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## 'Uven' and other animal metaphors for Pia

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# Pia Rosenqvist: researcher, networker, friend – all in one!

CHRISTOFFER TIGERSTEDT • KERSTIN STENIUS

PIA ROSENQVIST IS RETIRING in September 2014 after an exceptionally long career in the service of Nordic alcohol and drug research. As a student she was involved in drug research already in the late 1960s. Her Nordic career began in 1979, when she was appointed as research secretary in the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research (NAD). She soon took the lead of the unit, which in 2010 was merged to become the Finnish branch of the Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues.

Networking became almost an ideology in the late 1980s and 1990s. Co-operation was expected to be fast and flexible, crossing professional and disciplinary boundaries, bringing together unexpected parties who did not necessarily know each other yet. However, NAD's two original protagonists Kettil Bruun (1924–1985) and Pia were networkers long before the rise of that networking ideology, outspoken, pragmatic, decision-oriented and, not least, socially disarming.

With this supplement we want to pay tribute to Pia and her work. We asked a dozen of Pia's long-lasting colleagues to write no more than a thousand words each about her, without any further specification of the desired content. A few were unable to contribute for health or other reasons. But we are happy to present eight vivid variations on Pia. Although different in style and details, they all recognize her "tripolar personality order" (or "orderly tripolar personality") as a researcher, networker and friend.

The documentation in these texts is all the more important as it not only honours Pia but also gives a basic version of the so far unwritten history of NAD and its followers.

This supplement describes Pia mainly as being busy within Nordic and international networks of researchers. We will not repeat the recognition already given by the contributors but would like to add a few more features of Pia's work into the picture.

Pia's contribution to the Finnish research environment is hard to exaggerate. Together with Kettil Bruun she has played a key role by constantly reminding Finnish researchers about what is going on

in the Nordics, providing them with small but important resources, and showing that the Nordic countries are an exceptional field for conducting the difficult art of comparative social science. Thus, Nordic research on alcohol and drugs has come to serve as a window for many Finnish researchers into countries representing more diverse cultures.

Pia has also been a truthful friend and supporter of the journal *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* (and its predecessors). During the first decade (1983–1994), when the journal was owned by the Finnish alcohol monopoly, the Nordic Council

for Alcohol and Drug Research was a guarantee of its scientific independence. NAD and its followers have always formally appointed the editorial board. And in 2010, the Nordic Centre for Welfare and Health Issues became the owner of the journal. In all these developments, as a member of the editorial board for many years, as the head of NAD, as author and referee, and as a constant advisor Pia has whole-heartedly supported the Nordic journal.

We are joined by many, many colleagues when we thank Pia for what she has done, and for how she has done it!



## Et lille aftryk af min personlige erindring om Pia Rosenqvist

*– en god kollega og samarbejdspartner, som står meget stærkere i erindringen end disse få linjer kan give udtryk for.*

Som mangeårig beneficeret af det nordiske samarbejde blandt rusmiddelforskere har jeg haft et nært og langvarigt samarbejde med Pia, ikke blot i de år, hvor jeg var dansk repræsentant i NAD, men også igennem mange år som deltager i bl.a. NADs seminarer og informationsudveksling.

Det var en forandring da NAD blev afløst af NVC Finland og det er en næsten utænkelig forandring at Pia ikke længere vil være en fast del af det nordiske samarbejde. Pia var simpelthen Institutionen NAD, og vi er mange, der har nydt godt af hendes hegemoni i den årrække, hun var ankerbøjen i det nordiske samarbejde. Heldigvis er dette ikke en nekrolog, og jeg er sikker på, at Pia i lang tid endnu vil gøre sig gældende iblandt de nordiske og finske rusmiddelforskere, både som fagligt meget velkvalificeret

producent og som formidler af viden.

Der står stor respekt om Pias faglige indsats, men hun har ikke mindst gjort indtryk på os kolleger ved sin personlighed, sit engagement og sin omsorg for området og dets befolkning af mangeartede typer og personligheder, der har deltaget i denne del af forskersamfundet gennem årene. Det er jo en fagligt og personligt sammensat forsamling, og Pia har med indsigt, styrke og empati hjulpet og styret os gennem tider med vekslende offentlig bevågenhed.

