

Journal of Scandinavian Cinema
Volume 7 Number 2

© 2017 Intellect Ltd Article. English language. doi: 10.1386/jscs.7.2.121_1

feature article

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Useful cinema and the dynamic film history beyond the national archive: Locating municipally sponsored Swedish city films in local archives

ABSTRACT

Based on a case study of municipally sponsored films about the Swedish city of Gothenburg from the decades after World War II, this article contributes to the emerging scholarly field of 'useful cinema'. It is argued that local archival materials are essential for studying this kind of useful cinema with its multiple uses, textual variations, screening contexts and both domestic and international circulation. Local archival materials are further essential for studying not only the local institutional use of cinema, but also the relationship between theatrical and non-theatrical exhibition. Moreover, the international circulation of useful cinema

KEYWORDS

film historiography
film archives
local archives
useful cinema
city film
sponsored films

highlighted in the article cannot be studied solely with material from national archives. The conclusion calls for new types of digital archival milieus that capture the dynamics of this part of film history.

During the last decade, there has been growing scholarly interest within film and media studies in other kinds of films than the feature-length fiction film intended for cinematic exhibition. This interest extends to everything from amateur films to films commissioned or produced by municipalities and governments as well as by companies and organizations. This diverse body of films, made for various purposes and with a number of different screening contexts and audiences in mind, has been framed in various ways, for example, as 'The other film history', in a recent Norwegian anthology (Bakøy and Helseth 2011) and 'Film outside of the cinema', in an earlier Swedish one (Hedling and Jönsson 2008). Focusing especially on films from industries, schools and private and public organizations, recent scholarship has argued for using the term 'utility' as a defining principle for this broad field of films (Hediger and Vonderau 2009a; Zimmermann 2011a; Acland and Wasson 2011a; Florin et al. 2016).

This kind of 'useful cinema', as it is called in one of the more influential anthologies, has been integrated in a broad range of organizations and institutions throughout the twentieth century, where 'schools, business, and public agencies invested in celluloid and its diverse family of technologies in order to instruct, to sell, and to make and remake citizens' (Acland and Wasson 2011b: 2–3). Produced with specific purposes and specific audiences in mind, the films were sometimes screened at cinemas before main feature films, but they were more commonly exhibited in other contexts such as classrooms, factories, libraries, museums and community halls, or at the commissioning company or organization. Focusing on these trajectories in and out of cinemas and through other screening venues, Gregory A. Waller proposes studying this broad field of moving images as a kind of 'multi-sited cinema', that is, 'the varied and historically specific ways that motion pictures have been put to a host of different uses across a wide range of locations well beyond the commercial movie theatre' (2016: 40).

If the so-called New Film History that emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s challenged earlier teleological film historiography and gave new insights into especially the early silent era, Vinzenz Hediger and Patrick Vonderau argue that the broad field of useful films constitutes the next big 'uncharted territory' within film and media studies (Hediger and Vonderau 2009b: 10). Moving beyond film history's traditional focus on fiction, and occasionally on feature-length documentary films screened at cinemas, the study of useful cinema entails a number of novel approaches to film historical inquiry, echoing those of New Film History. An indisputable part of these approaches is that they extend the role of the archive, bringing new types of archives and archival materials to the forefront. This includes, above all, a move from traditional (often national) film archives to the archives of municipalities, museums, organizations and companies at the regional or local level. This shift is a significant one, as film history has traditionally been written from a national perspective, emphasizing films found in the major national archives and exhibiting close ties to the ideology of the nation state and the creation of its artistic canon. In this regard, Sweden is no exception.

