

HISTORISK TIDSKRIFT  
(Sweden)

138:1 • 2018

det inte alls på Algots. Vad var det som var så speciellt vid Algots och hur påverkade detta arbetarkollektivets mottagande av arbetskraftsinvandrare? Det är lätt att bli enögd som arbetarhistorisk forskare och lägga väl stor vikt vid det företag eller den fackliga organisation man själv studerar.

Bokens styrka är den noggranna och väldokumenterade framställningen. Med hjälp av en intervjustudie organiserar Svanberg en motberättelse som ger ytterligare en dimension – både av migrationsmönstren och arbetets villkor. På så sätt syresätter han framställningen och sätter dessutom in den i sin samtida kontext, vilket gör att boken kommer – och bör – användas som referensverk för lång tid framöver. Förhoppningsvis fortsätter Svanberg den inslagna vägen. Då vore det intressant om han kunde vidareutveckla integrationsperspektivet ur arbetarhistorisk synvinkel – det behövs.

Örebro universitet

BJÖRN HORGBY

Andreas Åkerlund, *Public diplomacy and academic mobility in Sweden: The Swedish Institute and scholarship programs for foreign academics, 1938–2010* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press 2016). 248 s.

Hardly anyone with experience from contemporary academia and interest in foreign policy issues would object to the claim that Åkerlund's book highlights two extremely popular concepts. Attempts at symbiosis deserve attention as potentially challenging projects. Owing to the historical perspective of more than seven decades, this study of Swedish academic policies designed to reach out to the wider world may be a case in point. The Swedish Institute (SI), established as, nominally at least, a public-private partnership in 1945, was their primary platform.

The book has a neat structure. Meanings of academic internationalization and public diplomacy are outlined, research premises laid out, sources and method discussed in the introductory chapter. In spite of the rapidly expanding body of relevant research, it is free of excessiveness. Beside policy-related documents, responsible for qualitative aspects, the analysis is based on a dataset of almost 9 000 scholarship holders. The core of the book consists of three chronological chapters. Each addresses one principal stage of the SI's scholarship policies and covers from 32 to 20 years. The declining tendency might suggest a build-up of dynamics over time. Quantitative findings are presented for each stage, a special chapter deals with long-term trends.

It is no coincidence that Swedish image management emerged around the time when Marquis Child's bestseller (1936) marshalled the "Middle/Third

Way" slogan. Åkerlund demonstrates how the practice of academic exchange has reflected the changing environment and reiterates the trajectory from reciprocal bilateral exchanges, to the expression of international solidarity, to development aid, to trade and transformation assistance in Sweden's wider vicinity.

The central tenet is that academic exchange may be employed, as a foreign policy tool, to "creat[e] networks and communicat[e] knowledge and values" (p. 34) across borders and to contribute to the country's image abroad. The SI itself was born in an attempt to address the negative undertones that Sweden's wartime neutrality had generated. Besides, it had a humanitarian mission to contribute to the European cultural renewal.

It is interesting to notice that, besides Scandinavian and Baltic neighbours, Central and Eastern Europe soon entered Sweden's academic exchange policies. These contacts suffered a set-back during the early Cold War. Only the de-Stalinization of the later 1950s brought about a change and, in 1960, also the USSR got involved. Swedish politics functioned as a window of opportunity in East-West communication. The activism of the 1970s and 1980s was different. As a form of international solidarity, it responded to decolonization and to the threats to preferably progressive democratisation (Chile) and went beyond conventional "culture and image" public diplomacy. This was mirrored on institutional level, too: SI, by then a foundation, severed its original ties to business. While its agenda was expanding with the introduction of guest scholarships, it established close co-operation with the Swedish International Development Agency, the primary platform of Sweden's official development aid. The end of bipolarity in the early 1990s modified the picture – the democratisation in Eastern Europe appealed to Sweden. What contribution academic exchange was going to make remained unclear but this did not hamper wide knowledge transfer, to the Baltics in particular. Changes that have emerged from Sweden's EU membership, like the ascent of multilateralism, and focus on public diplomacy in the country's vicinity openly implied that the SI's policy was to team up with the government and promote official agendas.

All in all, this study is well-written and manifests the centrality of academic exchange for internationalization of Swedish academia. It is also rich in thought-provoking details that could not be dealt with here. Minor flaws are few. Not surprisingly, funding is important for the story. As currencies have their own histories, a reference to current prices should illustrate past sums more frequently. Occasionally, a source reference is missing; see the story of the Czech mathematician (pp. 44–45). Furthermore, while German and US approaches to academic exchange are occasionally taken into account, the study would benefit from a closer look at other major internation-

al actors: When did the SI get inspired and when did it develop an innovation? Åkerlund says almost nothing about the opposite side of the exchange equation, the Swedes sent abroad. It is a pity that this part of SI's agenda is omitted, although, in all fairness, foreign academics are clearly heralded as the subject of inquiry. However, addressing following questions would, in my opinion, add even more complexity to the reviewed monograph: How were Swedish scholarship/grant recipients selected and supposed to mould their country's image? And, more on an academical than diplomatic note, what did they bring back home? These comments are intended to suggest concerns for further research of a multi-layer and utmost attractive topic.

*Göteborgs universitet*

PAVOL JAKUBEC