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The Nation State and the Competition State in Nordic Education

Edited by
Svein Ivar Angell

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EDITORIAL

Notes from the Editor

Svein Ivar Angell

Four of the five articles in this special issue of the *Nordic Journal of Educational History* are results of the workshop *International Interactions—Images and Imaginations—Education in the Nordic Countries between the Nation State and the Competition State,* held at Centre Universitaire de Norvège à Paris in March 2019. The workshop was financed through the University of Bergen's strategic programme for international cooperation in research and education (SPIRE). It gathered together a handful of historians who have been investigating how the Nordic schooling and educational systems have developed in relation to and through interaction with the international community. More specifically, the workshop's participants have explored the mutually reinforcing dynamics between the international and the Nordic educational systems. By studying these dynamics, we have sought to understand how the Nordic educational systems have been influenced through the interaction between national traditions and international impulses. Which images and imaginations have been produced—and reproduced—through the interaction?

The educational systems have served as representations of the Nordic societies and their culture. The representations have unfolded in several ways and in various arenas: through exchange programmes, through activities such as cultural and public diplomacy or "nation branding," and through interaction with international institutions. At the same time, the representations are aspects of domestic decision-making processes and the national self-images constructed in the Nordic countries.

The aforementioned dynamics can be traced back to the inter-war period and transnational organisations such as the League of Nations as well as civil society bodies such as the Norden Association (Foreningen Norden). During the post-war period, the number of transnational institutions and arenas multiplied and came to include bodies such as the Nordic Council, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Council of Europe and eventually the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

Along with the increase in transnational organisations, the scale and scope of interaction between national educational systems has also changed. Moreover, the historical development of this interaction can be seen as parts of broader state discourses. While it can be claimed that the nation state discourse played a major role in

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forming the educational systems up to the 1980s, this is no longer the case. The educational systems have now become part of state competitiveness on a global scale.

In this special issue of the *Nordic Journal of Educational History*, the issues introduced above are elucidated through five articles. Andreas Mørkved Hellenes's article investigates two interlinked sites of Scandinavian socialist internationalism in continental Europe in the 1930s: the Nordic folk high school in Geneva and the humanistic centre created by French philosopher Paul Desjardins in Pontigny. His analysis shows how the transnational activities of the Nordic folk high school's study programmes opened up new spaces for Scandinavian internationalism.

Henrik Åström Elmersjö explores the Norden Associations (*föreningarna Norden*) that were established in 1919 with the aim of promoting understanding and cooperation between the Nordic countries. The definition of "Norden" was negotiated from the very beginning. Promoting understanding and cooperation was very much considered an educational effort, and Norden was imagined within educational efforts sponsored by the associations. This article looks into how the Norden Associations imagined a Nordic school in which a Nordic sentiment could be established, and how this imagination related to the reality of the nationalistic school and to ideas of broader international cooperation—ideas between which the "Nordic idea" has always been sandwiched. The article shows how the methods that were used by the Norden Associations—ideas intended to promote understanding and cooperation between the Nordic countries—effectively hindered the imagination of Norden and the "Nordic idea."

Christian Sæle's article explores an experimental teaching project initiated by UNESCO in 1953 entitled "Co-ordinated Experimental Activities in Schools of Member States of UNESCO." The project's aim was to develop an effective and coherent cross-national "education for peace." Norway was one of 15 countries that accepted the invitation to participate in the project, putting great effort into it throughout the 1950s, even on the national level. By focusing on key participants and the organisational structures framing the experiment, Sæle argues that the Norwegian efforts should, to a significant extent, be seen as part of a broader Norwegian policy for building cultural relations with other countries. An overall ambition for this policy was to promote the Norwegian educational system as an expression of what was perceived as a particularly Norwegian, democratic, and peace-building tradition.

Piero Colla, in his article on the evolution of mass media's portrayal of an alleged Swedish "educational model" in France, highlights cross-national influences during two time periods, the 1960s and the 2010s. The origin of a stereotype is addressed from the point of view of interaction between the Swedish branding of its own model, and the demand, on the part of French elites, for a handy reform paradigm. Colla identifies two crucial phases of idealisation. At first, the popularity of the Swedish experiment in education coincides with the idealisation of Sweden as a laboratory for social reform. Since 2010, TV reporting has focused on both the resistance to this myth and the diversity of its possible uses.

Andreas Åkerlund's article is a historical analysis of Swedish policies for internationalising higher education and research from the 1970s and onwards. The analysis is carried out against the theoretical backdrop of the competition state, understood as a type of state that, in the last decades of the twentieth century, reformulated and restructured itself and its international relations with the aim of making its society fit

for international competition. Focusing on arguments for why Swedish universities need to be internationalised, how this should be done, and which parts of higher education should be internationalised, the article shows the development of Swedish internationalisation policies, starting in the 1960s and 1970s, when the focus was on international solidarity, inward student mobility, and the internationalisation of teaching. In the 1980s and 1990s, the idea of knowledge-driven economic development was the central paradigm. To this, the 2000s and 2010s added a focus on in-going mobility, as a source of revenue through tuition fees, and as a way to recruit skilled labour.

In sum, these articles represent fruitful ways of studying how the national educational systems have been formed in relation to the international environment. At the same time, they indicate a direction for future research in the field.

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Pilgrims and Missionaries of Social Peace: Geneva and Pontigny as Sites of Scandinavian Internationalism in Late Interwar Europe

Andreas Mørkved Hellenes

Abstract • This article investigates two interlinked sites of Scandinavian socialist internationalism in continental Europe: the Nordic folk high school in Geneva and the humanistic centre created by French philosopher Paul Desjardins in Pontigny. Locating and situating these two nodes on the cultural-political map of late interwar Europe allows for a study of how actors from the popular movements in Denmark, Norway and Sweden mobilised educational ideals and practices to internationalise the experience of Scandinavian social democracy. The analysis shows how the transnational activities of the Nordic folk high school's study course opened up new spaces for Scandinavian internationalism. In this way, the article argues, the school represented an experiment in internationalism from below where Nordism was deployed as a cultural strategy to create international understanding for working-class Scandinavians; and created new arenas for Nordic encounters with French political and intellectual milieus that admired Scandinavian democracy and social peace.

Keywords • internationalism, social democracy, Nordism, workers' education, cultural encounters

In 1931, in the first issue of the peace movement's magazine *Mellanfolkligt samarbete*, the social democratic vagabond, editor and interpreter Sven Backlund announced the creation of a new Scandinavian initiative in service of internationalism and peace.[1] At the Swedish labour movement's folk high school in Brunnsvik, Backlund had together with Norwegian journalist Birgit Nissen and Danish educationalist Frederik Begtrup drawn up drafts for a Nordic folk high school in Geneva, open to all, but particularly aimed at the non-academic youth, who for the lack of foreign language skills were unable to follow classes in "international questions" taught at the new institutions on the shores of Lac Leman. The idea had come to him on the night train to Geneva.

> [I]n the middle of the night, between Hamburg and Cologne, I was awakened by a thought. Danes, Norwegians and Swedes must out in Europe together to feel for themselves that they belong together. But how?[2]

Research for this article has been funded by Vera och Greta Oldbergs stiftelse, Letterstedtska föreningen, Stockholms Arbetareinstitutsförening, the Nordic research hub ReNEW and the Independent Research Fund Denmark (Project 8018-00023B).

1 Sven Backlund, "Skola i Genève," *Mellanfolkligt samarbete* 1, April 1931, 27.

2 Ibid. Translations from French and the Scandinavian languages to English are my own.

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Historians have pointed out how the social democratic internationalism of the 1920s were championed in the Swedish case by leaders like Branting, Engberg and Sandler, well-versed in European languages and frequent travellers to the League of Nations. As Bo Stråth puts it, "[t]he train to Geneva became a true bridge with Europe."[3] The initiators of the new school shared the conviction that this bridge should be opened also to young Scandinavians without similar cultural resources: there was a need to get workers and peasants in direct contact with Geneva and to spread the light "from the North to this broken Europe."[4] There was thus a double-sidedness in the school's ambition to internationalise Scandinavia. On the one hand, it offered new social groups the opportunity to take part in international life, functioning as a school in internationalism with studies in Geneva, trips through Europe and reading weeks in the French philosopher Paul Desjardins' cultural centre in the abbey of Pontigny. On the other hand, the Geneva school internationalised through its openness to students from different social groups a Nordic democratic experience both of peaceful cooperation among neighbouring nations and between classes.[5] In this way the Scandinavians taking part in the school became at the same time pilgrims and missionaries of social peace in Geneva, Pontigny and Scandinavia.

This article examines through the example of the Geneva school Scandinavian internationalism in the late interwar period. Internationalism is not here studied as the relations *between* national political parties or *through* the Labour and Socialist International,[6] but in terms of movements, exchanges and encounters: what Patrizia Dogliani has referred to as "internationalism as praxis."[7] More precisely, the purpose of what follows is to study the role of Scandinavian social democratic internationalists and their educational initiatives in bringing Nordic experiences into the interwar European debates and vice versa. Both the histories of social democratic parties' internationalism and the Nordic folk high school movement have been studied extensively in previous research. This study's contribution is to centre on two entangled sites that articulated a Scandinavian internationalism in Europe, producing new encounters at a critical moment in European history that represented "an age of intense cultural exchange."[8] Such transnational encounters can be studied as hothouses for intellectual exchange, as a sited form of exchange which was played out on stages that had bearing on the exchanges.[9] The two sites that will be studied here are the

3 Bo Stråth, "The Swedish Image of Europe as the Other," in *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*, ed. Bo Stråth (Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2000), 361.

4 Backlund (1931), 27.

5 Ludvig Krabbe, "Nordiska folkhögskolan i Genève. Folkhöjskolens tredje kurs," *Mellanfolkligt samarbete* 10, December 1933, 301–2.

6 Cf. Talbot C. Imlay, *The Practice of Socialist Internationalism: European Socialists and International Politics, 1914–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 1 ff, and Daniel Laqua, "Democratic Politics and the League of Nations: The Labour and Socialist International as a Protagonist of Interwar Internationalism," *Contemporary European History* 24, no. 2 (2015), 176 ff.

7 Patrizia Dogliani, "The Fate of International Socialism," in *Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. Patricia Clavin and Glenda Sluga (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 55 ff. See also the presentation of recent research on internationalism in Patricia Clavin and Glenda Sluga, "Rethinking the History of Internationalism," in *Internationalisms. A Twentieth-Century History*, ed. Patricia Clavin and Glenda Sluga (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

8 Carlos Reijnen and Marleen Rensen, "Introduction: European Encounters, Intellectual Exchange and the Rethinking of Europe," *European Studies* 32 (2014), 13.

9 Ibid., 21–22.

Nordic folk high school in Geneva and Paul Desjardins' cultural centre in Pontigny. In what ways did the establishment of the Geneva School create new arenas for encounters and learning processes for Scandinavian internationalists? Which transnational actors and sites were involved in these processes? How did the activities and spaces contribute to internationalise the experience of social peace in Scandinavia?

In answering these questions, the article attempts to do two things. Drawing on Norbert Götz' observation that *Norden* in the interwar period was "constructed" in Geneva through "interaction with outsiders," the article explores an example of everyday cooperation between Nordic actors abroad, with its repercussions both back in Scandinavia and on outside perceptions of the Nordic countries.[10] Similarly, in a study of the Nordic officials working within the new international bureaucracy staffing the League of Nations, Karen Gram-Skjoldager, Haakon Ikonomou and Torsten Kahlert have pointed out how these were perceived by non-Nordic actors in Geneva as representing a common Scandinavian identity.[11] At the centre of this article's investigation however we find other social actors than the politicians, diplomats and civil servants representing the Nordic countries in the Genevese institutions, such as educationalists and students, which together constituted the internationalist flanks of the emerging Scandinavian labour movements.[12] By focusing on these actors and sites, the article furthermore aims to introduce more complexity to the history of what has been referred to as a construction of a foreign and in particular American image of the early Nordic welfare state, and its usage in domestic political debates.[13] It is important to complement the history of foreign observers going North and bringing ideas home with that of other encounters taking place elsewhere and outside of the Nordic region, and notably in the context of Scandinavia's European connections during the late interwar period. Finally, the article seeks to shed new light on the transnational history of European interwar socialist internationalism by focusing on other social actors than political parties and by complementing a literature dominated by studies of Great Britain, France and Germany; in this body of work the Scandinavian workers' movements are sometimes mentioned but hardly ever present.[14]

The analysis of the Geneva School is based on archival materials kept in the Swedish Labour Archives and Library (ARAB). Specifically, I have considered the

10 Norbert Götz, "'Blue-Eyed Angels' at the League of Nations: The Genevese Construction of Norden," in *Regional Cooperation and International Organizations: The Nordic Model in Transnational Alignment*, ed. Norbert Götz and Heidi Haggrén (London: Routledge, 2009), 27.

11 Karen Gram-Skjoldager, Haakon A. Ikonomou and Torsten Kahlert, "Scandinavians and the League of Nations Secretariat, 1919–1946," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 44, no. 4 (2019), 464–66.

12 Although no systematic prosopographical study of these two groups, the analysis is based on a preliminary mapping out of the actors' professional and political profiles.

13 See for example Kazimierz Musiał, *Roots of the Scandinavian Model: Images of Progress in the Era of Modernisation* (Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlag, 2002); Mary Hilson, "Consumer Co-operation and Economic Crisis: The 1936 Roosevelt Inquiry on Co-operative Enterprise and the Emergence of the Nordic 'Middle Way'," *Contemporary European History* 22, no. 2 (2013); Carl Marklund and Klaus Petersen, "Return to Sender: American Images of the Nordic Welfare States and Nordic Welfare State Branding," *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies* 43, no. 2 (2013); Kiran Klaus Patel, "How America Discovered Sweden. Reinventing Democracy during the 1930s," in *Transatlantic Democracy in the Twentieth Century. Transfer and Transformation* ed. Paul Nolte (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2016); Byron Rom-Jensen, "A Model of Social Security? The Political Usage of Scandinavia in Roosevelt's New Deal," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 42, no. 4 (2017).

14 See for example Laqua (2015), Imlay (2017), and Dogliani (2017).

organisation protocols pertaining to the school's consolidation, the rectors' yearly reports and the board evaluations of the courses. In order to analyse some of the participating students' experiences I have made use of travel letters published in periodicals and local newspapers.[15] Finally, the study of the French-Swedish meeting at Pontigny is based on personal papers kept at the Institut Souvarine in Paris; the Swedish LO's archives at ARAB; and the Swedish Employers Association at the Centre for Business History in Stockholm.[16]

The article is structured in four parts. The first situates the Scandinavian internationalism of the Geneva School in relation to previous research about Nordism in the late interwar period. In the second section I turn to the school's activities following its consolidation in 1935, and identify its deployment of Nordism as a cultural strategy used to educate internationalism to the Scandinavian students and give them access to knowledge about the international institutions. I first study how the students experienced the school and its travels around Europe as an encounter with international life. Secondly, I situate it as part of a broader agenda within Scandinavian social democracy where integration of the Norwegian labour movement on the international arena was a priority in a moment where democracy was under threat in Europe. This situation triggered the creation of new connections between transnational progressive alliances in democratic Europe, some through the establishment of cultural exchanges and education, others seeking to overcome the divisions on the labour market. It was further expressed in the episode that I discuss in the following section, namely how the French search for social peace after the fall of the Popular Front culminated in the French–Swedish meeting at Pontigny. Finally, I discuss the meanings of the Geneva School's interwar Nordic internationalism, arguing that it functioned in a dual way that aligned the international outlook with the national agenda and vice versa rather than opposing them. It internationalised those involved in organising, teaching and participating in the school's course, and it internationalised the Scandinavian reformist democratic experience.

The Geneva School: Internationalism in an age of Nordism

In August 1935 the members of the Association of the Nordic folk high school in Geneva met at Folketeatret in Oslo for their annual general meeting. Founded in 1930–31, the school had been through a tumultuous trial period ridden with organisational conflict. Thoroughly reorganised, it was consolidated in Oslo under the influence of the workers' educational associations (*Arbejdernes Oplysningsforbund* in Denmark, *Arbeidernes Oplysningsforbund* in Norway, *Arbetarnas Bildningsförbund* in Sweden), granted public funds from the three Scandinavian social democratic governments, and allocations from the Nordic cooperative movement (*Nordisk*

15 I have only used texts that convey the relatively immediate impressions of the students, and not the journalistic stories that some participants sent home. A case in point is Sigurd Evensmo's texts from his time as a student in 1935, where there is no mention of the school, e.g. his reports from the International Labour Conference to the Norwegian labour press, Sigurd Evensmo, "Arme mr. Butler," *Arbeiderbladet*, July 8, 1935, and Sigurd Evensmo, "Selsom revy over verden i nød: Arbeidskonferansen i Geneve—sett fra galleriet," *Arbeiderbladet*, June 29, 1935.

16 These include French press clippings that track the debate in France, which were collected and bound by the French organisers and sent as gifts to the two Swedish organisations.

Andelsforbund).[17] The reorganisation, proposed by a five-man committee chaired by ABF secretary Gunnar Hirdman, was an attempt to solve a critical situation for the school.[18] During its first years it had been the object of internal quarrels and public dispute as a result of a power struggle between Scandinavian officials at the Genevese institutions and the workers' educational organisations in Scandinavia. Historian of ideas Katarina Leppänen has interpreted this quarrel as resulting from two conflicting perspectives on internationalism that time and again surfaced during the school's first years.[19] Whereas the Geneva officials saw internationalism as represented by the new world order constituted by the League of Nations and the International Labour Organisation, the representatives of the workers' associations adopted a more critical position, related to their stances on nationalism, Nordism, and the possibility of expanding "the power of the small and neutral European states" rather than adapting the worldview of the major powers.[20] This reflected the emergence of a new answer to a new political situation in Europe with the rise of fascism and communism and the ensuing problems of the contemporary world organisation, and the result was a controversy between two groups, the officials and the Social Democratic teachers. Among the early teachers of the Geneva School were several young, Social Democratic academics: the Swedes Allan Degerman, Gunnar Myrdal, and Oluf Leopold; the Norwegians Axel Sømme, Arne Ording and Halvard Lange; and the Danes Arne Sørensen, Oluf Bertolt, and Sigurd Juul Andersen[21]. When the trio Backlund, Sømme and Sørensen published *Den største højttaler*, a collection of articles about the place of the Nordic countries in the world in 1933, the conflict had escalated.[22] Arguing for a "new Scandinavianism" and a socialist reorientation with public measures to fight the oncoming economic crisis, the Geneva teachers quickly

17 "Nordisk Folkehøiskole i Genève: April 1936," protocol from board meeting in Svalöv, April 28, 1936, vol. 1, NFG, ARAB, 3.

18 Along with Hirdman the other members of the committee were the Danes Arne Sørensen and Oluf Bertolt and the Norwegians Christian L. Lange and Haakon Lie.

19 Katarina Leppänen, "Education for Internationalism at the Nordic School for Adult Education in Geneva 1931–1939," *History of Education* 40, no. 5 (2011), 645–49.

20 Ibid.

21 Allan Degerman (1901–1980) was rector of Viskadalen folk high school from 1926–1933 and one of the pioneers in introducing courses in international questions to the Swedish folk high schools. The economist Gunnar Myrdal (1898–1987) was an associate professor at the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva in 1930–31 and influential social democratic intellectual and politician. Axel Sømme (1899–1991) defended a French doctorate in economic geography in 1931. A member of the intellectual Marxist group Mot Dag before joining the Labour Party, he co-wrote in 1933 the influential *En norsk 3-årsplan* with Ole Colbjørnsen. Arne Ording (1898–1967) obtained a French doctorate in history in 1930. A member of Mot Dag, he joined the Labour Party in 1936 and was the first editor of the journal *Internasjonal Politikk*. Halvard Lange (1902–1970) was a grant holder at the Christian Michelsen Institute 1932–1935, secretary at AOF 1935–1936, and rector at Sørmarka folk high school 1938–1940. He was a member of the Labour Party's leadership from 1933. Arne Sørensen (1906–1978) worked at *Politiken* 1929–1931 and as a folk high school teacher 1930–1936. He broke with the Social Democrats to found a new political party, Dansk Samling, in 1936, advocating a national-Christian "third way" position. Oluf Bertolt (1891–1958) was a folk high school teacher and journalist. He was between 1933–39 the editor of *Socialisten*, and was rector at Esbjerg workers' folk high school 1934–1957. Sigurd Juul Andersen (1898–1976) was a folk high school teacher. Based at Askov from the mid-1920s, he taught in particular international politics and was a strong believer in the League of Nations.

22 Sven Backlund, Axel Sømme and Arne Sørensen, *Den største høittaler og fem andre aktuelle problemer* (Oslo: Tiden, 1933).

found themselves under attack by bourgeois newspapers back home and the Nordic League of Nations' officials in Geneva.[23]

The consolidation of the school at the general meeting in 1935 was effectuated on three levels. On the organisational level it became to a much larger extent linked to the workers' educational associations in Scandinavia and separated from the Geneva officials. Secondly all decisions concerning the school's curriculum and teachers would be decided by an acting board, rather than an annual general meeting. Thirdly and as a result of this, a fixed format was introduced for the annual course that would stay in place until the outbreak of the war. Its outcome was essentially a submission of the school to the workers' educational associations. Moreover, this led to something of a change of guards on the school board. Among the original founders of the school, together with Backlund, had been the Danish League of Nations' employees Ludvig Krabbe and Finn T. B. Friis, the Swedish ILO secretary Sture Thorsson, the Interparliamentary Union's Norwegian secretary general Christian L. Lange, and the Swedish Liberal parliamentarian Kerstin Hesselgren— all of them important names associated with the spirit of Geneva in their home countries. With the Geneva Scandinavians gone, the set-up shifted considerably. Influential men from the workers' educational organisations, such as Hirdman and Bertolt, together with the perennial Backlund and Norwegian LO secretary Lars Evensen, made up a solid majority against the sole representative of classical Grundtivigianism on the Geneva School's board, the Dane Holger Kjær.[24] On a larger scale, this exemplifies the turn from liberal internationalism to social democratic internationalism in the Nordic countries, with new internationalists imposing themselves: young scholars with an internationalist outlook, socialist ideas, and support from increasingly strong labour movements back home. This shift from the liberal internationalism incarnated by the Geneva officials to a new, social democratic internationalism was perfectly represented by the replacement of Christian L. Lange by his son, historian and secretary of the AOF Halvard Lange, as one of the Norwegian members on the board. From autumn 1935 all three Scandinavian countries had social democratic governments which decided to support the school financially, sometimes to the dismay of other political parties.[25]

Although "Nordic" in the name, the school was by and large a Scandinavian story. The inclusion of Finnish members of the board was discussed, but rejected.[26] It is however important to point out that the ambition of the Nordic school's Nordism was something quite different from Scandinavianism in the nineteenth century sense of political unity. Nor was it a particularly loose, inclusive vision of Nordic community. Finnish, Icelandic (and Estonian) Scandinavophone students occasionally attended the school's course, but their numbers were minimal compared to the typical twelve–fifteen yearly participants from the Scandinavian countries. Nordism, for the organisers, was less concerned with representativity than with a cultural-political

23 Leppänen (2011), 645.

24 "Foreningen Nordisk Folkehøiskole i Genève. Nov. 1935," protocol from board meeting in Malmö, 22–23 November 1935, vol. 1, NFG, ARAB, 1.

25 "Folkeskolens budgett vedtatt," *Nationen*, April 4, 1936.

26 "Aarsmöte i Foreningen Nordiske Folkehöiskole i Genève," protocol from annual general meeting in Oslo, August 25 1935, vol. 1, NFG, ARAB, 4.

programme based on linguistic community. In this sense, it was but one of many expressions of a new wave in the history of workers' Scandinavianism (*arbeiderskandinavisme*).[27] Another example of this was the re-creation, in 1932, of the Joint Committee of the Nordic Social Democratic Labour Movement (SAMAK), that sought to coordinate the work of the labour movement committees formed by unions and parties and grew in importance as the social democratic parties came into government.[28] Mirja Österberg has argued that SAMAK played an important role as the transnational agent in the construction of a Nordic region, producing in the 1930s a "negotiated consensus on Nordicness," influential in bringing the Norwegian labour movement back into the fold.[29] Similarly, it has been argued that the Nordic folk school in Geneva played a part in helping the Norwegian labour movement's return along the "long way to Geneva."[30] The Norwegian participation at the International Labour Conference in 1934, which marked the return of Norway to the ILO after some fifteen years of scepticism towards the organisation, opened the door for other forms of international cooperation. Soon after reintegrating the ILO, Norwegian LO joined the Amsterdam International and SAMAK, indicating their revised positions on international matters as well as a newfound confidence in government along with a need to mobilise in defence of democracy.[31]

Workers' Scandinavianism came to be based on practical co-operation and cultural affinities that in the 1930s could be summed up in precisely that word: democracy—"democracy within and between the people; social, political, economic, national, Scandinavian and international democracy," as Per Albin Hansson defined it in a speech in Copenhagen.[32] This was the fruit of the labour of the workers' movements, and decidedly different from earlier forms of Scandinavianism, according to Norwegian *Arbeiderbladet* upon the celebration of the Day of Norden: "Whereas the previous academic-literary "Scandinavianism" with its foggy pathos never got any practical impact and died a quiet death, the Nordic workers' front has stood strong and delivered practical results."[33] One expression of this new Nordism, which became central in social democratic rhetoric in the late 1930s, was the concept "Nordic democracy." Again, it drew meaning from its contrast with bourgeois democracy, positing parliamentary democracy as a stage in political progress that

27 Mary Hilson, Silke Neunsinger, Iben Vyff and Ragnheiður Kristjánsdóttir, "Labour, unions and politics in the Nordic countries, c. 1700–2000: Introduction," in *Labour, Unions and Politics under the North Star: The Nordic Countries, 1700–2000* ed. Mary Hilson, Silke Neunsinger and Iben Vyff (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017), 8, 16.

28 Klaus Petersen, "Constructing Nordic Welfare? Nordic Social Political Cooperation 1919–1955," in *The Nordic Welfare State: A Historical Reappraisal*, ed. Niels Finn Christiansen, Nils Edling, Per Haave and Klaus Petersen (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum, 2006), 73.

29 Mirja Österberg, "'Norden' as a Transnational Space in the 1930s: Negotiated Consensus of 'Nordicness' in the Nordic Cooperation Committee of the Labour Movement," in *Labour, Unions and Politics under the North Star: The Nordic Countries, 1700–2000* ed. Mary Hilson, Silke Neunsinger and Iben Vyff (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2017), 237.

30 Halldor Heldal, "Den lange veien til Genève: Norsk arbeiderbevegelse og ILO 1920–1934," *Arbeiderhistorie* 5 (1992).

31 Kettunen (2013), 215.

32 Ruth Hemstad, "Scandinavianism, Nordic Co-operation, and 'Nordic Democracy,'" in *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy*, ed. Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2010), 189–90.

33 "Vekst og grotid for samholdstanken i Norden," *Arbeiderbladet*, 26 October, 1936.

was to be defended so that it would be possible to take more steps towards a full democracy. The concept of 'Nordic democracy', first launched in 1935, arose as a domestic and Nordic answer to the increasingly menacing outside "world of tensions," and was used to mobilise large crowds in public celebrations.[34]

These examples show that Norden in various ways was used in the Nordic social democratic context as a resource.[35] From the mid-1930s, the Geneva School represented a similar position on Nordism as a political strategy. With the introduction of new statutes and a new board consisting mainly of representatives of the educational associations, the school's organisational ties to the Geneva Scandinavians were broken. This did not seem to cause a setback for the school's popularity. To the contrary, the consolidation represented a "full breakthrough" with great interest from prospective students, although it made it decidedly more social democratic.[36] While Ludvig Krabbe in 1933 had observed a sometimes difficult political diversity among students "[f]rom fascists to left wing socialists, conservative liberalism, but mainly traditional socialism—which doesn't exclude strong nationalism—creating tensions between nationalities,"[37] the political homogeneity within the group was highlighted four years later.[38]

Nordism as a cultural strategy of Scandinavian internationalism

From the consolidation the Geneva School's programme consisted of four dimensions. First, a period of pre-school preparation in the Nordic countries, based on the methods of the popular educational movements like correspondence courses with preparatory readings. Then the participants met for a preparatory taught programme at folk high schools in Scandinavia. Secondly an important place on the programme was occupied by travels around Europe providing a practical look on contemporary Europe and its economy, industry, social relations, politics and ideologies. Thirdly the Geneva weeks, filled with taught classes and visits to the institutions. And finally, some weeks to finish the courses and digest the experiences at Pontigny before the return home. Jenny Jansson has argued in her studies of workers' education that it can be seen to constitute "a forum for ideological schooling of members that can be and has been identity-constitutive."[39] Which identities did the educational programmes of the Nordic folk high school constitute? The question of the relationship between Nordism and internationalism was in this context a practical just as much as a theoretical concern; one could perhaps say that it was deployed as a cultural strategy. A cornerstone of the school had since its creation been that teaching should take place in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish on equal footing. Teaching materials in the vernacular languages were a constant preoccupation due to the lack of textbooks on

34 Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang. "Introduction: 'Nordic Democracy' in a World of Tensions," in *Rhetorics of Nordic Democracy*, ed. Jussi Kurunmäki and Johan Strang (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2010).

35 Österberg (2017), 238.

36 Kerstin Hesselgren, "Nordiska folkhögskolan i Genève," *Mellanfolkligt samarbete* 2, 1935, 57–58.

37 Krabbe (1933), 301.

38 Benjamin Bjørklund, "Seks sommer-uker ved Geneve-sjøen," *Bergens Tidende*, July 14, 1937.

39 Jenny Jansson, "Class Formation in Sweden and Britain: Educating Workers," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 90, fall (2016), 52.

international questions available in Scandinavia, and the "pooling" of resources from the three countries improved the situation considerably. Most importantly however the language policy of the school expressed a democratic and social ambition, emphasising the opportunity to acquire knowledge and experiences outside of the national framework for those that had no academic training nor foreign language skills. In other words, Nordism made an internationalism from below possible in the Nordic context. As Axel Sømme, rector of the school from 1933–1935, put it:

> While the cooperation between the peoples of Europe is limited to a reduced number of multilingual people in each country, all social strata, thanks to the similarities between the Danish, Norwegian and Swedish languages, are part of the Nordic cooperation.[40]

Still this was not something that could be taken for granted in the daily life of the school. Many of the students had never been abroad and lacked experience in inter-Scandinavian communication. In a letter from the first year's course, a Swedish participant commented that the language situation had been mostly unproblematic, but made a reservation concerning the Danes.[41] Reports from the rector and teachers were more concerned, underlining how it was of utmost importance that the students spent much time on "the practical study of the Scandinavian languages," including daily reading of newspapers from all the three countries.[42] From 1935 an introductory course in the differences between Danish, Norwegian and Swedish was introduced at the beginning of the school programme. A most welcome one, according to student Ingrid Berg, warning in *Arbeiderbladet* that although reading texts in all three languages was easy, face to face communication was quite a different matter.

> [E]very now and then one feels disoriented […], looks a bit surprised at the other, who looks back in the same way, and in the end we nod good-heartedly but without confidence at each other and say *ja* and *ha*—the misunderstanding is a fact, because we didn't fully understand what the words meant.[43]

Courses and practice represented the best cure, according to another participant, claiming that classes in the different languages was hard in the beginning, although soon enough that stage was bypassed.[44] "It is amazing how quickly one acquires the entirely necessary routine of mutilating different languages," wrote another one, pointing to how the Scandinavian students ended up by mixing the three languages in their communication.[45]

40 "Bedre vilkår for mellemfolkelig samarbeide i NORDEN enn mellem noen andre nasjoner," *1ste Mai*, May 19, 1936.

41 Karl Nilsson, "Kring Genèveskolan," *Mellanfolkligt samarbete* 7, November 1931, 271.

42 Axel Sömme, "Beretning om undervisningen ved Nordisk folkehøiskoles 4de kursus i Genève april-mai-juni 1934," report dated July 17, 1934, vol. 38, Föreningen Nordisk Folkhögskola i Genève (NFG), ARAB, 6. See also Finn T. B. Friis, Axel Sømme, "Forslag til Retningslinjer for Undervisningen ved Nordisk Folkehøjskole i Geneve," letter dated August 19, 1934, vol. 1, FNG, ARAB.

43 Ingrid Berg, "Geneveskolen—et utmerket tiltak," *Arbeiderbladet*, October 8, 1935.

44 Arne Mellesmo, "Med Nordiske Folkehøgskole til Geneve," *Dagningen*, June 30, 1939.

45 Hans Sandås, "Geneve—'Verdens hovedstad:' Litt om arbeidsbyrået og dets virksomhet," *Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad*, 24 July, 1939.

The introduction of a pre-course at a folk high school in Scandinavia provided both common ground and comradeship before the trip to Geneva began. If the introduction to the Scandinavian language community represented one stage of the Nordic folk high school's course in internationalism in practice, another important social aspect of the school was the travels. Foreign travel was still a privilege of the few during the interwar period.[46] In the mid-1930s things started to change, following the introduction of vacation laws in some countries, spurred on by the adoption of a convention at the International Labour Conference in 1936, and the following year Swedish ABF founded its own travel agency, Reso.[47] Among the organisers of the Geneva School, there was a strong belief in the pedagogical potential in travelling for the students, in "seeing rather than reading."[48] Here, too, the democratising ambitions of the school were evident: it was common for the students to stress that this was their first—and possibly last—trip abroad, at least outside the borders of Norden.[49]

Between Scandinavia and Geneva, the school was on the move inside a political-cultural geography that made use of the expanding networks of modern transport, from continental sleepers and intercity express trains to buses on the Autobahn and North Sea steamers. Historians have pointed out how the internationalisation of transport greatly improved the opportunities for intensive exchange across borders in the interwar years.[50] The speedy and impressionistic experience of modern travel was described in the following way by a student in 1937, on the way from Esbjerg towards Geneva:

> A wonderful day on the North Sea onboard the steamer A.P. Bernstorff—with the speed of lightning from Antwerp to Brussels […] and we find ourselves as veritable tourists in one of Europe's great capitals. The Belgian King's two castles, the church in Laken […], hat off at the tomb of the unknown soldier, the Palace of Justice […], parcs and poor quarters, and goodbye to Belgium.[51]

Leppänen suggests that the study trips of the school followed in the footsteps of the nineteenth century German *bildungsreisen*. This was certainly true, although the travels also clearly included elements of modern tourism's checklist of sights to see. By and large, however, the stops of the trips were dedicated to the discovery of social progress and innovation, such as visits to the Zuiderseedamm in the Netherlands, tours of consumers' cooperatives in England, and inspections of the Reich Labour Service (*Reicharbeitsdienst*) in Germany. The school thus represented an adventurous voyage for the participants, but also an educational one, where the foreign conditions, ranging from industrial achievements to miserable housing conditions, were constantly compared to the situation back home.

46 Klas Grinell, *Att sälja världen: Omvärldsbilder i svensk utlandsturism* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 2004), 124.

47 Carina Gråbacke, *När folket tog semester: Studier av Reso, 1937–77* (Lund: Sekel, 2008), 40.

48 Leppänen (2011), 640.

49 Arne Mellesmo, "Med Nordiske Folkehøgskole til Geneve," *Dagningen*, June 30, 1939.

50 Reijnen and Rensen (2014), 20.

51 B. B., "Tvers gjennem Europa: Med Nordisk folkehøiskole til Geneve," *Bergens Tidende*, July 10, 1937.

> To put aside the daily work in known surroundings in a remote fjord village home at Vestlandet and suddenly find oneself in the midst of the centre of Europe, yes, even the world—seems somewhat shocking. But when one gets used to the new light unknown perspectives open up.[52]

The boarding school experience, administered by a Scandinavian "husmor,"[53] represented a refuge from the cacophony of the international capital; although the students did get a taste of what Glenda Sluga calls "a Genevan culture of conferencing and local tourism—a kind of education in cultural difference and exchange,"[54] their daily communal evening meal was *grøt* (porridge).[55] The magnificence of the city of Geneva and its surroundings represented a wide range of things, alongside the inevitable international institutions. An encounter with "French" culture for some students. An introduction to Alpine landscapes for others. But above all, it was the "centre of the world,"[56] which offered a glimpse into the unknown stages and corridors of contemporary international affairs.[57] During the weeks in Geneva, general courses were taught by the school's permanent teachers, while experts from the League or the ILO lectured on their topics of expertise. Most of these teachers were Scandinavian officials, but the list of external lecturers also included central figures in Geneva such as ILO director Harold Butler, who was translated by Backlund.