Another central part of these new approaches, one that compels the researcher to explore new types of archives, is a shift in focus from the filmic text per se to its production background and exhibition contexts. A major argument within this emerging field of study is that since the films were produced to be useful, to satisfy a specific need within the commissioning organization or institution rather than to function as art or entertainment, they are seldom self-sufficient as objects of analysis. Thomas Elsaesser has argued that the study of useful films must start from 'a pragmatic premise', abandoning older classifications, and that 'the actual film is only one piece of evidence and residue to be examined and analysed' (2009: 32). In connection with this, he proposes that the film scholar should begin by focusing on 'three A's' when approaching this kind of film: *Auftraggeber* (commissioner), *Anlass* (occasion or purpose) and *Adressat* (intended audience). That is, one should ask: Who commissioned the film? For what occasion or purpose was it made? Who was its intended audience? This kind of information, however, is often difficult, if not impossible, to discern from the film itself, especially if it was screened in the cinema's programme of shorts or in schools. Other types of material, which may be spread across different public and/or private archives, are necessary.

In this article, I will discuss a specific case of useful cinema, films about the Swedish city of Göteborg (Gothenburg) commissioned by the city's municipal council. With a starting point in Elsaesser's three A's, and making use of records from the city's municipal board and council as well as other departments and local tourist organizations, I examine three film projects from the decades after World War II, during the expansion of the Swedish welfare system. The first project, from 1946, resulted in two versions with different titles, *Sveriges port mot väster* ('Sweden's gate to the west') (Skoglund, 1946a) and *Staden vid Västerhavet* ('The city by the western sea') (Skoglund, 1946b).¹ The second is *Den gyllene porten* ('The golden gate') (Cronsioe, 1957)² and the third is *Göteborg – Hjärtpunkt i Norden* (Gothenburg – *The Heart of Scandinavia*) (Bergström, 1964).³

Taking seriously the conceptualization of useful cinema, the central aim of the article is to show the pivotal importance of using local archives, including both filmic and non-filmic materials, as a starting point when studying these types of films and the organizational contexts within which they were produced. In many cases, the kind of useful cinema studied here – city films sponsored by the municipality – were screened both in cinemas and in other venues, and some of the different versions of the films can often be found in the national archives. A further aim is therefore to discuss the relationship between national film archives and local and regional archives in film historical inquiry.

The guiding hypothesis of the article is that materials from local archives not only shed new light on the holdings of the national archives, but also are essential for analysing the background of a specific film's commissioning, its multiple uses, its local, national and international circulation, and the relationship between theatrical and non-theatrical screening contexts. First I will situate the films discussed, and useful cinema more generally, in the context of the last decades' digital development and a recent Swedish project for making these kinds of films digitally available. Based on Yvonne Zimmermann's exhaustive conceptualization of commissioned films and utility (2011b), I will then highlight some characteristic features of useful films that are central for framing the discussion of how the films examined in this article can be studied, and the relationship between useful cinema and different kinds of archives and archival practices.

1. As I will discuss, the shorter version of this film was later given the English-language distribution title *Sweden's Gate to the West*, which is a direct translation of the Swedish title of the longer version of the film. To distinguish between the different versions of the films discussed, I will throughout the article use direct translations of the Swedish titles when discussing the different Swedish versions.
2. This film was later given the English title *Gothenburg – Sweden's Gate to the West*, but to distinguish it from the 1946 film I will throughout the article use a direct translation of the Swedish title.
3. In this case, the English-language distribution title is a direct translation of the Swedish title, with the difference that 'Norden' ('The Nordic Countries') has been translated to 'Scandinavia'.

4. For a discussion on the background of Filmarkivet.se, see Jönsson (2014).

Useful cinema on digital platforms

The new direction taken by film historical research in the last decade must be understood in relation to the broader technical developments during the period, when a growing number of non-fiction films have been made accessible to researchers and the general public in digital formats. In the Swedish context, one digitization project is especially important for the present discussion: the website Filmarkivet.se (launched in 2011). The site is a collaboration between the National Library of Sweden (KB) and the Swedish Film Institute (SFI) to make a broad range of non-fiction films freely accessible in digital format, many of which plausibly can be labelled as 'useful'.⁴ The site has been a huge success with the public, but from a research perspective, it has received justified criticism that is in line with the arguments of this article. Ingrid Stigsdotter has shown that the site is part of a larger film historical orientation centred on the Swedish capital of Stockholm and the national archives located there (2012). Stockholm is not only over-represented with regard to geographical film material on the site; the films selected mainly come from holdings in archives in the Stockholm region, something that of course influences the kind of national film history being constructed on the site.

