



Gender Clashes and *Faux Pas*: *The Political Diaries of Ulla Lindström, Swedish Minister 1954–66*

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ABSTRACT IN ENGLISH

In Sweden, as in many other countries, women's political representation was a contested issue long before 1922, when the first five women entered the Swedish Parliament among 375 male MPs. In general, the few women in top political positions have met resistance both from male colleagues and in the mass media. Biographies and memoirs of political women in different countries from the 1950s until today show a similar pattern: political scandals are more devastating for women than for men; and for women the question of doing gender "right" is often crucial.¹ The mass media's tendency to stereotype female politicians is also immensely influential.² In this paper the special discourse developed in the Swedish press regarding Ulla Lindström, the only female minister between 1954 and 1966, is scrutinized. The concepts of 'doing gender' and 'gender clash' are used to analyse how women politicians are constructed as 'not right', and to show how women politicians are stereotyped in the press. The question is whether and how the political persona created in the national press corresponded with the political persona created by Ulla Lindström in her political diaries, written during her time as a cabinet minister. These diaries created a sensation when they were published in two books, in 1969 and 1970, partly because they were published such a short time after Lindström's resignation, partly because the diaries were based on shorthand notes and revealed the internal discussions among members of the government in a way that was unique at that time, both in Sweden and Europe.

ABSTRACT IN SWEDISH

Såsom åtskillig forskning visat har det varit svårt för politiskt aktiva kvinnor att förena de motstridiga krav som ställts på dem som handlingskraftiga politiker och "riktiga" kvinnor. Inom massmedieforskning används ofta ordet *persona* för att beskriva den personlighet som en politiker iscensätter på den offentliga arenan, en politisk *persona*. Problemet för politiker är att det i massmedia ofta skapas en annan *persona* än den som politikern själv iscensätter. Den svenska pressens bild av Ulla Lindström som ett pratigt och beskäftigt statsråd, vars karriär präglades av grodor, fadäser och klavertramp, kan ses som ett sätt att "skapa" en politisk *persona* och med den en diskurs; ett specifikt sätt att tala och skriva om regeringens enda kvinnliga minister åren 1954–66. När Ulla Lindström efter sin avgång 1966 publicerade de politiska dagböcker hon fört under sin statsrådstid var ett av hennes motiv sannolikt att hon ville ge sin version, dvs skapa sin egen politiska *persona* som motvikt mot den bild som skapats av henne i pressen. I mitt bidrag skall jag med stöd av begrepp som "genuskrock" och att "göra kön" ge exempel på hur Ulla Lindström skapades som politisk *persona* och hur hon själv såg på eller tolkade den bild som konstruerades i pressen.

Keywords: women in politics, political *persona*, political diaries, *faux pas*

INTRODUCTION

When Ulla Lindström was appointed as minister without portfolio in 1954, she was only the third female minister ever in the Swedish government led by Tage Erlander, Prime Minister and leader of the Swedish Social Democratic Party (henceforth SAP), from 1946 to 1969.³ The two female ministers preceding Lindström had been appointed for only short periods of time.⁴ Ulla Lindström was the first woman to hold a ministerial position for any length of time, serving for twelve years, from 1954 to 1966. Today, twelve years as a minister is considered a very long period of time. This was, however, not the case in the 1950s and 1960s when several members of the Swedish government held their positions for more than 20 years.⁵ When Erlander wanted to appoint a female minister before the 1954 election he first met resistance in the government.⁶ The fact that he had some difficulties finding suitable tasks for the female minister did not stop him; he found it "ridiculous" to start the election campaign without a woman in the cabinet.⁷ Finally he created a portfolio including family, consumption, aid to developing countries, and immigration. Lindström herself said she had a "general store" of political issues to handle with four different departments involved: the Ministries of Commerce, of

Health and Social Affairs, Foreign Affairs and Justice.⁸ Lindström soon initiated the Swedish National Board for Consumer Policies and she was the architect behind a new family policy that included the creation of publicly financed day-care centers, one of the most important reforms of the 1960s, to mention only a couple of her initiatives.⁹ From 1947 to 1966, she was also Swedish delegate to the United Nations General Assembly, and did regularly spend one or two autumn months in New York. According to Dag Hammarskjöld, UN secretary-general, Ulla Lindström “made the whole UN blush” when she initiated a debate on family planning in developing countries.¹⁰

THE POLITICAL DIARIES

I met Ulla Lindström for the first and only time in the early 1990s. When we met she was in her eighties and almost blind. Nevertheless, she looked at me and said that I ought to read her political diaries, which were kept at the Swedish National Archives:

- “Every single word is true”, she said.

Of course, I am well aware of the fact that truth is a contested concept, not least in the ongoing debate, which has been running since the 1990s, on autobiographical self-representation.¹¹ For a long period of time political memoirs, autobiographies and biographies have been something of a “men’s club.”¹² This applies also to Sweden, where the Social Democratic Party (SAP) was the dominant party during Ulla Lindström’s ministry.¹³ Within the SAP it has been a tradition to publish political memoirs and/or biographies of the party’s important men, i.e. the social democratic leaders.¹⁴ The memoirs published before the 1990s related the history of the party rather than the life of the authors and critique of the party leaders was rare.¹⁵ Ulla Lindström, who did not hesitate to criticize Tage Erlander, was the first female minister to publish memoirs, or, “excerpts” from what she called her “political diaries”, which appeared three years after she resigned in protest from her ministerial post.¹⁶ The first volume: *In the government: From my political diary 1954–59* was published in 1969, and the second volume: *The government did not resign! From my political diary 1960–67*, in 1970.¹⁷ Ulla Lindström prepared the publication herself by editing her original diaries and writing the introductory sections. A comparison between the original diaries and the published volumes shows striking similarities – the editor has made only small changes (exchanging some words, omitting sections that are of a private character). More sections have been omitted in the second volume than in the first, but on the whole the published memoirs are more or less identical with the original diaries.

