



Book Review

Björn Lundberg
Naturliga medborgare: Friluftsliv och medborgarfostran i scoutrörelsen och Unga Örnar, 1925–1960.

Lund: Arkiv (PhD diss)
2018, 368 pp.

Educational research is often associated with the study of educational institutions—kindergartens, schools and universities—and the ideas linked to these. However, a large part of the teaching and research that are being conducted in departments of education around the world are devoted to the study of educational processes that takes place in other venues. Björn Lundberg's book *Naturliga medborgare*, a published version of his doctoral dissertation, illustrates the fruitfulness for historians of education to venture beyond the more traditional educational setting as an object for their scientific inquiries.

In this book, Lundberg uses two groups within the Swedish youth movement, the Scout movement (Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts) and *Unga Örnar* ("Young Eagles"), to describe how the Scandinavian notion of *friluftsliv* (translated by Lundberg as "outdoor life," literally "free-air life") were used as means in the training for citizenship in Sweden during twentieth-century (or between 1925 and 1960 to be more precise).

The Scout movement is familiar to an international reader and it has attracted a fairly large scholarly interest, while *Unga Örnar*, a leisure organisation for children and youth with ties to the Social Democratic Party, has been

studied more sparsely. However, just as the Scout movement, the development, and evolution of *Unga Örnar* was part of a transnational process with similar organisations in Germany (*Die Falken*, founded in 1904), Austria (*Rote Falken*, founded 1925), Belgium (*Faucons Rouges*, founded 1928), and many other countries.

How connected and embedded the Swedish *Unga Örnar*, or the Swedish Scout movement, was to similar institutions in other countries during the period studied is, however, not something that is mentioned in Lundberg's book. The aim of Lundberg's study is, in other words, not to examine the transnational diffusion, circulation and national adaptation of ideas regarding the connection between outdoor life and citizenship training. Instead, it is an attempt to unveil how the idea of *friluftsliv* was used as a method, or pedagogical tool, in practice in order to promote a citizenship ideal amongst its young members. And, perhaps most importantly, how both the method and the citizenship ideal has changed over time.

To place the emergence of these two youth movements in a larger intellectual and historical context, the author describes how the idea of nature's positive effects on children emerged during the nineteenth century. In the crowded (urbanisation), loud and polluted cities (industrialisation) there was a call amongst a rather heterogeneous group of thinkers to "save" the children by giving them the possibility to "return to nature," even if it was temporarily. Ideas of nature, health and childhood became further interwoven during the first de-

cares of the twentieth century. It is in this historical and intellectual context, merged with the breakthrough of parliamentary democracy and the emergence of the social-democratic welfare state, that these two movements were born and developed.

The book is structured to capture change over time within these two organisations. The focus is thus on three constructed periods, the first covering the emergence and development of these organisations up until 1939, the second covering the war-years between 1939 and 1945 and the final time-period has its focus on the post-war period between 1945 and 1960. In the first empirical chapters, covering the time period up until 1939, Drawing inspiration from Ruth Lister's ideas that it is most fruitful to analyze citizenship as practice and using Foucault's concept of governmentality, Lundberg challenges the previous research that has stressed that boy scouts aimed to instill militaristic and nationalist values while the girl scouts was devoted to questions connected to empowerment and emancipation. In viewing these organisations in general—and the concept of *friluftsliv* in particular—through Foucault's concept of governmentality, Lundberg makes the argument that *friluftsliv*s could be understood as a technology of citizenship that is embedded within liberal governmentality.

This change in perspective, that organisations devoted to the governance of children and youth, which do not operate in the direct intervention of the state could, or should, be understood as operating in the realm of civil society is one of the most valuable contributions with Lundberg's book. By focusing on the practices and analyzing them through a governmentality prism, Lundberg argues that the qualities that the perso-

nal traits that were acquired—active, self-reliant and self-disciplined—by its young members *were not de-facto* meant to train their ability to survive in the wild, rather these qualities should be later used as active, self-regulatory, citizens within society. In both these organisations, the campsite formed an important venue in the hands-on training of active citizenship. This is based on the idea that these children would leave "civilisation" (the cities) and set up a new civilisation in the wilderness, where the desired actions of an active and self-regulatory citizen were simulated in a hands-on manner. The pedagogical key was repetition, as Lundberg illustrates. The children were instructed on how to do a wide range of activities properly, however, the key was that these proper activities became a part of their daily routines.

It would have been interesting to know if and how these campsites were connected, from an intellectual history perspective, with contemporary rural-ly located schools like William Reuben George's George Junior Republic, the German *Landerziehungsheime* or one of the other organisations or institutions who used simulated citizenship participation as a pedagogical tool. This question relates to an overarching *problématique* regarding if the Swedish scout movement and the Swedish *Unga Örnar* should be understood as operating on a relatively autonomous transnational field, in the Bourdieusian sense of the term, or if the methods these organisations used in the training of its members for active citizenship mirrors developments and ideals in society at large, both in Sweden and abroad?

If these organisations were part of a relatively autonomous transitional field, historical circumstances—Sweden not being part of the Second World War,

officially—seems to have taken these organisations on a different path. Lundberg demonstrates that one of the effects of Swedish children were spared the direct impact of the war created an “asymmetrical international” relationship that, within these organisations, took the form of a sense of moral responsibility to help to rebuild the world after the war. For the organisations, the war years also meant a shift from simulations of activities into de facto doing a real and meaningful contribution (for example by signing up for voluntary air surveillance). Responding to a long-lasting critique of the Boy Scouts being a militaristic organisation, their engagements during the war tried to transform this image by stressing the important civic role the organisation filled.

The post-war development of these organisations, as described by Lundberg, follows a familiar pattern both internationally and with the Swedish school system, and with society at large. In an era of transnational actors and initiatives—UN and EEC—they became more international and global in their scope. And in the long 1960s, the Boy's and Girl's scouts were integrated into one. All of these changes illustrate how both the ideal and methods connected to citizenship have been transformed to adapt to the changing times.

Lundberg's book stimulates almost as many new questions as it answers, which is a testament to its high quality. The book is extraordinarily well-written and valuable contribution to the historical scholarship of children's outdoor life in twentieth-century Sweden.

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