Også på det personligt plan er vi mange der har nydt godt af Pias blanding af krav og omsorg. Selv husker jeg hendes afskedsgave, da jeg for nogle år siden sammen med Jakob Lindberg forlod NADs styrelse og fik overrakt en personlig hilsen i form af en lille bog med gode råd om helse-

bevarende adfærd – et udtryk for Pias diskrete deltagerobservation af min tydeligvis mindre sundhedsfremmende adfærd i form af rygning af cigarer og indtagelse af diverse vareprøver ved NADs alkoholforskningsseminarer uden trang til kompensation i form af sportsudøvelse eller upassende asketisk adfærd.

Pias autoritet har altid udfoldet sig gennem et filter af godt humør med en sund og smittende latter, så den faste styring fremtrådte med en beundringsværdig diskretion.

Pia Rosenqvists æra har været en blomstringstid for det nordiske fælles arbejde på alkohol- og narkotikaforskningens område.

Det har hun fortjent store spande af roser for – og ikke blot en kvist.

Tak, Mamma Pia!

**Jørgen Jepsen**

## Pia Rosenqvist: a spirited scholar, a builder of community

Where to start, in thinking about her work and life? Pia Rosenqvist has played so many parts, and I know only some of them. First, Pia is a scholar. Let me give just a couple of examples. It was from her work that I learnt that, while Swedish doctors in the early 20th century acknowledged that heavy drinking resulted in health problems, they insisted that fundamentally it was a social rather than a health question. Pia contributed substantially to our knowledge of the history of social handling of alcohol problems in Sweden, and more broadly in Nordic countries, for instance with a comparative study of temperance boards in Sweden and Finland. In the International Study of Alcoholics Anonymous, it was Pia who assembled and analysed the data from several countries, and upended our perceptions of AA as a very male enterprise. Once the number of problematic drinkers in the population of each gender was taken into account, heavy-drinking women were consistently overrepresented in AA.

Second, the great work of Pia's career has been as a creator of community – of diverse and overlapping communities tied together by scholarship, with mutual learning, joint

projects, and collaborative work, but with a dimension also of long association and friendship. Central to this has been her position in the Nordic world, but her projects have often reached far beyond it. She has been endlessly welcoming of new bright spirits coming into the field. Her guiding principle has been to reach across boundaries – national and linguistic boundaries, of course, but also boundaries of discipline, and of topical area. In her work she commanded various tools which could facilitate the process. Meetings could be put together and financed. Study courses could bring young scholars into the fold. A book in the Nordic Council on Alcohol and Drug Research (NAD) monograph series often became a project's goal and most visible achievement. Looking through the list of the 52 NAD monographs, it is an impressive record of collective scholarship, of boundary-crossing projects and contributions to knowledge. In nearly all of this work, Pia played a facilitating role, and often much more.

Pia has been a pivotal figure in the Nordic alcohol and drug research world – a world which is a bright constellation in the global picture. Its strength and luminosity de-

pend not only on the contribution of individual scholars and research centres, but also on the history of working together, creating products which are more than the sum of the parts. NAD and now the Nordic Welfare Centre (NVC) have played key roles in the creation and sustenance of that collective world and of its productivity in ideas and analyses, and Pia has played the central role – the spinner of connections at the heart of all the webs.

The first image that comes to mind when thinking of Pia is the broad smile of welcome. She is curious about the world – about how things fit together, about what is implied by or a precondition for something happening or being said. She talks with animation, she is matter-of-fact, indifferent to status, widely inclusive, warm-hearted and generous. Vignettes come to my mind from the long sweep of time I have known her: Pia wheeling Klaus Mäkelä up the airbridge, returning from a Mexico meeting with Klaus' leg in a cast after he tripped on a sidewalk; a joyful snapshot of Pia and Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl on the ramparts around Dubrovnik; on a day-trip to Drottningholm, our coming across Queen Sylvia wheeling

her children across the grass in a pram; Pia as president of the Kettil Bruun Society speaking for us all at the con-

ference banquet in Toronto. Others will have different images come to mind, but I am certain they will include the

warmth, the feeling of fellowship, and the broad smile.

**Robin Room**

## Drug researcher Pia Rosenqvist

The first time I met Pia Rosenqvist was in Vordingborg (DK) in 1984, on a research course organised by her employer, the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research (NAD). Pia was on leave from NAD and took the course as a student. So did I, a young MA and a beginner in the research world. The course was led by Kettil Bruun and Ole-Jørgen Skog and arranged by Margareta Järvinen. During the course, we were to meet other big guys of alcohol and drug research, such as Griffith Edwards, Albert Tuyns, Ragnar Hauge and Klaus Mäkelä. I was shy and nervous and totally lost trying to speak “Skandinaviska”. Thank god Pia was there, warm and generous, to take me under her wings.