According to the introduction to the first published political diary, Ulla Lindström started to write down all the “exciting issues” she experienced as minister in order to be able to explain the political decisions to her grandchildren.¹⁸ Lindström was a skilful writer who had worked as a journalist for many years. She wrote in her diary at home in the evenings and in big books, a kind of ledger. She knew stenography and she noted down in shorthand what was said in the governmental meetings as they were happening. When writing the diary she used the shorthand notes, which she often kept in her handbag. In the introduction to the first published diary she wrote that “the quotes are substantiated by my shorthand and thus authentic.”¹⁹ I will come back to the question of authenticity.

Originally, Ulla Lindström had not planned to publish her political diaries, but after her resignation she decided that her testimony would be of general interest, showing how a government worked. She wrote that the diaries could be seen as a “report justified by my proximity to the events, telling about the relations between those in power in the government and in the parliament and the results of the political power struggle.”²⁰ In the introduction to the first book she also mentioned a more personal aim for publishing the diaries. In order to put a stop to untrue “fables,” she wanted to give her own version of what lay behind her resignation in 1966, underlining that there was “no grudge or need to retaliate” behind the publication of her diaries.²¹

When the political diaries were published Ulla Lindström was criticized for being indiscreet, since she openly revealed the discussions in governmental circles. In particular the unveiling of less formal discussions among cabinet ministers during their daily lunches was criticized.²² Several reviewers described her political diaries in terms of a contested politician’s defence or a “talking back.”²³ At the same time, the reviewers felt that they had previously put her down unjustly; now they found that the author was talented, brave and humorous.²⁴ Ulla Lindström had a “feminist gaze” and the misogyny she and other political women experienced during the 1950s and 1960s was mirrored in her diaries. She did not hesitate to criticize the press for stereotyping women and the labour movement for “fumbling relations with the sisterhood” (i.e. women).²⁵ Ulla Lindström’s publishing of her political diaries could be seen as an act of defence, but, on the other hand, you could also say that she fits into a tradition where women’s writing of “scandalous memoirs” is a way of expressing resistance as well as vindication.²⁶ She wanted to give her version of events, which could be described in terms of a feminist interpretation of being a political woman. The controversial question of authenticity did not seem to trouble her when, as already mentioned, she wrote that “the quotes are substantiated by my shorthand and thus

authentic.”²⁷ She did not seem to reflect on questions of interpretation or of making choices. Her version was her “true” or “authentic” version and, as a former journalist, she was accustomed to reporting from political meetings; she did not problematize the fact that she was reporting from the governmental circle of which she was at the time a working part. After the publication of the diaries, she received letters from friends and colleagues who more or less confirmed her version of events²⁸ and her books have been (and still are) widely quoted both by scholars and authors of memoirs and biographies. In other words, the diaries have been judged as reliable sources.

POLITICAL PERSONA

During my current work on a biography of Ulla Lindström, I have used the concept of the *political persona* to analyze the growing gap I have found between the *persona* of Ulla Lindström constructed in the press and the *persona* that Ulla Lindström herself constructed or created in her diaries. The concept of the *political persona* is often used in mass media research where the politician “is perceived as an actor performing a relevant ‘persona’, a self as revealed to others.”²⁹ In the following, I will use the concept of the *political persona* to emphasize the fact that Ulla Lindström was constructed in the Swedish press as a deviant politician, whose career was characterized by *faux pas* or, as one reviewer of her diaries wrote: “(t)he silly Ulla /.../ of the botches, bodes, and gaffes.” He added that he himself had helped to put her down “with both malice and recklessness.”³⁰ He was, however, not the only journalist putting Ulla Lindström down. As already mentioned, a particular discourse or way of describing her *political persona* was developed in the press. She was constructed as deviant, both as a woman and as a politician. She was also stereotyped and often described as a woman who was too talkative and thus in need of a muzzle. In her diary, Ulla Lindström showed how the press constructed her as a “chatterbox”³¹ and also ascribed to her comments that she had not made. In the diaries she gave her version of events, which can be seen as a construction of her own *political persona*. In this paper, I will use the diaries to compare the *political persona* constructed in the press with the *political persona* constructed in the diaries. Furthermore, I will use the concepts of *doing gender* and *gender clash* to analyze how women politicians in general, and Ulla Lindström in particular, have been constructed as “not right.”

In the 1950s and 1960s, the newspapers in Sweden were many and influential, particularly since most Swedish towns had two local (often quite small) newspapers, one social democratic paper and one belonging

to the opposition parties, that is, the liberal, the agrarian or the conservative parties.³² As soon as Ulla Lindström's name was mentioned in a newspaper she (like all MPs and ministers) got press cuttings through the Public Information Service (Statens Upplysningsbyrå). A collection of cuttings are filed in Ulla Lindström's archive at the National Archives and my analysis is based on those press cuttings as well as (microfilmed) Swedish newspapers published between 1954–66.

POLITICAL WOMEN AND GENDER CLASHES

The fact that Ulla Lindström was the only female minister in Tage Erlander's government made her both visible and deviant, not least when, dressed in a skirt, she was photographed together with male colleagues all dressed in dark suits. Being the only female minister also meant that she was scrutinized in the press and soon a special way of describing her was developed, a discourse that was both critical and misogynist. Research from different countries show that political women are often stereotyped in the mass media, a phenomenon which seems to have been more or less the rule since women first gained the right to vote.³³ "The politically active women who make themselves seen and heard are perceived as angry and provocative," according to Margareta Svahn, who has studied insults, stereotypes and gender constructions in contemporary Swedish mass media.³⁴ To simplify you could say that Ulla Lindström was accused of "not doing gender right."³⁵