Pelle Snickars calls Filmarkivet.se 'a failed film archival project', arguing that it has failed to balance two conflicting archival priorities: on the one hand, free access to the broadest possible selection of materials and contextualizing resources to meet the needs of researchers, and on the other hand, a more curated selection of films targeting the general public (2015). From the perspective of the discussion on useful cinema, many of the films on Filmarkivet.se stand out as rather de-contextualized, especially because, as previously mentioned, in most cases the films themselves give few clues about the background of their commissioning and their screening contexts. Two of the films that I discuss below are available (in one of their versions) for public viewing at Filmarkivet.se. However, it is only with the help of material from local archives that it has been possible to determine who commissioned the films as well as their multiple uses and screening contexts. Given the fact that this research area is still in the process of development, the lack of context might be understandable. But in line with Snickars' criticism, it is obvious that the site provides a curated filmic past offering few possibilities to link the film material with other types of sources.

Lars Gustaf Andersson, John Sundholm and Astrid Söderbergh Widding put forward similar criticism, albeit in more moderate terms, of the site's focus on isolated filmic texts (2012). In a discussion of experimental film and digital platforms, they highlight the potential of a site such as Filmarkivet.se to capture some of the dynamics characterizing a large part of film history outside of cinemas and feature-length fiction films. They argue that earlier film historiography and to some extent its associated archival practices have constructed a static history with a focus on fixed filmic texts. When it comes to genres such as experimental film, it is not so much finished texts that are most interesting to make accessible in digital format, but rather all the different versions, re-takes, scripts and documentation from the social context of the films' production and exhibition. Drawing on arguments from Fossati (2009), they furthermore emphasize the potential for using digital techniques to create new types of archival milieus on digital platforms where the dynamic film history of fragments, failures and multiple versions could be shown side by side. So far, Filmarkivet.se has fallen short of realizing such a vision.

Beyond the fixed text: Textual variation of useful cinema

5. See especially note 21 in Bengtsson (2007).

Turning to Zimmermann's attempt to pinpoint some central characteristics of utility and commissioned films, it is evident that this part of film history also could be characterized as open and dynamic in a way that goes well beyond traditional film history's focus on fixed and isolated texts (2011b: 79–81). Many useful films, according to Zimmermann, have an open textual character that varies over time and according to the specific screening context. Produced for different purposes and with different audiences and screening contexts in mind, several different versions of the same film were often made, differing, for instance, in duration and language. Often the same film was also labelled in different ways depending on its current screening context: as propaganda, enlightenment or as a way of promoting tourism. The creation of new versions through re-editing was also, according to Zimmermann, a way of extending the length of a film's circulation to a decade or more.

The textual instability of useful films can also be seen in another characteristic that Zimmermann highlights: the common reuse of material from older films in new ones, giving many utility films a modular character (2011b: 80–81). In the Swedish context, Mats Björkin and Snickars as well as Bengt Bengtsson have demonstrated how this reuse of film material in different film projects occurred in the production of non-fiction films in both the inter-war and post-war periods (Björkin and Snickars 2003; Bengtsson 2007).⁵

Textual variation is also common, of course, when it comes to feature fiction films, a factor that Gunnar Iversen emphasizes in his discussion of the digital future of film historical research (2016: 153–57). But when it comes to useful films, this variation seems not to be something that occurs solely with certain titles, but a distinctive feature of this type of film in general, making it impossible to speak of a single original version of a given film.