That’s how a long-standing friendship started. At the time I had little idea of how much she had already done for drug research and not the slightest comprehension of all she would do in the coming years.

In the late 1960s, Pia Rosen-

qvist was gathering material for her Master’s thesis “Cannabis och dess bruk i Helsingfors hösten 1968 – våren 1969” [Cannabis and its use in Helsinki from fall 1968 to spring 1969] (Rosenqvist 1970). Hers was the first empirical study of cannabis use in Finland which took place while a modern drug culture – of cannabis in particular – was emerging in the Western world. New drugs, new patterns of use and new ideologies caused concern and even a moral panic over the youth in the mass media and politics.

The Finnish government appointed the Committee on Narcotics Drugs in 1968 to assess the drug situation and to prepare a proposal for new legislation. In lack of reliable evidence, the Committee called upon Pia and her ongoing study of 60 cannabis users. Indeed, in the Committee report (KM 1969) Pia’s work is often referred to when cannabis users and their views are discussed. Today, (drug)

political discourse makes frequent use of the concept of evidence-based policy, but in the 1960s, during the formative period for drug policy, the evidence base was only starting to be built. This is how Pia began her career in the nexus of science and public policy, and this has framed her subsequent work.

At the time of Pia’s Master’s thesis, public discussion about the use of cannabis and other drugs among young people was so heated in Finland that she described it as “chaotic”. In order “to liberate the debate from certain unjustified arguments and prejudices” she, following some Nordic examples (especially Nils Christie in Norway and Bertil Nelhans in Sweden), wanted to intervene in the discussion with her study based on participant observation and interviews with cannabis users. With this ethnographic material she was able to show, for example, how users regulated their patterns of use in

different ways and how this regulation was based on informal social control and internal norms of the users. This, she claimed, should be taken into account in the planning of control policy. She concluded further that cannabis users were not a homogenous group, and distinctions between different groups of users should be better understood. These important findings have since been reinforced and reformulated in many other studies. Much progress has obviously been made, but there is still tension between research findings and the public image of cannabis, which seems to remain a prevalent issue for new studies.

In 1974, Pia Rosenqvist published an article titled "Inställningen till de internationella narkotikakonventionerna i Finland under 1920-och 1930-talen" [Attitudes towards the International Narcotics Conventions in Finland in the 1920s and 1930s] (Rosenqvist 1974). Based on documentary analysis, this article shows that Finland joined the international narcotics conventions only for pragmatic reasons (e.g. commercial policy). In the 1920s and 1930s Finland in fact received several complaints from the Permanent Control Opium Board (PCOB) because of high consumption of heroin (only Japan had higher heroin consumption than Finland in the 1930s). This article has proved to be an important ref-

erence in papers dealing with the historical development of the drug issue in Finland, especially because it demonstrates the importance of a wider social context and vested interests in the construction of drug policy.

In 1980, Pia Rosenqvist and Kjetil Bruun published an overview of alcohol and drug control policies in the Nordic countries (Bruun & Rosenqvist 1980). Control of medicines (psychotropics) was included in this overview. Pia returned to this theme in the 1990s when she edited an anthology on control of medicines in the EU and the Nordic countries together with Ann-Mari Skorpen (Rosenqvist & Skorpen 1996). Her interests in control policy studies also materialised in another NAD anthology dealing with drug policy from an international perspective (Skretting, Rosenqvist & Jepsen 1993). Furthermore, a special issue on gender, intoxication and discipline can be counted in this control thematic area (Järvinen & Rosenqvist 1991).

In the 1990s, NAD assumed responsibility for producing overviews on the drug situation in the Nordic countries. With her enthusiasm, outstanding social skills and a great sense of humour, Pia was a main engine in the project groups assembling data from different countries and preparing the reports (Olsson, Rosenqvist & Stymne 1997; Kouvonen, Rosenqvist

& Skretting 2001). Following the "Zeitgeist", she actively promoted a joint Nordic project on the social costs of drug problems (Melberg et al. 2011). In the last two decades, her interests in the drug field have been directed toward drug treatment, especially substitution treatment (Haugland & Rosenqvist 1993; Rosenqvist, Blomqvist, Koski-Jännes & Öjesjö 2004; Skretting & Rosenqvist 2010). Her forthcoming article, co-written with Kerstin Stenius, will explore the use of words and conceptualisations of drug problems in specialised substance abuse treatment and the social services in Finland (Rosenqvist & Stenius 2014).