Among the institutions precisely the ILO held a particular position for the Geneva school, which coincided with the annual International Labour Conference so that the students could attend.

> To sit on the press gallery during the International Labour Conference and look at the representatives of the most different of races […] assembled in the meeting hall, is a very interesting study, and gives one international perspectives, even though one is less impressed by what's going on during the negotiations themselves.[58]

This participation was made possible by two things. Backlund's contacts at the ILO provided the Nordic folk high school students with press passes that gave access to the conference, and the introduction in the late 1920s of headphones for simultaneous

52 Bjørklund, (14 July, 1937).

53 Gabrielle 'Gabbi' Sømme (1899–1952) was married to Axel Sømme, rector of the school from 1933–1935, but continued to work for the Geneva School as well as for Desjardins in Pontigny throughout the 1930s.

54 Glenda Sluga, *Internationalism in the Age of Nationalism* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2013), 74.

55 Axel Sömme, "Beretning om undervisningen ved Nordisk folkehøiskoles 4de kursus i Genève april-mai-juni 1934," July 17, 1934, 1. A course participant from Stavanger recounts in a letter his amazement upon attending "Consul Bakke's fish dinner," a fixed point on the annual programme, where the Norwegian consul had served angler *quenelles*—in fine company one shockingly saw fit to present the guests with the sort of undesired fish that back home was always thrown back in the sea. See O-l, "Inntrykk—overraskelser—oplevelser: Reisebrev fra Geneve," *1ste Mai*, June 28, 1935.

56 Mellesmo, (June 30, 1939).

57 Benjamin Bjørklund, "Ferdabrev: Gjenom Danmark, Nederland og Tyskland til Sveits: Og 6 vikors upphald i Geneve," *Firda folkeblad*, July 20, 1937.

58 O-l., "I problemene og motsetningenes verdenssentrum. Reisebrev fra Geneve," *1ste Mai*, June 22, 1935.

translation of the speakers made it possible also for non-French or English-speakers to follow the deliberations. The technology impressed the students,[59] although the most impressive feat for one young social democrat was Backlund's translation skills. They assured that when Labour MP Helga Karlsen came as a delegate she could make her speech to the conference about the forty-hour week in "genuine Oslo vernacular" and still receive great acclaim. "It was [Backlund] who stood by Helga's side when she spoke.—'And then I felt just as safe as if I were standing back home in Norway', she told us down here afterwards."[60] Pauli Kettunen has highlighted how the month-long conferences through their regularity and length represented important arenas of socialisation and informal communication across the three groups of employers, unionists and government representatives that constituted the tripartite structure, including for interaction on the national level.[61] They were also occasions for interaction between the students and the Scandinavian delegates, for example at "Nordic dinner parties" arranged in Genevan summer evenings where all delegates, together with diplomats and officials from the institutions were present. All this contributed to make the students come back to Scandinavia with insight in the workings of the institutions and full of Nordic experiences. Many students carried on the torch by writing in newspapers and periodicals, making public talks for local educational associations, and some also launched initiatives such as annual Nordic study weeks, which made use of the folk high school networks and often could boast lecturers representing both the political and academic elite. Some students were inspired to take part in other internationalist programmes, like the Swede Karl Ekblom. Rich on the experience from the Nordic folk high school, he regretted how "remarkably" removed other Genevan summer schools seemed to be from the "peace efforts of the labour movement and the social injustices in the world," suggesting how this was a natural reflection of the social composition of participants in such initiatives.[62] In this respect, he contended, the Scandinavians were truly pioneers.

The students' practical introduction to international life followed a fixed path. They first met the Nordic language community in the pre-school programmes organised at folk high schools in southern Scandinavia. The school itself was no permanent place, taught as it was in a combination of correspondence courses, study circles, lectures, field trips, and study visits. More precisely, it operated as a temporary travelling party around Europe, with only two fixed points on its map, Geneva and Pontigny. On the way to Switzerland the students met Continent's ports, landscapes, towns and rivers. After intensive study weeks at the institutions the school relocated to Pontigny for a quieter atmosphere of study, to digest impressions before the trip home. In a sense, the school's structure was built around a logic were the students first became Nordists before they could become internationalists; this was both a linguistic and spatial lesson.

59 Sandås, (July 24, 1939).

60 O-l., (June 22, 1935).

61 Pauli Kettunen, "The ILO as a Forum for Developing and Demonstrating a Nordic Model," in *Globalizing Social Rights. The International Labour Organization and Beyond*, ed. Sandrine Kott and Joëlle Droux (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 213–14.

62 Karl Ekblom, "Uppfostran till en internationell värld," *Mellanfolkligt samarbete* 7, 1934, 267–68.

A school for Europe's democratic youth

The end of what Zara Steiner calls "the hinge years," with the Nazi seizure of power and following withdrawal of Germany from the League along with the spread of economic crisis in continental Europe changed European political geography.[63] In this new political map of Europe, new centres emerged, linked by their democratic systems: England, France, the Benelux, the Nordic countries, Czechoslovakia. It was no coincidence if a book written by the French journalist and activist Pierre Paraf published in 1935 bore the title *Clartés d'Europe*; the Frenchman visited and compared the Third Republic to the Czech "republic of philosophers" and the Scandinavian "lands where liberty is preserved."[64] While Paraf was soon followed by other continental observers interested in studying at close hand the evolution of the Nordic democracies, the European situation also led the Nordic folk high school more directly into contact with new milieus on the Continent.[65] "As the decade dragged on," writes Sluga, "the League of Nations was less and less at the center of influential internationalist initiatives."[66] With the failure of the League, new arenas for internationalism appeared across democratic Europe.

One such arena was Paul Desjardins' Pontigny. The French philosopher had at the beginning of the century bought a medieval Cistercian abbey in Burgundy, where he created the *Décades de Pontigny*—ten-day seminars for European intellectuals that made it a key site for transnational exchange. From the mid-1930s, Pontigny's activities took a marked political and social turn, in "defence of a humanism under threat" in the words of historian François Chaubet.[67] The repercussions of the economic crisis, the German aggressions, and the fascist threat in France all contributed to constitute what Chaubet describes as a Damascene moment for Desjardins. The abbey thus became a meeting place for European socialists, housing importantly the First and Third International Plan Conferences in 1934 and 1937, where a range of leading European theoreticians assembled to discuss Hendrik de Man's ideas about planism.[68] Following Desjardin's turn towards the workers' organisations, other international activities came to be organised at Pontigny, e.g. the summer courses of the Amsterdam International, as well as workers' study weeks organised by the French General Confederation of Labour (CGT).

In 1935 Backlund encountered Desjardins, and starting that year the Geneva school's programme included complementary study weeks there. The abbey was renowned for its library and study facilities, and they were put to use for the school's

63 Zara Steiner, *The Lights that Failed: European International History 1919–1933*, Oxford University Press: Oxford, 2005.

64 Pierre Paraf, *Clartés d'Europe*, Paris: Editions R.-A. Corrêa, 1935.

65 On the Continental travelogues from Norden in the 1930s see Peter Stadius, "Happy Countries: Appraisals of Interwar Nordic Societies," in *Communicating the North: Media Structures and Images in the Making of the Nordic Region*, ed. Jonas Harvard and Peter Stadius (London: Routledge, 2013).

66 Sluga (2013), 76.

67 François Chaubet, *Paul Desjardins et les Décades de Pontigny* (Paris: Presses universitaires du Septentrion, 2000), 203. The Scandinavian connections are ignored by Chaubet.

68 See Gerd-Rainer Horn, "From 'Radical' to 'Realist:' Hendrik de Man and the International Plan Conferences at Pontigny and Geneva, 1934–1937," *Contemporary European History* 10, no. 2 (2001), 239–65; see also Tommaso Milani's thesis *"Les Belles Années du Plan?" Hendrik de Man and the Reinvention of Western European Socialism, 1914–36 ca.* (PhD diss., London School of Economics and Political Science, 2018), 175–78.

lectures and seminars.[69] In 1937, to give an example from the curriculum, rector Sigurd Juul Andersen taught a class on the transformations of the home and society in the context of technological change and rationalisation, Degerman and Backlund finished courses about the 23d Labour Conference, and Ording lectured about French history from the revolution to the Popular Front.[70] While the days were spent with books, the evenings at Pontigny offered a refined cultural programme, with literature and poetry readings by visiting French writers, as well as French and Nordic song, music and discussions. A student writing back from Pontigny observed that "if the spirits of any of the old abbots hover through the rooms they would undoubtedly be surprised and horrified by modern monastic life."[71]

There were two central aspects of the Scandinavian developments that in particular fascinated Desjardins: the role of popular education through the folk high school movement, and the creation of worker-farmer alliances to counter fascism and fight the economic crisis. Although slightly varying from country to country, these cross-party agreements ensured that social democrats got support for welfare reforms by agreeing to introduce agricultural subsidies to fight the slump on the countryside.[72] Their shared interest in the combination of internationalism, education and peace struggles made Backlund and Desjardins conceive another French–Scandinavian initiative, the meeting between "an old nation" and "the bastions of liberty in the North."[73] The vision of creating a new meeting place for young people from France, Scandinavia and other democracies sought to unite two ideas, as Desjardins wrote, "on the one hand take part in the work of restoring a tattered Europe, on the other to create the transnational school that his Swedish friend dreamed of."[74] The *Amitié enseignante de Pontigny* or *Anti-Babel* would by Backlund be introduced in Scandinavia as "studiekamraterna i Pontigny," and its programme that of "education through comradeship."[75] He presented it as an initiative that drew on the heritage of the folk high schools and the workers' educational associations, and these movements were mobilised to find suitable candidates. In Oslo, it caught the attention of the Department for Romance languages and literature through the philologist Gunnar Høst, engaged as one of the teachers of the Anti-Babel. Observing that this new study course represented opportunities which were "something different than staying at a boarding house and talk to Americans," the professors started to send their students to Pontigny.[76] And similar to the Geneva school's possibilities to make use of the abbey's facilities and cultural activities, the Anti-Babel students were offered a varied programme. The idea was that the students from different countries

69 "Nordisk Folkehøiskole i Genève. Dec. 1937," protocol from board meeting in Stockholm, December 18–19 1937, vol. 1, NFG, ARAB, 2.

70 Ibid.

71 Benjamin Bjørklund, "Moderne klosterliv: Nordisk folkehøiskole i Frankrike," *Bergens Tidende*, August 7, 1937.

72 Hilson, Neunsinger, Vyff and Kristjánsdóttir (2017), 16.

73 Quoted in Sven Backlund, *På jakt efter Europa* (Stockholm: Kooperativa förbundets bokförlag, 1952), 119–20.

74 Quoted in Backlund (1952), 125.

75 Sven Backlund, "Pontigny," undated manuscript, series 3, vol. 1, Manuskript(samling) (MS), ARAB, 2.

76 Magne Skodvin, "Paul Desjardins og nordmennene i Pontigny," in *Fransk i Norge*, ed. Anna-Lisa Amadou et al (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1975), 146–47.

met up in Pontigny to study Europe's problems against the background of local studies of the region's ancient French villages, rich in historical remnants from Romans. The study of contemporary issues included both agricultural facilities in Burgundy and trips to study modern industry in Paris.[77] Moreover, the trips to Paris included visits to Desjardin's debating society *L'Union pour la Verité*.[78]

Through Backlund and Desjardins' collaboration, Pontigny was put on the map of Scandinavian intellectual milieus. During these years of mounting threats against democracy, it continued to represent a form of liberalism revivified by a modern humanist socialism, and was a source of inspiration for one of the period's most ambitious Scandinavian educational projects, the creation of the Norwegian humanistic academy Nansenskolen in 1938. In France Pontigny's activities were part of a sort of renovation of democracy, from theoretical debates on political philosophy to the practical task of helping refugees. The Scandinavian students finding themselves in the midst of all this took an active role in establishing the abbey as a centre for regional coordinating efforts to receive political refugees, notably from Nazi Germany, the Spanish Republic and the International Brigades.[79] The Norwegian student Hans Sandås wrote back about how the encounter with refugees was a deeply unsettling experience: "We've all read the newspapers' depictions of all the horrendous things that these poor people have gone through. We all pity them, of course; but most of us probably don't reflect that deeply about what we hear and read." [80] Meeting women and children, some of them orphans, who had fled fascism was an entirely different thing, and made him wonder, despite all criticism against the League of Nations, what Europe would have looked like without it: "how many refugee camps would we then have seen today?"[81]

Pontigny's opening to the democratic youth of Scandinavia took place within a French context where several groups sought information and cooperation with the Nordic social democracies.[82] At the Paris International Exposition of 1937 the Nordic pavilions were praised in the French centre-left press for their uncompromising democratic positions, presenting progressive counter-images to the monumentalism of the Soviet and German pavilions. The popularity of the Scandinavian pavilions marked the point of departure for an article series from Scandinavia written by the journalist Jules M. Guesde, the half-Norwegian grandson of the socialist leader Jules Guesde. Government mouthpiece *Le Populaire* introduced Guesde's articles as a direct follow-up to coverage of the Exposition, seeking to inform readers in detail about the Scandinavian social realisations.[83] According to the socialist Georges Lefranc, the

77 Backlund, "Pontigny," MS, ARAB, 2.

78 Skodvin (1975), 144.

79 One of these refugees was the German communist Charlotte von Steinbock-Fermor, whom Gabbi Sømme managed to help to Norway in 1939. In Pontigny she met Einar Hirdman, a student at one of the courses taught there. The two later married. This story is told by Yvonne Hirdman in her book *Den röda grevinnan: En europeisk historia* (Stockholm: Ordfront, 2010).

80 Hans Sandås, "Små sluttbemerkninger om Folkehøiskolen i Genève, og litt om de spanske flyktninger," *Sarpsborg Arbeiderblad*, August 15, 1939.

81 Ibid.

82 On the French interest for Sweden in the mid-1930s see Andreas Mørkved Hellenes, *Fabricating Sweden. Studies of Swedish public diplomacy in France from the 1930s to the 1990s* (PhD diss., Sciences Po Paris & University of Oslo, 2019), 49–80.

83 Jules Guesde, "Voyage en pays scandinaves: Au libre et démocratique Danemark," *Le Populaire*, October 11, 1937. A number of appreciative articles by Guesde were published from Denmark, Sweden and Norway over the following weeks.

pavilions had led many French socialists to discover the countries and their achievements.[84] The historian Lefranc, a regular visitor to Pontigny, had a few years earlier been one of the instigators of the CGT's *Institut ouvrier supérieur* (Workers' institute for higher studies) and ran together with his wife Émilie Lefranc the *Centre confédéral d'éducation ouvrière* (CCEO), both of them institutions that grew rapidly with the support of the Popular Front government. Through Backlund, Lefranc got in contact with the Scandinavian counterparts to his French initiative, namely the workers' educational associations. In 1938, Lefranc organised the study trip "La vie scandinave" (Scandinavian life) for students of the CCEO to Denmark and Sweden, spending among other things a week as guests at the ABF's school in Brunnsvik and visiting KF and LO in Stockholm.[85] Backlund again served as an intermediary between Nordic and continental milieus the following year, in the most mediatised episode of French interest in Scandinavian solutions to contemporary challenges during the decade, the so-called French–Swedish meeting in Pontigny.

In search for social peace: French questions and Swedish answers in the abbey

French historian Olivier Dard has shown how during the late interwar years important groups of intellectuals and experts in France were orientated towards foreign countries, traveling to confront their ideas to those of others and observed the foreign experiences sometimes considered models to follow, either finding inspiration in or rejecting them.[86] Many were graduates of the École polytéchnique, and gravitated around recently created institutions for economic policies, groups like *X-Crise* and magazines such as the *Nouveaux Cahiers*, in overlapping networks of reformist trade unionists and reform-minded industrialists and public administrators sharing a strong belief in how technocratic policymaking could establish mechanisms to keep peace. A key concern was to find out how—after the massive strikes and eventual political failure of the Popular Front experience in 1937–38—one could find a "third way" to rejuvenate democracy in order to face the perils of fascism and communism, not least by introducing "industrial" or "social" peace. "Social peace," the *Nouveaux Cahiers*' leading figure Auguste Detoeuf wrote not long after the fall of the Popular Front, citing the evolution in Scandinavia, was the best way to assure "social progress." One of his close collaborators, the engineer Paul Planus, went to Sweden and wrote a study of labour relations and the Swedish way to social peace.[87] On Backlund's initiative and with Desjardins' approval, the *Nouveaux Cahiers* invited the leadership of LO and their counterparts in the SAF to a three-day seminar at Pontigny in June 1938.

In a letter to the LO, Detoeuf stated that he had read about the "state of social relations in Sweden" and concluded that it would be highly desirable for France to go through a similar development.[88] He therefore wanted Swedish representatives

84 Georges Lefranc, preface to *Visite aux Ouvriers Scandinaves*, by Georges Albertini (Paris: Conférences de l'Institut supérieur ouvrier, 1938), 3.

85 The CCEO aired radio lectures about social Sweden and published a more general introduction to Scandinavia written by one of the participants, see Albertini (1938).

86 Olivier Dard, *Le rendez-vous manqué des années 30* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2002), 8.

87 Paul Planus, *Patrons et ouvriers en Suède: vers la paix sociale* (Paris: Plon, 1938).

88 From *Nouveaux Cahiers* to LO, letter dated March 31 1938, series E9A, vol. 21, LO, ARAB, 1.

to come to France to "show by their declarations and their examples the methods used in Sweden."[89] In other words, the main object of the seminar was to present to French industrialists and trade unionists the systematic negotiations between the two parties on the labour market conducted at Saltsjöbaden. In France, the *Nouveaux Cahiers*, together with Backlund and the French–Swedish businessman Rolf Nordling, prepared the meeting. Nordling made it clear to the Swedish invitees that the French did not want to make any presentations, considering that they had little to teach the Swedes on the matter in question while conversely having almost everything to learn from them.[90] In Sweden, SAF and LO produced a compendium defining seven different domains of particular interest within the Swedish developments. This became the basis of the Pontigny meeting and would later be published in its entirety by the *Nouveaux Cahiers*. In seven sessions chaired by Nordling, the Swedes presented their exposés with Backlund translating. Each exposé was followed by long debates where the French participants posed questions to the Swedes. Despite the participants' insistence that the event was no more than an "information meeting," it provoked a violent debate in French newspapers over the relationship between trade unions and employers, not the least as some of the participating syndicalists hinted at supporting a "Scandinavisation" of the French labour market.[91] Detoeuf, in his closing speech, did not hesitate to identify in the road to social peace a mechanism to safeguard European democracy:

> Swedes and Frenchmen, we both need to save our threatened democracies; we need to save all that can be saved of our liberties, all that can be saved of our old and noble civilisation […]. It is an immense service […] that our Swedish friends have given us in this Abbey of Pontigny, one of the spiritual centres of a Europe that will not die.[92]

Meanwhile, in Sweden, the event above all seems to have generated increased understanding for the national importance of the Saltsjöbaden negotiations. Social democratic and bourgeois newspapers alike wrote enthusiastically about the great interest in France for Swedish solutions, and the sentiment spread over the western border.[93] Norwegian labour daily *Arbeiderbladet*, characterising the Swedish delegation as "Nordic missionaries," stated that they had brought sanity to a country in dire need for some.[94] The strength of the encounter as opposed to the regular press reports was that it provided a very concrete stage for a performance of cooperation. Similar to how the Geneva school had been "open for all" and staged discussions between

89 Ibid.

90 From Nordling to Lindbergh (sic), letter dated May 31 1938, E9A, vol. 21, LO, ARAB.

91 C.-A. Bolander, "Svensk anda triumferar. Samförstånd och kamratlighet i Pontigny," *Dagens Nyheter*, June 27, 1938.

92 "Discours de M. Detoeuf au déjeuner de clôture du Congrès de Pontigny," speech dated June 29 1938, series F51H, vol. 4, Svenska arbetsgivareföreningens arkiv (SAF), Centre for Business History (CBH), 6.

93 C.-A. Bolander, "Svensk-fransk arbetardebatt. Ett Sigtuna i Pontigny," *Dagens Nyheter*, June 26, 1938; H. H-th., "Franska frågor i mängd vid Pontignymötet," *Svenska Dagbladet*, June 28, 1938; "Pontigny gav impulser till fortsatt samarbete i Frankrike," *Arbetet*, July 4, 1938; "Ny världsartikel?" *Metallarbetaren*, July 6, 1938; "Frankrike studerar svenska arbetsförhållanden," *Aftonbladet*, July 13, 1938.

94 Tor Gjesdal, "Nordiske 'misjonærer' lærer Frankrike folkeskikk i arbeidslivet," *Arbeiderbladet*, July 9, 1938.

students of different social classes and sometimes political convictions, the SAF and LO leaders participating in Pontigny drove home their message all the stronger as a result of their performance of the spirit of compromise—what *Dagens Nyheter*'s Paris correspondent called "the spirit of Saltsjöbaden."[95] This was not only true for the presentations and question-and-answer sessions in the abbey, but also highly present—and noticed by the French—outside of the discussion rooms. One episode in particular was singled out in many reviews. On the last evening of the meeting, participants celebrated at a restaurant in the neighbouring village of Vézelay. The dinner ended with the Swedish guests, LO and SAF men alike, performing sailor songs arm-in-arm. In a way, it staged an anecdote popular in French contemporary writings from Scandinavia, attributed to Lenin:

> If, Lenin declared after having passed through Stockholm, a coup d'état ever was to occur in Sweden, the revolutionary government would start by hosting a dinner for the bourgeois government it had overthrown […]. And the capitalists would hasten to return the courtesy.[96]

The episode reverberated in the press, with those positive to the meeting identifying this as a truly extraordinary example of the spirit of class-transcending compromise and cooperation in Sweden.[97] Conversely, Communist and anarchist press described it in terms of class treason.[98] The image of industrial leaders and workers' representatives toasting happily confirmed, for those positive, the advanced character of social and labour relations in Sweden, while the critics saw this sort of fraternisation as precisely the evidence of the limits of social democratic reformism.

Conclusion: Internationalising the Scandinavian experience

The Pontigny episode marked the peak of the French interest for Scandinavian social democracy in the interwar period. It should be interpreted in the context of the late 1930's many transnational encounters where intellectuals and practitioners of different strands met to discuss ideological renewal to overcome the stalemate of the European liberal democracies, from the Plan conferences to the Colloque Walter Lippmann. By collecting and disseminating up-to-date information about Swedish social and labour market politics as well as generating a number of French reports, the French–Swedish meeting functioned as a workshop that produced not only knowledge about the Swedish solutions to the contemporary crisis in Europe, but also the myth of a reformist paradise in Scandinavia. Importantly, it was made possible by politico-intellectual networks that believed strongly in international ex-

95 C.-A. Bolander, "Svensk anda triumferar. Samförstånd och kamratlighet i Pontigny," *Dagens Nyheter*, June 27, 1938. This is the first occurrence of this term, which during the post-war era would become a central part of both Swedish self-images and frequently referred to in foreign portrayals of the country, that is recorded in Kungliga biblioteket's digitised newspaper collections.

96 Serge de Chessin, *Les Clefs de la Suède* (Paris: Hachette, 1935), 67.

97 See for example Raymond Millet, "La leçon que nous ont apportée syndicalistes et patrons suédois," *Le Temps*, June 20, 1938; Pierre Bost, "Sous les ombrages de Pontigny M. Jouhaux et M. Gignoux parlaient bien amicalement…," *Paris-Soir*, July 5, 1938.

98 Gustave Rodrigues, "Pontigny, centre de trahison ouvrière," *Nouvel Age*, July 4, 1938; Georges Valois, "La charte d'Amiens déchirée," *Nouvel Age*, July 5, 1938; Gaston Bergery, "Scandale à Pontigny," *La Flèche*, July 8, 1938.

change to tackle the menace posed by communism and fascism. In this mix, education had a particular position. Not in the stricter sense of curricula and organised scholarship, but the ambition of learning from shared experiences, and bringing together both the democratic youth and technocratic experts from different social and national backgrounds facing shared problems. It was Desjardins' interest in Nordic popular education and Backlund's capacity to serve as an intermediary between the French and Nordic spheres that brought the Geneva school to Pontigny in the first place, thus establishing it as a site of reference for Scandinavians and making possible the organisation of the meeting. Moreover, Pontigny—as well as Brunnsvik and other workers' folk high schools across Scandinavia—offered possibilities for the individuals and groups involved to create veritable border-crossing encounters.

By bringing out the internationalism of the workers' educational associations, this article has added another layer of understanding to the late interwar period's foreign interest in the Nordic region. This suggests that, in order to identify important moments of transnational contact, it is necessary to look beyond the bilateral relations of party organisations or the works of literary travellers; they were just as much or more a result of the creation of other connections. Moreover, the article has identified political and cultural intermediaries who were not diplomats, and whose international cultural relations were not concerted cultural diplomacy.[99] Perhaps their activities could be seen as a form of transnational democratic activism—whose activities inadvertently yet all the same contributed to increase the reputation of the Nordic region. The "Genevese-Pontagnacian construction of Norden" analysed here thus differs from the Genevese construction analysed by Götz as well as Gram-Skjoldager, Ikonomou and Kahlert, and notably in its shape as a way to social peace and as a democratic stronghold whose experiences could inform the French debates over the future of democracy and capitalism. In this way the example of the Pontigny meeting illustrates the periphery's capacity to achieve "shortcuts to modernity" before the centre.[100] The case reveals an interesting dynamic in this process between culture and politics. While the Nordic students in Pontigny readily accepted their position as "pilgrims" to an ancient site of European culture, the Swedish trade unionists and employers got assigned the role of "Nordic missionaries." Similarly, the unstable relationship between cultural centre and periphery reveals itself in the altering press portrayals of the Pontigny meeting, as they shift between depicting the Swedes as *either* teachers giving lessons *or* as students under examination. The Pontigny episode can in this way be characterised as a socio-political example of what Pascale Casanova in her studies of world literature has referred to as "consecration," namely the elevation of the cultural periphery's innovations by the centre.[101] To be sure, in France the meeting contributed heavily to establish the reference to Swedish labour market solutions in particular and to Swedish reformism in general in the catalogue of political tropes. This opens an interesting path that cannot be explored

99 For a study of a similar dynamic in contemporary official Swedish-international cultural relations see Nikolas Glover and Andreas Mørkved Hellenes, "A 'Swedish Offensive' at the World's Fairs: Advertising, Social Reformism and the Roots of Official Swedish Cultural Diplomacy, 1935–1939," *Contemporary European History* (fc., 2020).

100 Stefan Nygård and Johan Strang, "Facing Asymmetry: Nordic Intellectuals and Center-Periphery Dynamics in European Cultural Space," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 77, no. 1, January (2016), 96.

101 Pascale Casanova, *La république mondiale des lettres* (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 47–61.

here, namely of the impact that meeting had not on French developments, but on the Swedish participants and their ongoing negotiations six months before the Saltsjöbaden deal was sealed. It also raises a question that falls outside of the scope of this article, namely of the effects that the encounter with Geneva and Pontigny had on the some three hundred "Nordic" students that attended the school in the 1930s and their careers before, across and beyond the world war.[102]

The examination of the Geneva school's internationalism as praxis has offered three avenues to the study of socio-spatial transnationalism in Europe during the late interwar period. First the temporary, travelling school's movements makes it possible to trace a contourless cultural-political map of Europe hachured by contemporary social themes and connected to only a few fixed points: Pontigny, Geneva, and a limited number of folk high schools in Scandinavia. In turn this has allowed for an expansion into the social history of Scandinavian internationalism, by enlarging the scope from diplomats and decision-makers to the popular movements, notably the workers' educational associations, the folk high school teachers and students—several of whom later became influential actors in other social spheres. Secondly, this has shown that the Geneva school mobilised Nordism as a cultural strategy to produce a specific Scandinavian and social democratic internationalism, both by observing "international questions" through the optics of "new Nordism," and perhaps just as importantly by educating students through travels, readings and teachings in the Scandinavian languages. The students' discovery of the world centre of Geneva and the heart of European culture at Pontigny was in this way also an encounter with Nordic cooperation as lived reality, and in the extension of this a re-discovery of the fatherland. Their shared experiences of these entangled sites made them Nordists—and internationalists. Thirdly, the study of the school reveals the many entanglements and overlaps both between different transnational groups and activities. If an ambition of the school's operations was the creation of Nordic internationalism, an effect was to internationalise the Scandinavian experience, in the sense of defending democracy against dictatorship by means of first the alliance between the workers of the countryside and the cities and secondly the establishment of social peace.

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102 For the number of students, see Leppänen (2011), 639.

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Between Nordism and Nationalism: The Methods of the Norden Associations' Educational Efforts, 1919–1965

Henrik Åström Elmersjö

Abstract • The Norden Associations (*föreningarna Norden*) were established in 1919 with the intention of promoting understanding and cooperation between the Nordic countries. The definition of "Norden" was negotiated from the very beginning, and Icelandic and Finnish associations were not established until the 1920s. Promoting understanding and cooperation was very much considered an educational effort, and Norden was imagined within educational efforts sponsored by the associations. In this regard, the associations had predecessors in the Nordic schoolteacher meetings that dated back to the age of Scandinavism in the middle of the nineteenth century. The Norden Associations created special school boards in the 1920s in order to both promote a more Nordic approach in some subjects—mainly language, geography, and history—and to promote cooperation between the countries, with the youth as the catalyst for a more Nordistic future. This article looks into how the Norden Associations imagined a Nordic school, in which a Nordic sentiment was established, and how this imagination related to the reality of the nationalistic school and to ideas of broader international cooperation, between which the "Nordic idea" has always been sandwiched. The article shows how the methods used effectively hindered the imagination of Norden and the "Nordic idea" beyond the scope of cooperation between nations.

Keywords • nationalism, Norden Association, interwar era, post-war era, international education

Introduction

The construction of "Norden" as a cultural unit goes back a long way and has been linked to transformations of European concepts of unity and division.[1] From a Western European perspective, an earlier partition between the "barbaric" Northern Europe and the "civilised" Southern Europe transformed into a "barbaric" Eastern Europe and a "civilised" Western Europe in the eighteenth century. In this context, the Nordic countries could be seen as a periphery, separated from the Slavic east and the Germanic middle of Europe. After the Napoleonic Wars, "Norden" started to take shape as a cultural entity, beginning with the newly established union between Norway and Sweden, and eventually also incorporating Denmark, Iceland, and Finland.[2]

1 In this construction "Norden" usually means the Nordic countries of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden including their respective realms and including the more—and sometimes less—autonomous entities such as the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Sápmi, and Åland.

2 Max Engman and Åke Sandström, "Det nya Norden," in *Det nya Norden efter Napoleon*, ed. Max Engman and Åke Sandström (Stockholm: Stockholm University, 2004), 16–18; Uffe Østergaard, "Norden – europæisk eller nordisk?" *Den jyske Historiker* 69–70 (1994), 18; Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth, "Introduction: The Cultural Construction of Norden," in *The Cultural Construction of*

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Ideas of Norden and "Nordicness" (*nordiskhet*) was especially prevalent after World War One, and in the midst of nationalist hegemony economic and cultural cooperation was mostly forwarded, as opposed to a new pan-nordic nationalism.[3] Education was an arena that was deemed especially interesting, in line with new expectations on the youth of the time.[4]

In this article I aim to analyse the way international non-governmental organisations in the Nordic setting—the Norden Associations—envisioned and utilised education as an arena for creating, recreating, and negotiating Nordic identity and cultural cohesion among Nordic youth. I also intend to show how this vision was amended to fit into the nationalistic as well as the international and global sentiment of the interwar period and in what way that changed in the post-war era. I will especially scrutinise the methods used to convey the message, more so than the ideas themselves. The main research question is: how was Norden methodically imagined, re-created, and negotiated in the associations' educational efforts? I will also relate my findings to earlier research regarding the Nordic teacher meetings during the nineteenth century.

Theoretical considerations

In order to get at how the imagination and negotiation of Norden is embedded in the methods utilised to spread the idea of Nordicness through education I will borrow theoretical assumptions from the sociology of scientific knowledge. The concept *methodological nationalism* is a theoretical notion that is mostly utilised in discussions about research within the humanities and the social sciences.[5] This notion clarifies how the nation is re-enacted and reproduced in research through the framing of different studies in national contexts that are not problematised. By enclosing research questions in a national setting, the nation-state becomes the terminal unit of inquiry, thus re-establishing the nation itself as an entity. In this study I intend to utilise parts of this concept, discussing nationalistic influences on methods employed by international organisations empirically. The national outlook of international organisations in the interwar period will therefore be analysed in much the same way as, for example, historiographical research would analyse historians taking the nation for granted in past historical research. This approach will also enable an analysis of potential shifts towards the creation of more "Nordic" methods.

The term "methodological nationalism" was originally coined in the 1970s and then applied in different sociological contexts, mostly when evaluating research in

Norden, ed. Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997), 20. See also Henrik Åström Elmersjö, *Norden, nationen och historien: Perspektiv på föreningarna Nordens historieläroboksrevision 1919–1972* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2013), 47–52.

3 Monika Janfelt, *Att leva i den bästa av världar: Föreningarna Nordens syn på Norden 1919–1933* (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2004), 26–28; Kari Haarder Ekman, *"Mitt hems gränser vidgades:" En studie i den kulturella skandinavismen under 1800-talet* (Göteborg: Makadam, 2010); Ruth Hemstad, *Fra Indian summer til nordisk vinter: Skandinavisk samarbeid, skandinavisme og unioinsuppløsningen* (Oslo: Akademisk publicering, 2008).

4 Henrik Berggren, *Seklets ungdom: Retorik, politik och modernitet 1900–1939* (Stockholm: Tidens förlag 1995).

5 See e.g., Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, "Methodological Nationalism and Beyond: Nation-state Building, Migration, and the Social Sciences," *Global Networks* 2, no. 4 (2002), 301–34.

the social sciences.[6] Wimmer and Glick-Schiller break down methodological nationalism into three very much interrelated modes, the first being ignoring the nationalist forms of inclusion and exclusion as key features of the modern condition. This ignorance is showcased in making the national condition of modern societies invisible. By not paying attention to *how* inclusion and exclusion based on national conceptions have formed modern society, the national conception becomes a given, and the nation-state is re-imagined and re-enacted without any attention being paid to it.[7]

A second mode of methodological nationalism is taking the national frame for granted, naturalising it without any problematisation of the national discourses, histories, or loyalties behind it. This is perhaps the most fundamental mode of methodological nationalism. National frames and entities are taken for granted not only within national societies and in the political arena, but in research and in international cooperation, too. Researchers and even so-called international foundations or societies seldom reflect upon the national framework of community.

The third mode discussed by Wimmer and Glick-Schiller is the territorialisation of the imagination. Paraphrasing Giddens, they conclude that "the web of social life was spun within the container of the national society, and everything extending over its borders was cut off analytically […]."[8]

By employing the concept of methodological nationalism in an analysis of an international project, I hope to be able to find key features of the negotiation regarding the local, the regional, the national, the Nordic, the European, and the global in educational efforts aimed to manoeuvre between these levels in the way that the Norden Associations' work was envisioned. Although there are obvious differences between Nordism and nationalism, not least regarding how implemented the concepts were regarding the organisation of everyday life in the timespan I am researching, they nevertheless are similar ideological concepts—and "imagined communities"[9]—that might be analysed utilising similar concepts. In light of these theoretical considerations, the questions become; how do ignorance, taking for granted, and territorialisation, fit when moving from the national to the Nordic? How did the Norden Associations' methods regarding educational efforts relate to ideas of the nation and ideas of Norden?