The same film is thus often found in multiple versions (not infrequently with different titles) that may be spread across several different archives. Using three film examples, I will show that, in many cases, working with both filmic and non-filmic materials in different archives nevertheless makes it possible to identify the different versions of a film and tentatively specify their different uses and intended audiences.

A useful kind of city film: Municipal cinema and the welfare state

The concept of the 'city film' has a self-evident place within film history and ranges from formal experiments in the so-called city symphonies of the 1920s to the more instrumental kinds of brief city portraits that are the focus of this article. The latter are certainly not unique to Sweden, and in a Scandinavian context, the so-called Oslo films of the post-war period are especially interesting as a point of comparison (Iversen 2011). In Sweden, city films sponsored by municipalities proliferated around the country in the 1930s. The films had multiple aims: to promote the city, both to tourists and to industry, as well as to preserve images of the city for the future (Karlsson 1937: 498–500). However, it was in the decades following World War II, a period of unrivalled growth and increasing standard of living in Sweden, that municipalities around the country took a more active role using cinema to promote their cities and Sweden's evolving welfare system. In an overview of different types of non-fiction films during the inter-war and post-war periods in Sweden, Mats Jönsson points to the close ties between the development of the Swedish welfare state and the production of non-fiction films (2016). As the country's main harbour and

industrial city, Gothenburg was certainly also characterized by an expanding economy and welfare sector in the decades after the war. Here too, following Jönsson, cinema was used as a way of showcasing the city's evolving welfare system. In the mid-1960s, when the last of the films examined in this article was produced, the expansion of the Swedish social welfare system in many ways had peaked. The 1960s can also be seen as a period of cultural and medial transition, with new types of cultural practices and audio-visual media, especially television, heavily affecting the Swedish film industry and landscape with regard to the production of both fiction and non-fiction films.

For enlightenment as well as for propaganda: Multiple uses and target groups

In the spring of 1945, the municipal board of Gothenburg received a proposal from the production company Filmo to produce a 30- to 40-minute 'enlightenment and propaganda film' about the city (Filmo 1945 cited in Göteborgs Stadsfullmäktige 1945a: 1). The term 'propaganda' did not have the same negative connotations as it does today, and was, as we shall see, used in relation to both this project and the film from 1964. The film was primarily aimed at the city's inhabitants 'who will get to know their city, acquire some insight into the municipal administration, and receive an answer to the question: What do we get in return for our taxes?' (Filmo 1945 cited in Göteborgs Stadsfullmäktige 1945a: 1). The main film would later be shortened and re-edited into a fifteen-minute film to be screened in cinemas as well as at the meetings of tourist organizations around the country. It would also be translated into English, to be screened in the United Kingdom and the United States. The municipal council accepted the outline and allocated 35,000 Swedish crowns for the project, corresponding to approximately 66,000 Euros today (Göteborgs Stadsfullmäktige 1945b: 20).

As suggested in the outline, two different versions of the film were made: a 30-minute version called 'Sweden's gate to the west', to be screened for the city's own inhabitants; and a fifteen-minute version called 'The city by the western sea', to be screened in cinemas around Sweden. Both of these versions are listed under their respective titles in SFI's Swedish Film Database, without any indication, however, that they are different versions of the same film project. Only the longer version is held in the SFI archive, and this version is also available for public viewing at Filmarkivet.se.

At first, the shorter version was harder to find. It is not available in either the national archives or any of the municipal archives in Gothenburg. After searching through the inventories of various public institutions in Gothenburg, I discovered it among the films held by the City Museum of Gothenburg, whose film collection is not yet digitally catalogued. The print is incomplete and lacks the first two or three minutes of the film, including the title sequence, probably from damage that occurred during a screening. But given its close similarity to the longer version and its listing under the title 'The city by the western sea', there is little doubt that it actually is the shorter version of the film.