Political scientists and other scholars have investigated the male resistance experienced by women in high political positions. A vast academic research literature, as well as biographies and memoirs, show that women have faced and still face difficulties when entering the male dominated political arena.³⁶ Feminist media scholars have investigated the tendency to sexualize, personalize and domesticate female politicians in the mass media, in short the tendency to comment on their looks and family life rather than their deeds.³⁷ A modern example is the Swedish feminist party, Feminist Initiative, *Fi*, which was formed in 2005 and aimed to gain seats in the Swedish Parliament in the 2006 election. When *Fi* was portrayed in the mass media, its members were described as being the wrong kind of women, organized in the wrong way, saying the wrong things, highlighting issues that were not considered "political," etc.³⁸ They were also sexualized, ridiculed and de-feminized, not least in cartoons. More than 40 years earlier, Ulla Lindström was subjected to the same master suppression techniques;³⁹ she, too, was often portrayed malevolently in news articles and in cartoons. In the press, the members of *Fi*, just like

Ulla Lindström, were constructed as *political personae* who committed *faux pas* and who did not do gender right. Like Lindström, *Fi* members were described with words seldom used in relation to male politicians, like “silly geese.”⁴⁰

According to one journalist “(f)emale politicians thus seem to be evaluated not only on their performance as ‘credible politicians’ but also on their performance as ‘credible women’.”⁴¹ Previously, I have described this dilemma in terms of *gender clashes* – a paradoxical situation in which it is as impossible for a female politician to perform as a ‘credible politician’ as it is to perform as a ‘credible woman.’⁴² A telling example is the incident when Ulla Lindström, together with all the members of the Swedish government, bowed when greeting the British Queen Elizabeth II, who visited Stockholm in 1956. The fact that Lindström bowed instead of curtsied was described as scandalous misbehavior by the British press (did Lindström think she was superior to the Queen?). The curtsy scandal was quickly echoed in the Swedish press and Lindström received letters saying she ought to resign since she was a “shame to her country”⁴³ and cartoonists portrayed her as unable to kneel.⁴⁴ Evidently Lindström was “not doing gender right” when she, like her male colleagues, bowed instead of curtsying. Those who criticized her did not see her as a minister among ministers. Instead, they saw *Mrs* Lindström who did not curtsy, i.e. she did not perform like a woman. This *gender clash* – a clash between what was expected from her as a credible politician (to bow like a man) and a credible woman (to curtsy to the Queen) – illustrates the difficulty faced by political women in acting as ‘credible’ politicians. A similar situation occurred when Ulla Lindström attended a wedding in a black dress. In one paper she was gleefully criticized for not following etiquette (never wear black at a wedding!) which no doubt was a way of undermining her as both a ‘credible’ woman and a ‘credible’ politician; she did not do gender right.⁴⁵ Another common *gender clash* is when the role of female politician clashes with the role of mother, a clash that in Sweden has been particularly visible in studies of the career of the former SAP leader, Mona Sahlin. In 1995, Mona Sahlin was more or less forced to resign from her ministerial position for using the government’s credit card when buying private articles like napkins and chocolate. In the press she was perceived as a neglectful mother lacking political authority.⁴⁶ In comparison, male politicians involved in political scandals are seldom accused of being careless fathers.

I would suggest that this tendency among journalists to stereotype female politicians as women (rather than as politicians) could be interpreted in terms of *gender clashes*. Going back to Ulla Lindström, I would argue that journalists were unable to understand that she, like her male

colleagues, was acting politically. They did not recognize the “political woman”; they saw only the stereotyped “woman,” the “babbling” minister who was repeatedly making *faux pas*. According to the Swedish political scientist Maria Wendt, political women are often described as “characters” (how they are) and not as “political actors” (what they do).⁴⁷ Consequently, women are not seen as proper politicians but rather as acting in their private capacities, a fact that undermines their political authority.⁴⁸ Ulla Lindström’s *political persona* as it was created in the press was actually not political; her *persona* was constructed as a political wrongdoer, i.e. a woman. According to one reviewer of her political diaries her career was “marked by *faux pas*” and he found her “pushy, obstinate and tactless,” characteristics that were not considered feminine in the 1960s.⁴⁹ This kind of almost abusive wording or discourse is found surprisingly often in the press, albeit more often in the non-Socialist press than in newspapers owned by the labour movement.⁵⁰ In a way, this mirrors the fact that a deep political conflict existed between the competing non-Socialist and Socialist parties in Sweden during the 1950s and 1960s,⁵¹ but that is not the only conflict concealed here. Undoubtedly, a special discourse was developed in the press regarding Ulla Lindström. It was a discourse that became more and more negative and misogynist surprisingly quickly. In 1957, when Lindström had been a minister for less than three years, one leading newspaper wrote: “Minister Ulla Lindström’s *faux pas* are now a matter of routine.”⁵² The often repeated mentions of Lindström’s *faux pas* constructed her as a politician who did and said the wrong things. When she once wrote a letter (instead of talking) the influential, conservative newspaper *Svenska Dagbladet* sighed: “On top of everything Ulla Lindström has now started writing letters.”⁵³ The following day the same paper wrote that in the aforementioned letter she had “made an ass of herself” and thus shown her “lack of ability to deal with her work.”⁵⁴

THE PRESS DISCOURSE AND THE DIARY

Undoubtedly, Ulla Lindström was well aware of the predominantly, negative press discourse. In her diary she wrote that she was described as “garrulous”⁵⁵ and that her political actions were interpreted as evidences of “female thoughtlessness.”⁵⁶ She even made list of words used in the press to describe male versus female politicians.⁵⁷ This could be interpreted in terms of resistance, perhaps a way of dealing with the fact that she was constantly put down in the press by male journalists? It should be noted that the (still rare) female journalist treated her differently; they not only wrote about Lindström in more positive terms but also marvelled

at the misogynist press discourse.⁵⁸ Also, when she was appointed minister several newspapers wrote that the new Minister of Family (in one paper she was called the Minister of Haberdashery⁵⁹) was an able woman, talented, hard-working and good-looking.⁶⁰ When she later gave a speech in Malmö, the local paper presented her to the readers as follows: “The cabinet minister Ulla Lindström is an elegant woman to look at while you attentively follow her intelligent arguments for continued social democratic rule in Sweden,” adding that she had “a very graceful and feminine appearance in a red velvet hat.”⁶¹ Ulla Lindström herself did not officially complain about the way in which she, as minister, was portrayed in the press. When interviewed by a female journalist in *Aftonbladet*, a Stockholm-based social democratic tabloid, Lindström and the interviewer discussed press cuttings with headings like “(n)ow the Madame has babbled again” and “Ulla has made a *faux pas*” or a “serious gaffe.”⁶² Lindström commented hopefully that the patronizing tone applied to women would disappear when more women became politically active.⁶³