In addition to her numerous publications, Pia Rosenqvist has had a strong and important influence on the drug field as an initiator and supporter of many research projects on the drug issue. But what is perhaps most impressive in her drug career is that she has contributed to drug research in six different decades. This is amazing, and look how young she still is!

**Pekka Hakkarainen**

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## Pia Rosenqvist – organiser, researcher, friend

I first met Pia in the early 1980s when Kettil Bruun was chair of the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research (NAD) and Pia was NAD's research secretary. I applied for a job at NAD's secretariat in Helsinki and was invited to a job interview. When I arrived at Kalevankatu 28, five minutes before the appointed

time, Kettil sat there waiting, very friendly but slightly uncomfortable with the situation. On the stroke of the appointed time, the door opened and in came a woman in a yellow dress, charismatic, energetic and full of humour. Kettil's relief was visible: "This is Pia", he said, "she'll take over from here". And indeed she did.

Working with Pia for five years at NAD's secretariat in Helsinki – and following her work for more than two decades from Denmark – I have seen how tremendously important she has been for Nordic collaboration in alcohol and drug research. As an organiser of conferences, workshops, graduate school courses,



es, thematic meetings and the like, Pia is simply unbeatable. She is bright, effective, creative and always well-informed about what is going on in the field. How many people in the Nordic countries have not come to know each other, to be inspired by each other's research and work together because of meetings, working groups and research projects initiated by Pia? Until Kettil Bruun's premature death in 1985, the development of Nordic collaboration in alcohol and drug research was Kettil's and Pia's common project; after his death Pia continued the path-breaking work they had started.

In my bookcase I recently found an old book called *Sex, Intoxication and Discipline* (what a title!) which Pia and I edited in 1991. Contributors were Christa Appel, Sidsel Eriksen, Elianne Riska, Harriet Bjerrum Nielsen, Monica Rudberg, Christina Andersson, Marja Holmila, Elina Haavio-Mannila and Karen Leander – an impressive group of female scholars and an example of Pia's ability to gather competent people and make them work together. I re-read the book and was struck by its topicality. The book argued against the simple gender convergence hypothesis that was popular in alcohol research at the time. Although there was a lot of concern in the Nordic countries (and elsewhere) about women starting to drink like men, there was little re-

search supporting this thesis. The contributors of the book set out to discover the social and cultural factors that supported or restricted women's drinking, finding more of the latter than of the former. Women's alcohol use was characterised as more dependent on men's alcohol use than men's was on women's. Young girls' drinking, for instance, was clearly a part of heterosexual relationship building, while young boys' drinking was also part of male status play and male bonding activities. Adult women drinking excessively were often married to men who drank even more excessively. Also, women's alcohol consumption over the life course was strongly related to their civil status and reproductive functions, whereas men's drinking patterns were more formed by their careers and broader social networks. The book also showed that female (and male) drinking was surrounded by strong cultural norms, including the traditional conceptions of intoxicated women being "loose", and of wives/mothers being especially responsible for their family's wellbeing, and sometimes also controllers of their husbands' drinking.

Pia's contribution to the book was a fascinating chapter on women in the AA in Finland. Building on Ann Oakley's and R.W. Connell's theories on gender and power, the chapter analysed the position of women in AA and

Al-Anon. Pia showed that at its start in 1948 in Finland, Alcoholics Anonymous was naturally dominated by men, because the overwhelming majority of people with alcohol problems at the time were men. When women participated in the AA, it was more in the role as wives of alcoholics than as problem drinkers. In the late 1980s, however, when the data for the chapter were gathered (as part of the International Collaborative Study of Alcoholics Anonymous, ICSAA), the proportion of women in the AA was 25 per cent in Finland. There were differences in the functions of men and women active in the AA: men more often had external functions such as presenting the organisation in lectures and written texts to the public, while women were responsible for internal functions and services. Women nevertheless had a relatively strong position in the Finnish AA. They did not report many experiences of discrimination or sexual harassment, for example, and they were seldom interested in women-only AA groups. Many of them said that because they had developed their drinking problems in the company of men, they were also interested in sobering up together with men. Neither did they feel suppressed or restricted by male AA members when telling their stories at meetings, as was sometimes reported from other countries.

