with Kant during his active exile years, gratefully remember his overflowing scholarly learning, and the warm handshake with which he greeted us, whenever we met and whenever we parted... (Hägerstrand, 1978, p 101).

For those of a later generation, born, like he was, 'under a wandering star', Edgar Kant bequeathes a record of courage, commitment, and collegiality.

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Chronology

1902	Edgar Kant born in Tallinn 21 February, son of Jüri Kant, merchant and Elise Ruval
1917	Estonia's autonomy recognized by Russia, 17 April
1918-20	Liberation War against Soviet Union
1918	Military service on the Estonian Front
1920	USSR-Estonian Peace Treaty signed in Tartu
1921	Matriculated and entered Tartu University Autumn term
1923-24	*Amanuens*, Department of Geography and Natural Sciences, Tartu University
1924	Visited Paris and Algiers
1926	Travelling fellowship for study at University of Szeged, Hungary
1927-36	Editor-in-Chief for the group project *Eesti* (home area studies in Estonia)
1928	Travelling fellowship for study at Hochschule für Welthandel (Vienna) M.A. (*mag. geogr.*) University of Tartu, Spring term
1928-34	Assistant Lecturer in Economic Geography, University of Tartu
1929	Edouard Gaudy Medal of the Société de Géographie Commerciale (Paris); Travelling fellowship for study at Handelshochschule (St-Gallen) and at Weltwirtschaftliches Archiv (Hamburg)
1930	Married Leida Kalling, B.A. Founder member of the Eesti Rahvuslaste Klubi (Estonian Patriotic Club): became editor in 1932
1931-32	Rockefeller Fellowship for study at universities of Paris, Grenoble and Amsterdam
1933-35	Shareholder and contributor to newspaper *Vaba Sona* (*Free Word*) 1933-34, and *Uus Sona* (*New Word*), 1934-35
1934	Defended doctoral dissertation 15 May
1934-36	*Docent* in Economic Geography, University of Tartu
1934	Foundation of Svensk-Estniska Samfundet (Swedish-Estonian Society)
1935	Jubilee Medal on the occasion of the 400th anniversary of the first printed book in Estonian Presented Plan for reform of communal administration to Ministry of Interior, Estonia, 10 September
1936	Ordinary Professor of Economic Geography, University of Tartu; Corresponding member, Finnish Geographical Society
1936-39	Chairman, Society for Economic Sciences (Tartu)
1937	Director, Tartu regional industrial inventory; Revised State Constitution adopted
1937-39	Lektor at Military Academy in Tallinn

1937–40	Member, Advisory Commission of the Estonian Institute for Economic Forecasting
1938	Pro-Rector, University of Tartu from 1 January Elected member of *Eesti Teaduste Akadeemia* (Estonian Academy of Sciences) Elected President, Humanities Section of the Estonian Academy of Sciences
1938–40	Editor-in-Chief for the *Eesti Atlas* (*Atlas of Estonia*) Member, Estonian Institute for Natural Resources
1939	Member, Commission for the Labour Market Survey, Estonian Ministry of Economy Foreign member of the Swedish Society for Anthropology and Geography
1941–44	Named as Rector, University of Tartu, 18 September 1941 to 19 September 1944
1945–47	Archivist at department of geography, University of Lund, Sweden
1947–50	Research Associate, department of geography, University of Lund, Sweden
1950	Lektor in economic geography, University of Lund
1951–52	External Consultant on Professorial appointment, Helsinki University, Finland
1951	Faculty Opponent on Ph.D. dissertation defence, University of Uppsala
1952	Ordinary member, Baltic Research Institute (Bonn)
1953	Corresponding member, Akademi für Raumforschung und Landesplanung (Hannover) Faculty Opponent on Ph.D. dissertation defence, University of Lund
1954	Member, Académie internationale libre des sciences et des lettres (Paris)
1955	Corresponding member, Société Neuchâteloise de géographie
1958	Corresponding member, Société de géographie de Genève Member, Union internationale pour l'étude scientifique de la population
1960	Member, Institut international de sociologie
1963	Honorary Member, Koninklijk Nederlandsch aardrijkunde (Amsterdam)
1964	Professor of Economic Geography, University of Lund
1978	Died at Lund, 16 October