After her resignation Ulla Lindström problematized the tendency to stereotype both political men and women in the press.⁶⁴ In her diary she wrote that political women were described in a patronizing and gendered way while descriptions of political men were gender neutral.⁶⁵ She also underlined the fact that, contrary to what was assumed by the journalists who criticized her for speaking before thinking, she always carefully planned what to say. In order to be able to confirm in retrospect what she had actually said, she used to tape-record and type all her speeches.⁶⁶ When interviewed many years after her resignation Ulla Lindström had a seemingly more indulgent attitude towards the press. Possibly she was trying to smooth things over when she said that it was perhaps rightly-deserved that the press had dubbed her the “witch” of the government. Being the only woman meant you had to assert yourself, she said, and perhaps “I was too eager to assert myself at the beginning of my career.”⁶⁷ Thinking in terms of strategies, it seems as though Lindström’s strategy was not to complain about the way she was described in the press, at least not while she was still in a ministerial position. At the same time she was conscious of the journalistic tendency to misinterpret her speeches. As already mentioned, one strategy to counter this phenomenon was to have all her speeches recorded, typed and (later) filed. The publishing of her “political diaries” could also be seen as a conscious strategy. As described above, in the first published diary she particularly underlined that she not only wanted to give inside information about the work of the government, she also wanted to give her own version of her career as a minister.⁶⁸ Among the excerpts from her diary she also inserted some essay-like chapters in which she gave her view on gender and politics,

i.e. her experiences of being the only woman at a period when there were few women in top positions in politics and they were critically scrutinized in the press. In the diary she described how she was often confronted with *gender clashes* in terms of incorrect news, misunderstandings and eye-catching headlines and cartoons in the newspapers.

DUBIOUS REPORTS AND INCORRECT NEWS

Ulla Lindström often found that her political speeches were misinterpreted in journalists' reports. Once, after she had spoken about World War II, Hitler and public opinion, she was accused of recommending censorship. One journalist wrongly reported that she wanted to gag the press, a misinterpretation that was repeated in several newspapers, eventually resulting in one journal writing that the person in need of a muzzle was Ulla Lindström herself.⁶⁹ The article was illustrated with photos of Lindström and a well-known Norwegian Nazi leader (Vidkun Quisling), a juxtaposition that very much upset Lindström.⁷⁰ By the time a social democratic newspaper finally asked for Lindström's speech manuscript in order to find out what she had actually said the damage was already done.⁷¹ According to Lindström, such incidents were quite common. What she said was misinterpreted and uncritically quoted from one newspaper to another and thus the "babbling minister" was created.⁷² The idea that Lindström needed a muzzle later reappeared in an editorial of *Svenska Dagbladet*, the leading, conservative newspaper in Stockholm.⁷³

In her diary, Ulla Lindström gave another example of how the press actually created misleading news when she presented a proposed change to a bill called "raggarlagen" or "raggarparagrafen" in the Swedish Parliament. In the 1960s greasers ("raggare") were members of a gang of youths who drove about in cars in Stockholm and other cities offering (often very young) girls lifts. In spite of the title of the bill it was actually the young girls who were targeted. Girls as young as 14 had been found in cars and on boats and it was assumed they were in need of protection. The new bill made it possible for the police to ask for the names and addresses of young girls found in cars and on boats in the docklands.⁷⁴ It was a contested proposal, not least since the National Board of Health and Welfare had previously presented a more far-reaching proposal, which was mixed up with the proposal presented to Parliament by Lindström.⁷⁵ Among those protesting violently against the proposed bill were the Social Democratic Youth Association (SSU) and the Social Democratic Student's Association, both in Stockholm. In an open letter to the press, the Board of SSU demanded Ulla Lindström's resignation. The problem was that they, as well as the social democratic (Stockholm-based) newspapers who

supported them and severely criticized Lindström were attacking the wrong proposal, i.e. the one previously proposed by the National Board of Health and Welfare. This meant that Lindström was being wrongly accused, but none of the newspapers checked their sources. The same mistake was made by a large group of MPs, a fact that further confused the debate but still placed Lindström in the position of the accused. On top of that, the social democratic tabloid *Aftonbladet* under the headline “Family Minister Lindström on the warpath”⁷⁶ wrote that Lindström had threatened to resign should the bill not be accepted.⁷⁷ According to *Aftonbladet* a campaign to “save” Lindström had started among MPs.

In her diary, Lindström wrote that the threat to resign was a canard. According to her it would have been “ridiculous” to resign over a mere “trifle” like this and she added that MPs were not stupid. Of course they did not try to “save” either the proposition or her, she added in her diary.⁷⁸ Lindström’s version of the proposed “raggarparagraf” was finally accepted by Parliament. Nevertheless *Aftonbladet* continued to blame Lindström, criticizing her for an “extremely disrespectful” remark, which she had, in fact, *not* made in her speech to Parliament.⁷⁹ The quote appeared in other newspapers and thus Lindström was depicted as a “disrespectful” minister “on the warpath.” This might sound harmless but the often-repeated sensational headlines presumably had an impact, and not only on the readers. The special discourse or way of describing Ulla Lindström developed in and by the press was a discourse in which she was created as an incompetent woman and whatever she did or said was interpreted in terms of making blunders. Later, she was portrayed in a tabloid in “the political profile of the week” under the headline “Her history as minister is a history of *faux pas*.” According to the same paper, she “makes at least one blunder a year!”⁸⁰

The way in which the media willfully misinterpreted Lindström’s speeches and created false news assisted in the shaping of a (false) *political persona*, that did not correspond to the one created by Lindström herself. The gap between the two shows how the only female minister was stereotyped as a politician who was acting in an inappropriate way (threatening to resign), saying the wrong things (being “disrespectful”) and being aggressive (“on the warpath”).