Applying the feminist per-

spective of ours in 1991 to Pia herself, we may say that Pia has never been an oppressed or timid woman afraid of standing up for things she believes in. I have always admired her for the live wire she is, and for her courageous and no-bullshit attitude to life. I would like to end this text where it started: at NAD's old secretariat in Kalevankatu 28 in Helsinki. I remember an evening when Pia, Marja Venna (student and secretary at NAD) and I were copying and posting NAD newsletters. Pia lived in Stockholm at the time but was back in Helsinki attending meetings, pre-

paring a conference and writing articles for the newsletter. The secretariat was placed on the ground floor, the windows facing a gloomy backyard, where we sometimes had unwelcome visitors, among them an irritating flasher. Unfortunate for the flasher, he chose this specific evening to return to his old haunt outside the window. Pia spotted him immediately. Exclaiming something in Finnish, the contents of which I do not quite remember – but I think it had something to do with “sex and discipline” (the theme of our subsequent book!) – she grabbed a pair of scissors and

rushed towards the window, gesticulating and laughing. The flasher disappeared and we never saw him again.

Flashers and scissors aside, I want to conclude that Pia has been, and continues to be, invaluable for the development of Nordic alcohol and drug research. She is also a very dear friend of mine who hopefully now, when she is about to retire, will have more time to travel. Copenhagen, for instance, is a lovely place!

**Margaretha Järvinen**

## On watch for 35 years

In many ways Pia is an enigmatic woman. She has never sought the limelight but anybody, who knows anything about Nordic alcohol and drug research, knows Pia. Employed since 1979 by the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research (NAD, later NVC) her challenge was to promote NAD as a body supporting innovative and progressive research in the alcohol, drug and later gambling areas within the framework of respectable social sciences. Pia studied sociology at the University of

Helsinki and she was marked by the spirit of the 1960s: pluralism, integration of theory and empirical research, importance of comparative and historical perspectives aiming at a better society. Was she like Pallas Athena that sprung fully grown and clad for battle from the head of Zeus?

Both yes and no, I would say. Her educational background was solid and her personality traits served her well; reserved but agreeable and helpful, self-disciplined, organized and dependable but

novelty seeking and intellectually curious.

Even if NAD's secretariat was located in Helsinki it was supposed to serve all the Nordic countries. As the secretary was small, Pia became an administrative secretary and the key person in all the Council's activities. Her ambitions were to present innovative and feasible projects to the Nordic board or give an old theme a new twist. Besides, it was often her task to recruit researchers that knew the chosen topic and find speakers for

meetings and seminars.

In the early days Pia could rely on advice and support from the two national alcohol research centers. The Finnish alcohol researchers were located close by in Kalevankatu but the Norwegian institute was farther away. Besides, there were groups of researchers and individual researchers in the other three Nordic countries. New collaborators joined forces when research centers were established in Denmark and Sweden. Purposefully she widened the social network across the Nordic borders, looking for scholars to be invited to conferences and seminars to enrich the Nordic research milieu.

As an administrative secretary Pia had to deal with changing structures and incessant shifts of board members representing administration and research. Council members had pushed for their interest, governmental priorities shifted, the Baltic countries

became an issue and for some time “nordisk nytte” [Nordic benefits]” was a binding key term. In the 2000s the course of NAD changed and in the end NAD was merged with other Nordic institutes into the Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues. In all this turbulence, Pia has represented the continuity of collaborative Nordic alcohol and drug research.

Even if Pia’s position at NAD was mainly an administrative task her job description required that she carries out research. This was a clever measure where her sociological mind thrived in research in drug issues and treatment systems. We both enjoyed being participants in the international AA project: *Alcoholics Anonymous as a Mutual-Help Movement. A Study in Eight Societies*.

No one knows better than Pia what Nordic alcohol and drug research has been about for the past four decades. At

the end of her career her enormous social capital has been a great asset. Occasionally she was on leave but even then she remained on her watch. I particularly appreciate how attentive she was to us few Icelandic researchers in the periphery of the North. She purposefully made effort to include us in as many of the Council’s activities as possible, shared experience and offered support when needed.