The two versions are interesting to compare. The longer version, intended for the city's own inhabitants, gives a rather detailed depiction of the city and its welfare development, including meetings of the municipal council, the construction of new housing, improvements in healthcare, the city's fire brigade and so on. The shorter version, screened in cinemas as a way of promoting the city towards tourists, also focuses on the city's welfare institutions and development, albeit in less detail and less slowly paced. Most of the shots in

the shorter version are also found in the longer version. The shorter version is not, however, merely a shortened version of the longer one that otherwise preserves the overall structure of the film. Rather, the succession of the scenes and shots is almost completely reordered, and the way the material is framed by the voice-over differs as well. Thus, this is a clear case of the textual instability that Zimmermann argues is a distinctive feature of many useful films.

In the first half of the 1950s, the municipal board discussed the possibility of producing new prints of the film, as the old ones were beginning to wear out (Göteborgs Stadskollegium 1953). They also discussed a re-edit of the film to omit scenes that exaggerated the crisis-ridden period at the end of the war and replace them with new footage. Due to high production costs, re-edited prints were never made. But following this discussion, it seems likely that the procedure of producing new and updated versions of this type of film was not an unusual phenomenon. In line with Zimmermann's argument, it seems to have been a way to use the same film, with minor adjustments, for a longer period of time.

An important factor concerning this film project is the role of the production company Filmo, which was founded by the Swedish Labour Movement and had close ties to the Social Democratic Party (SAP). Filmo not only produced this film about Gothenburg, but also election films for the local SAP in 1942 and 1946.⁶ Filmo thus produced films about Gothenburg commissioned both by the city's local chapter of the SAP and by the municipal council – where the SAP held a majority. Filmo's election films for the SAP in Gothenburg from 1942 and 1946 bear many similarities to the 1946 film commissioned by the municipality. The political rhetoric of the voice-over is clearly more outspoken in the election films, but the places and activities that appear in the city film are largely the same: the harbour, the city's industries, the development of new residential areas and so on. In the two films from 1946, the recently ended war is a pregnant point of comparison. In the 1946 election film, the war and its effects on neutral Sweden and Gothenburg's harbour and industries are used as a starting point for discussing the city's political and economic development. In the film commissioned by the municipality, the war is not mentioned at all, but traces of it are unintentionally visible in some of the footage. This film reuses some footage both from the 1942 and the 1946 election films, for example some shots from the city's health-care services, the city centre and newly built residential areas. That the same company produced both election films for the ruling party in the city and a film commissioned by the municipality, recycling some material between the films, blurs the boundaries between enlightenment, touristic publicity and political propaganda. Filmo's production processes, and in particular the case of the 1946 Gothenburg film, are thus a clear example of the pragmatics, multiple uses and textual dynamics of useful cinema.

6. *Din stad* ('Your city') (Andersson, 1942) and *Vårt mål* ('Our goal') (Anon., 1946). Both of these films are available at Filmarkivet.se.

International circulation below the national archives' radar

All three of the films that I discuss in this article were made in several language versions for international distribution. This kind of international circulation of Swedish non-fiction film has only been sparsely discussed in previous research. Björkin and Snickars, for example, have provided some insight into the international circulation of Swedish industrial films during the 1920s (2003). An important factor in this context is that the SFI archive is devoted to films that were screened at cinemas in Sweden. Many non-fiction films that were screened in cinemas' programmes of shorts may therefore be found in their collections. But

films that were translated into other languages for international distribution will in most cases be impossible to detect at the national level. Film prints in other languages than Swedish, or written traces of their existence, are seldom available in the archives of SFI or KB. To reveal the international circulation of useful films, a detour must be taken via local or regional archives.

In 1948, according to the production company Filmo's annual report, prints in English and French were produced of the shorter version of the 1946 film, as discussed in the initial plan (Filmo 1948). Given the titles *Sweden's Gate to the West* and *Gothenburg*, they were probably to be screened in the United Kingdom, the United States and France. So far, however, I have not been able to confirm this circulation with sources from the respective countries. Confusingly, the English title of the shorter version of the film is a direct translation of the Swedish title of the longer version, something that once again shows the difficulty of identifying the different versions of a film.