THE NIB-CRISIS

When Ulla Lindström’s diaries were published, some of the reviewers were appalled by the picture she painted of the press and felt that the journalists were in need of self-criticism.⁸¹ Self-criticism, however, was not what characterized the press during the NIB-crisis in 1963, when the social

democratic tabloid *Aftonbladet*, together with a liberal paper in Gothenburg, started a campaign criticising NIB, the *National Board for International Development*, an authority that provided aid to developing countries, and for which Ulla Lindström as minister was responsible. In her diary, Lindström described the NIB-crisis as: “seven weeks of being subject to the most turbulent attacks of my political life.”⁸² She collected more than 300 press cuttings from the NIB-crisis and asked herself how the critique against her and NIB could have developed into such an “unrestrained campaign.”⁸³ The gap between the *political persona* created in the press and the *persona* created in her diaries seemed to be unbridgeable.

To give a brief background: the story of NIB started in 1961, when the Swedish government created a special committee to work on issues regarding international development assistance policy. The committee was initiated and led by Olof Palme, who worked closely with Prime Minister Tage Erlander, and a proposal to set up NIB, *the National Board for International Development*, was soon presented.⁸⁴ NIB started as a new authority in 1962 and it was no more than eighteen months before the press began to ask critical questions about its activities in countries like Algeria, Ethiopia and Pakistan. The critique probably mirrored the fact that NIB had an unusually short start-up period; the administrative routines did not work and several key people resigned after only a short period of time.⁸⁵ Many of the complaints were directed against the head of NIB, Arne Björnberg, who had been formally appointed by the government when NIB started in 1962. NIB was led by a Board and the head of the Board, Valter Åman, together with Olof Palme, had obtained some information about internal problems at NIB during spring 1963. Neither Palme nor Åman had, however, informed the minister in charge, Ulla Lindström, who was taken by surprise when the NIB-scandal exploded in the press in mid-September 1963. A series of articles was published, criticizing both the head of NIB, Arne Björnberg, and NIB’s projects in different countries. *Aftonbladet*, the social democratic paper owned by the Swedish Labour Union Federation (henceforth LO), took up the story and drew special attention to Lindström. *Aftonbladet* created a front page drama with headlines like “Staff are running away from public authority.”⁸⁶ The articles were followed up by editorials in which Lindström was rebuked in a pompous way and held responsible for this that and the other, particularly for the hiring of Arne Björnberg and, according to one front page headline: “Ulla Lindström chose the wrong people for NIB.” When Lindström declared in an interview that Arne Björnberg had been formally appointed by the government, the editor-in-chief of *Aftonbladet* accused her of not facing up to her responsibilities and called on her to resign, a sensational demand since it emanated from a paper close to the social democratic party.⁸⁷

The NIB-crisis was to a great extent a scandal created by the press.⁸⁸ Recent research on political scandals has shown that the “media tend to cover female political scandals more extensively than male political scandals.”⁸⁹ This conclusion applies to the contemporary Swedish media and of course the result cannot simply be transferred to the 1960s and the NIB-crisis, but undoubtedly a witch hunt showing great similarities to more modern witch hunts in the media (at least in the press⁹⁰) was started, with the aim of dismissing Ulla Lindström.⁹¹

In her diary, Lindström wrote that she had the feeling that the NIB-crisis was a campaign directed specifically against her, a conclusion that was dismissed by several reviewers of her book.⁹² Later, however, it turned out that she was right in her belief that someone was acting against her. Many years after the NIB-crisis, the Swedish historian Kjell Östberg has shown that Arne Geijer, the chair of LO, was behind the wish to “get rid of” Lindström. Geijer was deeply involved in aid to developing countries through his simultaneous function as chair of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, ICFTU. Through useful contacts Geijer managed to place two of his supporters at *Aftonbladet* (owned by LO), one of them as editor-in-chief and the other as an expert on international issues. Their first task at *Aftonbladet* was to fulfil Geijer’s and LO’s wish to “get rid of” Ulla Lindström. This information was uncovered by Kjell Östberg when he investigated reports sent from American diplomats in Stockholm to Washington.⁹³ Eventually *Aftonbladet* went too far when publishing an interview with Olof Palme, who was supposed to have said that *Aftonbladet* made it impossible for Erlander to dismiss Lindström.⁹⁴ The Prime Minister could hardly act according to the wishes of the editor-in-chief of a social democratic tabloid.

The question is, could this plan to dismiss Lindström be interpreted in terms of an ultimate *gender clash*? The editor-in-chief of *Aftonbladet* was able to profit from the fact that Lindström was already dubbed the “shrew” of the SAP, and since she was not backed up by influential party comrades she seemed to be an easy target. The problem was that *Aftonbladet* hit too hard; according to Lindström the opinion finally changed and she met sympathy among some of her colleagues.⁹⁵ The plot against Lindström could be seen as a clash between an influential representative of the labor movement and the only female minister. *Why* LO and Arne Geijer wished to get rid of Lindström is not clear, but probably they wanted another minister responsible for aid to developing countries.⁹⁶ I would, however, argue that this is also a question of gender and power in the Swedish labour movement. The clash between LO and Lindström could be compared with another, more recent clash between a highly placed female politician and the wish among influential men in the labor movement to get rid of

this woman; i.e. when Mona Sahlin reluctantly resigned as leader of the Swedish Social Democratic party in 2010. It was Mona Sahlin's shortcomings rather than her politics that were the focus for the media and when she finally resigned the gender order was restored, according to Gunilla Jarlbro and Mia-Marie Hammarlin, who have studied the media reports on Mona Sahlin.⁹⁷

