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Rural political anomalies in the Republic of Havland

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ABSTRACT

Notable differences in political opinion are often observed when surveying rural and urban areas. This trend holds across geographical, sociological, and cultural divides, and can be observed in most societies with sufficient development disparity. In most cases, these differences show a skew towards conservatism and traditional values in rural areas and more diverse, liberal values in metropolitan areas.¹ This is adequately explained by the more multicultural population in cities as well as the higher population of educated and young inhabitants in urban areas.² However, two studies of population sentiment in the Republic of Havland point to a significant outlier in this assessment.³ In this paper, I aim to examine to what extent rural populations in Havland are an outlier to traditional

¹ Ben Singer, 'Differences in Political Opinion between Urban and Rural Populations', *Contemporary Sociology*, 12.5 (1968).

² L. M. Peabody, *A Gentle Introduction to Sociological and Statistical Principles*, 1991.

³ Misa Kawasaki, 'A Response to "Differences in Political Opinion": The Case of Havland', *Contemporary Sociology*, 12.6 (1968); Misa Kawasaki, 'Revisiting Havland: A Statistical Analysis of Urban and Rural Political Opinion Evolution in the Republic of Havland', *Contemporary Sociology*, 15.2 (1979).

models of rural political thought, and how that contrasts against urban political thought. I will also attempt to offer some explanations as to the differences.

INTRODUCTION

As Kawasaki writes in her original 1968 paper, “any coherent theory of rural political thought must take into account the strong outlier presented in the Havland case study, without which we would be simply creating a statistically-supported stereotype.”

However, what exactly is the “strong outlier”? How can we best describe the rural political thought of the Republic of Havland?

Let me begin by reiterating the usually stated propositions of rural political conception. Peabody writes in *Principles* that “rural thought can generally be characterised by three attributes: 1) Strong religious and hierarchical belief structures, 2) A high degree of social conservatism, and 3) Strong conceptions of ethnic or national identity”. It is important to note here that “rural” as defined by Peabody excludes populations displaced from or minorities within their place of residence, these observations apply in general to members of the majority ethnic or population groups who live outside of cities. Havland’s rural population fits this definition: >95% of Havland’s rural population forms one generally homogenous ethnic group with both English and Danish heritage. Since the island was originally uninhabited, this “settler” ethnic group (consisting of ethnically English slaves and ethnically Danish raiders who captured the slaves in the 7th to 10th century) can be deemed the natives of Havland. However, while the group is genetically homogenous with a high degree of intermarriage between those of English and Danish heritage,

cultural divisions are murky and difficult to define. It is my suspicion that cultural animosity is one of the drivers of the Havland anomaly.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The cultural divide between the two primary inhabitant groups of Havland, combined with the difference in social position between them, created many unintended effects. Aland's 1980 survey of Havlandic language use gives us one such effect:⁴ While a pidgin or creole language (Havlandic) developed organically, it was eventually codified when the Kalmar Union settled the islands from approx. 1400 A.D. until it was replaced by modern Havlandic due the *Talereform* act. Old Havlandic, reflecting the divide in its speakers, had two major branches, Anglophone and Danophone. Interestingly, most surviving written samples of the language and living speakers are from the Anglophone branch, despite that branch being less prestigious and less favoured by the official authorities. Foger surmises that this is because of several factors: most ethnically Danish and literate members of Havlandic society (i.e. those of high social standing) learned and used vernacular Danish, German, or other continental languages rather than Danophone Old Havlandic and thus would make records in those languages; once the *Talereform* was announced use of the Danophone branch died rapidly as modern Havlandic (bearing much stronger resemblances to Danish) became the official language of business and law while Anglophone Old Havlandic persisted as a *patois*-like cultural language; the conversion (to Danish/modern Havlandic) and destruction of Danophone Old Havlandic

⁴ John Aland, 'Some Notes on the Havlandic Tongue (Havske Sproget/Det Havske Nyttale)', in *Of Old Words: A Collection of Essays on Old Havlandic*, trans. by Sarah Foger, 1980, pp. 12–21.

documents was encouraged during the *Talereform*; and finally that there were simply more users of the Anglophone than the Danophone branch, such that the Anglophone branch emerged victorious when the two branches conflicted. Today, only the Anglophone branch survives, and it is spoken as a natural language almost exclusively in rural areas in spite of successive government efforts to eradicate it.⁵

Another effect of the bipartite society was the creation of an early, and persistent, rural-urban divide with relatively limited social mobility. English slaves, except for those with exceptional abilities, were usually employed as manual labour or farming in villages, while the cities were largely inhabited by the Danish settlers descended from Vikings, who became merchants and traders. As such, the early literate population of Havland was almost exclusively Danish, and it is only through happy accidents and the gradual spread of literacy that we begin to see the recording of Anglophone Old Havlandic during the Kalmar period. Eventually, long after the Viking period ended and the slaves became settlers in their own right through gradual transition and social intermingling, there emerged two distinct social classes: the *jarlmanns* i.e. merchants, traders, and those freemen permitted to conduct business in the cities outside of market days, and the *lagrmanns* i.e. villagers, menial labourers, and farmers. While the ethnic association remained (that is, associating *Jarlmanns* with Danish descent and *Lagrmanns* with English descent), and we see early examples of attempts to preserve a cultural heritage in *The Book of Hans*, it is unclear the extent to which these associations remained true. It

⁵ Sarah Foger, 'Understanding the Birth, Reception, and Death of Danophone Old Havlandic', in *Of Old Words: A Collection of Essays on Old Havlandic*, pp. 22–30.

was possible, through various means, for a *Lagrmann* to become a *Jarlmann* (usually through the obtaining of a patron, or a marriage), or for a *Jarlmann* to be cast out into the villages. Nevertheless, these social conceptions would last well into the Kalmar and succeeding Royal era, and some argue to this day.