Sources

The Norden Associations' have large open archives in Denmark, Finland, Norway, and Sweden, and much of their activities are described in minutes from meetings and other texts deposited in these archives. I have mostly used the Swedish archive

6 See e.g., Herminio Martins, "Time and Theory in Sociology," in *Approaches to Sociology: An Introduction to Major Trends in British Sociology*, ed. John Rex (London: Routledge, 1974), 276; Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1979), 191; Ulrich Beck, "The Cosmopolitan Society and its Enemies," *Theory, Culture & Society* 19, no. 1–2 (2002), 21. The concept is also related to Michael Billig's concept of "banal nationalism;" Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 1995).

7 Wimmer and Glick Schiller (2002), 304.

8 Ibid., 307.

9 Benedict Andersson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983).

for this article, but a great deal of the documents filed in the archive are copies of documents filed in the other Norden Associations' archives. It is therefore possible to map more than just the Swedish association's activity without exploring all the archives.[10] However, some resources from the Norwegian archive and some contemporary printed material published by the Norden Associations (Mainly *Nordens kalender* and *Nordisk tidskrift*) have also been utilised in this analysis.

I have also employed earlier research regarding the Nordic teacher meetings and other research on the connectedness of educational ideas and practices between different contexts in northern Europe. Much of this research shows how ideas conceptualised as Nordic were manifested in discourses regarding education long before the Norden Associations started their activities, which makes this research useful for the purposes of this article.

Nordism in the beginning of the twentieth century

There are weak but clear connections between the *Nordism* of the twentieth century and the *Scandinavism* of the nineteenth century. Proponents of Scandinavism coveted a political union between Denmark, Norway and Sweden, while the more modern Nordism grew out of a conceived need for cooperation between small, independent states during and after World War One. Even if Scandinavism had a renaissance at the very beginning of the twentieth century, the dissolution of the union between Norway and Sweden basically put an end to the idea of a political union between the Scandinavian countries.[11] The project of Nordism also tended to be a balancing act between national and Nordic identity in a similar manner as the pacifist movements in the interwar period had to balance their internationalism with patriotism.[12]

However, there are many different "Norden" discourses, and they are in diverse ways related to nationalism, international cooperation, and even the white-supremacy movement. Within the conceptualisation of Nordism, there has been a tendency to see "Norden" as a semi-national identity marker, between the European and the national. The Nordic nationalisms also have some common traits, with a focus on the historical figure of "the free peasantry" as a symbol for the national heritage being perhaps the most common.[13] However, the idea of a Nordic heritage is in many ways as much a downplay of the Baltic and European components of the five nations' histories and nature as it is a celebration of the geographical, historical and political fellowship between them.[14]

10 The archive is in a process of moving from the Swedish National Archives (*Riksarkivet*) to the TAM-archives in Stockholm, and the placement of the sources might therefore change.

11 Østergaard (1994), 15–19; Janelt (2004), 26–28; Ekman (2010); Hemstad (2008).

12 See Ingela Nilsson, *Nationalism i fredens tjänst: Svenska skolornas fredsförening, fredsfostran och historieundervisning 1919–1939* (Umeå: Umeå University, 2015); Mona Siegel, *The Moral Disarmament of France: Education, Pacifism, and Patriotism, 1919–1940* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Sandi E. Cooper, *Patriotic Pacifism: Waging War on War in Europe, 1815–1914* (New York: Oxford University, 1991); Jan Kolasa, *International Intellectual Cooperation: The League Experience and the Beginnings of UNESCO* (Wrocław: Polskiej Akademii, 1962).

13 Henrik Stenius, "Nordic Associational Life in a European and an Inter-Nordic Perspective," in *Nordic Associations in a European Perspective*, ed. Risto Alapuro and Henrik Stenius (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2010), 37–40; Nils Kayser Nielsen, *Bonde, stat og hjem: Nordisk demokrati og nationalism – fra pietismen til 2. verdenskrig* (Aarhus: Aarhus universitetsforlag, 2009), 19; Østergaard (1994), 9.

14 See for example Uffe Østergaard, "The History of Europe Seen from the North," *European Review* 14,

The content of a proposed Nordic heritage has been negotiated on different levels. Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish cooperation was more profound at the start of the interwar period. Finland was not seen as a totally unproblematic Nordic country given its very different language and different (recent) history.[15] However, Finland filled an important role in the Nordic community by making the boundary between Norden and Russia more distinct. Both in Finland and in Norway there was also a problematic history of dependency on Denmark and Sweden that further fuelled suspicion towards Nordic cooperation at a very nationalistic time. Focusing on the Nordic heritage in Finland could be interpreted as a focus on the *Swedish* heritage at a time when Finland was just winning its independence.[16] From a Swedish point of view, there might also have been a quest for bringing Finland into the Nordic context in order to make sure that the connection between Finland and Sweden was maintained and that Finland was not brought, or pushed, in a Baltic direction.[17]

The Icelandic Nordicness was perhaps less questioned. However, Iceland had similar problems with the establishment of vivid cultural and political connections to Denmark and Norway, something that could be seen as a re-conquering of Iceland at a time when it was also winning its independence.[18] During the interwar period, Nordists settled on a definition of Norden with boundaries towards the rest of the world drawn at the southern border of Denmark and the eastern border of Finland, demarking Norden as something other than the power of central Europe and the "uncivilised" Russia.[19]

The Norden Associations

The Norden Associations (*föreningarna Norden*) were formed in this context in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden in 1919, in Iceland in 1922, and in Finland in 1924. During World War One, ideas for a Nordic union or federal state were voiced, and conservatives who wanted a more moderate mode of cooperation envisioned a public association for Nordic cooperation with members from all the states that were deemed Nordic. This would mean that a single association with members from all Nordic countries should be formed.

In 1918, a configuration with one association in each of the countries, that is, one Danish, one Norwegian, and one Swedish association started to be projected instead (this configuration also became a reality in 1919). Committees where formed in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden to lay the foundation on which the associations could be formed and to enunciate what their agenda would be. The committee least interested in the more far-reaching models of cooperation, the Norwegian committee,

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no 2 (2006), 288; Bo Stråth, "The Swedish Image of Europe as the Other," in *Europe and the Other and Europe as the Other*, ed. Bo Stråth (Brussels: Peter Lang, 2000).

15 Max Engman, "Är Finland ett nordiskt land?" *Den jyske Historiker* 69–70 (1994), 62–63.

16 Uffe Østergaard, "The Geopolitics of Nordic Identity: From Composite States to Nation States," in *The Cultural Construction of Norden*, ed. Øystein Sørensen and Bo Stråth (Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1997), 44.

17 Jan A. Andersson, *Nordiskt samarbete: Aktörer, idéer och organisering 1919–1953* (Lund: Lund University, 1994).

18 Vagn Wåhlin, "Island, Færøerne, Grønland og det nordiske," *Den jyske Historiker* 69–70 (1994), 42–43.

19 Janfelt (2005), 231–32.

set the agenda by not wanting to be a part of any associational model that had a political union on its programme. The steps taken seem to indicate an effort to unite nationalism and Nordism by accepting what were considered to be distinctive differences between the Nordic nations, and at the same time highlighting some common ground.[20]

Norwegian worries about Swedish subversion against Norwegian independence were not entirely unjustified. In the Swedish debate regarding League of Nations-membership, it was quite clear that Swedish nationalists and conservatives branded Norden as a Swedish domain.[21] All of the associations were formed by elites (academics, politicians, and industrialists) and it would not be until World War Two that members would be recruited on a large scale from all walks of life. In a way, Nordism in the interwar period might have been part of a larger ideological and cultural (male) bourgeois movement.

Federalist ideas arose again during World War Two, but settled back on the cultural cooperation that was already established.[22] The height of the Nordistic sentiment was perhaps reached during the 1960s, before Denmark entered the European Economic Community, and a new interest in European identity and cooperation was established in Norden.[23]

The Norden Associations' educational ideas, activities, and organisation

Already by the beginning of the twentieth century international networks were established within different sciences, the peace movement, and between advocates for professional collaboration on an international stage. In a lot of ways this interest for what was happening in other countries was coupled with both nationalist hegemony and a disciplinarisation process, which also influenced teachers and the educational sciences.[24] When discussing education and internationalisation, especially in the context of (international) non-governmental organisations ((I)NGOs) and other interest groups acting independently from official national or local governments, the interwar period (1919–1939) has been deemed a very important period.[25] After World

20 Monika Janfelt, "Föreningarna Norden mellan nordism och nationalism," in *Mångkulturalitet och folkligt samarbete*, ed. Krister Ståhlberg, Nord 2000:29 (Copenhagen: Nordisk Ministerråd, 2000), 30. See also Christopher S. Browning and Pertti Joenniemi, "From Fratricide to Security Community: Re-Theorising Difference in the Constitution of Nordic Peace," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 16 (2013), 483–513.

21 Torbjörn Norman, "Ansiktet mot öster: Svensk nationalism mot Nationernas förbund," in *Väst möter Öst: Norden och Ryssland genom historien*, ed. Max Engman (Stockholm: Carlssons, 1996), 215–18.

22 Andersson (1994), 59; Janfelt (2005), 68–76. See also Jan Hecker-Stampehl, *Vereinigte Staaten des Nordens: Integrationsideen in Nordeuropa im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (München: Oldenburg, 2011).

23 Lars Hovbakke Sørensen, "Norden som idé og praksis: Den danske Foreningen Nordens rolle som politisk-ideologisk pressionsgruppe 1940–1960," *Historie*, no. 1 (1996), 90–100. See also Svein Olav Hansen, "Foreningerne Norden 1919–1994: Ambisjoner og virklighet," *Den jyske Historiker* 69–70 (1994), 124.

24 Eckhardt Fuchs, "Educational Sciences, Morality and Politics: International Educational Congresses in the Early Twentieth Century," *Paedagogica Historica* 40, no. 5–6, (2004), 757–84.

25 John Boli and George M. Thomas, "INGOs and the Organization of World Culture," in *Constructing World Culture: International Non-Governmental Organizations since 1875*, ed. John Boli and George M. Thomas (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 1999); Akira Iriye, *Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002); Eckhardt Fuchs, "The Creation of New International Networks in Education:

War One a supranational organisation was also founded (the League of Nations) beginning to take international cooperation to a more official level. After World War Two the supranational organisations like Unesco and the Council of Europe took over much of the role of influencing national educational systems in a much more efficient way than had been the case for the League of Nations, even if educational efforts had also been on the agenda for the League.[26] However, there were also important predecessors on the Nordic scene interested in education.

Arenas for educational Nordism predating the Norden Associations

More or less organised Nordic cooperation on the educational scene started already in the nineteenth century. Norway and Sweden were in a union, which encompassed a common monarch and a common foreign and trade policy. Even though school policy was not the same in Norway and Sweden, Merethe Roos have shown that a shared textual culture—that is, public arenas of expression with common norms—regarding schooling formed in the middle of the nineteenth century, especially regarding the connection between the Church and the schools.[27]

In the beginning of the 1860s, initiatives were taken to establish Nordic teacher meetings. Previous research has concluded that the teacher meetings were a consequence of Scandinavism and the rapid development of the elementary school (*folkskola*) in the Nordic countries. A meeting in Copenhagen was planned for 1864, but was cancelled due to the Second Schleswig War.[28] This war also dampened the interest in Scandinavism, but the idea of cultural exchange continued, and the interest for teacher meetings was sustained with the first meeting instead held in Gothenburg in 1870.

These meetings then continued for 100 years, and changed focus multiple times, but in the nineteenth century they were both an arena for the exchange of pedagogical ideas and an arena for the imagination of Norden, perhaps more in the wake of political Scandinavism, heading in the direction of cultural Nordism.[29] According to Håkan Andersson, who has looked into the topics discussed at these meetings up until 1910, they can be characterised as more or less international pedagogical subjects, not really related to Norden or the idea of Nordic culture. The meetings could

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The League of Nations and Educational Organizations in the 1920s," *Paedagogica Historica* 43, no. 2 (2007). See also Henrik Åström Elmersjö, "The Norden Associations and International Efforts to Change History Education, 1919–1970: International Organisations, Education, and Hegemonic Nationalism," *Paedagogica Historica* 51, no. 6 (2015), 727–43.

26 See e.g. Fuchs (2007); Thomas Nygren, "UNESCO and Council of Europe Guidelines, and History Education in Sweden, c. 1960–2002," *Education Inquiry* 2, no. 1 (2011), 37–60; Poul Duedahl, "Selling Mankind: UNESCO and the Invention of Global History," *Journal of World History* 22, no. 1 (2011); Romain Faure, *Netzwerke der Kulturdiplomatie: Die Internationale Schulbuchrevision in Europa, 1945–1989* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2015). See also B. J. Elliott, "The League of Nations Union and History Teaching in England: A Study in Benevolent Bias," *History of Education* 6, no. 2 (1977); Susannah Wright, "Creating Liberal-Internationalists World Citizens: League of Nations Union Junior Branches in English Secondary Schools, 1919–1939." *Paedagogica Historica* 56, no. 3 (2020).

27 Merethe Roos, "Tidlige skoleforbindelser: Svensk-norsk idéutveksling på skolens område rundt midten av det 19. århundre og dannelsen av tekstkulturer over kjølen," *Nordic Journal of Educational History* 5, no. 1 (2018), 3–25.

28 Johan Backholm, "När lärarna blev nordister: Om skandinavism och nordism på de första nordiska skolmötena," *Nordisk tidskrift* no. 6 (1994), 17–27.

29 Ibid.

then be described as an arena for the Nordenisation of the pedagogical culture, rather than as an arena for the dissemination of cultural Nordism. By creating a Nordic arena for the discussion of pedagogical ideas and concepts, the pedagogical culture in some sense broke the national barrier in the same way as the shared textual culture had already done.[30] However, the meetings seems to have been more about the organisational structure of something Nordic than about launching ideas about Nordic identity in schools. In relation to an on-going pedagogical modernisation, these meetings have been described as somewhat restrained; a willingness to change the world through pedagogy might have been there, but those were only to be moderate changes.[31]

The Nordic teacher meetings were not an isolated manifestation of Nordic ideas on the organisational level. They were preceded by Nordic student meetings (1829–1875), the Scandinavian natural sciences meetings (1839–1936), and the Nordic Church meetings (1857–1861). However, these meetings ended in the nineteenth century or in the interwar period, but the teacher meetings continued.[32] During the period between 1870 and World War One, there was also a vibrant "Nordic School Youth Movement" that organised the exchange of ideas between Nordic school youth, where strong links were established between pupil organisations in the Nordic countries.[33]

The interwar period

The overall "working programme" (*arbetsprogram*) that the Swedish Norden Association launched in 1919 focused on "deepening the knowledge about Danish and Norwegian conditions in various fields."[34] In the associations' joint membership journal *Nordens kalender*, a text about the relationship between the Nordic and the national tried to pinpoint what the "national" meant in a Nordic context: "Our own national feelings will only grow more pure and real if they develop a feature of Nordic affinity."[35] The Norwegian minister of foreign affairs, Halvdan Koht, wrote in the same journal a few years later regarding his work as a minister:

> For Norway it might sometimes be natural to cooperate with Sweden and Finland, other times with Denmark or Iceland. […] Each of the countries could always have special interests they need to protect. But most of the time it will have an advantage in standing together with one or more of the other [Nordic countries].[36]

30 Håkan Andersson, "Skola och lärare i nordismens tjänst: De nordiska skolmötena 1870–1910," in *Utbildningshistoria 1989*, ed. Urban Dahlöf, Årsböcker i svensk undervisningshistoria 163 (Uppsala: Föreningen för svensk undervisningshistoria, 1989); Roos (2018).

31 Joakim Landahl, "Det nordiska skolmötet som utbildningspolitisk arena (1870–1970): Ett rumsligt perspektiv på den moderna pedagogikens historia," *Utbildning & Demokrati* 24, no. 3 (2015), 9.

32 Backholm (1994), 18.

33 Björn Norlin, "The Nordic Secondary School Youth Movement: Pupil Exchange in the Era of Educational Modernization, 1870–1914," in *Beyond the Classroom: Studies on Pupils and Informal Schooling Processes in Modern Europe*, ed. Anna Larsson and Björn Norlin (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), 83–102.

34 The programme committee's proposal for a working programme, A:1, Archive of the Swedish Norden Association (ASNA), Swedish National Archives (SNA), 3 (my translation).

35 *Nordens kalender* 1934, 2 (my translation).

36 Halvdan Koht, "Nordisk samarbeid ut-etter," *Nordens kalender* 1936, 9 (my translation).

These two statements showcase the nationalistic base for the kind of Nordic ideas that the associations demonstrated in the interwar period. This also had repercussions for their work in the educational field.

Almost immediately upon their inauguration, the Norden Associations turned to schools and education in order to get their message of Nordic cultural cooperation across to the youth. Of course, they could utilise the teachers' interest in Nordic cooperation underlined by—among other things—the Nordic teacher meetings. The Norden Associations initiated school committees within each association. A manifesto on how the associations were to approach questions related to schools was issued, and the associations tied what they saw as important "school people" to their cause.[37] This might not have been a hard task in the interwar period. International work that did not challenge the commitment to the nation state was often seen as a way to commit to both of the hegemonic ideas of the time—international peace and national prosperity.[38]

School trips were one strategy used by the associations' school committees for the dispersion of Nordicness to Nordic school children. Summer courses for school children that would lead to meetings between children from the different Nordic countries were also on the agenda, as well as different types of financial support for other organisations that worked with internordic meetings and issues, for example, the scouts.[39] In a way these organised meetings took over some of the organisational features of the "Nordic School Youth Movement" that had previously organised similar events for pupils, by pupils.[40]

One way of spreading knowledge about the other countries was through the teaching of each other's languages. Lecturers in the neighbouring countries' languages were therefore sponsored in order to make sure that college and university students in the Nordic countries could study each other's languages.[41] Language lecturers sent to foreign countries during the interwar period were a way to transfer knowledge, not only about the language itself, but also about more general cultural ideas regarding the lecturers' countries of origin. Through these lecturers, the nationalistic sentiment—visible in domestic literary teaching—was transferred to other countries as a way of imagining the nation and exporting the nationalistic image.[42]

The associations also had a strong commitment to the textbooks used in Nordic schools, mostly the history textbooks, and launched a limited survey of the textbooks in the 1920s and a mutual almost total survey in 1932–1935. After World War

37 *Föreningen Norden och det nordiska samarbetet* (Stockholm: Föreningen Norden, 1928), 63–69. See also Janfelt (2005), 82–85.

38 Wright (2020), 4. See also Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

39 See e.g. Minutes from the Swedish Association's board meeting, January 10, 1920, A1:1, ASNA, SNA, § 7; Minutes from the Swedish Association's school committee meeting, October 26, 1925, A1:2, ASNA, SNA, 1–3; Minutes from the Swedish Association's board meeting, November 18, 1932, ASNA, SNA, §5; *Norden: Förening i Finland för nordiskt samarbete 1924–1934* (Helsinki: Föreningen Norden, 1934), 48.

40 Norlin (2014), 99–100.

41 *Norden: Förening i Finland för nordiskt samarbete 1924–1934* (Helskinki: Föreningen Norden, 1934), 24.

42 See e.g., Andreas Åkerlund, "Ambassadors of the Swedish Nation: National Images in the Teaching of the Swedish Lecturers in Germany 1918–1945," *Paedagogica Historica* 51, no. 5 (2015), 595–613.

Two, this mutual textbook revision was made continuous with national commissions of experts overseeing the textbook production in the Nordic states.[43]

Most attention in the interwar period was given to the teachers in elementary school, who were seen as the associations' apostles.[44] In relation to the work with textbooks, one of the members of the Norwegian commission of experts in the history textbook revision commented that "the history *teacher* means more than the history *textbook* [for the diffusion of Nordic sentiment]."[45] Courses for teachers and exchange programmes were initiated by the school committees, and these venues seemingly functioned as arenas for the dispersal of ideas about Norden directed towards the teachers in the Nordic countries. However, as with the Nordic teacher meetings in the nineteenth century, less attention was given to the Nordic idea, and more to the meetings themselves, with hopes of learning about each other:

> Regarding *the youth*, the [Swedish school-] committee reckon that summer courses should be held in a Swedish town, where conditions are favourable, with school children from *one* other Nordic country, with an agenda in accordance with the courses for German children in Sweden, that was successfully realised last summer […].[46]

In this case, emphasis is clearly on how to organise the summer courses, and nothing is said about the ideas that are to be conveyed. It is even compared to courses held for children outside the sphere of Nordic cooperation and affinity. The courses for German children (not organised by the Norden Association)—which was to be copied—was most likely general courses about Swedish culture and language, and not about Nordic cooperation and affinity. The emphasis on having children from only one other Nordic country probably directed the proposed courses towards bilateral information on national culture and language, rather than towards any Nordic idea or sentiment.

A lot of attention was focused on informing pupils in Nordic schools about the other Nordic countries, and the teachers were given the role of mediator. However, in the interwar period there was some concern regarding the teachers' own ability to present a true representation of the other Nordic countries. One early example of this was the Norwegian association's commitment to lend 50 diapositive slides and a complete written lecture about Norway to schools in Stockholm. The idea was that the Swedish teachers could "use this lecture when showing the pictures."[47] An image of Norway would be transmitted in a complete package where Norwegians wrote about Norway, and Swedish teachers were only the medium to convey a pre-written

43 The textbook revision has been discussed elsewhere: Elmersjö (2013); (2015); Henrik Åström Elmersjö, "Negotiating Norden: Nordic Historians Revising History Textbooks, 1920–1970," in *Making Nordic Historiography: Connections, Tensions & Methodology, 1850–1970*, ed. Pertti Haapala, Marja Jalava and Simon Larsson (New York: Berghahn Books, 2017).

44 Janfelt (2005), 85.

45 Memorandum on Danish Textbooks by Haakon Vigander, August 15, 1932, vol. 194, Archive of the Norwegian Norden Association (ANNA), Norwegian National Archives (NNA), 6 (my translation, original emphasis).

46 Minutes from the Swedish Association's school committee meeting, October 26, 1925, A1:2, ASNA, SNA, 2 (my translation, original emphasis). See also minutes from the Swedish Association's board meeting, January 10, 1920, A1:1, ASNA, SNA, §8; Minutes from the Swedish Association's board meeting, May 20, 1930, ASNA, SNA, §9; Minutes from the Swedish Association's board meeting, November 18, 1932, ASNA, SNA, §6.

47 "P.M. ang. Skolesaker," November 2, 1921, vol. 193, ANNA, NNA, 7 (my translation).

message. The imagination of the Nordic was limited to the imagination of the different countries that made up the region.

The methods utilised in the efforts of the Norden Association directed at schools were more or less imbued with nationalist thought, and not with Nordism. Nothing in the organisation of the associations' activities seems to be rooted in any idea starting with a common Nordic viewpoint. Instead, activities seem to start in the differences, in learning about each other *as* something different. This led towards an imagination of Norden limited in territorial and cultural scope. Nordicness was not imagined as an idea separate from the nations; it was imagined as the sum of the nations.

Territorialisation was definitely a part of this imagination, not seeing the entire region as one, but as a puzzle made up of five territorial pieces, which meant that no strings of the cultural web were really allowed to cross the border. Students were not supposed to learn about a common social web, but more about the webs of the other Nordic countries.

However, it seems that most of the imaginations of Norden was nationalised by taking the nation for granted, by not evoking a common Nordicness as the starting point for cooperation, and by not even trying to establish this common viewpoint. Even if the inclusion and exclusion within the national framework was not discussed at all, it would still be wrong to say that the Norden Associations ignored the nation as an important entity. On the contrary, the associations' texts showcase an awareness of the nation, with the associations themselves being made up mostly of conservative nationalists in the interwar period. However, the question of how to build a Nordic sentiment if the nation is always taken as the point of departure never seems to have been asked. Instead, the Nordic sentiment was built in a way directly linking it to—and departing from—five different national sentiments.

In short, the Norden Associations imagined a Nordic school as five national schools where pupils learned a lot about the other Nordic countries.

The post-war period

The way the associations were rooted in the hegemonic nationalism of the interwar period was commented upon after World War Two by the associations themselves. Even though delegates from the five associations' boards met each year ("the delegates' meeting"), the lack of a truly inter-Nordic arena for the members of the Norden Associations was obvious almost immediately after the war. In an effort to regain some credibility in the debate over internationalism in the wake of European cooperation, and also to develop more official Nordic cooperation within the inter-parliamentary Nordic Council (*Nordiska rådet*), which was established in 1952, the Nordic Congress was founded and had its first meeting in Oslo in 1954.[48] This established a more inter-nordic arena for the Norden Associations, where also educational matters could be discussed.

The reorganisation of the associations continued with the formation of a common umbrella organisation "Norden Associations Federal" (*Föreningarna Nordens Förbund*, FNF), in 1965.[49] This new kind of organisational basis for the associations was

48 *Foreningene Nordens kongress, Oslo 1–2 juli 1954* (Oslo: Foreningen Norden, 1955), 7–8.

49 Jan A. Andersson, *Idé och verklighet: Föreningarna Norden genom 70 år* (Stockholm: Föreningen Norden, 1991), 91.

in a way forced by the new debates on international cooperation in the post-war era. This could be considered a less nationally territorialised conceptualisation of Nordic cooperation. Further evidence of this was some new regional activities initiated by the associations, for example in the Cap of the North, especially in the Torne Valley, and the Norden Associations were engaged in the conferences held both in Northern Sweden and Finland, and in western Sweden and eastern Norway, regarding cooperation on the local level between municipalities on both sides of the border.[50]

This way of conceptualising Norden at the organisational level in the post-war period also had consequences for the associations' ideas about education. At the first Nordic congress in Oslo in 1954, there was a lecture and a debate regarding Nordic languages in Nordic schools. The focus on making sure that pupils learned something about the other Nordic countries and their languages seems to have still been focused upon.[51] One interesting point that had come up in meetings between the boards of the Norden Associations in the last years of the 1940s was that the syllabi for Nordic languages should be the same in each of the countries.[52] This further points in the direction of less nationalistic methodical features of the Nordic cooperation in the educational field.

While the revision of history textbooks was on-going, attention was also turned towards geography textbooks. In 1948, the idea—which was forwarded by the Finnish association already in 1938—was discussed in more detail. What was especially problematic for the Nordic interest of the Norden Associations was that the Nordic region was not described as a region in many geography textbooks: "It would be of the utmost importance that the Nordic countries be treated together in one section as a kind of unit, so that it is not so, as currently is the case, that Finland is attributed to Eastern Europe and Denmark to Central Europe."[53] The commission of experts on geography textbooks did not amass a lot of activity and fell into dormancy in the 1950s after what was described as an intense couple of years between the end of the 1940s and the beginning of the 1950s.[54] Still, their activity is especially interesting for what it can say about the negotiation over how Norden was imagined, and could be imagined. The geography discussions are interesting because they not only focused on how the Nordic countries were wrongfully described, but also paid—at least some—attention to Nordicness itself and the perceived boundaries of Norden.[55]

Teacher meetings continued to be held, as well as shorter teacher exchanges. In the post-war era students of different ages were also sent on study trips to their neighbouring countries at the expense of the Norden Associations.[56] During the post-war

50 Ibid., 95.

51 Ibid., 32–56.

52 Ibid., 41.

53 Minutes from the meeting in the Internordic commission of experts regarding geography textbooks, April 19, 1948, vol. 196, ANNA, NNA, § 3 (my translation).

54 Letter from Veikko Karsma (the Finnish association) to all Norden Associations, December 8, 1966, vol. 198, ANNA, NNA, 1–3.

55 Minutes from the meeting in the Internordic commission of experts regarding geography textbooks, April 19, 1948, vol. 196, ANNA, NNA, § 3.

56 For descriptions of activities see e.g. *Nordisk tidskrift* 1948, 282; *Nordisk tidskrift* 1951, 80, 281; *Nordisk tidskrift* 1954, 57–59, 124–25, 270–71; *Nordisk tidskrift* 1958, 57, 131–33, 340, 417–18, 472; *Nordisk tidskrift* 1960, 66–68, 493–97.

era most of the teacher meetings were directed towards teachers of specific subjects such as geography, history, and social studies. These meetings also took a different turn where, for example, the Nordic perspective itself was fought for and "the idea of Nordism" and "international understanding" was specifically addressed.[57] In the post-war era a lot of attention in many school subjects was directed away from not only the national situation, but also away from the Nordic perspective, and more attention was given to the European and global perspectives. At least that was what the representatives of the associations had seen and they saw it as a problem.[58] Meanwhile, the school trips directed at students were still focused towards learning about "the other" nationalities, rather than learning about an inclusive Nordic youth.[59] The methods established in the interwar period were still in effect, even though Nordism had been clearly challenged by a new supranationalistic discourse.

A tendency towards a more "organised Nordism" might be visible in the efforts of the Norden Associations in the wake of World War Two. They were more or less forced to take a more global, or at least European, international stand—with more focus on Norden itself and less on the nations that made up Norden—in order to stay relevant in a world that took a big turn towards supranational cooperation.

The nation was certainly still taken for granted, but on the level of territorialisation there was a small but noticeable shift towards Nordic territorialisation in the post-war era when compared to the interwar era. Still, no common viewpoint was really established, which in part could be a consequence of organisational ignorance. Paradoxically, while the nationalistic spokespersons of the interwar era did not ignore the nation, but in a way actively promoted national solutions to methods of cooperation, the—perhaps—less nationalistic spokespersons and board members of the post-war era did not really see how their inherited methods were imbued with national thought, as a consequence of ignoring the national condition of the societies which they were trying to change.

Conclusion

During the pre-war era, methods and organising principles for Nordic cooperation were established within a nationalistic logic. Cooperation and the dispersal of Nordistic ideas were established on different levels, from the local to the Nordic. Björn Norlin has also shown that these levels of organisational geographies that set the dispersal of Nordistic ideas in a context of local, regional, national, and Nordic cooperation on seemingly apolitical subjects were also at the centre of the Nordic youth movement in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century.[60] A lot of the organisational frames for cooperation in the educational arena were established around the nation as the basis, with educational policy becoming more and more national in the late nineteenth century. However, local and regional organisational features were also evident, and these levels set boundaries for Nordic cooperation.

57 See e.g. Nordic study course for teacher students and younger teachers, August 7–13, 1960, vol. 202, ANNA, NNA.

58 See e.g. Preliminary programme for Nordic history teacher course in Sigtuna, August 3–8, 1952, F10A:1, ASNA, SNA; Studyseminar on textbooks on Nordic history at Elingaard, June 30–July 5, 1958, F10A:1, ASNA, SNA.

59 See e.g. Arne F. Andersson, "Vår skolreseverksamhet," *Nordens tidning* 9 no. 1 (1951), 3–5.

60 Norlin (2014), 101.

Even if the idea was to disseminate Nordistic ideas, all Nordic endeavours had to rely on national organisations.

For ideological reasons, based in nationalism, the Norden Associations adopted a very nationally framed organisational foundation, with one association for each of the Nordic nations. During the interwar period this really showed in the methods utilised by the Norden Associations within the educational field. The Nordic idea was mostly circulated without any articulated meaning of the word Norden. Instead knowledge about the other Nordic nations was established as the most important method to make the Nordic youth more supportive of the Nordistic cause, without any real manifestation of what the Nordistic cause really was.

During the post-war era, other more internationally oriented supranational organisations (EEC, UN, Council of Europe, etc.) were established, and the Norden Associations followed suit in many respects, for example, by creating the "Norden Associations Federal." The methods linked to education also tended to be more based in ideas of Norden as a whole, for example, by taking a stand for a Nordic perspective at a time when European and global perspectives threatened to wedge Norden out of education, going directly from national to European contexts, and skipping the Nordic countries as a cohesive entity.

I have discussed these changes in relation to some concepts derived from methodological nationalism. The organisation of political power since the French Revolution has on a large scale been connected to the nation and therefore had much of its organisational frames ready to be taken for granted. Nordists might have felt the same about Norden, with preconceptions that, for them, made Norden something that could be taken for granted, but at the same time they obviously knew they had to "sell" the idea of Norden to the public, which was the idea behind utilising educational arenas for the Nordic cause.

By breaking down what comprises methodological nationalism in social research—ignorance, taking for granted, and territorialisation—the concept might lend itself to shed some light upon how organisations like the Norden Associations were able to (or not able to) utilise education to circulate ideas about identities beyond the nation. For example, Norden seems to have never been taken for granted the way the nation was. There was probably (and still is) some sense of what Norden is among the general public in the Nordic countries, but it is not imagined as deeply and profound as the nation. As Benedict Anderson observed, the nation is imagined as both special and universal in that everyone belongs to (or should belong to) a nation, but all nations are also unique in that, for example, the Danish nation is like no other nation.[61] Not everyone belongs to a regional, semi-supranational entity like Norden, and it needs to be explained, exactly because it is not a nation. Nordism goes out of its way to declare that it consists of independent sovereign nations all having something in common.

It is regarding territorialisation that Nordism might be more easily understood. The "new" territorialisation that consisted of a definition of a geographical region and its relation to other regions was more or less dependent on the concept of "levels." Building from the local and regional levels, where for instance cooperation in regions overlapping national boundaries was supported by the associations, Nordists tried to

61 Anderson (1983), 5.

establish an educational Nordic level between the national and the European. This work was especially visible in the post-war era through the associations' work with geography and history textbooks. However, even in this respect there seems to be a conscious tenacity to imagine a new kind of territorialisation, with clear intentions.

There had been clear ideological reasons for making sure Nordic cooperation was based in the supremacy of nations during the interwar period. The organisational structures established in this period were then maintained—mostly through what Wimmer and Glick-Schiller would call ignorance—during the post-war era, when the ideological reasons for upholding a strong nationalist sentiment were weakened, in favour of Nordic territorialisation. The establishment of a Nordic sentiment was effectively hindered by organisational structures based in a perceived natural principality of nations, which ultimately trumped any transnational idea.

In short, Norden was not taken for granted, the way the nations were, and while there was a tendency to try to territorialise Norden, these efforts were accompanied by ignoring the national condition of the Nordic countries, and the national condition of the cooperation itself. By not exploring this national condition, and what it might mean for Nordism, the Norden Associations continued to re-enact national frames, not least in the way they organised their educational efforts.

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Adelskap forplikter: Norges deltakelse i Unescos skoleforsøk 1953–1959

Christian Sæle

Abstract • **Noblesse Oblige: Norway's Participation in Unesco's Educational Experimental Program 1953–1959**. In 1953, Unesco initiated a teaching experiment project, "Co-ordinated Experimental Activities in Schools of Member States of UNESCO," with object to develop an effective and coherent, cross-national "education for peace." Norway was one of 15 countries that accepted the invitation, and put great effort into the project on a national level throughout the 1950's. Where earlier research has focused on the hands-on implementation of the experiments, this article targets the background and motivation for the Norwegian participation. By focusing on key participants and organizational structures framing the experiments, the article argues that the Norwegian efforts to a significant extent should be seen as part of a broader Norwegian policy towards building cultural relations with other countries. An overall ambition for this policy was to promote the Norwegian educational system as an expression of a particular Norwegian democratic and peace building tradition. This also reflected a self-image that resulted in much of a *noblesse-oblige*-approach towards Unesco, where Norway, together with its Nordic counterparts, felt obligated to offer their assistance.