Even if Pia is a resourceful person there are some mysteries to be resolved. The questions rises: where did her enthusiasm come from and what kept her going? Is Nordic alcohol and drug research such an exciting field that anyone should dedicate it a whole career? If you use your sociological imagination, apply imaginative thought and detach yourself from the conventional routines – as Pia did – the answer must be: yes, it is!

**Hildigunnur Ólafsdóttir**

## “Uven” and other animal metaphors for Pia

I got acquainted with Pia in 2003 and 2004 when I worked as editor for the *Nordic Studies on Alcohol and Drugs*. I left the job for maternity leave

in 2004, and at the beginning of 2005 I started to look around for job opportunities. I immediately thought of giving Pia a call to ask whether NAD

(the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research) needed some extra help. When she heard that it was me on the phone she burst out: “It’s great

to hear from you, because we were just talking about contacting you for a job!”

When I came to NAD in 2005, it was an institution that circled around Pia. It had its format and its way of working, and Pia was the spider who kept the threads together. She would call us to meetings at the round table in her office, drawing up lists of what needed to be done and telling us to do it.

The facade of the institution was not the most fashionable: no great investments in design, or in the appearance of information letters and publications. Pia has always been more into substance, driven by knowledge, passion and long experience in the field. Our primary task was to propose relevant and topical themes, and we were to do so by being keen and alert. The main sounding board were the civil servants and researchers in the advisory group and in the scientific council.

Sometimes I thought Pia gave a bit too much room to others and took some researchers’ suggestions too seriously. Where I would hear someone expressing a vague idea in a subordinate clause, Pia would take notes and suggest this idea as the basis for a whole new project. I guess this reflected our amount of experience: like a wolverine she would quickly be able to grab the new stuff from a long monologue of “old stuff”.

Another reason for Pia’s be-

ing so sensitive to suggestions from the research community was her great aim to serve; NAD was to be useful to Nordic researchers and other professionals in the alcohol and drug field. We were to realise thematic projects by organising meetings and conferences, and through publications and information. The ways in which the NAD organisation worked is in fact the most cost-efficient way of working for Nordic co-operation, or any co-operation for that matter. If one compares the total turnover of the NAD organisation with the amount and quality of knowledge gathered and produced, one cannot escape seeing the brilliance in it all. And the brilliant mode of working was to a great extent the result of Pia’s clear-sightedness and stubbornness.

It may have been this clear-sightedness that led a Nordic colleague to come up with the nickname “Den gamla uven” (approximately, “the great long-eared owl”, in the positive signification of someone who has been long in the game and has cultivated her eyesight and hearing). This was a perfect name: her round glasses, her dark hair and the shape of her skull. And most essentially: Pia is equipped with ears as sharp as her eyes. She really IS an owl, and I started to refer to her as “Uven”, although at some point we were rather an office full of squirrels. Maaria, Pia, Petra and I were quick in our moves,

speech and work. And Pia’s dark clever penetrating eyes are more like those of a squirrel, I think.

But I remember once when even the alert eyes of Pia almost slumbered: in 2008 the Nordic Council of Ministers sent the master brain of the NVC merger to our office at Annegatan. The three of us women sat listening while the merger man spent hour after hour talking nonsense. We thought we would fall asleep, and that may be the only time Pia almost fell asleep during the process of the merger.

My great admiration and respect for Pia as a person and colleague was established long ago, but during the re-organisation of NAD into the Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues (NVC) in 2009 and 2010, I must say I was amazed by her social skills and capacities. She argued with facts and experience, never stooping to interpret other peoples’ action as expressions of “evil” or other dramatic ingredients. People simply act as they do because they have other (sometimes less informed) views on the matters. Only a person with great maturity and open-mindedness can function in such a way.

In fact, what makes it so nice to be around Pia is precisely that there is never any meta-story of personal conflicts or power games going on. Almost the only thing that matters is the actual question being discussed or the task to be done. I

say “almost”, because there are two equally important things: humour and curiosity.

I guess it was to a great extent thanks to Pia’s way of “being in the world” that I really started to get seriously involved in the research questions I work with today. Pia understands that you can get carried away by a question just because you are hugely curious to know more. As long as I was efficient in my work tasks, she would let me use some working hours for my dissertation. It’s a matter of fact: as long as I

did my work as a project leader well, she would let me do anything I wanted, provided that it made sense. Although this turned out good for me career-wise, I suspect that at some point she realised that letting me wander off in all directions may also have been an opening of a Pandora’s box when it came to my own stress levels. She took me aside once and told me that she thought I was very, very ambitious – this was her way of telling me that I was working too much, to cool me down.