This kind of international circulation was more extensive with the next film about Gothenburg, commissioned by the city's municipal council. Rather than producing new prints of the film from 1946, the municipal council in 1957 approved a proposal from the regional tourist board (Göteborgs och Bohusläns turisttrafikförening) requesting financial support for a new tourist film about the city that in addition to Swedish would be produced in English, French and German (Göteborgs Stadsfullmäktige 1957: 18). The project was allocated 21,000 Swedish crowns, or about 26,000 Euros today, and also aimed to gain some financial support from private companies in the city.

The film was given the title 'The golden gate' and was directed by Håkan Cronsioe. Although Cronsioe was one of the leading non-fiction filmmakers in Sweden at the time, I have not yet found any filmic or non-filmic traces of it in any of the national archives. This is clearly because it was not screened as a part of the regular cinema programme in Sweden. In the Regional and City Archive of Gothenburg, however, I was able to find two prints of the film: a Swedish version of about 22 minutes and a German version, called *Das Goldene Tor*, lasting about twelve minutes. Since these prints were only listed in the archival record under their respective titles, without any dates or further information, it was only by reading about the film in the records of the municipal board and council that it was possible to understand what kind of film this



Figure 1: Opening credits of the German version of 'The golden gate' (1957). Published with permission from Håkan Cronsioe's family.

was. Except for the language of the voice-over, the arguments presented in the films and their overall structure are basically identical in the two versions. The main difference is that most of the rather long scenes in the Swedish version have been shortened in the German version.

A first obvious difference between the film from 1946 and 'The golden gate' is that the latter is in colour. Compared to the didactic tone of the 1946 film, the tone of this film could best be described as flâneuristic, with the voice-over proclaiming at the beginning: 'Let us view the city with the inquisitive eyes of the tourist!' The film also focuses to a greater degree on touristic aspects of the city rather than its social welfare services, although the city's industries and newly built residential areas also appear. If the 1946 film heavily relied on its voice-over and an expository mode, to use Nichols' (2010) terminology, 'The golden gate' oscillates between an expository mode and a more poetic one. The poetic mode is especially prominent in the longer version, with long scenes or parts of scenes uncommented by the voice-over. These differences in tone and mode are not surprising given the production background and intended audience of the film, with international tourists rather than the city's own inhabitants as the main target group.

Except for a few minutes from meetings of the municipal board and council, there are few archival remains that record the discussion preceding the decision to fund the film. However, in the annual reports of the tourist board from the late 1950s and early 1960s, the circulation of the film is briefly mentioned. It seems to have had quite wide circulation in Europe, and the 1958 report records that a print of the film in Esperanto (!) had been produced for circulation in continental Europe (Göteborgs och Bohusläns turisttrafik-förening 1958: 3). In Sweden and Europe, the film was mainly distributed through the film department of the Swedish national railway company SJ. In the United States, it was distributed as both an educational film and a tourist film under the title *Gothenburg – Sweden's Gate to the West* (Cook 1960: 46; Library of Congress 1969: 349). This English title is thus almost the same as the 1946 title, but because the distribution catalogues state that it was produced in 1957, there is little doubt that it is an English version of Cronsioe's film. Different films could be given virtually identical title when they were distributed internationally, complicating the work of tracking a specific film's circulation. Although the film did not leave any traces in national archives or records, with the help of material from the local archives it was possible to piece together a quite a wide international circulation.