Keywords • associated schools project, Unesco, education for peace [fredsundervisning], cultural relations [kulturelle relasjoner], nordic cooperation [nordisk samarbeid]

Innledning

Unesco ble etablert i 1946 med mål om å arbeide for fred og mellomfolkelig forståelse gjennom å fremme internasjonalt samarbeid.[1] Skole og utdanning var fra starten av et sentralt satsingsfelt. De første årene tok dette arbeidet grovt sett to retninger – en mot revisjon av lærebøker, særlig i historie, og en mot seminarer og konferanser for lærere, skolefolk og ulike fageksperter.[2] De store ambisjonene bak lærebokrevisjonen viste seg imidlertid å være vanskelig å realisere, og i 1953 kuttet UNESCO bevilgningene til dette arbeidet betydelig.[3] Samtidig ønsket man seg mer håndfaste resultater fra seminar- og konferansevirksomheten.[4]

I 1953 lanserte derfor Unesco skoleforsøksprosjekt *Co-ordinated Experimental Activities in Schools of Member States of UNESCO* (heretter Unesco-forsøkene).

1 Unesco Constiution: Introduction.

2 Christian Sæle, *Den rette historien:* Lærebokkritikk som historiepolitisk redskap (Bergen: Universitetet i Bergen, 2013); Unesco, *International Understanding at School: An Account of Progress in Unesco's Associated Schools Project* (Leiden: Unesco, 1965).

3 Perrti Luntinen, "School History Textbook Revision by and under the Auspices of UNESCO, Part 1", *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, no 2 (1988); Sæle (2013), 51–58.

4 Unesco (1965), 11.

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Dette representerte en ny og offensiv strategi fra Unesco, hvor man rettet søkelyset mot undervisningen direkte, i stedet for indirekte via lærere, fageksperter eller lærebøker.[5] Norge var et av 15 medlemsland som takket ja til invitasjonen om å delta, og gikk svært aktivt inn i arbeidet.[6] I 1957 kulminerte det norske engasjementet, og etter at de siste norske forsøkene var fullført i 1959 forlot Norge i praksis prosjektet.[7] Dette hadde da (fra 1957) endret navn til *Associated Schools Project in Education for International Understanding and Co-operation* (ASPRO). Det hadde også endret karakter, mer i retning av et kontaktnettverk for utdanningsinstitusjoner på ulike nivåer. Det var likevel i sterk vekst, og har fortsatt å vokse frem til i dag.[8] Jeg vil i denne artikkelen tematisere bakgrunnen og motivasjonen for det norske engasjementet i Unesco-forsøkene 1953–1959.

Det finnes ikke mye forskning på den innledende fasen av det som i dag heter *Associated Schools Network* (ASPnet). Den forskningen som finnes har ofte hatt praktiske siktemål mot å forbedre og utvikle prosjektet, og har derfor i liten grad vært historisk innrettet. Den er gjerne mer praktisk-pedagogisk orientert, med vekt på det konkrete arbeidet i skoler og lærerkollegier, der spørsmål om organisering, tilrettelegging av undervisning og grad av innflytelse og påvirkning på elevene har stått sentralt.[9] I den grad motivasjon for deltakelse har blitt adressert, har spørsmålene gjerne rettet seg mot grupper av enkeltaktører, som lærere, skoleledere eller elver, hvor svaret jevnt over har vært at deltakelse i prosjektet er motivert av entusiasme for de verdier Unesco representerer, og vilje til å gjøre en innsats for å spre disse verdiene: "a desire for a better world, a will to help create it, and faith in the importance of education in achieving these aims."[10]

For innsikt i prosjektets historiske utvikling, er man i stor grad henvist til Unescos egne rapporter og oppsummeringer.[11] Også her ligger hovedvekten på det konkrete arbeidet rundt organisering og utforming, bundet sammen av en fortelling der

5 Elisabeth Teige, "Kan demokrati læres?," i *Nye stemmer i norsk pedagogisk humanioraforskning*, red. Tone Kvernbekk og Lars Løvlie (Bergen: Fagbokforlaget, 2011a), 179–201.

6 Teige (2011a).

7 På 1980- og 1990-tallet økte igjen den norske interessen, og i toppåret 1995 var 70 norske institusjoner aktive i prosjektet (Unesco, *UNESCO Associated Schools Project (ASP) List of Participating Instiuturions by Region* (Unescodoc 1995)).

8 Fra 15 land og 33 skoler opprinnelig, var det i 1955 20 land og 57 skoler, i 1958 43 land og 186 institusjoner, i 1966: 55 land 510 institusjoner (Unesco 1965). I 1971 ble navnet igjen endret til *Associated Schools Project in Education for International Cooperation and Peace* (ASP), før det i 1998 fikk navnet *Associated Schools Project Network* (forkortet ASPnet). Det offesielle navnet i dag er *Associated Schools Network*, men der man har beholdt akronymet ASPnet. Nettverket samler i dag mer enn 11 000 utdanningsinstitusjoner, fra barnehager til høyere utdanning, fra 182 land. UNESCO Associated Schools Network: Guide for National Coordinators (2018), 4–5.

9 Michele Schweisfurth, "Learning to Live Together: A Review of Unesco's Associated Schools Project Network," *International Review of Education* 51, nr. 2/3 (2005), 219–34; Teige (2011a); Elisabeth Teige, "Citizenship Education and the Rebuilding of Europe after World War II: The Case of Norway," *Virteljahrschrift für Wissenschaftliche Pedagogik*, no. 3 (2011b); Christina Borgen, *Asssociated Schools Project (ASP): En underøkelse av UNESCOs skolenettverk i Norge* (Universitetet i Oslo: Hovedoppgave i Pedagogikk, 1996); Eva Nordland, *Evaluering av de norske Unesco nettverksskolene*, Rapport nr. 2 (Oslo: Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt, Universitetet i Oslo 1990); Johs Sandven, "Elevenes reaksjon på skolens program, arbeidsmetode og arbeidsorden," *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Research* 3, no. 1, (1957a), 181–213.

10 Schweisfurth (2005), 232. Se også Teige (2011a), 185–86.

11 Unesco (1965); Unesco, *"Navigators for peace:" Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) Historical Review 1953–2003*. (Paris: Unesco, 2003).

entusiasme og innsatsvilje for fredssaken ligger til grunn. Det hittil mest koherente forsøket på å gi en samlet historisk beskrivelse av ASPnet, ble utgitt av Unesco ved 50-års jubileet i 2003. Det er symptomatisk hvordan prosjektet her gjennomgående beskrives som et grasrot-initiativ drevet av entusiastiske praktikere, der Unesco og ASPnet fungerer som inspirator og tilrettelegger:

> The scheme started out on a small scale at the grassroots level and driven over five decades, by a growing number of enthusiastic and creative teachers committed to reinforcing the humanistic, cultural, and international dimensions of education in view of world developments.[12]

Den praktisk-pedagogiske organiseringen og tilretteleggingen har også stått i sentrum for det som har vært skrevet om den norske deltakelsen i Unesco-forsøkene på 1950-tallet, og myndighetenes rolle er lite tematisert.[13] Suarez et al. (2009) viser imidlertid at inngang i prosjektet på nasjonalt nivå ofte vel så mye har handlet om å flagge tilhørighet til og interesse for verdensfellesskapet og de verdier Unesco representerer, det de kaller "symbolic affirmation of world community, international understandig and human rights", som engasjement og begeistring for disse verdiene i seg selv.[14] Vi vet at også norske myndigheter var involvert i Unesco-forsøkene, ved å finansiere dem og formelt godkjenne de avvik fra læreplanene som forsøksvirksomheten krevde.[15] Men vi vet lite om hvilke vurderinger som lå til grunn på nasjonalt nivå i denne prosessen.

Jeg vil i denne artikkelen vise hvordan den norske deltakelsen i Unesco-forsøkene ble rammet inn av og bidro i en bredere utenrikspolitisk satsing på å bygge kulturelle relasjoner med utlandet i disse årene. Dette var en satsing som rommet to motiver: Å skape et positivt bilde av Norge i omverdenen og å forebygge konflikt.[16] Å holde frem det norske skole- og utdanningssystemet sto her sentralt.

Etter en kort redegjørelse for Unesco-forsøkenes formål og utbredelse i Norge, vil jeg gjøre rede for relevante forskningsperspektiver på internasjonalt kultursamarbeid i perioden, og hvordan disse informerer min egen analyse. Jeg vil deretter diskutere hvordan Unesco-forsøkene sto i forhold til tidligere forskning på arbeidet med å bygge kulturelle relasjoner med omverdenen, der *Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem med utlandet* sto sentralt.[17] Etter det vil jeg gå særlig inn på to ledende aktører i forsøkene, og studere hvilke motiver de hadde med seg inn i arbeidet. Dette er leder for den norske forsøkskomiteen, Haakon Vigander, og ekspedisjonssjef for skoleavdelingen i Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartementet (KUD) Einar Boyesen.

12 Unesco (1965); Unesco (2003), 5.

13 Teige (2011a); Teige (2011b).

14 David F. Suárez et al., "UNESCO and the Associated Schools Project: Symbolic Affirmation of World Community, International Understanding, and Human Rights" *Sociology of Education* 82, no. 3 (2009), 197–216.

15 Teige (2011a); Josef Faaland og Haakon Vigander, *Tre års undervisningsforsøk etter Unesco-tiltak* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1960).

16 Svein Ivar Angell, "Norge og omverdenen 1945–2010: Fra kulturpleje til omdømmeforvaltning," Økonomi & Politik, nr. 4 (2014), 26–36; Svein Ivar Angell, "The Office for Cultural Relations: Representing Norway in the Post-War Period," i *Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries: Representing the Peripery*, red. Louis Clerc, Nikolas Glover og Paul Jordan (Leiden/Boston: Brill Nijhoff, 2015).

17 Angell (2014); Angell (2015).

"Undervisningsforsøk etter Unesco-tiltak"

En grunnleggende utfordring på skolefeltet, slik Unesco så det, var fraværet av sikker, forskningsbasert kunnskap om hvordan en undervisning for fred og internasjonal forståelse kunne innrettes på en mest mulig effektiv og hensiktsmessig måte.[18] Unesco-forsøkene var ment å frembringe slik kunnskap. Dette skulle skje ved at ulike land gjennomførte sammenlignbare undervisningsforsøk etter Unescos anvisninger, der resultatene skulle evalueres og analyseres på en vitenskapelig forsvarlig måte. Målet var å utvikle klare retningslinjer for hvordan en slik undervisning objektivt sett burde legges opp, uavhengig av nasjonal kontekst. Tanken var at helhetlige og velprøvde anvisninger, både når det gjaldt innhold og undervisningsmetoder, lettere ville kunne spres internasjonalt.

I invitasjonen som gikk ut til medlemslandene i 1953, hadde Unesco derfor store ambisjoner for prosjektet. Blant annet skulle det omfatte hele skolers virksomhet, inkludert aktiviteter utover skoletid, ikke bare enkeltfag og klasser. Men etter innspill fra dem som takket ja, ble prosjektet noe nedskalert, og hvert enkelt land fikk noe større handlingsrom.[19] Man samlet seg om at forsøkene tematisk skulle dreie seg om ett eller flere av de tre temaene kvinners rettigheter, andre land og kulturer, eller FN-systemet og FNs arbeid for menneskeretter og fred. Muligheter for sammenligning på tvers av land ble likevel understreket. Det forble derfor et krav at forsøkene skulle foregå på "secondary school level", og at forsøkene skulle gjøres til gjenstand for en evaluering i form av "objective tests of knowledge and attitude".[20]

I Norge var det den norske nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco som mottok invitasjonen, og kalte sammen til et planleggingsmøte hvor representanter for så å si alle med interesse for den høyere skole[21] var representert: Utdanningsrådet, Pedagogisk seminar, Lektorlaget, Kirke- og Utdanningsdepartementet, representanter fra ulike skoler, samt Pedagogisk Forskningsinstitutt.[22] Det ble satt ned en forsøkskomite som skulle lede planleggingen og det videre arbeidet. Tre Oslo-skoler ble innlemmet i forsøkene: Fagerborg gymnas, Frogner skole og Oslo Katedralskole.[23]

Blant deltakerne kom det til uttrykk en klar forestilling om at det var viktig at Norge bidro, ja at prosjektets suksess kunne vise seg å være avhengig av norsk deltakelse. En av de deltakende lektorene, Finn Havnevik fra Oslo Katedralskole, hevdet at "saken er så viktig at jeg ikke synes vi skal ta noen sjanse på at forsøket mislykkes av

18 Unesco: *Education for Living in a World Community: Co-ordinated Experimental Activities in Schools of Member States; General Preliminary Information*, ED/127 (Unesco 1953).

19 Unesco (1965), 12–13; Teige (2011a), 185–86.

20 Referat, Komitéen for koordinerte forsök i skolen, Möte på Frogner skole, 22 august 1955, s. 2. (NKOM 1953–1955).

21 Den høyere skole (eg. Den høyere allmennskole) ble etter lov av 1935 en fellesbetegnelse på realskole og gymnas, som fulgte etter syvårig folkeskole. Fra 1964 gikk betegnelsen ut av bruk, som resultat av den nye folkeskoleloven av 1959. Denne åpnet for niårig enhetsskole, fulgt av treårig gymnas.

22 Report on the activities in Norway till January 1st 1955, rapport fra den norske nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco til Unesco (NKOM 1953–1955); Teige (2011a), 187.

23 Når disse tre skolene fra et såpass snevert geografisk område ble valgt, var det delvis et uttrykk for hvor den skolepolitiske eliten befant seg, men hadde også med ressurser å gjøre. Overfor Utenriksdepartementet, beklaget Nasjonalkommisjonen i 1956 at ressurssituasjonen gjorde at "det har ikke vært mulig å drive nevneverdig virksomhet utover Oslo." (Stortingsmelding nr. 17 (1956), *Om Norges deltakelse i De Forente Nasjoners Organisasjon for Undervisning, Vitenskap og Kultur (UNESCO)*), 2.

mangel på interesse og initiativ og oppfinnsomhet hos oss."[24] Men det var også klare oppfatninger om at prosjektet var viktig i seg selv. Lektor Hans Mohr, også han fra Oslo Katedralskole, og rektor ved Asker gymnas Haakon Holmboe mente "det var på høy tid at det gjøres noe for å utnytte den muligheten vi har til gjennom skolen å oppdra den kommende generasjon til større internasjonal forståelse."[25]

Leder for forsøkskomiteen var altså Haakon Vigander, som også selv var deltaker som rektor på Frogner skole. Kirke- og utdanningsdepartementet (KUD) var representert ved ekspedisjonssjef for Skoleavdelingen Einar Boyesen. Det var hans departement som bevilget de nødvendige midler til forsøkene. Sammen med Utdanningsrådet var det også KUD som etter hvert godkjente de forslag til avvik fra læreplanene forsøkene krevde.[26] Pedagogisk Forskningsinstitutt ved Universitetet i Oslo, var representert ved professor og bestyrer Johs. Sandven, som etter hvert også fikk ansvar for evalueringen.

Vigander og forsøkskomiteen gikk i gang med planlegging av forsøkene, og skoleåret 1955–56 ble det ved de tre skolene opprettet egne forsøksklasser. Disse fikk eget pensum og egne undervisningsopplegg i norsk, fransk, engelsk og historie, innrettet mot temaene menneskerettigheter og "kvinne-emansipasjonen".[27] I 1957 kom Sandven med sin evaluering, hvor han mente å kunne dokumentere positive effekter av forsøksundervisningen, både i kunnskaper og holdninger, selv om resultatene ikke var helt entydige.[28] En siste runde med forsøk ble foretatt i 1958–1959. Nå var også Asker gymnas og Stabekk skole med, og forsøkene ble denne gang ledet av lektor Josef Faaland fra Stabekk skole. Temaet var internasjonal forståelse. Denne runden av forsøk ble imidlertid "forfulgt av en rekke uhell",[29] og utgivelsen av *Tre års undervisningsforsøk etter UNESCO-tiltak* i 1960, med engelsk utgave i 1962, oppsummerte forsøkene og markerte i praksis avslutningen på det norske engasjementet i prosjektet.[30]

Kulturelle relasjoner mellom forestillinger og bilder

Basert på studier av de nordiske og baltiske land på 1900-tallet, beskriver Clerc og Glover (2015) arbeidet for å bygge internasjonale, kulturelle relasjoner som en vekselvirkning mellom nasjonale selvforståelser og de bilder som finnes av nasjonen internasjonalt. Det er sentralt hvordan disse praksisene aktiverer *forestillinger* (imaginings) nasjoner har om seg selv, i samspill med de *bilder* (images) man mener finnes der ute og som nasjonene søker å skape, foredle eller motarbeide.[31] Å identifisere

24 Her sitert fra Teige (2011a), 186.

25 Ibid.

26 Faaland og Vigander (1960). Se også Den Høgre Skolen 1956, 660ff.

27 For en nærmere beskrivelse av forsøkene, se Den Høgre Skolen 1956, 660ff og 687ff; Faaland og Vigander (1960) og Teige (2011a), 187–99.

28 Sandven (1957a).

29 Faaland og Vigander 1960, 9.

30 Faaland og Vigander (1960); Josef Faaland og Haakon Vigander, *Educational Experiments Carried Out Over a Three-Year Period Under a UNESCO Scheme* (Oslo: Unesco and the Norwegian Government, 1962). I 1960 ble riktignok Eik Lærerskole med i ASPRO, men var den eneste norske institusjonen i nettverket frem til 1980-tallet, da den norske deltakelsen igjen fikk et oppsving.

31 Luis Clerc og Nikolas Glover "Representing Small States in Northern Europe: Between Imagined and Imaged Communities," i *Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries: Representing the Periphery*, red. Louis Clerc, Nikolas Glover og Paul Jordan. (Leiden/Boston: Brill Nijhoff, 2015), 6.

slike forestillinger og bilder vil også stå sentralt i min analyse: Hvilke forestillinger og bilder lå til grunn for det norske arbeidet med å bygge kulturelle relasjoner og hvordan knyttet Unesco-forsøkene seg til disse?

Videre, identifiserer Clerc og Gloover (2015) et "small state tool kit" små stater har til rådighet for å gjøre seg gjeldende i ofte asymmetriske relasjoner overfor større land.[32] Sentralt her er de særlige forutsetningene små nasjoner har for å samle seg om brede, konsensuelle forestillinger om sitt land, som man så arbeider for å projisere. Dette åpner for at enkeltindivider kan spille en særlig fremtredende rolle i disse praksisene, der de kan opptre, og ser seg selv, som helt uproblematiske talspersoner for nasjonen som helhet. En sentral type av slike enkeltaktører er såkalte "foreign relations entrepeneurs", det vil si kosmopolitiske individer med gode språklige ferdigheter, kunnskap om utenlandske samfunn og tilgang til relevante nettverk.[33] I forlengelsen av dette oppstår et utpreget samkvem mellom statlige og ikke-statlige aktører, som stadig befinner seg rundt samme bord og gjerne går inn og ut av roller og posisjoner.

Dette leder til spørsmål mer i retning av organisering og enkeltaktører, som også er viktig for å forstå en eventuell diffusjon av motiver mellom myndigheter og deltakere i forsøkene. Hvordan var Unesco-forsøkene rammet inn organisatorisk, og hvordan bidro enkeltaktører i dette arbeidet? Lå det i Unesco-forsøkene et potensiale til å bidra i satsingen på å bygge kulturelle relasjoner, og på hvilken måte?

Kildene til denne undersøkelsen er for det første å finne i arkivet etter den norske nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco, hvor vi får et innblikk i hvilke institusjoner og aktører som var involvert og hvordan de samhandlet.[34] Nasjonalkommisjonen hadde sekretærfunksjon for forsøkskomiteen, og møtereferater og korrespondanse er derfor bevart der. Jeg vil holde denne informasjonen opp mot tidligere forskning på arbeidet med kulturelle relasjoner i perioden. Til en viss grad vil også det materialet forsøksvirksomheten selv etterlot seg, i form av rapporter, pensumlister og undervisningsopplegg være av nytte. Her blir de to enkeltaktørene Haakon Vigander og Einar Boyesen viktig. Gjennom taler de holdt, tekster de skrev og debatter de deltok i og inngikk i, får vi et bilde av deres forestillinger og motivasjoner for å delta i Unesco-forsøkene, både som individer, men også som representanter for de institusjonene og organisasjonene de var en del av.

Unesco-forsøkene og Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem med utlandet

I 1950 vedtok det norske Stortinget å opprette *Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem med utlandet* (heretter Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem) som en avdeling under Utenriksdepartementet, med oppdrag om å forvalte Norges kulturelle relasjoner med andre land. Dette innebar både å drive rent kultursamarbeid og å gjøre Norge kjent i

32 Ibid., 9–12.

33 Ibid., 9. Se også Kristine Kjærsgaard: "A Public Diplomacy Entrepreneur: Danish Ambassador Bodil Begtrup in Iceland, Switzerland and Portugal, 1949–1973," i *Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries: Representing the Peripery* (Leiden/Boston: Brill Nijhoff, 2015), 102–22.

34 Riksarkivet, Den norske Nasjonalkommisjonen for UNESCO, Serie Da, Saksarkiv, Eske 32, Mappe Skoleforsøkene generelt 1953–1955 (NKOM 1953–1955) og Mappe Skoleforsøkene generelt 1956–1959 (NKOM 1956–1959). Takk til Svein Ivar Angell, som har stilt dette kildematerialet til disposisjon for artikkelforfatteren.

omverdenen.[35] Opprettelsen av Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem var, som Unesco, et tidstypisk uttrykk for troen på kultur og opplysning som konfliktforebyggende elementer i internasjonalt samarbeid. Lignende institusjoner ble også satt opp i mange andre europeiske land på samme tid.[36] Som et lite land, så Norge seg også tjent med et internasjonalt klima preget av samarbeid og lavt konfliktnivå.

Det som kjennetegnet det norske selvbildet i denne satsingen, var en forestilling om at det fantes en særegen norsk fredstradisjon, og at Norge var forpliktet til å spille en formidlende og fredsbyggende rolle på verdensscenen.[37] Dette var forestillinger som strakk seg tilbake til begynnelsen av århundret, og er et typisk eksempel på den vekselvirkningen Clerc og Glover (2015) beskriver. Dette kom også tydelig til uttrykk i argumentasjonen for å opprette Kontoret for Kulturelt samkvem:

> Norges omdømme som kulturland er høyt. På en rekke felter – særlig i mellomkrigstiden – har vårt land befestet sitt ry for alltid å stå i forreste rekke i arbeidet med fredelige fremskritt. Ved internasjonale kongresser og på annen vis har Norge hyppig kunnet glede seg over at dets meninger har vært tillagt en betydning som er gått utover det folkets størrelse skulle tilsi. Departementet mener at dette omdømme forplikter til en rasjonell utbygging av vårt kulturelle samkvem med utlandet.[38]

Det ble særlig fremhevet at Norge kunne spille en slik rolle med utgangspunkt i et høyt utviklet utdanningssystem.[39] Selv om Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem formelt sorterte under utenriksdepartementet, overtok derfor avdelingen en rekke oppgaver som tidligere hadde lagt under KUD, som dermed øvet stor innflytelse over arbeidet. Blant annet sto Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem for utgivelsen av tre bøker om det norske utdanningssystemet beregnet på et utenlandsk publikum, mellom 1955 og 1958. Einar Boyesen skrev forordet til den første av dem, mens de to andre ble skrevet av Olav Hove og Ingeborg Lycke, også de høytstående embedsmenn i KUD.[40]

Den norske nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco ble også underlagt Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem. I tråd med Unescos konstitusjon, hadde Stortinget i 1946 opprettet en egen nasjonalkommisjon for Unesco. Den skulle tjene som rådgiver for regjeringen i Unesco-saker, som rådgiver for den norske delegasjonen til Unescos generalkonferanser og som bindeledd mellom Unesco og norske kulturorganisasjoner og

35 Angell (2014); Angell (2015).

36 Nikolas Glover, *National Relations: Public Diplomacy, National Identity and the Swedish Institute 1945–1970* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011); Angell (2014).

37 Angell (2014).

38 Stortingsproposisjon nr. 1 (1950), 13. Se også Angell (2014).

39 Angell (2014); Angell (2015); Ragnhild Eitungjerde Høyvik, "Fram fra skjoldets skygge:" Norsk arbeid med kulturrelasjoner overfor utlandet 1945–1973 (Masteroppgave, Universitetet i Bergen 2014).

40 George M. Wiley, *The Organisation and Administration of the Educational System of Norway* (Oslo: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office for Cultural Relations and Royal Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education, 1955); Olav Hove, *An Outline of Norwegian Education* (Oslo: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office for Cultural Relations and Royal Norwegian Ministry of Church and Education, 1955 – nytt opplag i 1958); Ingeborg Lycke, *Adult Education in Norway* (Oslo: Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office for Cultural Relations, 1957); Svein Ivar Angell, *"The Result of Gradual Development of Democratic Idealism:" Education and Images of Norway in the Post-War Period*, forthcoming.

institusjoner.[41] De første årene eksisterte det ingen egen bevilgning til denne kommisjonen, bortsett fra et mindre beløp fra KUD. Men fra 1950 fikk nasjonalkommisjonen sin egen bevilgning av budsjettet til Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem. Fra 1952 fikk den fikk sitt eget sekretariat, og bevilgningene økte jevnt utover på 1950-tallet.[42] Finansieringen av Unesco-forsøkene kom likevel direkte fra KUD, ekspedert av Einar Boyesen.[43]

Slik lå de organisatoriske rammene til rette for at Unesco-forsøkene skulle innlemmes i det norske arbeidet for å bygge kulturelle relasjoner. Nasjonalkommisjonens arbeid vekslet da også mellom på den ene siden å gjøre Unescos virksomhet kjent i Norge, på den andre siden å gjøre Norge synlig på mange ulike felt overfor Unesco og de nasjonene som befant seg der. Nasjonalkommisjonen var slik en bidragsyter når det gjaldt å promotere norsk kultur og samfunnsliv internasjonalt. En ikke ubetydelig del av kommisjonens ressurser gikk også med til å møte en stor interesse for norsk skole og utdanning, og kommisjonen mottok hvert år en rekke forespørsler fra Unesco om undervisningsspørsmål i Norge.[44] KUD var en viktig bidragsyter i dette arbeidet.[45] Det er grunn til tro at Unesco fra starten også anså Norge som en viktig samarbeidspartner i Unesco-forsøkene.[46]

Det mest sentrale ansvarsområdet for Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem, var de første årene å forvalte utvekslingsavtaler innen høyere utdanning. Stipender ble delt ut til studenter fra andre land som ønsket å studere i Norge, og til norske studenter som ønsket å studere i utlandet. Utvekslingsavtalene var en kanal norske myndigheter for det første brukte aktivt for å skape et positivt bilde av Norge i utlandet, der det var et uttalt mål å gi støtte til studenter man anså særlig skikket til å gi et positivt bilde av Norge i hjemlandet.[47] For det andre var det en kanal for å styrke internasjonaliseringen av norsk forskning og høyere utdanning, særlig overfor Storbritannia og USA.[48] Det var også mot USA at de fleste utvekslingsavtalene var innrettet. Det eksisterte klare forestillinger i Norge om at Norge politisk og kulturelt var særlig kompatible med de liberal-demokratiske verdier USA representerte, og at Norge derfor kunne og burde være en medspiller i å utvikle et slikt politisk prosjekt. Disse liberal-

41 Stortingsmelding nr. 17 (1956), *Om Norges deltakelse i De Forente Nasjoners Organisasjon for Undervisning, Vitenskap og Kultur (UNESCO)*, 1–2.

42 St. meld. nr. 17 (1956), 2; St. meld nr. 78 (1956): *Om virksomheten ved Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem med utlandet 1. juli 1950–30. juni 1956.*, 6–7.

43 Brev fra Det kongelige Kirke- og Undervisningsdepartement, Skoleavdelingen, til Den norske nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco v/rektor Haakon Vigander, Oslo 11. februar 1957, *Forsøk i skolen etter Unesco-planen* (NKOM 1956–1959). Departementet bevilget her kr. 3000,- til "forstsatte forsøk […] etter Unescos plan." Brevet var signert Rolf Bergmann, "for ekspedisjonssjefen". Bergmann var som byråsjef i skoleavdelingen like under Boyesen i departementshierarkiet. Bergmann deltok også på møtene i forsøkskomiteen frem til de ble satt i gang i 1955. (Referat, Den norske Nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco – Komitéen for koordinerte forsök i skolen, Møte på Frogner skole 22. august 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955)).

44 St. meld. 17 (1956), 4.

45 Den norske nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco: Oversikt over virksomheten i tidsrommet 1. november 1953 – 15. april 1955, side 4. (NKOM) Blant annet ble kommisjonen bedt om å bidra til et oppslagsverk over ord og uttrykk som ble brukt i undervisning. KUD utarbeidet den norske delen av verket.

46 Teige (2011a), 186.

47 Angell (2014), 28; Angell (2015), 89.

48 Angell (2014); Angell (2015); Høyvik (2014).

demokratiske verdiene hadde også sterk innflytelse i Unesco, og det har blitt hevdet at Unesco i sine innledende år var en "disseminator of liberal-democratic ideas of […] Anglo-American origin."[49]

I tråd med dette foregikk det i etterkrigstiden også en reorientering av norsk forskning fra franske og tyske tradisjoner mot en anglo-amerikansk tradisjon.[50] Dette skiftet kom også til uttrykk ved ansettelsen av Johs. Sandven som bestyrer for Pedagogisk forskningsinstitutt i 1950. Han representerte en sterkt amerikanskorientert, test-psykologisk tradisjon, og erstattet Helga Eng, som hadde vært langt mer europeisk orientert.[51]

Unesco-forsøkenes kobling mellom skole, forskning og internasjonal orientering passet derfor godt både med de forestillinger og bilder som lå til grunn for norsk kultursamarbeid i disse årene, og den innretning arbeidet i praksis hadde. I tråd med Kontoret for Kulturelt samkvems viktigste portefølje, finansierte også Unesco utvekslingsstipender for aktive deltakere i Unesco-forsøkene, noe Norge benyttet seg av.[52] I 1955 reiste nevnte Finn Havnevik til Unesco House i Paris, hvor han fikk lære om Unesco, besøke deltakende skoler, treffe stipendiater fra andre land, og ble selv bedt om å presentere de norske forsøkene.[53] Etter forespørsel fra Unesco, tok Norge samme år imot fire lærere involvert i prosjektet fra Japan, Colombia, Sveits og Frankrike.[54] Det er illustrerende å se den nære samhandlingen mellom institusjoner og aktører som kom til uttrykk ved dette besøket.

Både Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem, KUD, forsøkskomiteen og nasjonalkommisjonen var alle aktivt involvert i mottakelsen. Det var Haakon Vigander som hadde mottatt forespørselen fra Unesco, og spurte Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem om bistand: "Formannen [Haakon Vigander] hadde snakket med Utenriksdepartementets Kulturkontor som ville hjelpe til med programmet under oppholdet i samarbeid med Kirke og Undervisningsdepartementet ved byråsjef Hove."[55]. Sekretæren for forsøkskomiteen og nasjonalkommisjonen, Liv Hennum, responderte på forespørselen:

> [T]he Office of Cultural Relations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Ecclesiastical Affairs and Education, and the Committee of the National Commission dealing with the Co-ordinated Experimental Activities will do their best to make the visit of the Fellows in Norway as interesting and profitable as possible.[56]

49 F.W. Thue, *In Quest of a Democratic Social Order: The Americanization of Norwegian Social Scholarship 1918–1970* (Oslo: University of Oslo, 2005), sitert fra Angell (2015), 89.

50 Thue (2005); Angell (2015).

51 Kim Helsvig, *Reform og rutine: Kunnskapsdepartementets historie 1945–2017* (Oslo: Pax, 2017), 63, 127ff.

52 *Fellowships for Travel and Study*, Brev fra Unesco Education for International Understanding and Cooperation, Co-ordinated Experimental Activities in Schools of Member States til deltakerlandene, Paris 19 juli 1954, UNESCO/WS/064.93. (NKOM 1953–1955).

53 Brev fra Unesco til Finn Havnevik, 22. juli 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955).

54 Co-ordinated experimental activities in schools of menber states. Report from Norway – November 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955).

55 Referat, Komitéen for koordinerte forsõk i skolen, Möte på Frogner skole, 22. august 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955).

56 Brev fra Liv Hennum, sekretær for den norske nasjonalkomiteen til William D Carter, Head, Exchange of Persons Service, Unesco, 17 August 1955 (Hennum-Carter 1955: NKOM 1953–1955)

Gjestene skulle få besøke forsøksskoler og diskutere med lærerne der, og Hennum foreslo å arrangere møter med "leading personalities in education."[57] Mottakelsen ble holdt som en lunsj på Presseklubben i Oslo, med kanapeer, wienerschnitzel, rødvin og is.[58] Forsøkskomiteen var representert ved Hennum, Vigander og tre lektorer fra deltakende skoler,[59] mens KUD og skoleavdelingen var representert ved byråsjef Rolf Bergmann. Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem tok regningen.[60]

Unescos vekt på at forsøkene skulle være av vitenskapelig karakter, gjenspeilte dessuten et sentralt trekk ved norsk skolepolitikk på denne tiden, nemlig troen på at den den fremvoksende pedagogiske vitenskapen skulle vise vei i skoleutviklingen. Einar Boyesen sto som eksponent for dette.[61] Noe av det første han gjorde etter han tiltrådde stillingen som ekspedisjonssjef i 1938, var å delta i komiteen som utarbeidet den første studieplanen for det da nyopprettede Pedagogiske Forskningsinstitutt (PFI). Her arbeidet han også som sensor og holdt forelesninger i pedagogisk historie gjennom hele sin tid som ekspedisjonssjef.[62] PFI sto således Boyesens hjerte nær, og var tiltenkt en fremskutt posisjon i norsk skoleutvikling. Når Johs Sandven fikk oppgaven med å ivareta prosjektets vitenskapelige profil gjennom en evaluering, var dette derfor ikke bare et uttrykk for at Norge var villig til å bruke sine mest fremstående ressurser på prosjektet. Det var vel så mye en mulighet for å projisere et bilde av norsk skole som moderne og forskningsbasert, noe man innenfor rammen av Unesco-forsøkene hadde all grunn til å tro at ville resonnere godt. Slik var Unesco-forsøkene ikke bare en arena for projisering av den norske skolen som særlig egnet til å bygge fred og internasjonal forståelse, men vel så mye en arena for promotering av norsk pedagogisk vitenskap i seg selv.

Det er imidlertid interessant at Sandven til å begynne med ikke ønsket at verken han selv eller PFI "som sådann" skulle være ansvarlig for evalueringen.[63] På et møte i forsøkskomiteen i 1955, uttrykte han bekymring for at det kunne bli kostbart og ta mye tid, takket nei, og foreslo at heller "en moden student i siste fase av sitt studium kunne gjöre det", eller "en av de deltakende lærere […], enten alene eller i samarbeid med en student."[64] Ingen av de deltakende lærerne, som alle var til stede på møtet, meldte sin interesse, og Haakon Viganders respons var at man fikk søke departementet om midler. Sandven fikk ansvaret for å avklare hvem som skulle gjennomføre evalueringen "innen 4. oktober", en drøy måned etter møtet fant sted.

Det er et åpent spørsmål hvordan det siden gikk til at Sandven selv utførte oppdraget. Som fagmann og forsker innenfor en tradisjon med sterkt objektive idealer, er det ikke til å undres over at han kan ha følt seg beklemt av den utpreget normativt-politiske målsettingen bak Unesco-forsøkene, og det nasjonale markeringsbehovet

57 Hennum-Carter 1955.

58 Brev fra Liv Hennum til Presseklubben, 22. november 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955). Vedlagt brevet var også bordkart, meny, bestilling av Unesco-bordkort og lys på bordet.

59 Dette var Hans Mohr og Finn Havnevik fra Oslo Katedralskole, og Alf Kinge fra Fagerborg skole. Kinge var for øvrig også formann i Internasjonal vennskapsliga og medlem i Norges Fredsråd.

60 Brev Liv Hennum til Presseklubben, 22. november 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955).

61 Helsvig (2017), 53ff.

62 Ibid.

63 Referat, Komitéen for koordinerte forsök i skolen, Möte på Frogner skole, 22. august 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955).