I have since also come to realise that Uven let me do things because she was wise enough to see that it was no point telling me not to.

These are only fragments of my “Pia story” and I have already used up all the space I was given. To summarise it all, Uven has taught me that as a researcher and as a person it is possible to be an owl, a wolferine, a squirrel and a spider. All at once!

**Matilda Hellman**

## Dear Pia,

I was invited to write up to 1000 words on the occasion of your retirement! A thousand words is much and it is also nothing compared to the decades we have known each other. Recently, we both tried to reconstruct our history: we met in 1982, in Helsinki, at the first autonomous meeting of the ICAA epidemiology section, the humble predecessor of the Kettil Bruun Society. Kettil – whom I also met for the first time that same year – was at least as alive as the two of us and if I remember right, you worked with him. Not to forget: during this visit in Hel-

sinki I saw the first icebreakers!

Since then we have met often, in different places, at all times of year, in diverse events, and we have shared many activities and experiences. I will not even try to recall the best stories!

We shared professional activities and collaborated in many projects: in training, mapping, interest group building and scientific projects. We even wrote an article together and edited a book (the second volume of the AA study with the meaningful title “Diversity in Unity”, published by

NAD publications, the series with the most beautiful cover in the world). I think: neither the article nor the book is bad at all...

But though these were serious professional activities, they were always fun and almost had the feel of city walks, visits to museums, castles, churches, discos, serious and non-serious drinking places (I remember how much you liked Metzger-Prillinger – one of my favourite Viennese Heurigen, which I had chosen for a closing event: they heated it on an old iron stove and served roasted sweet chest-

nuts and Sturm, the first version of autumn wine ... Now it is unfortunately closed, as the owners retired.). Not to forget all those official welcome and farewell dinners and private parties where we have eaten, drunk and laughed together. (A picture of us embracing each other and laughing was hanging on Robin Room's fridge door in Berkeley and as far as I remember also in Toronto. I wonder if the picture is still there, on the fridge door in Melbourne?)

We also met in private contexts: I spent an evening or a night in your house, where I met your charming children. But before my memories become too idealised I have to add new colours to the picture. So let me mention that there were episodes of rivalry, anger, quarrel and rejection and other bad feelings. But they never lasted long enough to change our long-standing relationship. I have to look for other means to fight nostalgia and will turn to things which astonished and impressed me immensely.

How did you do it all? How did you manage a family with three children, co-ordinate the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research, and care

for foreign guests in so many ways at work and at home? I remember being slightly shocked when I accompanied you to what I remember as a day-care centre, where you left a buggy with your youngest child (or was it already a bigger carriage?), telling me lightheartedly that your child had now received enough love and attention and you could return to work. The actual development of all of your children shows that I was a narrow-minded sceptic.

But neither did your work seem to suffer from your engagements with family and friends: you have always been a great co-ordinator and organiser; you have collaborated with hugely different persons working in hugely different areas; and on top of everything else you have participated in an impressive array of Nordic and international studies; you know more Nordic alcohol and drug researchers than anyone else in the Nordic community I have met. Your decision-making skills are legendary, and I don't think that I've ever seen you dissatisfied with your decisions. For a few years you successfully juggled a job in the Ministry, working in a hierarchical and official

context very different from that of NAD; and you had the ability to choose the nicest and prettiest young colleagues one could imagine and the generosity to support and promote them sustainably. The list could go on – we shouldn't forget the Finnish tango – but I will jump back to the present and to immediate pressures.

Dear Pia, my visit to Helsinki last year and the week we spent together in your "city" and your "country house" was great. I cherish our successful mushroom picking. Mushroom picking is a serious, professional activity and in need of a comparative frame. So I propose a second case study in Vienna's surroundings this autumn. And how about a third one in Italy? We should also discuss the establishment of a comparative, international mushroom picking group, which can develop into a society... Should membership be linked to retirement, I wonder. But with or without that group, there will be a relationship after retirement!