A most important task for the city: Prestigious kinds of useful cinema

In her discussion of central characteristics of useful films, Zimmermann argues that there is a broad spectrum ranging from more costly, prestigious projects, often screened at cinemas or in official contexts, to the more inexpensive everyday use of audio-visual media within organizations (2011b: 82–83). Screened both in theatrical and in non-theatrical contexts, the films discussed in this article belong, I would argue, to the former kind. This is especially the case with my final example: *Gothenburg – The Heart of Scandinavia* from 1964. This film was preceded by an exhaustive pre-production process at the initiative of the municipal council. If the previous film was above all made to promote tourism in the city, this time the main focus initially lays on promoting the city to a business audience. During the 1960s, Gothenburg in many ways stood

7. See, for example, Göteborgs allmänna skolstyrelse (1971: 7).
8. See, for example, Stockholms skoldirektion (1974: 40) and AV-centralen Karlskrona (1970: 16).

at the peak of its post-war prosperity, but due to changes in the European market and the expansion of the EEC (European Economic Community), it was argued that 'the production of propaganda for the location of industries and trading firms is a most important task for the development of Gothenburg' (Hermansson and Norling 1962: 1), and the production of a film about the city was seen as the central means in this effort. Interestingly, the word 'propaganda' was thus still used to describe this kind of promotional project in the mid-1960s. Although foreign companies were discussed as the most important target group, it was argued that the film should also be directed towards domestic audiences, both industrial companies and people who might move to Gothenburg for jobs. The possibility of screening the film in schools was also raised. The municipal council allocated 115,000 Swedish crowns to the project, roughly 120,000 Euros today (Göteborgs Stadsfullmäktige 1963: 10). This was approximately 50 per cent more than the budget of the 1946 film, and almost five times as much as that of the 1957 film.

The film premiered at cinemas in Sweden in March 1964 as a supporting film to Luchino Visconti's *Il Gattopardo* ('The leopard') (1963). In the summer of 1964, the regional tourist board took the initiative of making a more tourist-oriented version of the film with 'additions, cuts, compression, new texts and re-editing', including a new voice-over (Göteborgs och Bohusläns turisttrafikförening 1964: 9). This version of the film was also used as a supporting film at cinemas in Sweden. The film certainly seems to have had extensive international circulation. According to the tourist board's 1965 annual report, it was distributed via the Swedish Institute (not to be confused with The Swedish Film Institute) to some 25 different countries, including Germany, Switzerland, the United States, Japan, India and Canada (Göteborgs och Bohusläns turisttrafikförening 1965: 13). For example, it is listed as distributed through the Swedish Institute in the British National Film Catalogue from 1968 (British Film Institute 1968: 127). With regard to screenings in schools, the film is listed under the category 'Local Geography and History' (Hembygdskunskap) in the film catalogue for the Gothenburg school district from the late 1960s to the late 1970s.⁷ It is also listed under 'Swedish Geography' in catalogues for classroom films in a number of regions around the country throughout the 1970s.⁸

In the Regional and City Archive in Gothenburg, various language versions of both the longer and shorter version of the film are preserved; apart from the Swedish versions, they include English, German, French, Finnish and Dutch. Unlike the earlier Gothenburg films, both Swedish versions are available in the national archives. The shorter, tourist-oriented version is also available at Filmarkivet.se. The film's international circulation, the primary purpose for which it was made, has not, however, left any archival traces at the national level.

The two versions of the film have the same basic structure, centred on a blond young woman and a young city planner, who from his office shows the viewer different parts of the city. The version intended for industries and businesses has a greater emphasis on the city's industries and harbour activities, whereas the tourist version focuses a bit more on touristic aspects of the city. Both versions, however, are consistently framed in relation to the city's social welfare ambitions as presented by the young city planner. On a detailed formal level, some differences can be noted. The use of music and the way the music and voice-over are related to the images are more meticulous in the touristic version, which overall makes a more well-produced impression than the version mainly intended for industries and businesses. A speculative explanation of these differences could be that there were lower expectations

regarding formal qualities with a film screened for companies and industry than with a film aimed at tourists and screened for a more general public.