64 Referat møte Frogner skole 1955.

som omgav dem. Gjennom hele sin tid som leder av PFI markerte Sandven seg også i ulike sammenhenger som motstander av en politisert skoleforskning.[65] Men som amerikanskorientert representant for norsk høyere utdanning og skoleutvikling, finansiert av de facto de samme myndigheter som nå ba ham gjøre evalueringen, sto han sentralt i denne satsingen, enten han ville eller ikke. Dessuten, som leder for Norges fremste pedagogiske forskningsmiljø, var heller ikke verdien av å gjøre denne forskningen internasjonalt kjent, fremmed for ham. Samme år som Sandven publiserte sin evaluering i *Scandinavian Journal of Educational Reserach* (1957), skrev han også en artikkel i *International Review of Education*, med tittelen *Educational Research in Norway. The Development since 1950*.[66] Dette var i realiteten en smørbrødliste over tilsynelatende alle norske pedagogiske forskningsprosjekter og forskere i perioden.[67]

Haakon Vigander som "foreign relations entrepeneur"

Det var ikke bare sitt "ry" Norge hadde å legge på bordet overfor Unesco. Som ambassadør for foreningen Nordens lærebokrevisjoner i Unesco-apparatet hadde Haakon Vigander frem mot 1953 opparbeidet seg en særlig posisjon innenfor organisasjonens utdanningsrettede arbeid.

Haakon Vigander var lektor i tysk, engelsk og historie og arbeidet etter krigen som rektor på Frogner skole. Han hadde da lang fartstid i nasjonale og internasjonale fora som var opptatt av historie, skole og internasjonalt, konfliktforebyggende arbeid.[68] Når man ved opprettelsen av Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem snakket om "mellomkrigstiden" og "internasjonale kongresser", er det ikke usannsynlig at historikerorganisasjonen *International Comittee of Historical Scienses* (ICHS) sin første generalkonferanse i Oslo i 1928 en av dem man hadde i tankene. ICHS arbeidet for en mer internasjonalistisk orientert historieforskning og -undervisning, og ble stiftet i Geneve i 1926. Den norske historikeren og senere utenriksministeren Halvdan Koht ble valgt til komiteens første president, og som sekretær på konferansen, holdt i "the spirit of Oslo", virket Haakon Vigander.[69]

Sammen med Koht, spilte Vigander også en sentral rolle i Foreningen Nordens lærebokrevisjoner, der han blant annet hadde ledet den den norske granskingskomiteen. I tråd med diskursen om kultursamarbeid internasjonalt, foretok de nordiske land på eget initiativ i mellomkrigstiden flere omfattende, gjensidige granskinger av lærebøker, hovedsakelig i historie, for å bygge ned konfliktfremmende perspektiver og formuleringer.[70] Det man hadde fått til i Norden var, mente man, verdifullt, særlig ved at det hadde gitt konkrete og merkbare resultater. Dette sto i kontrast til det Folkeforbundet og mylderet av andre velmenende initiativer hadde oppnådd, der arbeidet for det meste hadde kokt bort i konferanser, resolusjoner og seminarer. Denne

65 Helsvig (2017), 123ff.

66 Johs. Sandven, "Educational Research in Norway: The Development since 1950," *International Review of Education* 3, no. 3 (1957b), 373–77.

67 Evalueringen av Unesco-forsøkene var også nevnt.

68 Brit Marie Hovland, *Historie som skolefag og dannelsesprosjekt 1889–1940: En historiografi ut fra folkeskolens historielærebøker* (Oslo: Universitetet i Oslo 2016).

69 Hovland (2016), 171.

70 Henrik Åström Elmersjö, *Norden, nationen och historien: Perspektiv på föreningarna Nordens historieläroboksrevision 1919–1972* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2013).

selvforståelsen kom klart til uttrykk hos Haakon Vigander. I et foredrag han i 1946 holdt i alle fall ved to anledninger,[71] presenterte Vigander et narrativ hvor Folkeforbundet, "som i år endelig skal gravlegges", og nærmest alle andre bestrebelser på feltet hadde mislyktes. Han beskrev dem som

> […] en broket skare av fredsvenner, moralister, kirkefolk, folkeforbundsfolk, historielærere og historiegranskere som med hverandre, om hverandre og på siden av hverandre samlet lærebøker og rapporter om lærebøker, vedtok ønskemål og reformforslag, mens Institutt for intellektuelt samvirke i Paris trykte bøker om alt som var sagt og planlagt på alle møtene.[72]

Mot dette sto foreningen Norden:

> Denne alminnelige opptatthet i mellomkrigstiden av en historieundervisning i folkeforsonende ånd, gjorde seg også gjeldende i våre nordiske land, og her nådde arbeidet ganske andre positive resultater enn annetsteds. […] [E]rfaringene fra det nordiske samarbeide […] tror jeg vil kunne få betydning for det fremtidige arbeidet også mellom andre land.[73]

Allerede i mellomkrigstiden hadde foreningen Norden forsøkt å gjøre sitt arbeid internasjonalt kjent. Motivasjonen var i hovedsak et ønske om å sette Norden på kartet, gjennom å vise frem noe man mente var unikt i verdenssammenheng. Som Henrik Elmersjö skriver, var målet ikke å spre den nordiske tanken i og for seg, men snarere å "visa upp sitt fredliga hörn av verden, att gå före og visa hur större förståelse för varandras historiea kunde leda till vännskapligare relationer."[74] Det viste seg imidlertid vanskelig å vinne anerkjennelse for arbeidet internasjonalt, og bestrebelsene forble uten hell.[75]

Men dette endret seg etter andre verdenskrig. Da Unesco gjenopptok det arbeidet som hadde myldret i mellomkrigstiden, var det en viktig målsetting å bli nettopp den samlende kraft som Vigander påpekte mangelen av. Å få en plan i arbeidet ble nå fremtredende, for at det ikke igjen skulle smuldre opp i gode intensjoner. Blant annet startet man forberedelsene til å skrive "A history of Mankind", som var ment å skulle fungere som et referanseverk for alle verdens lærebokforfattere.[76] I 1949 gav Unesco også ut en håndbok i lærebokrevisjon.[77] I denne fikk foreningen Norden høyeste karakter: "the accomplishments of the organization provide the most outstanding example so far of regional collaboration on textbook revision."[78]

71 En gang for Norsk gruppe av Internasjonal kvinneliga i Oslo i februar, og i august på et seminar for norske og britiske lærere i Hundorp.

72 Haakon Vigander, *Historieundervisningen og mellomfolkelig forståelse: Foredrag holdt i Nobelsalen, Oslo, den 28. februar 1946* (Oslo: Norsk gruppe av internasjonal kvinneliga for fred, 1946a), 7–8.

73 Vigander (1946a), 9–10.

74 Elmersjö (2013), 109–10.

75 Ibid.

76 Sæle (2013), 55–56.

77 UNESCO, *A Handbook for the Improvement of Textbooks and Teaching Materials: As Aids to International Understanding* (Paris: Unesco, 1949); Sæle (2013), 51–58.

78 UNESCO (1949), 34.

Året etter gav Unesco ut heftet *Mutual Revision of History Textbooks in the Nordic Countries* (herfra *Mutual Revision*), skrevet av Vigander.[79] Denne vant mye gehør, og Vigander og de nordiske bestrebelsene ble i årene som fulgte flere ganger trukket frem som eksempler til etterfølgelse. Det er ingen overdrivelse å si at Viganders utgivelse i stor grad ble retningsgivende for Unescos arbeid på feltet i årene som fulgte. *Mutual Revision* fungerte som arbeidsdokument for flere større Unesco-seminarer i 1950 og 1953, hvor Vigander også deltok som seminarleder.[80] Vigander personlig vant dermed også et navn, og ble stadig nevnt i ulike Unesco-rapporter der lærebokrevisjon var omtalt. I Unesco-avisen "The UNESCO Courier" ble han endatil omtalt som professor, selv om dette ikke var tilfellet.[81] Slik var det Vigander personlig som ble eksponent for foreningen Nordens arbeid internasjonalt.

Også sentrale aktører som den tyske historieprofessoren Georg Eckert, lot seg inspirere av Vigander, og oppmuntret ham til å bringe foreningen Nordens lærebokarbeid videre ut over Nordens grenser. Georg Eckert var grunnleggeren av "Georg Eckert Institut für Internationale Schulbuchverbesserung" (senere Schulbuch*forschung*) i Braunschweig, som sammen med Europarådet førte det internasjonale lærebokarbeidet videre etter at Unesco trappet ned sitt engasjement i 1953.[82] Vigander og foreningen Norden var en viktig inspirasjonskilde for dette arbeidet,[83] og Vigander arbeidet også senere med fremstillingen av norsk-tyske forhold i tyske lærebøker.[84]

Den posisjonen Vigander hadde oppnådd i dette miljøet, gjorde ham godt rustet til å opptre som det Clarc og Gloover kaller en "foreign relations entrepeneur". Som lektor i engelsk og tysk, hadde han gode språkkunnskaper i sentrale språk, og hadde opparbeidet seg en status i Unesco-nettverket som gjorde at han ble lyttet til. Slik var Norge ved opprettelsen av Unesco-forsøkene godt rustet til å nøre oppunder og holde frem det norske selvbildet som foregangsnasjon i fredssaken. Samtidig resonnerte det godt med Kontoret for kulturelt samkvems satsing på å spre kunnskap om det norske skolevesenet og norsk utdanning.

Einar Boyesen

Einar Boyesen fungerte i denne sammenhengen som det mest fremtredende bindeleddet mellom foreningen Nordens arbeid for mellomfolkelig forståelse, norsk skolepolitikk, det norske arbeidet for å bygge kulturelle relasjoner, og Unesco-forsøkene. Det var han og hans avdeling i KUD som finansierte forsøkene, var aktive bidragsytere for Kontoret for Kulturelt samkvem og hadde ansvaret for norsk skolepolitikk. Boyesen hadde også lang fartstid sammen med Koht og Vigander i foreningen

79 Haakon Vigander, *Mutual Revision of History Textbooks in the Nordic Countries* (Paris: Unesco, 1950). Denne kom også ut på fransk og tysk.

80 UNESCO, *Better History Textbooks* (Paris: Unesco, 1951); UNESCO: *Bilateral Consultations for the Improvement of Textbooks* (Paris: Unesco, 1953).

81 "Experts Study History Textbook Improvement for Unesco Programme", *UNESCO Courier*, vol. III, nr. 10, 24. Oktober 1950, 11. Vigander ble her presentert som "Professor of English and History, Oslo College."

82 Sæle (2013)

83 Georg Eckert, "Internationale Schulbuchrevision," *Internationale Schulbuchforschung*, no. 6 (1960), 399–415.

84 Haakon Vigander, "Deutsche Lehrbücher und die Darstellung der deutsch-norwegischen Beziehungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg," *Internationales Jahrbuch für Geschichtsunterricht* 8 (1961), 276–79.

Norden. Det Hovland (2018) omtaler som "trespannet Koht, Vigander og Boyesen" utgjorde i tiden før og etter andre verdenskrig en skolepolitisk elite i Norge, og i flere sammenhenger også internasjonalt, der de satt "på alle sider av bordet" og øvde stor innflytelse både over historieforskningen, historieundervisningen, skolen i sin alminnelighet og i det politiske liv.[85] Der Koht ble utenriksminister i 1935, fikk Boyesen som nevnt stillingen som ekspedisjonssjef for skoleavdelingen i Kirke- og Utdanningsdepartementet i 1938. Og han tok perspektivene fra foreningen Norden med seg inn dit. Som eneste nordiske land, ble det fra 1938 et krav om at alle godkjente lærebøker i historie skulle ha gått igjennom foreningens revisjoner.[86]

Boyesen var, sammen med Haakon Vigander, også før etableringen av Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem engasjert i arbeidet med å promotere Norge gjennom å holde frem utdanningssystemet. Utviklingen av sterke kulturelle bånd til Storbritannina, var høyt prioritert av norske myndigheter under den tyske okkupasjonen, og Utenriksdepartementet promoterte norsk samfunnsliv i en rekke bøker og pamfletter med hensikt å opplyse britene om norsk historie, litteratur og institusjoner.[87] I tråd med dette arrangerte KUD med Einar Boyesen i spissen en konferanse for norske og britiske lærere på vikingegården Hundorp i Gudbrandsdalen i 1946. Boyesen hold her åpningstalen, samt et foredrag hvor han snakket varmt om det norske utdanningssystemet, mens Vigander fremførte sitt nevnte foredrag om historieundervisning og internasjonal forståelse.[88]

Når det gjelder Boyesen og Unesco-forsøkene, gav han uttrykk for de samme forestillingene Vigander hadde gitt uttrykk for når det gjaldt lærebokrevisjon: Unesco ville trenge hjelp fra Norden om prosjektet skulle føre noen vei. Dette kom tydelig til uttrykk på det femte nordiske undervisningsministermøtet i København i februar 1954, hvor Boyesen tok initiativet til et ordskifte om forsøkene, og luftet muligheten for et nordisk samarbeid. Norge var da det landet som hadde kommet lengst i forberedelsene, og som gikk mest omfattende til verks med tre deltakende skoler. Sverige planla å delta med en skole, mens man fra dansk side nylig var blitt orientert om saken.[89]

Boyesen inntok på dette møtet en temmelig paradoksal posisjon, hvor han på den ene siden nærmest dømte Unesco-forsøkene nord og ned, samtidig som han ønsket å satse på dem. Hele prosjektet med Unesco-forsøkene ble sterkt kritisert, nærmest latterliggjort, fra dansk og norsk side. Slik det ofte var med Unesco, ifølge Boysen, savnet også Unesco-forsøkene et "nøgternt indhold".[90] Hele ideen om "påvirke elevernes sindelag og sligt" smakte dessuten av propaganda, som norske og danske elever

85 Hovland (2018), 115.

86 Elmersjö (2013), 110–11.

87 Angell (2015), 82.

88 Einar Boyesen, "Norway's Educational System," i *A Record of the Hundorp Conference for British and Norwegian Teachers, August 1946* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1948), 9–25; Haakon Vigander: "The Teaching of History and International Understanding," i *A Record of the Hundorp Conference for British and Norwegian Teachers, August 1946* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 1948), 79–118.

89 Det 5. nordiske undervisningsministermøde i København 7–10. februar 1954, *Dagsordenens punkt 2: Co-ordinated Experimental Activities in Schools of Member States of Unesco* (København: J. H. Sschultz, 1954), 83-90. Det var kun de skandinaviske landene som uttalte seg om saken. Den svenske skolen var Arvika skole.

90 Ibid., 89.

ville reagere sterkt på.[91] Også selve hovedformålet med forsøkene, å utvikle en egen type fredsundervisning, høstet kritikk av Boyesen: "Det forekommer meg at oppdragelse til internasjonal forståelse og internasjonalt samarbeid ikke nødvendigvis må kreve særskilt undervisningsstoff og særskilte undervisningstimer".[92]

Det var i det hele tatt "ikke i samme grad trang til et sådant forslag indenfor vore egne rækker", ifølge Boyesen, fordi internasjonal forståelse, mellomfolkelig samarbeid, fredssaken og menneskerettighetserklæringen allerede hadde gjennomsyret nordiske lands skolelovgivning og undervisningsplaner i mange år.[93] Dessuten, ble det påpekt, hadde små nasjoner som de nordiske den fordel at de stadig måtte forholde seg til omverden på en helt annen måte enn større nasjoner. Internasjonalt samarbeid falt Norden derfor mer naturlig. Bare tanken på at Unesco eller noen andre skulle vise Norden vei på dette feltet var nesten uhørt. Fra Danmark ble det formulert slik: "jeg tror ikke, at vi har brug for en ekspert fra UNESCO til at komme ned å vise os, hvordan vi skal undervise i menneskerettighederne, det tror jeg, vi forstår lige så godt som han".[94]

Likevel var altså Boyesen blant pådriverne for den i nordisk sammenheng mest omfattende satsingen på Unesco-forsøkene, og også talsmann for felles-nordisk innsats. Øyensynlig ikke fordi han trodde på prosjektet i seg selv, men fordi Norden hadde "de bedste betingelser" til å bidra, "på grund af de hovedsynspunkter, som har behersket vore lande gennem lange tider".[95] Dette gjorde Norden nærmest forpliktet til å vise vei i denne type initiativer, hvor klossete de enn måtte være.

På tross av at Danmark mildest talt stilte seg kjølig, mente de det var "rimelig å samles om en norsk tanke, idet det vitterlig er Norge, der indenfor UNESCO har været stadkolonnen på det kulturelle området."[96] Det hele kunne dessuten løses veldig enkelt i Danmark, ved å plassere forsøkene innenfor rammene av gymnasiets "spesialer", frie emner hvor man sto fritt til å lage egne opplegg. Sverige var ikke like krass i uttalelsene som Norge og Danmark, men betraktet Unesco-forsøkene for bare å være en liten del av den forsøksvirksomheten som allerede var i gang, og som i mangt allerede rettet seg mot de samme målsettinger som Unesco tegnet opp. Det var derfor viktig at Unesco-forsøkene i seg selv ikke tok for stor plass, og den svenske representanten advarte mot at dette kunne føre til en forsøkstretthet i skolen. De motsatte seg heller ikke muligheten for et samarbeid, men understreket at de i denne omgang ikke var ønskelig å utvide forsøkene.

Sverige og Danmark holdt slik Unesco-forsøkene noe mer på avstand enn Norge, ved å i større grad innlemme dem i strukturer som allerede fantes. På tross av at Boyesen verken mente det var behov for et slik prosjekt i Norden eller at et slikt prosjekt i det hele tatt var veien å gå for andre land heller, er det er interessant at Norge gikk såpass aktivt inn, og i stort fulgte de anvisninger Unescos hadde satt opp. Boyesen var åpenbart mer villig enn sine nordiske kolleger til så å si å stille norsk skole, norske lærere og norske elever til disposisjon for Unescos eksperiment, som henholdsvis

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid., 85.

93 Ibid., 88.

94 Ibid., 87.

95 Ibid., 88.

96 Ibid., 89.

laboratorium, forskere og forsøkskaniner, der Danmark og Sverige så et større behov for å trekke i bremsen.[97] Samtidig gjenspeiler dette hvordan arbeidet med å bygge kulturelle relasjoner var institusjonelt forankret på ulike måter. Når særlig Sverige var såpass avmålt, kan det også ha sammenheng med at deres tilnærming var annerledes innrettet enn den norske. Mens den norske moderniseringsdiskursen siden starten av 1900-tallet hadde vært dominert av demokratiske og politiske verdier, hadde den svenske vært mer karakterisert av økonomiske og teknologiske verdier. Kontoret for Kulturelt samkvems svenske motsats, Det svenske Instiut, var et halvoffentlig organ hvor næringslivet var sterkt representert, og således mer innrettet mot å fremme næringslivsinteresser enn man var i Norge, der staten inntok en mer sentral posisjon.[98]

Fra medlemmene i den norske forsøkskomiteen fremkommer det også at man hadde kontakt med sine nordiske kolleger om prosjektet. Rektor ved Arvika skole, Arthur Inglander, fikk av Haakon Holmboe ros for å "fra første stund vært meget aktiv for å sette disse eksperimentene ut i livet", og også for sin innsats som seminarleder for et større Unesco-seminar om forsøkene i Hamburg i 1956.[99] Til den den norske forsøkskomiteen kom det også inn en dansk bekymring for at de testene Unesco hadde satt opp ikke ville passe i de nordiske land. Vigander foreslo da at man burde rådføre seg med Inglander "for å undersöke hva han hadde gjort med hensyn til evaluering, og for eventuelt å få låne hans materiale."[100]

Det er likevel ingenting som tyder på at dette samarbeidet på noe tidspunkt ble formalisert eller koordinert, utover en mer sporadisk kontakt. Dette må nok sees i lys av at forsøkene gikk over relativt kort tid, der man hadde mange praktiske utfordringer å hanskes med, og synes å ha hatt nok med å tilpasse forsøkene eget skoleverk. På mange måter kom heller ikke det norske prosjektet lenger enn i prøvefasen, og man trakk seg ut relativt tidlig.

Hvordan gikk det?

Det er vanskelig å slå fast hvilken "impact" den norske innsatsen i Unesco-forsøkene fikk. Dette er heller ikke noe mål for denne artikkelen. Det kan likevel være interessant å dvele litt ved dette, fordi det bidrar til å kaste lys over hvorfor Norge trakk seg ut av et prosjekt som utover på 1960-tallet og videre var i sterk vekst. I Unescos egne rapporter og oppsummeringer av prosjektet ble Norges innsats omtalt i positive ordelag.[101] Særlig ble norske myndigheters aktive tilrettelegging fremhevet som forbilledlig.[102] Det er likevel ikke grunn til å hevde at Norge utpekte seg nevneverdig

97 Se Angell (2015) s. 85; Glover (2011); Svein Ivar Angell, *Den svenske modellen og det norske systemet: tilhøvet mellom modernisering og identitetsdanning i Sverige og Noreg ved overgangen til det 20. hundreåret*. (Oslo: Samlaget, 2002), 325–33.

98 Angell (2014); Angell (2015).

99 Haakon Holmboe, "Unesco-forsøk i skolen," i *Norsk skole – Opplysnings og kunngjøringsblad for skoleverket*, 3, no. 11 (1957), 163–67.

100 Referat, Komitéen for koordinerte forsõk i skolen, Möte på Frogner skole, 22. august 1955 (NKOM 1953–1955), s. 3.

101 Unesco Associated Schools Project in Education for International Understandig. Report on experimental projects carried out in Norwegian Secondary Schools, 1954–1956, Paris 16 April 1958, WS/038.87 (Unescodoc)

102 Co-ordinated experimental activities in education for international understanding and co-operation: interim report; activities in 1955 and 1956 (Unesco 1956), 10. ED/149

i Unescos rapporter i forhold til andre land. Det ser heller ikke ut til at de særlige småstatsfordelene man mente å ha, i særlig grad slo til. Den gode følelsen av å ha "vært tillagt en betydning […] utover det folkets størrelse skulle tilsi", som var en viktig motivasjon bak de norske bestrebelsene på å bygge kulturelle relasjoner i sin alminnelighet, gjorde seg derfor til syvende og sist knapt gjeldende i tilfellet med Unesco-forsøkene. Land som Frankrike og Tyskland, hvor volumet i virksomheten var større, fikk tilsvarende mer omtale enn Norge og andre mindre nasjoner, og Unesco synes å ha vært minst like interessert i hva som hadde foregått der.

Likevel fikk Norge utvilsomt markert seg som en medspiller til Unesco, og vist at man var villig til å stille opp for de verdier organisasjonen representerte. Men det synes klart at Norge ikke klarte å gjøre seg til den foregangsnasjonen Boyesen og Vigander mer allment hadde sett for seg at man burde være.

Når det ble som det ble, er trolig en viktig årsak til dette at prosjektet nokså raskt endret karakter fra å være et eksperimentelt forsøksprosjekt med en avgrenset og nokså homogen kohort, til å mer bli et skolenettverk med langt mer pragmatiske holdninger når det kom til selve undervisningspraksisen. Et uttrykk for dette er den store veksten i antall land og institusjoner. Fra å avgrense prosjektet til 33 "secondary schools" ved oppstarten, var antallet i 1958 steget til 186 institusjoner, deriblant også lærerutdanningsinstitusjoner. Siden kom også grunnskoler og barnehager til. Målet om å forske seg frem til en "best practice", som mer eller mindre sømløst kunne overføres på tvers av nasjoner, var dermed i stor grad forlatt før man i det hele tatt hadde rukket å fullføre forsøkene i Norge. Det som fra 1957 fikk navet *Associated Schools Project in Education for International Understanding and Co-operation* (ASPRO), var et annet prosjekt enn Norge hadde inngitt seg med i 1953.

Om noen hadde håpet at Norge skulle gjenta suksessen med Haakon Viganders *Mutual revision,* og lage en rapport som kunne gi samme innflytelse innenfor Unesco-forsøkene, er uvisst. Uansett synes det klart at når Faaland og Vignaders *Educational Experiments* kom ut på engelsk i 1962, var toget gått for lenge siden. Norge hadde da også i praksis avsluttet sitt engasjement, og ingen av de norske skolene var lenger aktive innenfor ASPRO. Slik fikk Norge heller ikke utnyttet det potensialet som kunne ha lagt i Vigander som en "foreign relations entrepeneur" og døråpner. Det er heller ingenting i arkivet etter nasjonalkommisjonen som tyder på at noen i forsøkskomiteen eller andre ytret et ønske om å fortsette det norske engasjementet. Kanskje kan vi fra Faaland og Viganders oppsummering også fra lærernes side lese ut en viss tretthet, der de avsluttet med følgende formaning: "Det må understrekes at slike forsøk, likegyldig klassetrinn og arbeidsform, bare bærer helt fram dersom *alle* deltakende lærere med en viss glød og pedagogisk håndlag går inn for å nå et godt resultat i samsvar med målsettingen."[103]

Dette gjorde også at Unesco-forsøkenes mulighet til å virke "disiplinerende" på norsk skolepolitikk trolig var begrenset. Likevel kan det ikke kan avvises at forsøkene, i kraft av de fremstående aktørene som representerte dem, og de store ressursene som ble langt ned, kan ha bidratt til å fokusere et norsk selvbilde i disse spørsmålene, og sendt signaler om hva som var viktig og riktig i skoleutvikling, både med henblikk på internasjonal forståelse og pedagogikkens lederrolle.

103 Faaland og Vigander (1960), 61.

Adelskap forplikter

Artikkelen viser hvordan Unesco-forsøkene i Norge i 1953–1959 ble rammet inn av en bredere norsk satsing på å bygge kulturelle relasjoner med utlandet, og beskriver hvordan enkeltaktører agerte og bidro i dette arbeidet fra ulike institusjonelle kontekster. Dette var en satsing som rommet to motiver: Å skape et positivt bilde av Norge i omverden og å forebygge konflikt. Til grunn lå forestillingen om en særegen norsk fredsnasjon, som forpliktet Norge til å spille en fredsforebyggende rolle på verdensscenen. Særlig så man for seg at Norge kunne spille en slik rolle med utgangspunkt i et velutviklet skole- og utdanningssystem, og å promotere dette ble derfor en sentral del av satsingen.

Her passet Unesco-forsøkene godt inn. De representerte både en arena for å forebygge konflikt, og å skape et positivt bilde av Norge internasjonalt ved å holde frem det norske skole- og utdanningssystemet. Også innsatsen i Unesco-forsøkene var motivert ut fra forestillingen om at Norge hadde særlige forutsetninger for å lykkes, og at Norge dermed var forpliktet til å bidra. Organisatorisk ble Unesco-forsøkene derfor tidlig innlemmet i et pågående arbeid med å bygge kulturelle relasjoner, hvor det var tette forbindelser mellom Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem, KUD og Nasjonalkommisjonen for Unesco, som hadde ansvar for Unesco-forsøkene.

Einar Boyesen var her en sentral aktør og bindeledd. Som leder for Skoleavdelingen i KUD, var han personlig og hans avdeling aktive bidragsytere til Kontoret for kulturelt samkvem sitt arbeid med å promotere det norske skole- og utdanningssystemet overfor utlandet. Han sto også som eksponent for en skoleutvikling basert på pedagogisk vitenskap. Unesco-forsøkenes vitenskapelige profil, gjorde at de representerte en arena for å vise frem norsk pedagogisk forskning, og den norske skolen som moderne og forskningsbasert.

Men Boyesen agerte i denne sammenhengen også ut fra en tradisjon for nordisk samarbeid på skolefeltet som hadde røtter tilbake i mellomkrigstiden, ikke minst gjennom foreningen Norden. Også lederen for Unesco-forsøkene i Norge, Haakon Vigander, understreker dette. Begge hadde vært aktive i foreningen Norden, og det var en klar forestilling hos de to at man i Norden hadde lyktes regionalt med mye av det Unesco nå ønsket å oppnå globalt. Det er nærliggende å tenke seg at den positive oppmerksomheten som det nyopprettede Unesco viet til Foreningen Nordens arbeid, og som Vigander sto som ambassadør for, må ha forsterket denne forestillingen. Boyesens forsøk på å få til et Nordisk samarbeid omkring Unesco-forsøkene må sees i lys av dette. Mer enn bare å promotere Norge og norsk skole, var det her en nordisk modell for fredelig sameksistens man ønsket å vise frem. Tanken synes langt på vei å ha vært at de nordiske landene satt på nøkkelen til Unescos suksess. Dersom Unesco implementerte globalt de verdier og metoder som de nordiske landene gjennom lengre tids utprøving hadde kommet frem til seg imellom, regionalt, ville Unesco lykkes.

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When Myth-Building Meets Nation-Branding: Fabricating the "Swedish Educational Model" in French Media Discourse (1964–2019)

Piero Colla

Abstract • The educational reforms carried out in Sweden have aroused persistent interest in the French public debate. This paper focuses on the evolution of the media's portrayal of an alleged Swedish "educational model," by highlighting cross-national influences over an extended time horizon. The origin of a stereotype is addressed from the point of view of the interaction between the Swedish branding of its own model and the demand, on the part of French elites, for a handy reform paradigm. Two crucial phases of idealisation are identified. At first, the popularity of the Swedish experiment in education coincides with the idealisation of Sweden as a laboratory for social reform. Since 2010, TV reporting has focused on both the resistance of this myth and the diversity of its possible uses. The expansion of market-oriented principles in educational culture is stigmatised as a "betrayal" of values associated with the Swedish reform experience (pupil autonomy, inclusiveness, anti-authoritarianism), while other players—such as international ranking organisations—intervene in shaping the media image.

Keywords • nation-branding, cultural diplomacy, school reform, national identity, educational transfer

Introduction

Since the end of the last century, Sweden's status as the epitome of social utopia in the developed world has been the subject of increasingly sophisticated investigations. Travel writing has provided a self-evident empirical field; echoes of the country's "success story" emerge in distinct times and contexts, as do its sedimentations in terms of cultural stereotypes, and misunderstandings.[1] From the end of the 1980s, the synergy between ethnography, cultural history and political science led Swedish research towards a reflexive insight: iconisation on a global scale could be understood in terms of its relevance for the *nation's* self-image, if not as a motivating force behind the development of the welfare state.[2] The social contract that matured in the 1930s—a (democratic) "socialism in one country"—came to the fore as the source of a new form of collective pride. This belief in the nation's exceptionalism proved to be a tool for the analysis of distinct policy developments: both the consensus behind

1 Kurt Almqvist and Kaj Glans, eds., *The Swedish Success Story?* (Stockholm: Ax:son Johnson Foundation, 2004). An extensive bibliography explores the consecration of Sweden as a model for the world. Early examples include Göran Svensson, "Utländska bilder av Sverige," in *Sverige, vardag och struktur*, ed. Ulf Himmelstrand and Göran Svensson (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1988) and Arne Ruth, "Det moderna Sveriges myter," in *Svenska krusbär*, ed. Björn Linnell and Mikael Löfgren (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1995).

2 One of the first investigations of this kind is by Jonas Frykman, *Modärna tider* (Malmö: Liber, 1985).

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the proactive immigration policies of the 1970s and the reluctant acceptance of EU membership in the 1990s can be understood against this background.[3]

A more recent field of research is less concerned with the psychosocial impact of the image of Sweden (*Sverigebild*) than with the way it is negotiated and exploited in transnational arenas. In other words, the nation-branding practices with which domestic public authorities address the public abroad (political leaders, economic actors, media etc.) to enhance the country's reputation. This scholarly field brought fresh insights into the mechanisms by which a nation grows into an icon: a dynamics in which any clear-cut boundaries between one side's "reality" and the other side's stereotype become blurred.[4] Prevailing national mythologies emerge as a result of a symbolic bargaining, tying the subject and object of idealisation together. The process often benefits both sides, on top of which it can be relayed back "to sender," as Marklund and Petersen put it.[5]

Although self-gratifying narratives increasingly appear to be a response to exogenous triggers, the way myth-providers and myth-users communicate and interconnect is rarely assessed. The purpose of this article is to bring out fully the interplay that makes national icons both powerful and ephemeral, i.e. their dependency on a *demand* for exemplarity. To do so, I chose to isolate a limited area of success in generating exceptionality through dynamic confrontation: the sphere of educational reform policies—in the fields of compulsory and secondary education. I intend to focus on how the iconic status of the Swedish school took shape in French public discourse, thereby enhancing our understanding of the path through which an international narrative of progressive Sweden was transformed into an influence tool. Thus far, the role played by Swedish welfare idealisation in the Latin world in making a successful "brand" has been neglected.[6] A. M. Hellenes has highlighted how this silence relies on an implied assumption: modern Swedish identity-making would appear to be the product of a *Sonderweg*, rather than of intensified exchanges. This has discouraged any further scrutiny of clusters of intellectual interconnections.[7] It is worth considering how self-gratifying images of social progress resonated with the expectations of the surrounding world. How they adjusted to the mirror image their targets reflected back.

3 See Bo Stråth, *Folkhemmet mot Europa* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1993); Urban Lundberg and Mattias Tydén, eds., *Sverigebilder: Det nationellas betydelser i politik och vardag* (Stockholm: Institutet för Framtidsstudier, 2008).

4 See Nikolas Glover, *National Relations: Public Diplomacy, National Identity and the Swedish Institute, 1945–1970* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2011) and Carl Marklund, "The Nordic Model on the Global Market of Ideas: The Welfare State as Scandinavia's Best Brand," *Geopolitics* 22 (2017), 623–39.

5 Carl Marklund and Klaus Petersen, "Return to Sender: American Images of the Nordic Welfare States and Nordic Welfare State Branding," *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies* 43 (2013), 244–56. On the way the xenostereotypes and the autostereotypes influence each other, see Kazimierz Musiał, *Tracing Roots of the Scandinavian Model* (Florence and Berlin: European University Institute and Humboldt Universität, 1998), 14 and ff.

6 The few exceptions have focused on the genesis of the Swedish myth in France, rather than on the role of transnational networking, or the connection with a public diplomacy agenda. See Yohann Aucante, "Den 'svenska modellen' i fransk samhällskunskap: En översikt," in *Médiations interculturelles entre la France et la Suède*, ed. Mickaëlle Cedergren and Sylvien Briens (Stockholm: SUP, 2015) and Gilles Vergnon, *Le modèle suédois* (Rennes: PUR, 2015).

7 Andreas Mørkved Hellenes, "Fabricating Sweden: Studies of Swedish Public Diplomacy in France from the 1930s to the 1990s" (PhD diss., Sciences PO, 2019), 29.

In many ways, the vision behind the establishment of a comprehensive compulsory school (*grundskola*, 1962) may be regarded as a step towards reframing the Swedish self-image into the epitome of a progressive ethos. Moulding the new generations in accordance with the requirements of a democratic, technology-run society was the rationale behind the overhaul of the curricula: a self-correcting dynamics that was meant to be "permanent."[8] On the one hand, the main pillars of this reform wave—pupil empowerment, anti-elitism, a combination of rational planning and equality—were homologous with the normative ground of the "Swedish model" at its height. On the other hand, its symbolic relationship with the surrounding world experienced an inversion. For a long time, the inspiration for the Swedish experiment in democratic schooling had come from abroad. The "school of the future" that emerged from the debates among progressive reformers in the mid-1940s was the product of an opening-up of internal debate to foreign input.[9] Up until 1933, progressive Austrian and German pedagogies encouraged the alignment of school life and discourse with the principles of democracy; in the midst of the Second World War, visits to the USA by cosmopolitan Swedish social scientists reinforced the ideal of school as an arena for democratic citizenship and rational workforce selection.[10]

The post-war period would lead to a reversal of the direction of this interchange. By the late 1950s, the fast pace of reform created a concrete opportunity to showcase an original achievement to the rest of the world. It provided the first example of a State-run educational reform that was underpinned by large-scale testing into suitable instructional formats, the impact of class homogeneity on achievement, and the relationships between acquired knowledge and long-term skills.[11] The "control room" of the reforms—the National Board for Schools (*Skolöverstyrelsen,* hereinafter SÖ)—took over the role of disseminator of good practices. A stream of study visits from abroad, both from Capitalist and Socialist countries, prompted it to expand its competence in external communication.[12] From then on, Sweden changed from being an importer of educational innovations—with a focus on universal provision and socially inclusive approaches—to become a leading *exporter* of the same.[13] In the following two decades, new reform areas—from mother tongue education for the children of immigrants to gender-awareness instruction—would validate this image. Consequently, the exchange flow with France can be approached as a subfield within the overall process, making the Swedish experience of school reform an international benchmark.[14]

8 A "school for citizenship" (*medborgarskola*), as it was defined in late 1940s pre-legislative reports.

9 *Den framtida skolan* (Stockholm: ABF, 1944).