CONCLUSIONS

The concepts of *doing gender* and *gender clash* are useful tools for the analysis of female politicians, both historical and contemporary. The media portrayal of Lindström does not correspond to the picture evolving in her diaries; from these two sources two very different personae appear. This is hardly surprising; a person's self-perceived *persona* rarely correlates perfectly with the *persona* perceived by others. What is particularly striking, though, is how Lindström's story reminds us of the pervasive resistance to women's political presence and the wide range of strategies and techniques that have historically been deployed to consciously or sub-consciously discredit women in politics. Stereotyping, ridiculing, and de-feminization are but a few of the strategies that are visible in the Lindström case.

Political scandals are more devastating for women than for men; for women, the question of doing gender "right" is crucial. There is, however, no way of doing it right: the gender clash makes it difficult to be a professional female politician. Through the eyes of the contemporary press, Lindström became a threat to the prevailing gender order, much as *Fi* did some 50 years later. Here, the media has played an active role in depicting political women as deviant, as different and as simply "not right," and in underlining female politicians' gender performance rather than their professional performance. The tendency to stereotype the (then only) female minister as a woman rather than as a politician could be understood in terms of a gender clash. A special discourse was developed in the press regarding Ulla Lindström, a discourse in which a *political persona* was created in the shape of a stereotypical woman: a woman who talked too much and made *faux pas*, a woman who was perceived as angry and provocative: "on the warpath." Ulla Lindström was constructed as a deviant politician, who, was a wrongdoer, whatever she did or said.

Behind Lindström's decision to publish her political diaries was probably a wish to demonstrate another *political persona* than the "shrew" of the Social Democratic Party created in the press. In her diaries, she did of course both explain and defend her ministerial decisions and actions. She did not hide the fact that she was a contested politician and a woman of temperament who occasionally made mistakes, but she dismissed the idea

that she was too talkative. Instead, she underlined the fact that she actually planned very carefully what to say: “My so-called spontaneity is always carefully prepared. I wonder whether my political antagonists will ever believe that. A woman is spontaneous, according to their prejudices.”⁹⁸

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NOTES

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- 2 Wendt, Maria, "Landsfäder och småbarnsmammor. Mediala gestaltningar av kön och politik". Freidenvall, Lenita & Jansson, Maria (eds), *Politik och kritik. En feministisk guide till statsvetenskap*, Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2011.
 - 3 During 1951–56, the Social Democratic Party formed a coalition government with the Farmer's League. Tage Erlander's 23 years in power are remarkable and also mirrored in his diaries, published and edited by his son Sven Erlander.
 - 4 Karin Kock was Minister without portfolio 1947–48 and Minister for the Domestic Economy 1948–49. Hildur Nygren was Minister of Education during for only 6 months in 1951. Nygren had to resign when the coalition government between SAP and the Farmer's League was formed.
 - 5 Tage Erlander was minister for 23 years, Östen Undén 35 years, Per Edvin Sköld 23 years, Gunnar Sträng 31 years, Sven Andersson 28 years, Torsten Nilsson 26 years.
 - 6 *Tage Erlander Dagböcker*, 1954 (edited by Sven Erlander), Stockholm: Tiden 2004 (8).
 - 7 *Idem*.
 - 8 Ulla Lindström, *I regeringen. Ur min politiska dagbok 1960–1967*, Stockholm: Bonniers, 1969 (24)
 - 9 Ann-Katrin Hatje, "Från kvinno- till välfärdsfråga. Stockholms daghemspolitik från 1950- till 1970-tal" i *Stockholm blir välfärdsstad. Kommunalpolitik i huvudstaden efter 1945*. Red Torbjörn Nilsson, Stockholm: Stockholmia 2011 (137).
 - 10 Ulla Lindström, *Och regeringen satt kvar! Ur min politiska dagbok 1960–1967* Stockholm: Bonniers, 1970 (50).
 - 11 Alpern, Sara, Antler, Joyce, Israels Perry, Elisabeth and Wither Scobie, Ingrid (eds), (1992), *The Challenge of Feminist Biography. Writing the Lives of Modern American Women*. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press; Gilmore, 1992; Gilmore, Leigh, *Autobiographics. A feminist Theory of Women's Self-Representation*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994; Long, Judy, *Telling Women's Lives. Subject/Narrator/Reader/Text*. New York: New York University Press, 1997; Margadant, Jo Burr, ed. *The New Biography: Performing Femininity in Nineteenth-century France*. Berkely: Univ. of California Press, 2000; Niskanen, Kirsti, *Karriär i männens värld. Nationalekonomen och feministen Karin Kock*. Stockholm: SNS förlag, 2007; Norrbin, Camilla, *Från isolering till integrering. En kollektivbiografisk studie över de kvinnliga riksdagsledamöterna under tvåkammarriksdagens tid 1922–1970*, Umeå: Umeå universitet, 2004; Stanley, Liz Moments of Writing: Is There a Feminist Auto/biography? *Gender and History* 2.1 (1990): 58–67; Stanley, Liz, From 'self-made' women to 'women's made-selves'? Audit selves, simulation and surveillance in the rise of public woman, in Cosslett, Lury and Summerfield (eds). *Feminism and Autobiography: Texts, Theories, Methods*, London: Routledge, 2000.
 - 12 Alpern et al. 1992 (5).
 - 13 The dominance of the SAP continued even throughout the six-years-long coalition government constituted by the SAP and the smaller Farmer's League (Bondeförbundet) between 1951 and 1957. Also, the coalition government consisting of all the parties except the communists during WW II was dominated by the Social Democrats.
 - 14 Linderborg, Åsa, *Socialdemokraterna skriver historia. Historieskrivning som ideologisk maktresurs 1892–2000*. Stockholm: Atlas Akademi, 2001.
 - 15 *Idem* (454).
 - 16 Ulla Lindström's resignation was a protest against the outcome of a conflict between Lindström and the Minister of Finance regarding aid to developing countries.