Apart from these differences, this film is a clear example of a prestigious, costly project, with a large budget, preceded by an extensive pre-production, produced for a number of purposes and intended for wide circulation, both domestic and international. It is also evident that the film's big budget is reflected in its production values and that the municipality and its planning ambitions are interwoven with the overall structure of the film, especially in the narrative's focus on the emblematic figure of a young city planner.

Conclusions

Shifting the focus from the national to the local archive, as I have done in this article, is not only a way of shedding light on local film culture and the municipal use of film for different purposes, but it is also a way of gaining new perspectives on the holdings of the national archives and making it possible to trace an international circulation of useful films that is often impossible to discern at the national level. By tracking the use of cinema by specific institutions through a number of different archives, it has also been feasible to sketch some of the pragmatics and dynamics of useful cinema, as opposed to the more static film history of the national archive.

Although the role played by the municipality differs in the three film projects I have discussed, two of the them (from 1946 and 1964) can be seen as examples of a rather prestigious kind of useful cinema, screened both in cinemas and in other venues, and clearly used as a way of showcasing the city, its planning and welfare ambitions to different audiences. This increases, I would argue, the possibilities of identifying different versions of a specific film and tracing their production background and distribution. Useful films with smaller budgets and less far-reaching ambitions, produced for everyday use within companies, smaller organizations or public departments, are likely to have had an even higher degree of textual instability than the examples discussed in this article. Furthermore, since the films discussed here were commissioned by a public body, there are quite extensive paper records of their production. In contrast, written traces of the use of film within private companies and organizations may in many cases be harder to find.

Attempting to identify the different versions of a specific film should not be seen as a sort of film historical pedantry. When analysing the municipal use of cinema and conducting textual analysis of a specific film, its rhetoric and the way the city is framed for different groups, it does matter whether a specific version of the film was intended to attract tourists or industries, or was aimed at schoolchildren nationwide or the city's own inhabitants. When studying useful cinema, a specific film is thus not a self-sufficient object of analysis. It must always be related to the background of its commissioning and the broader production and exhibition context, as well as to its possible textual variations, by examining holdings at a broad spectrum of archives.

Screened both in cinemas and in other venues, used for both industrial and touristic promotion, and meant for classrooms as well for the city's own inhabitants, my case studies clearly are examples of what Waller calls a 'multi-sited cinema' (2016: 40). They also illustrate the difficulty of categorizing this kind of film, which is in line with Elsaesser's argument in favour of abandoning pre-constituted categories and classifications and approaching these kinds of films from a 'pragmatic premise' (2009: 32). A central element of this

pragmatic approach and the study of useful films in general, as I have shown, is that the researcher is compelled to explore new types of archives in addition to the traditional and often national film archives. Along with the need to draw on material from different archives, new types of collaborations are called for between researchers and archives, as Fossati argues in her discussion of the future of film research and film archival practices within the ongoing digitalization process (Fossati 2009). In line with Andersson, Sundholm and Söderbergh Widding (2012), who draw on Fossati's work, I would argue that the digital development indeed opens up possibilities to create archival milieus on digital platforms that would be suitable for capturing some of the dynamics of the broad field of useful cinema. On such platforms, filmic and non-filmic material distributed across a number of different archives might be gathered. Furthermore, some of the textual dynamics that I have pointed to in this article might be captured, including different versions of the same film project and the reuse of material in different filmic texts. By also including a broad selection of non-filmic materials in digital form, some of the social context within which different kinds of useful films were commissioned, used, circulated and screened might be revealed. But the creation of such digital archival milieus requires moving beyond the ideas of the fixed and isolated text and the privileged status of the traditional film archive.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

- Florin Persson, E. (2017), 'Useful cinema and the dynamic film history beyond the national archive: Locating municipally sponsored Swedish city films in local archives', *Journal of Scandinavian Cinema*, 7:2, pp. 121–134, doi: 10.1386/jsca.7.2.121_1

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