10 See Ester Hermansson, *I amerikanska skolor* (Stockholm: Svensk Lärartidnings Förlag, 1940) and Alva and Gunnar Myrdal, *Kontakt med Amerika* (Stockholm: Bonnier, 1941). For an analysis of these influences, see Gunnar Richardson, *Drömmen om en ny skola* (Stockholm: Liber, 1983).

11 Ulf Sandström, *Det föränderliga samhällets skolpolitik* (Stockholm: SISTER, 2001).

12 In the 1960s, school reform emerged as a key area of the cultural exchanges between Sweden and the GDR. Birgitta Almgren, *Inte bara Stasi: Relationer Sverige–DDR 1949–1990* (Stockholm: Carlsson, 2009).

13 Torsten Husén, "The Swedish School Reform – Exemplary Both Ways," *Comparative Education* 25 (1989), 345–55.

14 In recent times, transnational assessment bodies have acknowledged Sweden's role as a forerunner, see *Improving Schools in Sweden, an OECD Perspective* (Paris: OECD, 2015). The extent to which this has factually influenced local policy strategies largely remains to be assessed.

An analysis of these parallel influence flows calls for a cross examination, based on a few principles that I would like to clarify further. The primary research area that I intend to assess concerns the interlink between the emergence of a successful reform field in Sweden and the processes of self-assertion of the nation in the global arena. To what extent has this area of reform played a decisive role in the good-will campaign towards France that was so accurately reported in A. Mørkved Hellenes' recent study?[15] The second aim, drawing on the analyses of the dynamic dimension of cultural lending by Werner and Zimmermann, revolves around the complicated relationship that develops between a nation built as a "model" and another that draws inspiration from it.[16] It aims to bring to light cross-influences, transfer channels and transfer "promotors" within media and academic circles. To achieve this goal, the scope of the present article is confined to two critical junctures in the internationalisation of Swedish educational policy: the end of the 1960s and the late 2010s. I will approach them through the way Swedish reforms were incorporated in the French domestic public debate. Such a focus calls for a cross-use of a variety of empirical sources. On the one hand, I focused on how the reform of compulsory education was "discovered" in French media, through an exhaustive census of public service broadcasts in the video archive of French television (INAthèque database). On the other hand, by browsing the archives of relevant Swedish State boards, I tried to determine how, at peak times, this popularity was monitored and managed from Stockholm.[17]

"Swedish school" on the front page in Gaullist France

The French intelligentsia's interest in Scandinavian educational experiences is far from a recent phenomenon. From the 19th century onwards, French intellectuals have been intrigued by the way in which the spheres of education and praxis intertwine in Scandinavian cultures: from the status of educational crafts (*slöjd*) and home economics in schools, to the trade unions' commitment to retraining and reskilling.[18] The late 1950s move towards comprehensive schooling reactivates this Nordic "tropism" within a new frame. Swedish reform records seem to foreshadow a general trend towards mass education and systematic coordination between pedagogical scholarship and policy-making. A laboratory for reform ideas and, even more so, a call to self-assessment.

In a general way, the visibility of Swedish schools in the French media follows a parallel path to that of the "invention" of the Swedish life-style as a source of national self-questioning. The role of audiovisual media and news reports in this process has

15 Mørkved Hellenes (2019), 29.

16 Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: *Histoire Croisée* and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory* 45 (2006), 30–50.

17 The empirical basis of this article is provided by printed and archive sources from the National Board of Education, the Swedish Institute (Svenska Institutets arkiv, SI) and the Information Commission (Upplysningsberedningen), established in 1963 and converted in 1966 into a permanent body: the Council for Information about Sweden Abroad (*Kollegiet för Sverigeinformation i utlandet*, hereinafter KSU).

18 On the representation of education in French travellers' texts of the late 19th century, see Vincent Fournier, *L'utopie ambiguë: la Suède et la Norvège chez les voyageurs et essayistes français (1882–1914)* (Clermont-Ferrand: Adosa, 1989). See also Serge de Chessin, *Les clefs de la Suède* (Paris: Hachette, 1935) and Emmanuel Mounier, "Notes scandinaves," *Esprit* 164, 1950.

thus far passed unnoticed. Nonetheless, a sharp shift in the tone of TV coverage of Sweden—from anecdotal curiosity to a focus on social conditions and Welfare benefits—can be observed in the first half of the decade. The number of TV reports focusing on the Swedish social landscape broadcast by the two existing public channels jumps from zero in the 1950s to a dozen between 1964 and 1971. This process culminates in 1969, when four long reports on Swedish society were broadcast. An analysis of the content of this output shows a growing emphasis on the features of the educational system. In nearly all of these examples, the Swedish school provides evidence of the impact of the Welfare State's expansion on citizens' identity and on the notion of communality. Within a few years, its transformation would become an object of interest in itself. In the autumn of 1969, a long report followed by a studio debate on Swedish educational reform trends inaugurated a series on topical global social issues.[19]

The place of young people in Swedish society was the main theme of "La Suède," hosted by the political journalist Roger Louis.[20] This programme was the first social documentary on life in Sweden to be broadcast by the state network. In it, we learn that foreign languages are taught at an early age in Sweden: disseminating the know-how that a changing world will require is a recognised priority. The daily life of a middle-school class emerges in the form of a French lesson for a class of beginners; pupils appear intent on singing in chorus a recent hit by the pop singer, Françoise Hardy: if the content does not sound quite so "scholastic"—emphasises the commentary—this is what the pupils' delegates asked for. This fleeting reference to the breakthrough of democratic values in a learning context exemplifies a feature that would be expanded upon in later programmes: the high status and the general acceptance of practical, autonomous schooling. A commitment to equality permeates a set of observations that would elicit the same astonishment throughout the sample: the pupils' relationship with their teachers, addressed informally as "du," and the minor role of assessment and marks. But the most provocative feature is the way democratic decision-making is consciously incorporated into daily training practices. As for educational content, the only subject matter discussed in the 1964 report revolves around education in social behaviour and relationships. The footage dwells on technical laboratories, cooking and typing classes: modern life has made its appearance in school since the latter (and through it, society as a whole) has started to address today's children as tomorrow's citizens. From an early age, the school system is keen to ensure its pupils are integrated by familiarising them with emerging skills and progressive social values. And not only in the public sphere: in the three longest reports between 1964 and 1970, interviews with pupils and teachers focus on sex education—"an issue that surprises us, us French!"—and resonate with popular clichés.[21] Rather than on teaching content, the focus is on the confidence with which young people seem allowed to share their feelings with an adult, and receive guidance on intimate topics.

19 J-E. Jannesson, *Suède, école nouvelle,* "Arguments," broadcast on October 29, 1969 on PREMIERE CHAINE.

20 R. Louis, *La Suède*, broadcast on January 31, 1964 on PREMIERE CHAINE.

21 See Carl Marklund, "A Hot Love and Cold People: Sexual Liberalism as Political Escapism in Radical Sweden," *NORDEUROPAforum,* no. 1 (2009).

Since its very first mention, the Swedish school is essentially identified, on the one hand, with the anticipation of a future centred on a self-conscious, inhibition-free youth and, on the other, as a successful experiment in society's ability to domesticate its contact with adult life: i.e. canalising the emancipation from authority through a systematic acculturation to responsibility in all domains of life, in an over-technologised new world that is at once promising and threatening.[22] The vision of a radical schooling in individualism would increasingly dominate the picture. In "The Swedish Paradise," the Social Democratic culture of compromise stands out didactically as an alternative to France's political impasse.[23] As school observations have shown, this alternative presupposes a training in social skills, provided from an early age. All school-life scenes—such as pupils acting as guides for the class during nature study visits, taking the floor on simulated radio programmes, exchanging letters without adult supervision—are the epitome of a life-style favouring conscious participation rather than blind obedience.[24] The skills cultivated in the schoolroom anticipate the horizontal roles that will be required both in the workplace and for interpersonal relationships.[25]

The footage provides a condensed illustration of a society that combines inner cohesion with the absence of any obvious hierarchies. Its identity is outlined by daily routines and social interaction rather than professional duties, with a focus on kitchens and gyms, or on various forms of internships through which high-school students get an early taste of working life. In other words, the emphasis is on spaces and features that the French viewer is unlikely to find particularly "scholastic." In the short period between 1964 and the end of the decade, this oppositional *topos* is rapidly expanded—as is its rhetorical function—well beyond pedagogical thinking. It foreshadows new tools for social training and cultural consensus, in the context of the intergenerational and social unrest that preceded the explosion of May 1968.

Behind the concept-transfer: Hidden threads and connections

Both outcomes—the focus on Sweden as a benchmark of successful modernity and its framing through a supposed "educational model"—can be investigated from their exogenous or internal factors; let's try to shed some light on their joint action. In 1964, the creation of the ORTF (*Office de radiodiffusion-télévision française*) marks a step towards the professionalisation of the French broadcasting sector and greater autonomy of information. The new set-up broadens the scope for social investigation and international comparisons in public service, albeit within the limits set by political control and the growing tension between the Gaullist establishment and the student movement. Some of the presenters (G. Demoy, R. Louis) were sympathetic towards the latter: their reported surprise at the absence of any open conflict

22 A bomb shelter is one of the school facilities described in *La Suède*. Pupils' training to prepare for atomic attacks is also featured in *La Suède s'enterre*, broadcast on March 4, 1966 on PREMIERE CHAINE.

23 G. Demoy, *Le paradis suédois*, "Régie 4," broadcast on June 10, 1969 on DEUXIEME CHAINE.

24 *Suède, école nouvelle* (2019).

25 The links between participation at school and in working life are outlined in an interview with the newly elected Prime Minister, Olof Palme (*Contrat de progrès: la Suède*, broadcast on December 4, 1969 on PREMIERE CHAINE).

between ideologies and generations in the Swedish school environment is probably a sign of this.[26]

Another source of interest is the accentuation of the pace of educational reform in Sweden, associated with its increasingly political dimension.[27] The Swedish school as observed from France was one in which change was in full swing: the aspect that all French reporters emphasised most—the high status of practical teaching and citizenship education—was a key factor not only in the birth of the *grundskola*, but also in the 1969 overhaul of the curriculum and the 1970s reform of the high school. Directly linked to the radicalisation of social democratic educational ideology and its growing connection with family politics, these reforms aimed to tackle pupils' sociocultural handicaps and bridge the perceived gap between school and everyday experience. Childcare, introduction to parenthood and gender equality were thus promoted as teaching subjects. Nevertheless, the chronology of recent reforms goes uncommented, or is only vaguely hinted at.

French documentaries depict, almost didactically, the dual aim of a modern educational mission as provided for in the 1962 curriculum: education to self-determination and education to communal values.[28] The same applies to the revised curriculum's (*Lgr 69*) emphasis on *useful* content, social training, group-work and school democracy. But instead of emerging as unfinished, controversial political constructs, these features strengthen the exotic undertones of the reports.[29] The classic interview focusing on sex education in a 1969 broadcast can serve as an example. A passing reference is made to the controversial book *Living Together*, which was at the time subject to calls for censorship because of its matter-of-fact, non-conformist character.[30] But neither this conflict nor the work of the then-ongoing national inquiry into the scope and content of sex education was mentioned; indeed, sex education was simply depicted as proof of a miraculous harmony between social adjustment and personal fulfilment. The architects of the reforms as well as school officials typically have no voice in the early reports. The virtues of the system seem to stem from a natural fondness for organisation and social harmony. A recurring remark substantiates this supposed "cultural" pattern: surprisingly, a well-ordered life and inner comfort ("quiet") are the supreme ideals that the new Swedish generation cherishes the most.[31]

The lack of context is of a piece with the reports' impressionistic approach, but it undoubtedly serves a rhetorical purpose—which may account for the survival of the cliché over time and the swing of the political pendulum. Swedish "new" schools tell of a world where youth is at the helm.[32] Promoted as a symbol of an impending cultural

26 Roger Louis was among the politically "unreliable" TV journalists fired in the aftermath of 1968.

27 One of the main threads of the Social Democratic Party Congress in 1969 was that the social-levelling aim of the *grundskola* had not been met. The solution was seen to lie in toning down the theoretical dimension of the curricula and developing a public-run *kindergarten*.

28 See the public inquiry stating the goals of the new system ("The purposes of schools in a changing society," *Grundskolan*, SOU 1961:30, 143 ff.).

29 The Comprehensive school system did not cover the whole population until 1972.

30 Katarina Apelqvist-Larsson, *Leva tillsammans* (Stockholm: Tiden, 1968).

31 *La Suède*, 1964. More provocatively, the "boredom" of a self-satisfied Swedish youth is a leitmotiv in the interviews in *Le paradis suédois* and *Suède. Ecole nouvelle* (1969).

32 Until the studio panel organised in 1969, the adult element remains marginal in the presentations.

revolution, school-life helps to sketch a "global" image of society, as Glover puts it.[33] Rather than a school, it is a realised utopia, detached from politics, and for which the only legitimate doubt is a philosophical one: where will this lead? Is the happiness of the Swedes *authentic*? Its supposed in-built "culturality" would make Swedish education, even for a distant future, both seductive and inappropriate as a model.

From exotism to mimetism?

It would be naïve to consider the crystallisation of a Swedish educational "icon" as the product of random field observations. Through the metaphors contained in the reports, a set of underlying normative projections comes to the surface. I will attempt to enucleate its content, before focusing on some specific icon-promoters. The image of a smooth tool of social adjustment conveyed to the French TV public runs in tandem with the emergence of a Swedish tropism in public debate: "*la suédomanie*" (Swedomania).[34] Scholarly investigations of this trend reveal a striking homology with the picture we have just encountered.[35] The residual question concerns their mutual relationship. Did the *suédomanie* of the 1960s lead to the rise of a correlative "educational model" with the same egalitarian undertones? To what extent, conversely, did the observation of Swedish school politics help to shape the idea of Swedish exemplariness, while retaining a certain autonomy from its ebbs and flows?

In terms of social expectations, the Swedish narrative of the well-balanced compromise resulting from expert scrutiny is clearly the antithesis of the French political climate under De Gaulle, and a fascination for this approach filters through to the Gaullist circle itself.[36] The popularity of Swedish decision-making culture had been fuelled since 1967 in the wake of an essay by the Editor-in-Chief of the popular weekly magazine *L'Express*, exploring potential ways out from the tension between the demands for social emancipation and industrial modernisation.[37] The turbulence surrounding the country at the dawn of May 68 would confirm his diagnosis. Between 1968 and 1970, a stream of reports published in magazines and national newspapers consolidated the strategic function of Swedish reformism: to embody a non-revolutionary response to the crisis in advanced industrial societies.[38] The electoral campaign following De Gaulle's resignation would confirm this interest on the part of France's political establishment. In June, Pompidou, De Gaulle's

33 Nikolas Glover, "A Total Image Deconstructed," in *Histories of Public Diplomacy and Nation Branding in the Nordic and Baltic Countries*, ed. Louis Clerc, Nikolas Glover, and Paul Jordan (Leiden: Brill Nijhoff, 2015).

34 This term was coined by a French politician to pinpoint the political and media establishment's fascination with Swedish social achievements. It was instantly taken up by Swedish institutions concerned with the country's reputation abroad. See "Suédomanie, en myt?" *Aktuellt om Sverige-information* 2 (1972).

35 Aucante (2015); Vergnon (2015); Mørkved Hellenes (2019), 190–98.

36 One of De Gaulle's later inter-classist catchwords (*la participation)* resonates with his personal interest in Swedish reform politics, as highlighted in a letter from ambassador G. Hägglöf, 26.3.1968, FI a:76, Upplysningsberedningen, Riksarkivet (RA).

37 In his widely-circulation pamphlet dedicated to the economic fate of Europe in an American-dominated world, Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber, *Le Défi américain* (Paris: Denoël, 1967) had pointed to the "Swedish model" as a recipe that the French political elite should have followed.

38 Special issues or series of articles dedicated to Swedish politics appear in newspapers of mixed political tendencies (*Le Figaro, L'Humanité, Les Echos*) and in popular magazines (*Paris-Match, La revue française*).

Prime Minister and successor president, praised Sweden as his own social ideal; three other candidates would also quote it as a source of inspiration for their own programmes.[39] The flexibility of its educational system, in particular, was praised as a remedy to the recurring crisis of capitalism and the social exclusion it creates.[40]

The inner contrast between doctrinarism and pragmatism in education was already a *topos* in the media's portrayal of Swedish schools. After 1968, the parallel between "school model" and "social model" becomes explicit, as does the contrast with the tempestuous French situation, ranging from extenuating industrial disputes to generational conflict. The fact that this narrative lends itself to opposing demonstrations does not diminish its appeal. Traces of it pop up in the way in which the school is analysed in the TV report "the Swedish paradise" by the socially-committed film-maker, G. Demoy, broadcast in June 1969. From the outset, Sweden is portrayed as the country "that our politicians, economists and trade unionists like to take as an example."[41] The underlying question was one that would remain the same in the following decades: did the model really live up to expectations? The school system provides an ideal verification tool. The answer is provided in the form of a meeting with a vocational retraining course for adults, and with a compulsory school affected by the recent reform of the curriculum: the introduction of *Lgr 69*. The link between a visible integrative utopia and possible reform strategies has become clearer, with the latter calling to overcome the boundary between practice and literature and the hierarchies of traditional values that steered the system. Testimonies gathered from pupils and teachers would only serve to confirm it: teaching had become more in tune with real life and the personal dimension. Sexual education was once again raised as an example.

The format of the 1969 report makes it particularly revealing of the public's expectations; the report from Sweden was followed by an in-depth conversation between an audience of young French adults and two guests—an industrial representative and a student—in a live connection from Stockholm. Echoes of the anti-authoritarian revolt in French society are constantly in the background. Are there any pupils' unions? Is Swedish youth also rebelling?—are among the questions from the audience. The answer, which filters from the information provided by the guests, suggests that in Sweden there are fewer reasons to regard the institutions as an enemy. Educational innovations such as the recent suppression of the *studentexamen* (Swedish Baccalaureate) open a window on a utopian future dominated by the idealism and spontaneity of a new generation.

Throughout all the broadcasts, different demonstration schemes coexist. On the one hand, the reports essentialise the diversity of the two educational approaches. The Swedish rejection of any kind of selection is set against a competitive, elitist school. On the other hand, after 1968, there is a tendency to show that the French reform agenda is heading in the same direction. This is a likely explanation for the increasing number of documentaries once Jacques Chaban-Delmas had been sworn

39 Revealingly, Pompidou confided his feelings to *L'Express*, the magazine most committed to pro-Swedish PR.

40 One of the candidates in the 1969 elections, the reformist socialist Michel Rocard, referred in his campaign to the achievements of the Swedish system of lifelong learning.

41 *Le paradis suédois* (1969).

in as Pompidou's Prime Minister (June 1969). Despite its unusual features, the Swedish example now plays the role of legitimising the stated intention to overhaul the national education system, as well as the good intentions of its conceptors. The title of a TV programme ("Progress contract") directly takes up a Chaban slogan in favour of a social ceasefire. To test its feasibility, the report analyses the Swedish practice of trade union involvement, along with the broader idea of participation from an early age, which is proudly outlined by the newly-elected Prime Minister (and former Education Minister), Olof Palme.

Policy lending and comparisons were the primary focus of that year's TV reports.[42] The format of the programmes is altered: more airtime is given over to studio debates and the nature of the reforms and their transferability are subjected to a more in-depth analysis. The question is now directly addressed with the help of Swedish experts, interacting in fluent French and familiar with the expectations of their hosts. The new narrative style permeates the first documentary entirely devoted to Swedish educational experiences, "Sweden, a new school." It was produced after the presidential elections and in collaboration with the Swedish Embassy. On this occasion, the link with the guidelines for the ongoing reform of primary-school curricula in France and the exemplary status of the Swedish experience emerges from the format of the broadcast itself. This takes the form of three long reports interspersed with in-studio conversations between the journalist and two experts: one Swedish (a national education inspector) and the other French. The context is now clearly outlined: it is that of the voluntaristic turn of the 1969 curriculum: education in gender equality, an increase in practical subjects such as parenting skills and domestic science, and removing the last traces of separate educational pathways within compulsory schooling. Despite the abundance of technical elements, the Swedish example did not come from the content of the reforms but from much more intangible qualities: the "spirit" highlighted by the above-mentioned documentaries. It is the long scenes filmed in the classroom and the physical attitude of the Swedish pupils that serve as an example.[43] The directive role of adults and teachers seems marginal and the role of active methods is underlined.

The studio-recorded section served to rationalise all these impressions and translate them into basic principles. The Swedish expert proudly rattles them off: the social utility of study, the need to constantly update content, and self-education and self-evaluation, which are at the heart of the compulsory school reform but would also soon inspire the reorganisation of high schools and universities. Faced with these perspectives, the French representative openly placed himself in the role of willing pupil. As he points out, the primary school reform project launched in August by the new Education Minister, Olivier Guichard, follows the same track with its move away from centralism, increased responsiveness to the needs of individual pupils, and less "academic" contents and methods.[44] The supposed consensus

42 "The admiration for Sweden has made way for imitation"—notes the press review on global *Sverigebild*, issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. *Sverige i utländsk press* (Stockholm: Utrikesdepartementet, 1969).

43 "Look at these faces," the off-screen commentary exhorts from the opening frames.

44 In primary teaching, the humanities would be embedded within an interdisciplinary "awakening" subject: a reform that brings to mind the notion of "social orientation subjects" in Swedish curricula (from 1962 to the 1980s).

is somewhat undermined by the general tone of the presentations. Some signs of concern emerged from a long interview with a group of Swedish high-school teachers: French-language teachers, since, in this case too, the interviews were conducted without interpreters. The psychological impact of the issue of autonomy and democratisation on the teaching profession comes to light: as these first-hand observers explain, when teaching focuses on the individual pupil and the role of the teacher-judge is abandoned, the teacher is placed under an unprecedented psychological burden.

A final rhetorical thread falls outside the scope both of idealisation and comparison. It articulates a vague anxiety over the consequences of the path Swedish reformers appear to be pursuing undaunted, which involves a dismissive approach towards the aura of the school-institution and the disillusionment of the adult world. Some of the remarks by J.-E. Jannesson, the presenter of "Sweden, a new school," hint at this cultural distress: "It is as if the family did not exist [...] You are busy creating a new people […]" Indeed, all these questions revolve around the moral legacy of the Welfare State as such. They could be likened to broader, ambivalent narratives of Swedish success and its psychosocial corollaries. But child welfare and school life will lastingly provide the scenario in which such issues can be articulated.

The mail archives of the Information Council (KSU) bear witness to the growing unease of Paris-based officials with the media's new approach to *suédomanie*: sarcastic press reviews of "Sweden, a new school" make them afraid that excessive sympathy might turn into its opposite; a diagnosis that proved to be prophetic.[45] The end of 1969—the peak of *suédomanie*—is also when media interest in Swedish society begins to decline: the critical and self-critical hints contained in the latest reports anticipate a downward trend, which will be followed by total indifference in the second half of the 1970s.[46] However, for reasons I will attempt to investigate, interest in the school system takes other forms, spreads to the educated classes and will resurface with equal force.

School narratives as a branding tool

The search for the specific origins of the French media's focus on Swedish education provided me with an insight: this popularity was gaining ground in parallel with the launch of a systematic branding campaign for Swedish social achievements. In his study of the genesis of the Swedish Institute (SI), Glover outlines the advent, in the 1960s, of new tools and rhetorics of state-run cultural diplomacy.[47] How does the new Swedish "educational model" fit into this picture? A study of cross-influences should see this as a relevant question. It calls for a different kind of source material, as well as recent literature on Swedish information and propaganda targeting a French audience. The aim is to bring out specific iconisation agents that anticipate the target's expectations, fuel the demand and channel it into certain directions. Our attention should in fact be focused on two areas: on the one hand, the way French interest was monitored in Sweden thanks to the upgrading of the public-service branches in

45 Letter by D.M. Winter (Paris Committee spokesman) to the Foreign Ministry on November 5, 1969.

46 In "Contrat de progrès," a female activist brings up the recent wildcat strikes in the Port of Gothenburg as an example of the existence of pockets of discontent among workers.

47 Glover (2011).

charge of the *Sverigebild*; and on the other hand, the role of the 1960s educational reforms in shaping an attractive image of Swedish social reformism.

The launch of a specific "French action" (*Sverigeaktionen i Frankrike*) by the Information Council in 1963 provides a test-case of the relevance, within a specific context, of a coordinated approach to information about Sweden. The convergence of three factors works as a trigger: interest on the part of business circles to strengthen their positions in France; the business-like marketing of a country treated as a product; and a switch in focus towards social content and pilot reforms.[48] The Council's initiative drew on the findings of a poll on the *image* of Sweden in France carried out by an advertising company. The test bench for the so-called "Paris Committee," created to coordinate opinion-building initiatives, was the organisation of a state visit to France by the King of Sweden (28–30 May 1963) and Prime Minister Erlander. These high–level exchanges coincided with two major exhibitions dedicated to Sweden.

A strategy designed to shape a positive image of the country through advertisements and reports in important news outlets is clearly outlined in the minutes of the Paris Committee. Its articulation with a general policy trend would emerge in the years to come. At first, the information provided concerned "generalist" actions based on visits by Swedish celebrities, the promotion of industrial products and advertisements in the biggest news outlets.[49] But it soon evolved into more focused initiatives, targeting journalists interested in Sweden and intellectuals sympathetic to the country's social achievements, as well as sociologists and civil servants from De Gaulle's *commissariat au plan*.[50]

A trend well highlighted by Glover is confirmed by the study by Mørkved Hellenes: in the second half of the 1960s, the branding focus is on best practice in family and social reforms. This aspect plays a particular role in the relationship with France, driven by the presence of responsive journalists and politicians included in official visits, and finally by the outbreak of interest in the French public debate. It is easy to see that the new focus of school policy (often in connection with family policy) plays an increasing role both in the demand for information from France and in the supply of documentation, to such an extent that it gains a place in the "global" country narrative, as articulated by the cultural PR-agency in charge of study exchanges, the Swedish Institute. An early example is the study-visit programme called "Knowledge of Sweden," then "Living in Sweden."[51] The initiative was aimed at middle-ranking French public servants and advertised in *Le Monde* and other newspapers. Beginning in 1964, a specific space was reserved for education and for the recently adopted reforms, which were presented to the French guests in an introductory speech by a senior official followed by a documentary film.

An enhanced synergy between different branches of State administration—nation-branding agencies and national sectorial agencies—acted as a trigger here.

48 See Glover (2015).

49 Protokoll 10/01/1963 and 21/10/1963, Kommittén för Sverigeaktionen i Frankrike, Upplysningsberedningen, RA.

50 Ibid., protokoll, 7/11/1963. The broadcast *La Suède* was produced in the aftermath of the King's visit to Paris.

51 Pariskontoret, F III – 26, 1969, Svenska Institutet, RA.

Quantity and quality of the information output were underpinned by a greater emphasis on dissemination and self-promotion on the part of the National Board of Education. Disseminators were often administrative or scientific leaders of ongoing reform projects; features of the reform projects involving a social relevance—civic education, vocational orientation in school, etc.—were replicated from one publication to another.[52] The material then reached the SI—which coordinates dissemination—and was conveyed in the form of brochures.[53] A first wave of broad publications in French was edited, both in France and in Sweden, in connection with the country's first wave of popularity, linked to the visit of Sweden's head of state and the "action" of 1963–1964.[54]

This pre-organisation of information flows was, in part, the result of the professionalisation of the nation branding process described by Glover and Mørkved Hellenes; this might suggest that the school that was so admired in France was, essentially, one of the tools that the Swedish political system was using to create an *interesting* narrative about itself for the outside world. Nevertheless, to point out the coincidence between two paths of iconisation is not the same as explaining them. Image circulation is not a one-way street, nor does it take place in the abstract; what interests me most is the way *different* channels of imitation and conceptual borrowing relate to each other. At this stage of exchange expansion thematic choices are conditioned both by a political input and by the feed-back of Swedish diplomats on the ground, sensitive to the target's responsiveness. These are the premises of a hybridisation: unwittingly, Swedish diplomats and press officers, academic institutions from the two countries, and French policymakers in search of proven examples created a common narrative.

The first revision of the comprehensive school curricula in 1969 marks a turning point, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. From that year onwards, the layout of the foreign-language information sheets produced by SÖ became more sophisticated[55]. A summary of the first *grundskola* curriculum had been published in French in 1964 and a 1969 redraft resulted in a multilingual, fully-illustrated booklet presenting the salient innovations of the new curriculum.[56] The iconography features images of students at work in front of industrial machines, engaged in the shooting of a film or busy in a fully-equipped laundry. Exactly the same choices find echoes in French TV reporting of the time. Thematic leaflets were published to reflect both the general intentions of the system and specific priority reform areas: vocational guidance (PRYO), education for the disabled, sex education.[57] Most of the leaflets released by SI ("Actualités suédoises" series) on educational matters—a standard

52 *Informationsblad* 1965–1972, Skolöverstyrelsen, RA.

53 *Upplysningsmaterial på främmande språk*, SI. Over the years, technical data sheets (*faktablad*) disseminated through the diplomatic representations had delivered information on the school system in scattered and generic form. Production of the data sheets increased sharply towards the end of the 1960s. *Informationsblad*, BIC:1, 1965–1968, Skolöverstyrelsen, RA.

54 See Bengt Hultin, *L'école nouvelle en Suède* (Stockholm: Skolöverstyrelsen, 1964) and *L'Enseignement en Suède*, Notes et études documentaires, n° 3044 (Paris: La Documentation française, 1963).

55 Bib 1, 2, 3, Skolöverstyrelsen, RA.

56 Hultin (1964) and SÖ, *Voici l'école de base* (Stockholm: Liber, 1971).

57 *Informationsblad*, BIC:2, 1969, Skolöverstyrelsen, RA.

information source for foreign media—were in fact re-editions of SÖ publications.[58] In the ensuing years, they would report methodically on reorganisation projects (SIA-reform, 1974–1976 and the new Nursery School, *förskola*, launched in 1975) or specific curricula reviews, namely religion instruction and sex education. Values such as equality and integration were foregrounded: the focus shifts from organisation of the system or statistics towards ideology and opinion-building. The focus on technical analysis within SÖ shows that modernising the style of these campaigns was becoming a strategic dimension of the school reforms—a task which required the assistance of private consultants.[59] Thus, while the nation-building branch was the messenger, the message itself was being processed within the reform branch—all the while occupying a growing place in the national self-image.[60]

At this stage, the role played by Sweden as the object of the French debate undergoes a quality shift: the context was no longer that of a passive response to an act of goodwill towards the country and its products but of an internal push towards the *imitation* of a societal project.[61]

SI-arranged information tours now become a preparation for the transfer; school officials and teachers are increasingly targeted. Both the crew of "The Swedish paradise" and the author of the first monograph on education in Sweden had been part of such initiatives.[62] According to the scheme expertly illustrated by Marklund and Petersen in their essay *Return to Sender*, the debate that had taken hold in France and the increasing expectations from the target audience steer, to a certain extent, the branding actions. The French *Sverigebild* trend was conscientiously monitored both by the press reviews of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the Information Council. The upward trend represents not only a success indicator, but a concrete spur to strengthen and focus the communication.[63] Unsurprisingly, the budget estimations of the information campaign for France for 1970 put the emphasis on education issues.

The strategic alliance between the educational and nation-branding branches confers a more programmatic character on the information material designed for a French audience; some of the topics highlighted are both a picture of the current political agenda and a call for comparison.[64] At the same time, the increase of the bulk of information available for circulation prompted a synergy with French media

58 *Upplysningsmaterial på främmande språk*, Evi:96, SI.

59 *Informationsfunktionens roll i* SÖs *reformarbete* (report dated 12.6.1970). Konsult Kollegiet AB. The State reform bureaucracy's increasing focus on external communication was also a consequence of its assumption of new responsibilities for awareness-raising campaigns targeting immigrant populations.

60 Senior officials, including SÖ's general director, often feature among the authors of French summaries of the latest reforms. See Jonas Orring, *L'école en Suède: un aperçu sur l'enseignement primaire et secondaire* (Stockholm. SÖ-förlaget, 1968).

61 Letter by G. Hägglöf on 26.3.1968, FI a:76, KSU, RA.

62 Furthermore, a study visit for eight French journalists specialising in education was arranged from 20 to 26.4.1969 by the press service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—in cooperation with SÖ.

63 Initially, the Council's minutes record the request for more funds for information in France, due to a peak in spontaneous interest; later, they would acknowledge that the demand for exhibitions and conferences had become "too great to be met." Protokoll, 21.10.1969 and 8.4.1970, KSU, RA.

64 *The principle of objectivity in religious education, Environmental education, Sex roles studies… Informationsblad,* BIC: 3 1970–1972, Skolöverstyrelsen, RA.

actors. A synergy, or a role-play: a new type of cultural mediator—largely young, dual-nationality authors—operate within the Board, tasked both with debunking mythical constructions and substantiating them. One of the new contributors was R. Weber, a 29-year-old journalist who, in 1970, wrote a short pamphlet for the SI on *Gender Role Retraining in Swedish Schools*. This was soon followed by *A Showcase of the Swedish School System* and *Learning to Become a Swede* (1971), on immigrant education.[65] At the end of the day, French journalists (namely, press correspondents in Sweden) helped nation branding bodies to complete the work: transforming an ambivalent object of fascination, the Swedish school, into an all-round "model."[66] At the end of 1969, National PR-agents noted that the infatuation for Sweden in France was so intense that it could not be ascribed to their efforts. At the same time, it was becoming a handy tool to target them.[67] Both sides of the picture, diplomatic branding and mythologisation, had come closer and closer to each other.

Influence networks and international expertise

A further, partially independent influencing factor can be observed: the international networking of the Swedish reform architects. Torsten Husén, the academic mind behind the move to the comprehensive school system, soon developed into an agent of conceptual transfer: a prolific, widely translated ambassador of a success story.[68] The way it intertwines with the emergence of a national educational "brand" deserves close scrutiny.

Since the late 1950s, Husén was the main architect of the first body for evidence-based comparisons of national educational systems: the Stockholm-based IEA.[69] There is a striking coincidence between the launching of the *grundskola* and the release of the first IEA pilot study on pupils' achievements, in 1962.[70] The Swedish comprehensive school—a pioneer institution, inspired by the synergy between policymakers, research and business—became the laboratory of future, large-scale assessment. As early as 1961, the records of Swedish researchers in the field of longitudinal follow-up of pupils' performance led the OECD to organise a conference in Stockholm on a related topic: the best exploitation of talent through the school system.[71] Husén himself took part in it. That same year, the OECD conducted its country review of the Swedish education system. A year later, Husén would visit France

65 *La rééducation du rôle des sexes (sic) dans les écoles suédoises*; *Une vitrine du système scolaire suédois*; *Apprendre à devenir suédois*.

66 Stockholm correspondent M. Salzer praised the high school's "reform of the reforms" in an article based on an interview with T. Husén (*La réforme des réformes*); see also "Swedish School System in Transition" (*L'école suédoise en période de transition*, SI, "Actualités suédoises"), published on March 25, 1974.

67 Protokoll, 1.12.1969, Kommittén för Sverigeaktionen i Frankrike, Upplysningsberedningen, RA. Linked to this are the budget proposals for the Frankrikeprogram 1970/1971. They envisage the release in France of a multi-volume book on various aspects of current social affairs in Sweden.