THE DIVIDE IN 1968

In 1968, Havland had just emerged from the single party rule period and was transitioning to full democratic government. The rural-urban divide in that period is immediately obvious through several basic statistics: the urban areas are more economically prosperous (82% of Havland's economic activity occurs in urban areas), more ethnically diverse (~69% "Settler" in urban areas vs. >95% in rural areas), and more literate (>85% in urban areas vs. ~60% in rural areas after the 1952 Language Reform act). These factors, in theory, should correlate with a more liberal and progressive worldview compared to rural areas. Kawasaki's anomaly comes from the following set of questions (translated from Havlandic), administered to a sample of 117 urban and 92 rural residents of Havland: ⁶

1. The 1922 Revolution was a positive change for Havland. (Urban: 57% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 65% agree or strongly agree)
2. Havland should not have a monarchy in any form. (Urban: 67% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 89% agree or strongly agree)

⁶ Kawasaki, 'A Response to "Differences in Political Opinion": The Case of Havland'.

3. Absolutist rule was a negative period in Havland's history. (Urban: 82% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 91% agree or strongly agree)

4. The current government of Havland is satisfactory. (Urban: 72% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 64% agree or strongly agree)

Taken as a group, these four questions show a curious reversal from the expected trend. Rural support for republicanism and anti-monarchical sentiment exceeds urban support by a significant margin, even when rural satisfaction with the current democratic government is lower compared to that of the urban population. This contrasts strongly with the general perception of rural populations as traditionalist and conservative, and requires an explanation. Kawasaki suggests that, since a significant proportion of the rural interviewee population spoke (Anglophone) Old Havlandic either publicly or privately, this anti-monarchical and republican sentiment springs from an animosity towards the government due to historical oppression and attempts to eliminate their language, and by extension their culture.

ACCUSATIONS OF CULTURAL ERASURE

The Havland Government has consistently denied that it attempts to in any way erase the historic culture of the *Lagrmann* social group, and maintains that it works actively to protect and preserve Old Havlandic through the Havland Language Council (*Taleconseil*

Havland).⁷ However, the statement was made after said Language Council attempted to classify Havlandic as a dialect of Danish rather than a language in its own right (ignoring Old Havlandic entirely), sparking furore amongst scholars and speakers of Old Havlandic.⁸ The Havlandic government has also been accused of attempting to whitewash Havlandic history and downplay the legacy of slavery on the island, especially when discussing the *Lagrmanns*.⁹ In particular, an English publication on Havlandic history sponsored by the Havlandic State Institute (*Det Havske Statinstitut*, the government's primary cultural office) came under fire for only using the word "slavery" in its preface, authored by an American scholar otherwise unaffiliated with the book.¹⁰ While it is tempting to rule these occurrences a recent phenomenon from a government eager to present itself as a modernised Nordic nation, it is important to note that similar acts have been a staple of both royal and absolutist governments in Havland (the *Talereform* being the most obvious of these, giving the government free reign to persecute and harass Anglophone Old Havlandic speakers while offering Danophone branch speakers an easy transition to the more Danish-aligned modern Havlandic).

Nevertheless, the Havlandic Language Council statement marked a major downturn in relations between the government and Anglophone Old Havlandic speakers, so much so that Kawasaki felt compelled to recreate the study to measure changes in popular sentiment the following year.

⁷ 'Det Taleconseil Havland', *God Morgen Havland* (1, 1978).

⁸ Aland.

⁹ Kerry Brown, 'Havland PM Responds to Accusations of Whitewashing History and Downplaying Slavery', *BBC*, 9 February 1980.

¹⁰ *Havland: A Brief History* (Manutius Press).

THE DIVIDE IN 1979

The following were the results of the 1979 study: ¹¹

1. The 1922 Revolution was a positive change for Havland. (Urban: 69% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 48% agree or strongly agree)
2. Havland should not have a monarchy in any form. (Urban: 72% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 85% agree or strongly agree)
3. Absolutist rule was a negative period in Havland's history. (Urban: 87% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 95% agree or strongly agree)
4. The current government of Havland is satisfactory. (Urban: 82% agree or strongly agree / Rural: 44% agree or strongly agree)

Here we see a significant drop-off of rural sentiment regarding both the Revolution and the current government compared to their urban neighbours. The uptick in urban support can be explained through the rise in Havland's urban living standards and GDP in that time period. However, support for anti-monarchist and republican ideals remains strong, suggesting that their support for these ideals was based on principles or strongly-held beliefs rather than present material conditions provided by the democratic government.

¹¹ Kawasaki, 'Revisiting Havland: A Statistical Analysis of Urban and Rural Political Opinion Evolution in the Republic of Havland'.

CONCLUSION

It is highly likely that rural republican and anti-monarchist sentiment is a result of the systemic oppression of rural and *lagrmann* communities and cultures by the past and present governments of Havland, carrying out historic prejudices that date back to the Viking era. Moreover, these ideals do not make them more “liberal” in the contemporary sense, nor do they guarantee support for the current democratic government, especially if that government takes actions the community deems to be hostile. Contemporary surveys also mention that these rural communities are still more religious and more socially conservative than their urban counterparts.¹² Thus, the “anomaly” of Havland is less an anomaly than the natural result of a large population being systematically undermined since their forced arrival onto their place of settlement.

¹² ‘The Guardian Special Report: Havland’, *The Guardian*, 1 April 1977.