- 17 My translation of the titles of the books is not literal; in Swedish the titles are “I regeringen” and “Och regeringen satt kvar!” both with the subtitle “Ur min politiska dagbok.”
- 18 Lindström 1969 (9).
- 19 Lindström 1969 (19). My translation.
- 20 Lindström 1970 (9). My translation.
- 21 Lindström 1969 (18). My translation.
- 22 During these lunches, members of the government felt they could talk freely with “a bold heart,” according to the diary of Lennart Geijer. See Bjereld, Ulf, *Och jag är fri. Lennart Geijer och hans tid*. Stockholm, Atlas 2015 (138).
- 23 Larsson, Lisbeth, *Sanning & konsekvens. Marika Stiernstedt, Ludvig Nordström och de biografiska berättelserna*. Stockholm, Norstedts, 2001(112–117).
- 24 *Vecko-Journalen* 18 Nov 1970, *Svenska Dagbladet* 16 Oct, 1970.
- 25 Lindström 1970 (196). My translation.
- 26 Larsson 2001 (117).
- 27 Lindström 1969 (19). On the question of authenticity see Lisbeth Larsson 2001 (15) with reference to Leigh Gilmore.
- 28 Ulla Lindström’s archive, vol 10, Swedish National Archives.
- 29 Van Zoonen 2005 (72).
- 30 *Vecko-Journalen* 18 Nov, 1970 (Gustaf von Platen).
- 31 Lindström 1970 (198).
- 32 Kassman, Charles, *Arne Geijer och hans tid 1957–1979*. Stockholm: Tiden 1991 (286–292).
- 33 Adler, Laure, *Les Femmes politiques*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1993; Bjarnegård, Elin, *Men in Politics. Revisiting Patterns of Gendered Parliamentary Representation in Thailand and Beyond*. Uppsala: Uppsala Universitet, 2013; Childs, Sarah and Krook, Mona Lena, “Gender and Politics: The State of the Art”. *Politics*: 2006 vol 26(1) 18–28, 2006; Detlefsen, Louise og Christina Lopes, *Ritt Bjerregaard. En biografi om kvinden og politikern*. Köpenhamn: Borgen, 1997; Eduards, Maud, *Förbjuden handling. Om kvinnors organisering och feministisk teori*. Malmö: Liber, 2002; Falk, Erika *Women running for President*, University of Illinois Press, 2010; Genovese, Michael A. (ed), *Women as National Leaders*, Newbury Park, Calif: Sage 1993; Matthew, Glenna, Paget, Karen M. & Witt, Linda, *Running as a Woman: Gender and Power in American Politics*. New York: Free Press, 1995; Ross, Karen, *Women, Politics, Media: Uneasy Relations in Comparative Perspective*. Cresskill: Hampton Press, 2002; Ross, Karen, “Women Framed: The Gendered Turn in Mediated Politics” in Ross Karen & Byerly, Carolyn M. (eds), *Women and Media. International Perspectives*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2004; Ramsay, Raylene R., *French Women in Politics. Writing Power, Paternal Legitimation and Maternal Legacies*. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books 2003; Skard, Torild (2012), *Maktens kvinner. Verdens kvinnelige presidenter og statsministre 1960–2010*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget; Wendt, Maria & Eduards, Maud, “Fienden mitt ibland oss. Kön och nation i pressbevakningen av Feministiskt initiativ.” Maria Jansson, Maria Wendt, Cecilia Åse (eds), *Den nationella väven: feministiska analyser*. Lund: Studentlitteratur 2010; Wendt, Maria, “Landsfäder och småbarnsmammor. Mediala gestaltningar av kön och politik”. Freidenvall, Lenita & Jansson, Maria (eds), *Politik och kritik. En feministisk guide till statsvetenskap*, Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2011; Winberg, Margareta, *Läroinriktning i politikens hårda skola*. Stockholm: Bonniers, 2008.
- 34 Svahn, Margareta, *Liderliga kvinnor och omanliga män. Skällsord, stereotyper och könkonstruktioner*. Stockholm, Carlssons, 1999 (191).
- 35 Templin (analyzing cartoons of Hillary Clinton) “borrowed a phrase from Judith Butler (1990)”, stating that Hillary Clinton “is not doing gender right”, 1999 (22). Here I am borrowing the same concept of “doing gender”.
- 36 Lindström 1969, 1970; Winberg, Margareta 2008; Niskanen Kirsti 2007. See also footnote 33.