Love,  
*Irmgard*

**Irmgard Eisenbach-Stangl**

## Exit – Pia

An era in Nordic alcohol and drug research has come to an end. Pia Rosenqvist concludes her long career as a Nordic civil servant. Pia's retirement gives rise to two questions: (1) Will the Nordic alcohol and drug research community make it without Pia? (2) Will Pia make it without the Nordic alcohol and drug research community?

Nordic cooperation in the field of alcohol and drug research has a long tradition. The organizational frameworks, however, have changed. The Nordic Committee for Alcohol Research, created in 1959, and the Scandinavian Council for Drug Research, established in 1974, merged in 1978 to become the Nordic Council for Alcohol and Drug Research (NAD). In 2009 NAD became part of the Nordic Centre for Welfare and Social Issues (NVC), and changed its name to NVC Finland. As Pia has been the leading figure of this joint Nordic research effort for decades, there is every reason to ask whether it will survive without her tireless drive and advocacy. Will the increasing emphasis on the internationalization of research lead to the demise of Nordic cooperation on alcohol and drug research without Pia fighting its corner?

There are few persons with anything like Pia's flair for making contacts and building

networks. With great determination and spirit, she has overseen the birth of countless joint Nordic projects in alcohol and drug research. Always informed about what is going on in alcohol and drug research in the Nordic countries, and who is doing what, we have every reason to be impressed. I have more than once felt slightly embarrassed when she (and her colleagues) shows she knows more about what is happening in the Norwegian alcohol and drug research scene than I do myself. It is largely thanks to Pia that the range of institutions involved in Nordic alcohol and drug research cooperation extends beyond the main national institutions: smaller centers and individual researchers have been invited to participate in meetings, seminars, research projects, research courses etc.

In addition Pia has been a central figure in international alcohol and drug research. In the early 1990s, for instance, she took part in an extensive international project about AA. She has been the president of the Kettil Bruun Society (KBS), which for years has been the most important international meeting place for alcohol researchers in the social science field. Likewise, she sat for several years on the board of The International Society for the Study of Drug Policy (ISSDP).

Anyone who has worked with Pia is likely to accentuate her generosity and hospitality. She has always kept an open house for friends and colleagues from near and far. The number of dinners and gatherings she has invited to in connection with meetings and seminars, is immeasurable. Such gatherings have helped researchers from different milieus get to know each one better which, in turn, has made it easier to work together.

Now that Pia reaches the age of retirement at 68, it brings to an end a long chapter in Nordic alcohol and drug research. But she has prepared for her retirement and the change will not be as radical as one might expect, either for herself or the Nordic alcohol and drug research community. She stepped down from her position as head of NVC Finland in 2012 and became a special adviser on a contractual basis. The responsibility for running NVC Finland was handed to others, while she made her expertise and network connections available to the institutions and people who will keep Nordic cooperation on alcohol and drug research alive. I think some of us have been a little anxious that she would not be able to relinquish the reins fully, since she will be seen in the corridors in her capacity of special ad-

visor. As far as I know, there have been absolutely no problems whatsoever. Fresh minds have taken over. Invitations to Nordic research meetings and seminars will continue to be made. Pia, for her part, has worked on her own, without interfering too much in the daily work of the NVC.

Having reduced her working hours over the past two years, Pia has been able to get used to a life where work plays a smaller role. She clearly appreciates her increased freedom. Even though working and maintaining contact with the Nordic and international alcohol and drug research community have been an important part of Pia's life, she has other interests, some of which require a lot of time. One could say that lately she has had no time to

work. For instance, tennis has emerged in recent years as one of her great passions. And besides taking up this noble sport in her later days, she also spends numerous hours watching major international tournaments. Ballroom dancing is another activity that has entered into Pia's life. In fact, she spends several weekday afternoons and evenings at various dancing schools. She has also joined a reading circle which is currently immersing itself in the work of Nobel prizewinners.

Based on this, the answers to my initial questions will be:

(1) The Nordic alcohol and drug community looks as if it will make it without Pia, although many of us initially had our doubts.

(2) Pia will also get along

very well without daily contact with the Nordic alcohol and drug community. Her life seems filled with enticing activities.

I'd like to end on a personal note. In the more than 25 years I have known Pia, we have not only worked together professionally, we also became friends. It is a friendship I greatly appreciate. Our meetings are not always work-related and I am not afraid we will lose contact now that she stops working. As I myself am due to retire sometime next year, I am quite certain we will still meet, whether it's going to be in Finland, in Norway or at some other destination.

**Astrid Skretting**