68 See Torsten Husén, *An Incurable Academic: Memoirs of a Professor* (Oxford and New York: Pergamon Press, 1983).

69 International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement, founded in 1958. The secretariat was moved to Stockholm in 1969. From 1970, Husén also chaired the newly-created International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), based in Paris.

70 Joakim Landahl, "De-Scandalisation and International Assessments: The Reception of IEA Surveys in Sweden During the 1970s," *Globalisation, Societies and Education* 5 (2018), 566–76.

71 "Ability and Educational Opportunity," Kungälv, 1961.

on his first academic mission to the country.[72] Some of his students would follow in his footsteps, allowing the first experiences in the field of transnational comparison of the performance of education systems to draw inspiration from Swedish know-how. A Swedish conceptual toolbox would continue to influence the agenda of the international promoters of educational innovation: UNESCO, the Council of Europe, and above all the OECD. After having been tested in Sweden, key-words such as "recurring education," "competences" or "e-skills" were incorporated into a "doxa" of educational modernity.[73]

The "permanent reform" machinery put in place in preparation for the creation of the *grundskola* triggered an internationalisation dynamic, punctuated by institution and network building and individual study visits. It was not simply a question of marketing Swedish achievements abroad; these scholarly exchanges provided a qualitatively different kind of exemplarity compared to the message conveyed by cultural diplomacy channels. They did not promote a political agenda, but a view of education. The message came across as matter-of-fact: the performance of educational systems was suitable for comparison, and solutions tested in a given context could be measured and generalised. The ideological context of the 1960s—the rise of Sweden as a "leading nation" in the area of social modernisation—was conducive: the international career strategies of Swedish experts would benefit from the country's growing reputation.[74] At the same time, test scores consolidated the status of Swedish experiences as quality benchmarks.

To sum up, the French public would be confronted with a twofold seductive input: records of successful reform-making, and the availability of a new generation of experts who were entitled to provide advice and guidance. In the ensuing explosion of conferences and symposia, they were acclaimed as representatives of the education of the future, thereby crediting Sweden with specific expertise in certain areas of school modernisation: equality and social integration through education, civics and sex education.[75]

The global consequence of these converging actions can be summarised as follows: the creation of a doxa, and the stabilization of a social image. Recent research helps us discern how this process unfolded. Mørkved Hellenes has singled out a concrete legacy of the strategies of cultural diplomacy targeting France: the creation of a Swedish cultural centre in Paris in 1971.[76] During the early years of the cultural centre's programming, the changing status of the child in society played a limited, but subtle role; events and exhibitions with a focus on children's life and

72 Husén (1983) recalls that, all through the 1960s, he was involved in the country reviews that the OECD produced on three countries: the United States, Germany and France itself.

73 Torsten Husén, "Lifelong Learning in the 'Educative Society'," *International* 17 (1968), 87–99. Through his assignments at the OECD's Centre for Research and Innovation in Education in the 1990s, and the latter's role in the elaboration of "PISA" rankings, the Swedish scholar and senior civil servant Ulf P. Lundgren, paved the way for promoting this concept as a standard tool for international testing of educational achievement. Ulf P. Lundgren, "Pisa as a Political Instrument," in *Pisa Under Examination*, ed. M. A. Pereyra et al. (Rotterdam: Sense, 2011), 15–30.

74 Landahl (2018), 569.

75 Often, the proceedings of the conferences held abroad by these experts feature in the Board's external communication output. See T. Husén's report on "Education in the Year 2000," 1.11.1971, *Informationsblad,* BIC: 3 1970–1972, *Skolöverstyrelsen*, RA.

76 Mørkved Hellenes (2019).

school practices clearly appealed to the curiosity of the educated public.[77] The correspondence records of the centre also reveal a keen interest on the part of French high-school teachers, public servants and journalists, along with requests for further information.[78] New media channels then follow suit. In the early 1970s, a paperback collection (*La Suède en question*) was released, in cooperation with SI, to provide the French public with a picture of the most salient features of the Swedish approach to social organisation. The school reform was the subject of a separate volume; like Servan-Schreiber, the author was a journalist at *L'Express*.[79] Academic interest in French–Swedish comparisons also develops rapidly: making *this* particular school relevant for French topical debate had become a conditioned reflex, ready to operate whenever the internal political climate required it.[80]

The Swedish school's comeback in French media coverage (2010–2019): From model to *anti-model*?

It is in its translation to television that the iconisation process reaches its zenith. Cursory glimpses of life in Sweden are elevated to the status of an in-depth report, generally leaving image-exporters and transfer agents concealed behind the scenes. Both lessons and warnings from the "model" are displayed in a categorical manner. It has been all the more puzzling to recognize the same pattern in French media discourse produced 50 years later—in the era of laboratory teaching, e-learning and virtual classrooms.

An examination of the archives of French state radio and television and the databases of generalist press articles from 1945 to the present day shows that the focus on Swedish education policies of the late 1960s was followed by a gradual decline in media coverage, which has been interrupted by a reawakening of attention in the last 8–10 years.[81] As in the past, French attention to the state of Swedish education is being stimulated by the vigour of the internal debate in Sweden. In the background are the controversies resulting from the organisational reforms promoted since 1989, in particular the municipalisation of administrative and pedagogical responsibilities, and the partial deregulation of the curricula: but in this case, the impact has clearly been a delayed one. A recent example is the controversy within the Social Democratic government over the effects of opening up the education system to the market, which contributed to the central role played by the school system in the campaign for

77 I refer in particular to the touring exhibitions *Make Way for the Children!* ("Place aux enfants") and *Children in Town* ("Les enfants en ville"), held between 1976 and 1978. F 2:4, Pariskontoret, Svenska Institutet, RA. In the case of the latter exhibition, the content was provided by the newly-created Play Environment Council (*Lekmiljörådet*); it replicated previous promotion campaigns run in Sweden.

78 The airing of *Sweden, a new school* provoked "several hundred" requests for information at the Swedish Embassy.

79 Serge Richard, *Ecole nouvelle, société nouvelle* (Paris: Seghers, 1971).

80 Although no specific studies were produced, the *Revue française de pédagogie* dedicates ample space to the reporting of experiences and reviews of Swedish expertise in different areas, through the section "A travers l'actualité pédagogique" (Exploring current pedagogical trends).

81 I have only been able to find one reference to the Swedish school system in TV programming since the early 1970s; this was from May 1979 and refers to the law prohibiting corporal punishment. This silence would be broken only in the 1990s by a few sporadic flashes of information. The same pattern applies to radio broadcasting.

the Swedish general election of 9 September 2018. By drawing attention to the way school companies in Sweden are allowed to generate profits, several French media surveys have addressed the boom in private education, the commercial logic governing competition between schools for the enrolment of children and the transformation of teachers into service providers.[82] The prevailing mood is one of outrage: press articles and TV surveys portray a system that has become irresponsible, where schools and kindergartens listed on the stock exchange have bent their teaching to fit the logic of advertising, and they then transfer their failures onto the shoulders of pupils. This narrative has quickly developed into a cliché: as a matter of fact, the education situation had been described along the same lines during elections in Sweden four years earlier, when a TV report by the Franco–German channel ARTE claimed in 2014 that the school system in Sweden was "going off the rails."[83]

The drastic nature of the French criticism, particularly on the left of the political spectrum, is not surprising in light of the special regime (*l'exception culturelle*) that France claims for the cultural goods sector in international negotiations, when faced with the pressure of market forces. But there are also other explanations for the dramatic tone: the denunciation of the alleged commercial intoxication of the Swedish school system reveals a hidden anticipation: the persistence of a utopian outlook, rooted in a narrative tradition. In fact, many reports show frustration with the fact that Sweden "is not what we believed," that is, a system where equality and equal opportunities are a flagship.[84] This bewilderment has provided grounds for criticism: this could possibly explain why the "failure" of the system has been repeatedly addressed on state radio, television and in the press with a substantially uniform approach and tone on the part of the various commentators.[85] A successful myth-building exercise is now at odds with its objective: the existence of a positive bias among foreign observers becomes an aggravating factor or, to quote Marklund, a "trap."[86]

As is often the case with conceptual transfer, the debate that had developed in Sweden years earlier was resurrected in France and transformed into a one-sided message about Sweden's "new" neoliberal course in education. Since 2008, the Swedish government and school authorities have launched several assessments of the unforeseen effects of the transfer of management responsibilities from central government to the municipalities.[87] These assessments led to increased supervision by the central authorities of, for example, the opening of private schools and teacher certification; but the protracted controversy in Sweden has progressively transferred it into the French intellectual arena, where similar issues were emerging. The debate no longer focuses on the "foundation" of a model, but on its alleged "demolition." To this can be added a controversy in domestic policy in France: the polemical use of

82 Violet Goarant, "Privatisation de l'école, le fiasco suédois," *Le Monde diplomatique*, September, 2018.

83 *Suède: Les dérives du système scolaire* broadcast on September 7, 2014 on ARTE.

84 Beginning in 2013, the country's fall from first place to last in the PISA surveys is constantly mentioned.

85 *Education: l'anti-modèle suédois* broadcast on September 8, 2018 on FRANCE-CULTURE.

86 Carl Marklund, "A Swedish Norden or a Nordic Sweden?" in *Communicating the North*, ed. Jonas Harvard and Peter Stadius (Burlington: Ashgate, 2013).

87 SOU 2007:28, *Tydliga mål och kunskapskrav i grundskola,* and Proposition 2007/2008:50, *Statens skolinspektion*, Riksdagshandlingar.

the "failure" of a system against its *laudatores*. The evils concerning the deregulation of public education correspond, in fact, to reform guidelines that have also been envisaged in France, by boasting of the "lesson from Sweden," from the spreading of a market approach to schools to the concept of educational vouchers (*cheque* éducation).[88] In fact, going back a decade, we can see that the new Swedish approach to education was welcomed by the French political and media establishment; a welcome that was also extended to other measures designed to open up the labour market and the management of public services. References to Sweden in the so-called Attali Report on Growth (2008) and earlier praise on the part of both Conservative Prime Minister François Fillon and the Socialist presidential candidate Ségolène Royal are indicative of a consensus.[89] Following this type of narrative, Sweden is extolled as in the past as a laboratory of future trends. The polemical tone with which reporters have recently denounced deregulation can then be interpreted as the revolt of one stereotype (ethical and normative) against another, focused on flexibility and market adjustment. But neither of the two are new.[90]

For this reason, the difference in tone between the two periods—the shift from admiration to criticism—is perhaps apparent. One could say that the attention that reporters have been paying to the current crisis originates from the long pre-existing habit of attributing to Sweden both exemplariness and exoticism in the areas of childhood and education. The trend in the media coverage of the issue in the years 2010–2017 shows that the echoes of election campaigns have only reactivated a search for confirmation that operates, in the French debate, as a conditioned reflex. In other words, the Swedish school acts as a symbol of "something" more important than the content of empirical assessment in itself. Comparing the sample of articles and broadcasts I have collated, the very term "educational model" provides the most frequent and telling topos. No reporter is able to forgo it, regardless of the thesis to be proved: popping up in both critical and supportive contexts, the label is used as a descriptive term.[91] Very often, in the case of Sweden, images and stories of real life and school alternate, as if the latter had to epitomise, once again, the country's destiny as a whole.

Domestic uses of late utopian narratives in education: from anti-authoritarian school to equal parenthood

As was the case in the 1960s, interest for Swedish situations is largely conditioned by the outbreak of intricate controversies in the French social arena: the connection is clear in the case of the bans on the *burka* (2010) and corporal punishment

88 Decision No. 6 of the Attali Report ("allowing parents to freely choose the place where their children go to school […]"), see footnote 89.

89 I refer to the Committee on the Liberation of Growth, created by President Nicolas Sarkozy and chaired by Jacques Attali, a former advisor to François Mitterrand. In the final report, Sweden is cited 24 times (*300 décisions pour changer la France. Rapport de la Commission pour la libération de la croissance française* (Paris: La documentation française, 2008)).

90 In the first decade of the new millennium, both in the French and international perception, the contents of the "Nordic myth" shifted from praise for the welfare state to praise for the system's responsiveness in the face of crises. See Marklund (2017).

91 The expression is found in the titles or subtitles of many articles and programmes (*Le modèle* éducatif *suédois*, broadcast on April 18, 2012 on FRANCE 3) and in the text of the other reports cited.

(2019).[92] The focus on schools' integrative performance is then, once again, a metaphor: the implied issues are still authority vs. liberation, changing gender roles, *l'enfant roi* (child-as-king).[93] Rather than on actual reforms, reports will focus on the climate of Swedish debate, current rules and everyday life. These themes have been developed in particular by the television network ARTE, which is particularly keen to identify pan-European trends. Compared to the 1960s, the identity of the mediators has changed: they are dual-national journalists, cosmopolitans, inclined to frame the comparison in a pan-European perspective. However, this does not diminish the role attributed to Sweden: that of embodying—in fields such as children's rights—the most radical approach. A source of admiration and a source of fear at one and the same time; a paradigm of a communication gap. The Swedish education myth—in a globalised Europe—lives on as an instrument of competitive identification between the two countries. A teleological approach brings together almost all the subjects of the TV reports focusing on Swedish education, such as the advent of non-selective schooling and the pupils' seizure of power: for French state television (2010), Sweden is simply a country "without the *baccalauréat* and without marks," a description that was already news 20 years earlier.[94] In 2012, Soir 3 news referred to the Swedish "educational model" in the beginning of a sketch about a child-centred society.[95] In contrast to France, the "difficulties" facing pupils are not the focus of the Swedish educational institution's concerns: schools are committed to promoting the well-being of pupils, without recourse to competition or grades, and all intellectual activities take place in a pleasant environment. Another report, from the multicultural Stockholm suburb of Kista, reveals that "equality for everybody" is the school principal's motto.[96]

In addition to liberal assessment methods, other aspects of the Swedish school system are praised as examples of an emphasis on autonomy. In reporting how Swedish schools teach gender equality as a subject of instruction or how the niqab and cultural differences are accepted without drama, journalists do not take a stance. They let the "facts" speak for themselves. Sweden seems to be entrusted with the mission of demonstrating what the egalitarian schools of tomorrow will look like. This conclusion (a new version of an old topos) also applies to contexts where the concept of a "model" appears in an analogous, but reversed, way. In the evening news on the France 2 TV channel, the triumph of an omnipotent tyrannical child at school and then in the family is pilloried.[97] In this sense, too, Sweden would prove to be a forerunner: the methods used by its schools show how the country would be at the mercy of total domination by children and are evidence, according to the reporter, of the bankruptcy of the entire social design: "the Swedish educational model is shattered."[98]

92 *En Suède, ils acceptent le voile*, "Avenue de l'Europe," broadcast on March 13, 2010 on FRANCE 3 and *Suède. Éducation zéro violence*, broadcast on November 29, 2019 on FRANCE 5.

93 *L'enfant roi suédois*, broadcast on November 12, 2013 on FRANCE 2.

94 *Système scolaire en Suède: pas de bac pas de notation,* broadcast on June 14, 2010 on FRANCE 3. *Suède sans bac*, "Le Journal de 20H," broadcast on June 4, 1991 on ANTENNE 2.

95 *Le modèle* éducatif *suédois* (2012).

96 *En Suède ils acceptent le voile* (2010).

97 *L'enfant roi suédois* (2013).

98 Ibid.

Conclusion: From national stereotypes to international benchmarks?

The analysis of these two distinct outbreaks of media fascination for educational innovation in Sweden leads us to a series of interrelated reflections. The most striking one concerns the enduring stability of the image that had crystallized since the 1960s TV reports: Swedish school-life proved to be an inexhaustible source of good practices, rhetorical variations on the theme "inclusive, non-selective education, with respect for each learner's uniqueness."[99] This narrative is deeply intertwined with the imaginary construction of Sweden as a social utopia; at least in the French context, it has been a cornerstone of it. Both contingent reasons (the connection with the introduction of the *grundskola*) and the keen demand, among French educational stakeholders, for ways out of the generational impasse of May 1968, boosted the process. A virtuous circle was created between supply and demand, making school innovation—from nursery school to adult retraining—a crucial area of the State-run branding campaigns.

This successful invention has left a lasting mark. In contemporary TV reporting, school narratives are repackaged in a natural way with edifying tales around migrant integration, the rejection of violence in society, or gender equality.[100] Inevitably, this made the visibility of Swedish schools' performances highly dependent on the reputation of the social machinery as a whole. In our sample, the occurrence of TV reports matches quite accurately the ebb and flow of the "model." The impact peak (1968–1969) overlaps with the unanimous global consensus toward the "third way," while the sharp trend reversal of the early 1970s is mirrored by the hasty dismissal of Swedish schools as a media topic. The end of the Social Democratic hegemony and the growing criticism of Welfare in the 1980s would confirm the trend, making Swedish schools "invisible" for a time. The resumption in the 2010s (three to four TV reports per year, up to the end of the decade) echoes the attempts of the Reinfeldt government to restore the Nordic myth as a flexible response to the world economic crisis. In this phase, the Swedish references in educational policy resurface after a long silence, but now for different reasons: the ability to meet new challenges such as decentralisation, multiculturalism, IT literacy, etc. The abrupt switch to a gloomy appraisal, around 2014, stems from different causes: the demoralising impact of the 2012 "PISA shock" and the media coverage of the failure of integration politics. The refugee crisis of 2015 poses a stark challenge to Swedish society's ability to cope with cultural difference, both in technical and in ideological terms; the Swedish school system is then unanimously treated as an "antimodel" in French media coverage.

That said, the picture is perhaps more nuanced than it might appear. A complex interweaving of inward expectations and outward actions have merged to make the Swedish reference appealing. While the unconscious image has proved stable in attributing certain qualities to the Nordic educational culture (as the obsessive use of the term "model" demonstrates), the media relevance of the Swedish example

99 In turn, such a high expectation may explain the blatant disappointment that punctuates the new cliché of the Swedish "counter-model," in the aftermath of the 2012 Swedish "PISA shock."

100 The link between education and sexuality is the most constant feature, from the 1960s to the present day. The commitment of Swedish Nursery schools to dismantling gender stereotypes is a recurring topic in the latest TV report (*Il, elle, hen. La pédagogie neutre en Suède*, broadcast by ARTE on February 7, 2014; *C'est quoi ton genre?* "Regards," broadcast by ARTE on February 26, 2019).

has been more shaky. The periods in which the Swedish school system makes news in France are those in which the Swedish debate on schools has been most lively. The personal commitment of the Social Democratic leadership, from Erlander to Palme, to educational policy and pedagogical expertise, has been an influential element in the outreach of domestic reform experiences. In the first stage, Swedish-run branding, backed up by the French reformers' positive interest in the same issues, has had a direct impact on the image filtered by the media, whereas the 2010s are more dominated by French societal issues (commodification of education, "burka ban" and corporal punishment ban) in which Sweden offers easy insights. Curiosity for a completely different world dominated the documentaries of the 1960s and their dreamy speculations. In the 2010s, it seems clear to everyone—producers and audience alike—what "that" world stands for: that is, the extreme outcome of familiar cultural trends. Conventional narratives of exemplarity and exaggeration, against a backdrop of susbstantially common concerns: "Did Sweden go too far?"[101]

Carl Marklund has shown how, since the 1990s, the rhetoric around welfare had become "less Swedish and more Nordic."[102] To some extent, the school system constitutes an exception: French media rhetorics persist in delivering a "total," essentialised image of the country, identifying a national culture with an idea.[103] The programme titles ("The Country of Parity," "The Country where spanking is forbidden") allude to this.[104]

The tenacity of this *national-educational* myth, provides proof of its relative autonomy, which seems to stem from the successful effort of the Swedish reform elite to be acknowledged internationally as a reference, converting Swedish reform aims—in the words of a senior OECD official, Andreas Schleicher—into the "gold standard" of educational reform.[105] An activism that is, after all, material proof of the intention behind the Swedish reform to mean something to the world. In the early 2000s, U. P. Lundgren was the perfect illustration of a reformer who transferred his experience as a promoter of an ideological shift in national reform practices into an international arena. In this respect, a new feature, which is particularly evident in the final phase examined, clearly separates the two outbreaks of icon-making. The authoritative voice, which calls to criticism or to self-assessment, no longer refers to daring experiments or cultural leanings: the yardstick is now *transnational*. In addition to the echo of Sweden's self-criticism about the outcomes of the deregulatory trend of the 1990s, the main source of media attention lies in PISA surveys, press releases from the OECD (namely its Paris-based Centre for Educational Research and Innovation), and comments on both by French pedagogical experts. All of the media reports I have examined take it for granted that the PISA surveys provide evidence of a crisis: a 2014 report by ARTE links the growing privatisation of schools with the fact that Sweden dropped to a level "below the OECD average" in the 2012 PISA

101 This was the subtitle of *L'enfant roi suédois*, broadcast in 2013.

102 Marklund (2016), 6.

103 See Glover (2015)

104 *Le pays de la parité: au pays de la fessée interdite* (a "rose-tinted world," according to the presenter).

105 A. Schleicher, "How to return to the "gold standard" for education," *OECD Education and Skills Today*, April 3, 2017, https://oecdedutoday.com/how-to-return-to-the-gold-standard-for-education/ (accessed November 30, 2020).

survey.[106] Four years later, *Le Monde diplomatique* refers to the 2015 PISA findings to note a "sharp decline in science and mathematics" compared to 2000.[107] In 2018, the state radio channel France-Culture quotes, once again, PISA 2015 findings, that it describes as an "electric shock" for Sweden.[108] Here, France seems to have followed the general tendency to attach more and more credit to international comparative assessments, which have largely replaced specific "models" in education, according to the "comparative turn" noted by K. Martens, and the growing importance attributed to numerical data in the assessment of results.[109] But what makes the whole thing intriguing is that even this refocusing on *objective* criteria was triggered by influential *Swedish* institutional players, and allowed to amplify a reputation. In other words: the "educational model" that the French media continues to yearn for lives on, but as a concept. A quality benchmark that even Sweden is now urged to live up to, by a demanding audience.

106 *Les dérives*, 2014.

107 *Le fiasco*, 2018.

108 See footnote 85.

109 Martens (2007); Sotiria Grek, "Governing by Numbers: the PISA 'Effect' in Europe," *Journal of Education Policy* 24 (2009), 23–37.

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A Competition State Perspective on the Development of Swedish Policies for Internationalisation of Higher Education and Research 1960s–2010s

Andreas Åkerlund

Abstract • This article is an historical analysis of Swedish policies for internationalisation of higher education and research from the 1970s and onwards. The analysis is carried out against the theoretical backdrop of the competition state, as a type of state reformulating and restructuring the relation between the national and international during the second half of the twentieth century with the aim of making society fit for international competition. Focussing on arguments as to why Swedish universities need to be internationalised, how this should be done and which parts of higher education that should be internationalised, the article shows the development of Swedish internationalisation policies, starting in the 1960s and -70s where focus was on international solidarity, inward student mobility and the internationalisation of teaching. In the 1980s and -90s the idea of a knowledge driven economic development was the central paradigm, resulting in a stronger focus on research and international research collaboration. To this the 2000s and -10s added a focus on ingoing mobility, both as a source of revenue through tuition fees, and a way to recruit skilled labour.

Keywords • internationalisation, internationalisation policy, competition state, student mobility

Introduction: National and international in higher education and research

The history of higher education and research contains an obvious tension between the national and the international. The university and the academic community are often pictured as inherently international if not cosmopolitan as visible in several studies on traveling scholars, academic mobility and the circulation of knowledge.[1] At the same time the roots of the modern research university lie in the nationalisation of this institution as it grew more and more dependent on state funding. Various scholars have pointed to the professionalisation of the academic taking place in Germany in the nineteenth century with the creation of scientific disciplines and the creation of the academic career and the professorial corps, all made possible through government funding as the professors were given the status of civil servants.[2] Universities

1 For example Jan Sundin, *Främmande studenter vid Uppsala universitet före andra världskriget: En studie i studentmigration* (Uppsala: Uppsala universitet, 1973); Sverker Sörlin, *De lärdas republik: Om vetenskapens internationella tendenser* (Malmö: Liber-Hermods, 1994); Terri Kim, "Shifting Patterns of Transnational Academic Mobility: A Comparative and Historical Approach," *Comparative Education* 45, no. 3 (2009); *Global Exchanges: Scholarships and Transnational Circulations in the Modern World*, edited by Ludovic Tournès and Giles Scott-Smith (Oxford: Berghahn, 2018).

2 Joseph Ben-David and Awzaham Zloczower, "Universities and Academic Systems in Modern Societies," in Joseph Ben-David, *Scientific Growth: Essays on the Social Organization and Ethos of Science*, edited by Gad Freudenthal (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 127–39; Björn Wittrock, "The Modern University: The Three Transformations," in *The European and American*

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have ever since been a truly national project, crucial in educating national elites and creating and defining national identities while at the same time pursuing specialised research in ever narrowing scientific fields. Björn Wittrock concludes that "[…] universities form part and parcel of the very same process which manifests itself in the emergence of an industrial economic order and the nation-state as the most typical and most important form of political organisation."[3] The development towards providing higher education for ever larger groups of the population and the 'democratisation' of the university after world war two can be understood as a part of this national project.[4] At the same time the twentieth century saw an increase in academic mobility and mobility programs as well as other forms of international collaborations[5], illustrating that universities and research facilities in spite of their nationalisation had never ceased to be cosmopolitan milieus and important nodes in the global circulation of knowledge. Jürgen Enders has summarised this development like this:

> The contemporary university was born of the nation state, not of medieval civilisation, and it was only in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, following the establishment of clear national economic interests, that universities acquired their identification with science and technology. Their regulatory and funding context was, and still is, national; their contribution to national cultures was, and still is, significant; students tended to be, and still are, trained to become national functionaries; and universities played, and still play, a considerable role in what some have called the military-industrial complex of nation states. In this perspective, they are very much national institutions. It is appropriate, therefore, to see current trends as part of a process by which national systems of higher education are being challenged by new forces of internationalisation. Universities are thus objects as well as subjects of "internationalisation" or "globalisation". They are affected by and at the same time influence these processes.[6]

Enders description of the current trends in 2004 as a situation where national systems were being challenged by internationalisation illustrates well that although higher education and research historically always have had international or cosmopolitan aspects, recent history and processes of globalisation are something qualitatively different. To understand this, it is important to notice that internationalisation

University since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays, edited by Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 310.

3 Wittrock (1993), 305

4 Walter Rüegg, "Chapter 1: Themes," in *A History of the University in Europe: Volume IV Universities since 1945*, edited by Walter Rüegg (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 13–14.

5 See for example Walter Johnson, *The Fulbright Program: A History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965); Volkhard Laitenberger, *Akademischer Austausch und auswärtige Kulturpolitik: Der Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst (DAAD) 1923–1945* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt, 1976); Gerald Jonas, *The Circuit Riders: Rockefeller Money and the Rise of Modern Science* (New York: Norton, 1989); Karl-Heinz Füssl, "Between Elitism and Educational Reform: German-American Exchange Programs, 1945–1970," in *The United States and Germany in the Era of the Cold War, 1945–1990: A Handbook*, edited by Detlef Junker (West Nyack: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Olof Ljungström, *Ämnessprängarna: Karolinska Institutet och Rockefeller Foundation 1930–1945* (Stockholm: Karolinska institutet University Press, 2010); Chay Brooks, ""The Ignorance of the Uneducated': Ford Foundation Philanthropy, the IIE, and the Geographies of Educational Exchange," *Journal of Historical Geography* 48 (2015).

6 Jürgen Enders, "Higher Education, Internationalisation and the Nation-State: Recent Developments and Challenges to Governance Theory," *Higher Education* 47, no. 3 (2004), 364–65.

of higher education can be understood in two ways. On the one hand there is a descriptive use often defined as "the process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery of post-secondary education."[7]. On the other hand, its meaning is by no means neutral in discussions on the higher education aims and ideals, with a higher degree of internationalisation being regarded as a desirable development to pursue and actively work for. Thus the term has a double function. It is both analytical, describing the ongoing process of integrating an international dimension into higher education and research, and a normative one, with any movement towards adding international dimensions being declared as per se progressive and desirable.[8] As a political buzzword, internationalisation is especially important at the national level, both as a rhetorical tool for raising funds or political support, and as an umbrella term for a variety of politically desirable reforms. In this article focus is on this normative and policy-creating use of internationalisation.

In his article Enders pictures globalisation as a phenomenon challenging the idea of the nation state while the state at the same time has been crucial for implementing "global processes."[9] Saskia Sassen argues in a similar manner and refers to the role of the state in relation to globalisation, as an "interface between national and supranational forces."[10] It is therefore reasonable to argue that in order to understand national university policies in general it is important to consider what kind of nation state we are dealing with.

This perspective has been present in Swedish research on the relation between the modern state and science. Aant Elzinga for example has showed that the establishment of a Social Democratic Welfare state after World War II meant a notable shift in research policy and the organisation of higher education and research.[11] Olle Edqvist has in a similar manner investigated the transformation of Swedish science and the international arena in the 1990s.[12] Internationalisation as a government policy is briefly mentioned in Sverker Sörlins book on the international tendencies of science, but not analyzed in depth. He does however comment that government supported internationalisation is a new phenomenon for the late twentieth century.[13]

In this article I will argue that in order to understand not only the establishment of internationalisation policies, but also the way such policies are constructed and

7 Jane Knight, "Internationalization Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 8, no. 1 (2004), 11.

8 Peter Scott, "Massification, Internationalization and Globalization," in *The Globalization of Higher Education*, edited by Peter Scott (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1998); Donald Broady and Mikael Börjesson, "How to Investigate Cross-Border Phenomena: Some Conceptual and Terminological Issues," Paper presented at *Power, Cosmopolitanism and the Transformation of European Elites*, Trinity College Dublin, June 8–9, 2015.

9 Enders (2004), 369.

10 Saskia Sassen, *A Sociology of Globalization* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2007), 49.

11 Aant Elzinga, "Universities, Research and the Transformation of the State in Sweden," in *The European and American University since 1800: Historical and Sociological Essays*, edited by Sheldon Rothblatt and Björn Wittrock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

12 Olle Edqvist, *Gränslös forskning: Om internationaliseringen av svensk forskning* (Nora: Nya Doxa 2009).

13 Sörlin (1994), 255–57.

implemented, it is important to analyse their establishment and development towards the backdrop of a theory of how the modern state works in a globalised environment. The idea of the competition state provides such a theoretical frame, providing a new view on the state-higher education relationship in the modern era. Being a small industrialised country with a large higher education and research-sector and a very export dependent economy, Sweden is a good case for studying the relationship between the competition state and the establishment and development of internationalisation policy.

As will be visible throughout the article the idea of actively internationalising higher education and research has its proper history as rationales as to why work for to enhance international contacts and perspectives have shifted over time. This article is an analysis of the establishment of and the shifts in the Swedish internationalisation policy from the late 1960s until the 2010s. Focus will be on the arguments brought forth in policy documents, government investigations as well as by other actors within the field to why Swedish universities need to be internationalised. What has been presented as the main reasons for internationalisation? And how can we understand this development in the light of a general development in state functioning from the traditional welfare state to the present-day competition state?

The competition state

As briefly mentioned above the policies aiming at the internationalisation of higher education and research need to be related to more profound changes in the international environment and to the attempt of modern states to deal with global processes. The competition state is the adaption of the state to globalisation, understood as ongoing structural changes in the economy and the international institutional framework on a global level. In making society "fit for competition" many key concepts of the Keynesian welfare state are being abandoned or reformed:

> While the mission of the welfare state had been to protect national society from excessive competition by controlling cross-border economic transactions, by granting social rights an protection and by nationalizing key public services, the competition state pursues 'increased marketization'. It liberalizes cross-border movements, re-commodifies labor and privatizes public services.[14]

This definition of the competition state by Philipp Genschel and Laura Seelkopf makes clear its differences compared to the Keynesian welfare state. The competition state prioritises microeconomic efficiency over managing the macroeconomy and it is relying on market mechanisms while avoiding market interventions. It also differs from the traditional welfare state since it prioritises the commodification of labour through active labour market policies such as subsidised employments, and the privatisation of services. It also abandons the old nation state idea of national unity through economic coherence and a common identity or culture. The openness towards international markets and global flows of capital, workers and goods goes hand in hand with a declared indifference towards race, religion, or gender. Diversity

14 Philipp Genschel and Laura Seelkopf, "The Competition State: The Modern State in a Global Economy," in *The Oxford Handbook of Transformations of the State*, edited by Stephan Leibfried et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 237.

itself is thus declared a productive resource.[15] This is commented by Philip G. Cerny, who means that this development might lead to a decline of national unity and to societies abandoning the idea of a common good on state level. Globalisation, he concludes, might in some regards not lead to a new world order, but to tribalisation and a new world disorder.[16] Another result of globalisation and the transformation towards a competition state is the decline of state sovereignty. International trade treaties and the constant risk that mobile capital leaves the country makes it hard for governments to pursue protectionist or decommodification politics.[17]

As noted by Cerny this restructuring of the state does not lead to less state or a decline of state action. Instead it seems to necessitate "intervention and regulation in the name of competitiveness and marketisation."[18] These regulations often aim at restructuring the relation between the domestic and the foreign:

> [T]he state still has a major national role to play, but that role is increasingly to expose the domestic to the transnational, to prise open the nation-state to a globalizing world, in the interest of ensuring that citizens keep up with the multiple pressures and demands of that increasingly integrated and interdependent political, economical and social ecosystem. The foreign or external is no longer external or 'outside'. It is internalized in the very way the state operates and people interact politically, economically and socially from the local to the global levels.[19]

Methodological considerations and sources

One of the methodological problems when investigating internationalisation is the variety of practices and policy areas which are part of internationalisation efforts at a given time in history. To the existing practices we can count various forms of mobility (student, researcher, teacher, administrator), or international collaborations on different levels, from researcher over institutional to national. One could also mention implementing an international perspective in teaching under the concept internationalisation at home, or other forms of international collaborations, such as textbook revisions or international educational tuning or the alignment of curriculum to a common standard such as the Bologna process.

More interesting for a study on internationalisation policy than these various practices—which will differ depending on the institutional and economical frames of higher education on a national level—are instead the intended outcomes. Why was and is internationalisation pursued?—or as Edwin Starr could have formulated it back in 1970: "Internationalization, what is it good for?" In order to answer this question, the arguments need to be systematised.

In his *Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe* Hans de Wit presents various rationales behind the internationalisation

15 Genschel and Seelkopf (2015), 239.

16 Philip G. Cerny, "Paradoxes of the Competition State: The Dynamics of Political Globalization," *Government and Opposition* 32, no. 2 (1997), 255–56.

17 Genschel and Seelkopf (2015), 240.

18 Cerny (1997), 251.

19 Philip G. Cerny, "The Competition State Today: From Raison d'État to Raison du Monde," *Policy Studies* 31, no. 1 (2010), 6.

of higher education.[20] Although being on a high level of abstraction, his model is a helpful tool when it comes to identifying and classifying the arguments used within the policy and practice of internationalisation. According to de Wit the rationales can be divided into four different groups as shown in table 1.

Table 1. Rationales of internationalisation

1. Political rationales	*2. Economic rationales*	*3. Cultural rationales*	*4. Academic rationales*
Foreign Policy	Growth and Competitiveness	Culture promotion	International Dimension to Research and Teaching
National Security	Labor Market	Individual development	Widening the academic Horizon
Technical Assistance	National Educational Demand		Institution-building
Peace and Mutual Understanding	Marketization / Education as commodity		Profile and Status
National and Regional Identity			Enhancement of Quality
			International academic Standards

Based on Hans de Wit, *Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: A Historical, Comparative and Conceptual Analysis* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 85–99. The names of the various aspects of the rationales have in some cases been altered for the sake of clarification.