- 37 Wendt 2011; Ross 2004; Van Zoonen 2005; Hammarlin & Jarlbro 2014.
- 38 Wendt & Eduards 2010 (21–23).
- 39 Ås, Berit <http://eng.kilden.forskningsradet.no/c53296/artikkel/vis.html?tid=532836:421>. Accessed 1 Dec, 2014.
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- 41 Moustgaard, Ulrikke (2004) *The Handbag, the Witch and the Blue-Eyed Blond: Mass Media in (Re)Distribution of Power*, 2004 (57). http://www.medijuprojekts.lv/uploaded_files/1_Denmark_ResReport_ENG.pdf. Downloaded 2012-03-01.
- 42 Karlsson, Gunnel (2012), *Political power, Femininity and Gender Clashes*. Unpublished paper presented at the ESSHS conference in Glasgow, April 2012. With inspiration from Joan Scott, a paradox is “an opinion that challenges prevailing orthodoxy (literally, it goes against the *doxa*) that is contrary to received tradition. Paradox marks a position at odds with the dominant one by stressing its difference from it,” Scott, Joan, *Only Paradoxes to Offer*, 1996 (4).
- 43 Karlsson, Gunnel, “The Making of Political Women. Ulla Lindström and Inga Thorsson in Swedish Politics” in Freidenvall Lenita & Rönnbäck Josefine (eds), *Bortom rösträtten. Kön, politik och medborgarskap i Norden*. Södertörn: Samtidshistoriska institutet, 2011 (103–104).
- 44 *Aftonbladet* 17 June, 1956.
- 45 *Stockholms-Tidningen* 4 Nov, 1959.
- 46 Hammarlin & Jarlbro 2014 (112)
- 47 Wendt 2011 (129–130).
- 48 *Idem*.
- 49 *Svenska Dagbladet* 31 Oct, 1969.
- 50 An exception was *Aftonbladet*, a social democratic tabloid owned by LO, the Swedish Labour Organisation, which was extremely critical of Ulla Lindström, particularly during the NIB-crisis in 1963, Karlsson, Gunnel (2013), *How to get rid of a woman politician*. Unpublished paper presented at CFS seminar, Örebro University, 10 Sept, 2013.
- 51 This political conflict was led by the influential editor-in-chief of *Dagens Nyheter*, Herbert Tingsten. See Wirtén, Per, *Herbert Tingstens sista dagar. Berättelsen om ett liv*. Stockholm, Albert Bonniers förlag, 2013.
- 52 *Dagens Nyheter* 27 March, 1957. My translation.
- 53 *Svenska Dagbladet* 3, Nov, 1957. My translation.
- 54 *Svenska Dagbladet*, 4 Nov, 1957. My translation.
- 55 Lindström 1970 (198–199). Lindström actually wrote “pratmoster”, in English “talk aunt.”
- 56 Lindström 1970 (198).
- 57 Lindström 1970 (199).
- 58 *Röster i Radio* 5 Aug, 1961.
- 59 *Kvällsposten Malmö*, June 6, 1954.
- 60 *Ny Tid* 5 June, 1954.
- 61 *Arbetet*, 7 Sept, 1956. My translation.
- 62 *Aftonbladet* 15 Sept, 1959, *Dagens Nyheter* 7 April, 1957. My translation.
- 63 *Aftonbladet* 15 Sept, 1959.
- 64 Lindström 1970 (190–203).
- 65 Lindström 1970 (198–199).
- 66 Ulla Lindström’s Diary, Vol III June–Dec 1957, p 17/National Archives.
- 67 *MagaZenit nr 2* 1987 (my translation).
- 68 Lindström 1969 (9–18).
- 69 Lindström 1969 (161–162), *Vecko-Journalen* 1957:14, “Ulla med munkorgen” av Stig Ahlgren.

- 70 Lindström 1969 (161–162).
- 71 *Idem*.
- 72 On the visibility of women in minority positions and the stereotyping of women, see Regnö, Klara, *Det osynliggjorda ledarskapet. Kvinnor i majoritet*. Stockholm: KTH, 2013 (68).
- 73 *Svenska Dagbladet* (editorial) 28 Oct, 1963.
- 74 It the girl refused to give her name and address she could be taken to the police station for a short period of time.
- 75 Lindström 1970 (151–155).
- 76 *Aftonbladet* 29 May, 1963
- 77 *Ibid*, *Aftonbladet* 26 May, 1963, 28–29–30 May 1963.
- 78 Lindström 1970 (155).
- 79 *Aftonbladet* 30 May, 1963, editorial. Records from Parliament, First Chamber 1963: 26 and Second Chamber 1963 (27); Lindström 1970 (154).
- 80 *Kvällsposten* 2 Febr, 1966.
- 81 *Vecko-Journalen* 18 Nov, 1970.
- 82 Lindström 1970 (169). My translation.
- 83 *Idem*.
- 84 Östberg 2010 (225–229), Lindström 1970 (103).
- 85 Östberg 2010 (225–229).
- 86 *Aftonbladet* 14 Sept, 1963.
- 87 The NIB-story is complicated and I cannot go into details here. *Aftonbladet* 14 Sept, 1963 front page and the editorial column. See also Lindström 197 (17), where she exemplifies *Aftonbladet's* way of writing about her *Aftonbladet* 14, 17, 18, 27, 29 Sept, 1963, *Örebro-Kuriren* 19, 27 Sept 1963, *Svenska Dagbladet* 28 Sept, 1963.
- 88 Although the press in Sweden during the 1960s was quite different from today's mass media the number of newspaper sold was high, not least in the countryside.
- 89 Bromander 2012, abstract. See also Allen & Pollock 2012; Gomard, Kirsten & and Krogstad Anne (eds), *Instead of the Ideal Debate. Doing Politics and Doing Gender in Nordic Political Campaign Discourse*, Århus: Århus University Press 2001; Ross 2004.
- 90 In 1963 there was only one television channel in Sweden. The daily newspapers were numerous compared to today (2015) and of course the Internet had not yet developed.
- 91 Karlsson (unpublished) 2013. Regarding media hunts, see Allern & Pollock, 2012.
- 92 Lindström 1970 (169–183). Reviewer, see Gunnar Unger in *Svenska Dagbladet* 16 Oct, 1970.
- 93 I am grateful to Professor Kjell Östberg, Södertörn University College, who has kindly given me permission to use parts of his findings at the National Archives, N.Y., regarding the plans to dismiss Ulla Lindström. It was the American Ambassador in Stockholm who reported his meetings with Arne Geijer, chair of the Swedish Trade Union Confederation, LO, and ICFTU. Arne Geijer was a frequent visitor to the American Embassy in Stockholm, according to Kjell Östberg (mail to the author, dated 2 June, 2010).
- 94 Östberg 2010 (228).
- 95 Lindström 1970 (181).
- 96 Östberg 2010 (227).
- 97 Hammarlin & Jarlbro 2014 (120–121).
- 98 Ulla Lindström's diary, Vol VIII 10 March, 1964 p 97/*National Archives*/My translation.