The aspects presented in table 1 under each rationale are to be understood as examples and might not all be visible in the empirical material. The model of de Wit will be used throughout the article to highlight dominating themes as well as changes in internationalisation rationales in Swedish internationalisation policy over time. It also hints at the variety of intertwined political, economic, cultural and scientific rationales driving internationalisation in general. The fact that internationalisation has been and still is driven by such distinct forces as foreign and security policy, inner-academic rationales of communication and status or economic and occupational regards makes it especially interesting to relate the shifts in internationalisation policy to more general changes in how the modern state handles the international environment.

The sources used in this article are primarily parliamentary inquiries, so called SOU (*Statens offentliga utredningar*), or policy documents and reports emanating from government agencies. Supplementary material consists of conference reports or other publications on internationalisation. The material has been analysed using the rationales from Hans de Wit discussed above, in order to understand which areas of higher education and research that were prioritised and to what end internationalisation was to be carried out during the investigated time period. The main limitation of this material is that it only permits answering questions related to policy. It cannot grasp the actual internationalisation measures in the higher education sector, nor the general historical debate on why and how Swedish higher education and research should be internationalised.

20 Hans de Wit, *Internationalization of Higher Education in the United States of America and Europe: A Historical, Comparative and Conceptual Analysis* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2002), 85–99.

1970s: International perspectives and international solidarity

If we are to pin down the start of Swedish internationalisation as the point in time when the concept of internationalisation is first formulated as a policy object in Sweden, then internationalisation started at the beginning of the 1970s with the University inquiry of 1968 (*1968 års utbildningsutredning* U68) and the internationalisation committee of the state agency for higher education (*Universitetskanslersämbetet* UKÄ).

Universities international contacts had of course been thematised before. Discussions on the usefulness of educational exchanges or the knowledge of foreign languages or cultures are old topics in higher education and research and state or private funding of these activities go back at least to the end of the 1800s.[21] But internationalisation as a concept, a process and a desirable goal for higher education appeared around 1970 in the Swedish context. In this period internationalisation was strongly related to the idea of international solidarity, and the development of the underdeveloped world.

In a first short report the U68 committee presented the aims, which it considered crucial for higher education, and already here internationalisation was strongly related to the relationship between "developed" and "underdeveloped" countries. In the future one could, according to U68, "count with a conscious will to international equalization, contact and solidarity."[22] The report consequently discussed the need for education on the conditions of the poorer countries within a range of professions, such as engineers or medical personnel only to close this section with the following appeal:

> In a situation where the welfare gap between industrialized countries and underdeveloped countries is growing it is urgent to raise the question of the role of education in a conscious international politic for solidarity and equalization.[23]

In its final report, published in 1973, U68 returned to internationalisation as one of five main aims, of higher education, the other four being personal development, welfare, democracy, and social change. The inquiry emphasised that:

> […] the community that Swedish education relates to should not be reduced to the Swedish society. A developed solidarity and a broad frame of reference related to it must also concern the world society. The internationalization of education should not only treat conditions in Nordic and other European countries. It can in many cases be especially motivated to pay attention to the conditions in non-European states of which many will have a great importance for the future of human culture.[24]

21 See i.e. Henrik Brissmann, *Mellan nation och omvärld. Debatt i Sverige om vetenskapens organisering och finansiering samt dess internationella och nationella aspekter under 1900-talets första hälft* (Lund: Lunds universitet, 2010).

22 U68, *Mål för högre utbildning: Diskussionsunderlag utarbetat inom U 68* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1969), 57. It should be noted that earlier investigations into U68 did not pay attention to internationalization being formulated as one of the aims of higher education. See for instance Bo Lindensjö, *Högskolereformen: En studie i offentlig reformstrategi* (Stockholm: Stockholms universitet, 1981), 107–23.

23 U68 (1969), 59.

24 SOU 1973:2: *Högskolan: betänkande av 1968 års utbildningsutredning* (Stockholm, 1973), 49.

The suggestions of U68 had to be concretised and this was done mainly through the state agency for higher education, UKÄ, and the "internationalisation inquiry" conducted by the agency. Starting its work in 1972, the inquiry was to give recommendations on how internationalisation could be promoted. The inquiry itself formulated two main internationalisation motives: a general motive related to the importance of education for personal development and general knowledge of the world, and a labour market motive, related to the formation of professionals working abroad, or in certain domestic sectors.[25] The inquiry reports were the first Swedish examples of what internationalisation should mean in practice and according to the instruction given to the inquiry it was to investigate three types of needs: 1. Education for working abroad, 2. Specific knowledge of foreign conditions for Swedish professions such as teachers, journalists, state clerks or tradesmen, 3. General orientation on foreign conditions. The motivation as stated by the agency is highly interesting, as it stressed that Swedish official development assistance or participation in international collaboration had made the inquiry necessary.[26] Here international solidarity was not only understood as a matter of raising the consciousness about foreign conditions amongst Swedish teachers and students, but also about educating for the practical needs of international missions.

In the final report the inquiry made a number of suggestions. Most of them concerned the content of the curriculum. It treated international perspectives in the school system in general and the need for further training of school teachers, internationalisation of higher education curricula and course content as well as the need for enhanced teaching of foreign languages focusing technical or professional language.[27] The need for general funding of internationalisation was also thematised as well as in- and outgoing mobility. Mobility in general was motivated with the general need for international contacts to achieve the goals of the inquiry: "Vivid contacts with research and education in other countries should affect the educational planning in the direction of increased consideration of other starting points than specifically Swedish ones."[28] The inquiry also mentioned the importance of international contacts for the renewal of teaching and research as well as their importance for enhancing international understanding and personal development. As main reasons for incoming mobility, specifically for receiving foreign students the inquiry mentioned international solidarity and responsibility, the question of reciprocity as well as the creation of an international environment at the Swedish universities.[29]

One result of the internationalisation inquiry was that internationalisation was made one of two "social goals" within the university reform of 1977. The law now stated that higher education should "promote understanding for other countries and international conditions."[30] The view on internationalisation as mainly a question

25 UKÄ, *Att internationalisera universiteten: utgångspunkter, riktlinjer och frågeställningar för en internationalisering av universitetsutbildningen. Betänkande III från UKÄ:s internationaliseringsutredning* (Stockholm: UKÄ, 1973), 32–33.

26 Ibid., 9.

27 UKÄ, *Utbildningens internationalisering: Slutbetänkande från UKÄ:s internationaliseringsutredning* (Stockholm: UKÄ, 1974), chap. 3, 4, 6, 7.

28 Ibid., 137.

29 Ibid., 149.

30 Proposition 1976/77:59: *Om utbildning och forskning inom högskolan m.m.,* 3.

of integrating international perspectives, especially related to the developing world, into the curricula, seems to have been adapted within teacher education and the secondary school. It is interesting to note that the development agency SIDA was involved in producing material for concretising the overarching goals for internationalisation in secondary schools in 1977, and that a 1985 survey on internationalisation in teacher education in Linköping show that the interviewees were very concerned with creating understanding for other cultures or global peace.[31]

The idea of internationalisation presented in the U68 and the UKÄ internationalisation inquiry contained aspects of all four rationales present in the de Wit model, although with very different emphasis. Peace, mutual understanding and technical assistance were central aspects in the argumentation, and they all clearly belong in the realm of foreign policy, whereas another central aspect, that of individual development, belongs to the cultural rationales. Academic rationales were less central. The international dimension to teaching was the most prominent, but the argumentation also contained aspects of quality enhancement or widening of the academic horizon, although on a very general, less concrete level. The weakest rationales were the economic ones, as only the labor market related need for knowledge of international processes and foreign languages among Swedish experts and professionals working either in Sweden or abroad were thematised.

The UKÄ reports focused mainly on the internationalisation of educational content and the mobility of teachers and students. Research and researchers were very little discussed, which also seems to have been the general case in the 1970s discussions. When Jan Annerstedt in 1972 described investments, planning and control over the Swedish research landscape, he did not touch upon international collaborations, organisations, knowledge transfer or mobility.[32] The research landscape was still perceived as primarily a national issue.

1980s and -90s: Turning towards a knowledge driven economy

It became the task of the UKÄ, renamed in UHÄ (*Universitets- och högskoleämbetet*) to implement the recommendations of the internationalisation inquiry. For this the agency created a four year action program for internationalisation. This program aimed at supporting international perspectives and specialisations within higher education including capacitation of university teachers in general as well as a special focus on integrating language studies in general exams. The third aspect was supporting international exchange between universities and the establishment of positions for visiting teachers.[33] Concrete changes the UHÄ had in mind were the establishment of international secretariats at the universities as well as the creation of a national centre for language pedagogy.[34]

31 Inger Andersson and Lars Sundgren, *Undervisningens internationalisering* (Umeå: SIDA och Fortbildningsavdelningen i Umeå, 1977); Wit J. Wojtowicz, *Internationalisering i lärarutbildningen (*Linköping: Arbetsgruppen för internationalisering av lärarutbildningen vid universitetet i Linköping, 1985).

32 Jan Annerstedt, *Makten över forskningen: Om statlig forskningsorganisation och forskningsplanering i dagens Sverige* (Staffanstorp: Cavefors, 1972).

33 Susan Opper, "Internationalisera högskolan! En rapport från överläggningar 27–28 februari 1980 om åtgärder för att främja högskolans internationalisering," (1980), 10–11.

34 Ernst Erik Ehnmark, "Mobility of University Staff and Students: Some Comments and Suggestions from the Swedish Viewpoint. Paper Prepared for the CRE Conference in Genoa, October 1980" (1980).

Not only did this action program never fully materialise, due to lack of government funding. In a 1980 report the UHR concluded that Swedish universities had not taken the guidelines of the internationalisation inquiry seriously and had used the extra money received for study tours, to invite foreign researchers and for teaching abroad.[35] This although the intentions had been to enhance mobility of younger Swedish researchers. Another problem according to the report was the strong focus on contacts with Anglophone countries, contrary to the recommendations in the internationalisation inquiry's final report.[36]

During the 1980s one can see two competing views on internationalisation, which were related to the relation between economic internationalisation and the internationalisation of higher education. In her introduction article to the UHÄ-funded book on internationalisation *Gränslös högskola* ("borderless university," 1981) Susan Opper treated the internationalisation of the Swedish industry and economic life in general as a negative aspect of globalisation. The movement of industrial production from Sweden to other countries were by trade unionists seen as a threat towards the "democratisation of working life" and the "production for societal needs." Internationalisation thus raises Swedish dependence on processes taking place outside the country borders and the educational sector should prepare students for this new reality.[37]

If the economic internationalisation was presented as a problem, then immigration and multiculturalism were described in positive terms. Without further explanation Opper stated that cultural heterogeneity actualised the need for internationalisation of higher education, the school sector and consequently of the systems for health and social security. This should be no problem, as the presence of immigrants in Swedish society meant that "resources for internationalisation" were already at hand.[38] This is obviously a circular argument but seems to have been valid at the time. In the end Opper argued that internationalisation was part of the "moral obligation" of western countries to "cure ethnocentrism" and work for a future welfare through global collaboration; in the end this was a repetition of the ideas brought forth in U68 and the internationalisation inquiry.[39]

Another representative for the same government agency had a slightly different take on internationalisation than Opper. At the CRE conference in Genoa in October 1980 Ernst Erik Ehnmark from the international secretariat of the UHÄ presented the final evaluation report of Swedish internationalisation[40] as well as a revised action program focusing on staff mobility. His speech marks an interesting shift in Swedish internationalisation policy as the needs of Swedish science were presented as one of the main reasons for enhancing mobility:

> Mobility of staff and students will probably be a more and more important function of the international dissemination of specialized knowledge. No country and no university

35 Opper (1980), 13.

36 Marianne Hildebrand, *Användningen av internationaliseringsmedlen vid universiteten och högskolorna 1977/78 och 1978/79* (UHÄ-rapport 1980:7, Stockholm: UHÄ, 1980), 25–26.

37 Susan Opper, "En yttre ram," in *Gränslös högskola*, ed. Susan Opper (Vällingby: Liber Utbildningsförlaget, 1981), 15–17.

38 Opper (1981), 17–18.

39 Ibid., 20–23.

40 Hildebrand (1980), 25–26.

> can any longer keep its research up to the frontiers of knowledge in all subjects or in all scientific areas. The exchange of knowledge is very much a question of personal contacts and personal communication. From this viewpoint, mobility for postgraduate students, young scientists and university staff will become more necessary than perhaps ever before.[41]

A similar argumentation was presented by the Swedish university chancellor Carl-Gustaf Andrén, the highest official of the UHÄ, in a speech in Uppsala in September 1980. This speech can be seen as an example of a shift in rhetoric between the 1970s and the 1980s. Andrén started with the need for international perspectives in higher education as such and the needs for knowledge about foreign conditions for workers in development aid and export companies, but also for professional groups in Sweden. Mentioned were schools, state administration, social welfare and trade. These were arguments also present in the internationalisation inquiry reports. Andrén then formulated three overall motives for internationalisation: quality, competitiveness and solidarity. Quality meant that the quality of Swedish education should meet "highest international standards." Competitiveness meant on the one hand the transformation of knowledge into products. On the other the chancellor also stated that Swedish know-how as such could be regarded a not unimportant export product. Solidarity at last was related to quality of education, as only knowledge and insights given through high quality education made solidarity possible.[42] It is obvious that Andrén here added a new line of argument to the one present in the internationalisation inquiry. Internationalisation were from now on not only a question of solidarity through education or mobility for personal development, but also crucial for the advancement of both the economy and science itself. This means that Andrén here touched upon something that would become a strong future argument in favour of internationalisation: its importance for the creation of a research sector and in the end an economy fit for international competition.

What can also be seen in Andréns speech is an early example for an idea which came to be dominant during the period, namely the idea of the knowledge society. Nico Stehr stated in 1998 that the "transformations of modern economy" intensified the role of knowledge as an "element of production." Stehr continued:

> Knowledge not only becomes an object of commercial enterprises and exchange but also is increasingly the crucial source of added-economic value and therefore of the possibility of economic growth; and, perhaps, especially sustainable economic growth[43]

Following this line of argument, universities as both knowledge producing and knowledge disseminating institutions, had to be central entities in a functioning knowledge society.[44] Future innovations and national economic growth depended

41 Ehnmark (1980), 6.

42 Carl-Gustaf Andrén, "Högskolans internationalisering: En uppgift för 80-talet" (September 22, 1980).

43 Nico Stehr, "The University in Knowledge Societies," *Social epistemology* 12, no. 1 (1998), 33–42; See also Nico Stehr, "Modern Societies as Knowledge Societies," in *Handbook of Social Theory*, ed. Georg Ritzer and Barry Smart (London: Sage, 2001), 494–508.

44 Stehr (1998); Jussi Välimaa and David Hoffman, "Knowledge Society Discourse and Higher Education," *Higher Education* 56, no. 3 (2008), 265–85.

on the quality of higher education and research. From this point of view internationalisation became a quality driving measure, even a necessity for future prosperity. An example for is the book whose Swedish title translates to "Towards an academic education fit for international competition."[45] Published in 1990 by the economist and former rector of the Gothenburg business school, Ulf af Trolle, this book argues that the quality of Swedish higher education and research was of crucial importance for national prosperity and that reforms of the organisation and funding of the sector were a necessity to obtain and maintain an international standard. It is not possible nor necessary to discuss the proposals of af Trolle in detail, it is however interesting to note, that the international arena was the explicit yardstick towards which Sweden should be measured and that future prosperity depended on how well the country fore in the international competition.

This view on internationalisation transformed into politics. Sverker Sörlin describes the research policy of the early 1990s as "[…] a massive government support for national growth oriented, although internationally embedded research collaboration."[46] His analysis of the government research propositions of the early 1990s show how fundamental the idea of knowledge and research-intensive industries was in the research policy of the time. The creation of "centres of excellence" where research and industry could interact and create new products and processes was one way to enhance and accelerate the innovation process. Another was the attraction of international researchers and a third the access to supra-national research infrastructure and networks, especially through the European union.[47] International research infrastructure had of course existed and been important to research long before the 1990s[48] but they gained increased attention through the idea of a knowledge driven economic development.

Another aspect of internationalisation was the so called global questions. In his book on Swedish research policy Olle Edqvist states that polar research, energy supply or environmental issues, were an important part of government research propositions from 1986 and onwards.[49] Compared to the 1970s, where focus had been on education, the 1980s and -90s focused internationalisation of research. Where the 1970s had stressed the need for Swedish education in other countries and the Swedish students need for knowledge of foreign conditions, the late 1980s and 1990s stressed exchange of ideas, interaction and innovations. A typical example for this was a conference that the private foundation Wenner-Gren Center held in 1985, entitled "Research without borders." Here both theoretical and highly practical aspects of the internationalisation of Swedish research were discussed, such as the integration of guest researchers, problems related to research in Sweden and abroad, or research in relation to development assistance.[50]

45 Ulf af Trolle, *Mot en internationellt konkurrenskraftig akademisk utbildning* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1990).

46 Sörlin (1994), 255.

47 Ibid., 251–54.

48 See for instance Edqvist (2009), 61–68.

49 Ibid., 55–59.

50 See *Forskning utan gränser: Ett symposium om universiteten och forskningens internationalisering*, ed. David Ottoson (Stockholm: Liber, 1986).

Roughly ten years later the idea of internationalisation for international competition was a standard argument. In 1998 the government agency for higher education, *Högskoleverket* (Short: HSV, the successor of the UHÄ), presented a report on what the agency called strategic internationalisation.[51] The opening discussion on internationalisation in this report is interesting, as it shows a dual understanding of how globalisation and the new international environment should steer the internationalisation efforts in higher education and research.[52] The report starts by stating that "Sweden needs the world more than the world needs Sweden" and this was presented as the main reason for enhancing internationalisation as the new generations need more knowledge on global issues. They must, the report states, "feel at home in the wide world," but also handle changes in Sweden, such as the growing multi-ethnic character of Swedish society. So far, the arguments from the 1970s internationalisation inquiry are clearly recognisable. The description of the current state of affairs then presented the international environment as highly competitive. The globalised economy affected nation states productivity and export while financial capital moved more easy over nation borders, making it harder to control. At the same time there was a global competition on knowledge related to new technologies, as well as an emerging global market for higher education. This is a description of a highly competitive situation, where states compete within research and knowledge production, production, export and economic growth as well as about students and researchers. At the same time the report argued heavily for the need for international collaboration. Only so could global issues, such as the economic differences between countries, environmental problems or health issues be addressed and solved on a global scale. Enhanced international collaboration was also a way to combat emerging regionalism, nationalism and religious fundamentalism as well as preventing ethnic and religious conflicts.

Using the rationales of de Wit to analyse the development between 1980 and 1998 it is clear that there had been a shift both in the arguments brought forward in favour of internationalisation and in how these arguments related to each other. Within the foreign policy rationale we see the question of technical assistance losing importance over time, whereas peace and mutual understanding were still championed. The conclusion that international collaboration was necessary to combat regionalism, fundamentalism et cetera is an argument moving into the realm of security policy, something not really present in the earlier period. Cultural aspects were weakened as arguments for individual development, adding an international dimension to teaching or widening of the academic horizon were still present, but not as prominent as during the 1970s. The reason for this was the stronger focus on the academic rationale, as meeting international academic standards and quality enhancement in order to be able to compete internationally became increasingly important.

The most notable change however is related to the economic rationales. As shown the 1980s and -90s were a period where internationalisation of higher education and research were considered a main factor behind economic development, and in the end as something benefitting national wealth. This meant that the focus of internationalisation policy shifted from education to research and from students and teachers

51 Högskoleverket, *Utbildning och forskning för strategisk internationalisering: Redovisning av ett regeringsuppdrag* (Stockholm: HSV, 1998).

52 The following description is based on Högskoleverket (1998), 15–24.

to researchers. This also made the question of formalised international collaboration within the so-called global questions or around research infrastructure a feature within Swedish internationalisation policy. Placing knowledge production and higher education at the core of economic growth also meant that international competition was considered a natural feature of higher education and research, where institutions were competing globally for research breakthroughs and about the best and brightest among researchers and students. This is a radical shift compared to the 1970s and early 1980s with its focus on international collaboration and solidarity as ways to counter or ease the consequences of economic internationalisation.

2000s: Commodification of education and recruiting qualified labour

The assumption of a knowledge driven economic development and the focus on international competition continued to be fundamental for Swedish authorities understanding of internationalisation in the new millennium as well. There were however two major changes or additions taking place between roughly 2005 and 2018, both related to mobility. A suitable starting point for understanding this development is the 2005 report from HSV on local university policies and practices which described the universities overarching aims with internationalisation in the following five points:

1. Enhancing academic quality
2. Education for an international labour market
3. Enhancing the competitiveness of Swedish higher education and research
4. Working for international peace and solidarity
5. Understanding for other cultures[53]

These five general aims had not changed compared to previous periods. Focus was on academic quality and competitive higher education and research, labour market needs and solidarity, peace and understanding. The report then moves on to in detail analyse ongoing work with internationalisation, and also here most things are recognisable from earlier periods. It was about internationalisation of the curricula, integrating exchange students, enhancing outgoing mobility and the creation of international research environments. Looking closer into the report however there was also something new being discussed, namely the active recruitment of foreign ("international") students to educational programs. It was stated that this phenomenon is fairly new to Sweden, but that most universities planned to intensify this in order to "strengthen their position in the international science and education society" and to attract the "best international students to masters education and then eventually to a PhD-program."[54] How many PhD-students that had been recruited this way was not known but the report suggested that statistics on foreign students degrees and country of origin should be gathered systematically in order to focus eventual future recruitment campaigns.[55]

53 Högskoleverket, *En gränslös högskola? Om internationalisering av grund- och forskarutbildning* (Stockholm: HSV, 2005), 26.

54 Högskoleverket (2005), 99.

55 Ibid., 124.

In 2008 the HSV made a follow up to the 2005 report. Before analysing the Swedish development, the agency made a description of general global trends within internationalisation, and something that was noted was the rapid global increase of active student recruitment. The agency saw several reasons for this: higher education had not only become an important part of global commerce (commodification), but "[…] more countries today are dependent on immigrated labour with higher education."[56] Discussing mobility in the Swedish context the agency then came to the conclusion that there were market reasons for intensified campaigns for recruiting foreign students to Sweden. The amount of freemover-students globally were estimated to rise, but so was the competition for them as well.[57]

This shift in how to view student mobility was not only present in HSV reports, but also in central government policies. In 2006 the Swedish government created a globalisation committee (globaliseringsrådet) under the minister of education Lars Leijonborg. In its final report, also released in 2008, the same year as the HSV follow up, one of the policy recommendations of the committee was to make Sweden a net exporter of educational services. Related to this was a stronger focus on marketing activities, making Sweden attractive as a study destination.[58] The committee also thematised what it called "competition for talents." This was motivated by a perceived future demographic imbalance in the country, where an aging population was to be provided for by a shrinking active work force. The solution to this was to foster the immigration of skilled labour: "To preserve growth and welfare most countries in Europe need immigration of people who can fill gaps in the labour market and contribute with special talents."[59]

The globalisation committee had not linked the perceived need for skilled labour to the mobility of students, but roughly ten years later this is exactly what was done. In 2017 the government appointed a new internationalisation inquiry, whose instructions it was to develop a new national strategy for higher education and research, to investigate how more students could get an international perspective in their education and how Sweden could be made more attractive as a study destination and a knowledge nation.[60] The instructions also thematised why internationalisation was important for the rest of society. Mentioned were the international transfer of knowledge, overcoming global challenges, the importance of higher education for innovation and economic growth, as well as mutual understanding and individual development. But new was the relation between student mobility and the needs of the labour market:

> By attracting researchers, experts and foreign students who stay on after completing their studies, a country can gain access to international expertise, compensate for inadequate domestic education capacity, support innovation and the economy by renewing the knowledge and innovation system through an inflow of new methods, perspectives and technologies and mitigate the effects of an ageing population.[61]

56 Högskoleverket, *En högskola i världen: Internationalisering för kvalitet* (Stockholm: HSV, 2008), 16.

57 Högskoleverket (2008), 59–60.

58 Ds 2008:82: *Sverige i världen: Rapport från globaliseringsrådet* (Stockholm: Fritze, 2008), 15.

59 Ibid., 19.

60 SOU 2018*:3: En strategisk agenda för internationalisering: Delbetänkande av utredningen om ökad internationalisering av universitet och högskolor* (Stockholm: Norstedts juridik, 2018), 31.

61 Ibid., 33–34.

Attracting foreign students was, as one can see, of double importance for the Swedish state. Ever since the introduction of tuition fees in 2011[62] paying students were a direct income to state finances. They were also considered a group among which to recruit the highly educated specialists ("talents") who were to keep Swedish growth and welfare at a high level. It is therefore not surprising that of the two inquiry reports the first one dealt with strategic aspects and internationalisation at home, whereas the second one was exclusively dedicated to changes in the systems related to skilled immigration such as study visas, residence permits for skilled workers, scholarships for students and researchers or marketing efforts for Sweden as a study destination.[63] There was also pressure on the government from employer organisations, as illustrated by a 2016 report from Almega, the employer organisation for companies in the service sector, where foreign students were presented as a crucial recruitment basis for a number of service sectors.[64]

Parallel to this focus on attracting foreign students, higher education and research as development assistance returned as an important factor behind internationalisation of higher education in Sweden. Research collaboration and education in relation to development issues was of course as old as the idea of internationalisation, as seen at the beginning of this paper. In a way the 2000s therefore presented a return to the origins. What was new however, was the idea of a knowledge driven economic development. The societal development depends to a lesser extent on traditional production of capital and goods and to a higher extent on qualified knowledge and skills, as it was formulated in the government inquiry into higher education within development cooperation.[65] Enhancing higher education, the report states, is related to an overall positive development for economic growth, entrepreneurship, leadership and social mobility in a society. In a wider context it makes citizens more well informed and therefore also enhances democratic development, civil society, tolerance and equality.[66] This however redefined the relation between the developed and the developing world in how knowledge was to be transferred and by who. The 1970s internationalisation inquiry had conceptualised aid as something mainly brought to the needy by Swedish development workers active abroad.[67] The new deal was to focus on the education of actors from the aid-receiving countries, and to establish institutional partnerships between Swedish and foreign higher education institutions, besides the still existing technical assistance.[68]

62 André Bryntesson and Mikael Börjesson, *Internationella studenter i Sverige: Avgiftsreformens påverkan på inflödet av studenter* (Stockholm: Delegationen för migrationsstudier, 2019).

63 SOU 2018:78*:* Ökad attraktionskraft för kunskapsnationen Sverige: *Slutbetänkande av utredningen om ökad internationalisering av universitet och högskolor* (Stockholm: Norstedts juridik, 2018).

64 Almega, *Attrahera och behålla: Fler internationella studenter för minskade kompetensbrister* (Stockholm: Almega, 2016).

65 Ds 2011:3*: Högre utbildning i utvecklingssamarbetet: En analys av högre utbildning inom ramen för svenskt utvecklingssamarbete och politiken för global utveckling* (Stockholm: Fritze, 2011), 9.

66 Ibid., 11–14.

67 Mobility scholarships for the "third world" were however suggested by the inquiry and later also realised by the Swedish state. See Andreas Åkerlund, *Public Diplomacy and Academic Mobility on Sweden: The Swedish Institute and Scholarship Programs for Foreign Academics 1938–2010* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2016), 92–97.

68 Ds 2011:3, 72–73.

Returning to the rationales of de Wit most of them maintain valid arguments in favour of internationalisation also during this period. Within foreign policy rationales technical assistance made a comeback as a central feature alongside relation building for international peace and security. Mutual understanding and personal development were still central cultural rationales. Within the academic rationales there was little change in relation to the previous period as enhancing academic quality, institution-building, and adding an international dimension in teaching et cetera were still the central arguments in favour of internationalisation.

It is, once again, within the economic rationales that the fundamental change is found. Here the basic argument about economic growth was still central. New however were two other arguments, namely that higher education was a commodity, making it necessary to actively recruit foreign students into the Swedish system, as well as the labour market related argument that foreign students should stay on in Sweden to fill the need of the labour market for skilled labour. This was a turnaround from earlier periods. If the earlier focus had been on educating students in the Swedish higher education system for an international or at least internationalised labour market, then the new deal was to consider students partly educated abroad as a resource for the domestic labour market.

Conclusion: Swedish internationalisation policy from a competition state perspective

The development of Swedish internationalisation policy started with education for international development and international solidarity in the 1970s, adding themes of research quality and international competition in the 1980s, a theme that was underpinned by the 1990s argument that higher education and research were of crucial importance for economic growth and innovations.[69] During the 2000s two new strains of economy-related arguments were added: one hailing higher education as an important product, to be offered and sold on the international educational market, and one arguing that the recruitment of international students was not only of importance for the university sector, but for the needs of the domestic labour market in general.

Thus, the answer to the question why Swedish universities needed to be internationalised differs over time. Foreign policy has been a central feature from the start, with security policy-related relation building as well as technical assistance as the central arguments. Student or individual oriented arguments, such as international perspectives in the curriculum, personal development or the horizon-widening knowledge of other cultures were also constant arguments in favour of internationalisation. The same goes for the claim that internationalisation benefits world peace and mutual understanding. Academic rationales related to quality enhancement or widening the academic horizon gained weight over time, especially the line of argument that the purpose of internationalisation was to enhance the quality of higher education became especially prominent during the late 1980s and 1990s. This in turn was related to the development within the economic rationales, which are the ones showing the most complex development.

69 This development is also noted by Sverker Sörlin. See Sörlin (1994), 251–57.

In the inquiries from the 1970s the importance of internationalisation for the labour market was conceptualised as a need for Swedish students, or at least students on Swedish universities, to prepare for an increasingly international labour market. The movement of both persons and knowledge was conceptualised as outgoing, from Sweden to the abroad. Foreign students contributed to the international ambient at the universities—whatever that means—but that was also their sole function. When knowledge production and innovation were made central features within the knowledge-based economy, as it was formulated from the late 1980s and onward, the view on foreign students and researchers shifted. The relation was in a way reversed as it was stated that Swedish universities needed international contacts and collaborations and the knowledge they generate in order to stay relevant and competitive, both within the inner-scientific world, as well as within the global economy as a whole. This idea that "Sweden needs the world more than the world needs Sweden" was consolidated during the 2000s as the introduction of study fees for non-EU/EES-students made foreign students a source of revenue. The outspoken intention to recruit qualified labour for the domestic labour market among former students also reversed the 1970s view on the relation between Swedish education and international labour. Instead of educating Swedes for an international labour market, the aim was now to educate foreigners for the Swedish.

The answer to the question which the main reasons for internationalisation has been is therefore that these have shifted over time from foreign policy and cultural rationales towards academic and economic rationales. The turning point here being the idea of the knowledge society and the relationship between higher education and research, innovations and general economic growth. This economist view received yet another layer through the commodification of higher education itself through study fees and the interest in foreign students as a recruitment pool for skilled labor.

It is interesting to note that the arguments in favour of internationalisation of higher education and research can be grouped in, what it looks like, two opposing lines of argumentation. One of them is competition oriented, focusing the rapid globalisation of the economy, and arguing that internationalisation is necessary for industrialised societies in maintaining their level of development. Internationalisation develops science, economy and industry alike. Central subthemes in this line of argument is that education is an important commodity, to be sold internationally and that foreign students also present an opportunity for domestic companies to recruit highly skilled laborers.

The other line of argument is collaboration oriented. Globalisation also presents humanity with the possibility to address global challenges and the internationalisation of higher education and research is one way to create the possibilities for this. The overarching idea that positive societal development is knowledge driven is also presented as a strong argument in favour of internationalisation. Almost any desired improvement, be it economic growth, technological development, sustainability, democratisation, or equality, is helped by more internationalisation. This also explains why higher education and research, once again, becomes so strongly connected to development assistance during the 2000s.

What these two positions have in common is of course that they both present arguments in favour of internationalisation, although with underlying differences concerning which needs are to be addressed. A general trend in all documents analysed

in this article is that very few of them, if any, address whether there could exist fundamental problems with an increased degree of internationalisation. In the end, internationalisation is always beneficial, be it for the individual person, for the development of science and higher education, for the economy, and, not to forget, for global understanding and world peace.

Returning to the idea of the competition state it is striking that some fundamental aspects of this theoretical concept, set out to explain how this new kind of state functions are easily found within Swedish internationalisation policy. The short answer to the question how this development can be understood in the light of a general development in state functioning from the traditional welfare state to the present-day competition state is that internationalisation has increasingly been about making society 'fit for competition', to use the words of Genschel and Seelkopf.

This short statement needs a longer explanation. As mentioned above the focus of internationalisation policy has been on different aspects or areas of higher education and research, depending on how the relation between the national and international has been understood. When in the 1970s Swedish students should be prepared for an increasingly international and internationalised labour market, this international environment was exclusively understood in positive terms. The idea of a knowledge driven economic growth of the 1990s however placed higher education and research at the heart of economic development and the wealth of the nation, but it also made other nations into competitors. One sign for this was the idea that Sweden should compete internationally about the "best and brightest" among foreign students and researchers. Both examples mentioned above illustrate a central aspect of the competition state, namely the declared openness towards international flows, be it capital, goods or people.[70] Part of this ideology is that diversity itself is declared a productive resource, a position which is visible in the outspoken goal to create international environments at Swedish universities.

The competition state also favours openness towards international markets as visible in the 2011 tuition fee reform, which turned Swedish higher education into a commodity for non EU/EES-residents. Sweden entered the international market of higher education fairly late. Internationally foreign students had been an important source of revenue for a longer period of time. It is estimated that foreign students contributed $18.8 billion to the US economy in the academic year 2009/10 alone.[71] Previous research on higher education often point to the increased marketisation and commodification of the field.[72] The international trend towards commodification of higher education is best illustrated through the inclusion of educational services in the GATS-agreement[73] which in turn is exactly the kind of trade

70 Genschel and Seelkopf (2015), 237.

71 Laura E. Rumbley, Philip G. Altbach, and Liz Reisberg, "Internationalization within the Higher Education Context," in *The SAGE Handbook of International Higher Education*, edited by Darla K. Deardoff et al (Los Angeles, London, New Dehli, Singapore, Washington D.C.: SAGE, 2012), 22.

72 Nigel M. Healey, "Is Higher Education in Really 'Internationalising'?" *Higher Education* 55, no. 3 (2008), 333–55; Philip G.Altbach, "Knowledge and Education as International Commodities: The Collapse of the Common Good," *International Higher Education* 28 (2002), 2–5.

73 Rachel Brooks and Johanna L. Waters. *Student Mobilities, Migration and the Internationalization of Higher Education* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 24; Susan L. Robertson, Xavier Bonal and Roger Dale, "GATS and the Education Service Industry: The Politics of Scale and Global Reterritorialization," *Comparative Education Review* 46, no. 4 (2002), 472–495.

agreement championed by modern competition states. The increased focus on international competition also reversed how the international flows of knowledge and persons was conceptualised. Surely the U68 and the 1970s internationalisation inquiry thematised incoming students and teachers, but their focus was still on Sweden as a sender and international helper. This changed over time as focus successively moved towards Sweden as a receiver. First of knowledge, students and researchers, and then of revenue through tuition fees and of skilled foreign labour.

The marketisation of higher education is a sign for the competition state reliance on market solutions. In this case the international competition for ideas, (paying) students, researchers and "talent," was to speak up to the needs of Swedish export industry and to solve a domestic shortage in the labour force. This however did not mean that the state left internationalisation to the market. As noted by Cerny the restructuring of the state does not necessarily lead to less state or a decline of state action. Instead there is "intervention and regulation in the name of competitiveness and marketisation."[74] Swedish internationalisation policy during the 2000s has in much been about regulation of international flows and contacts, in setting up rules for tuition fees, systems for mobility and international collaboration, and linking the internationalisation of higher education to shortages on the labour market. Future research should look more into the institutional and organisational aspects of this process, such as government funding to international collaboration, mobility or curriculum internationalisation or internationalisation at home.

Jürgen Enders mentions that globalisation is a phenomenon which challenges the idea of the nation state, but he remains unclear when it comes to how we should understand this challenge.[75] Genschel and Seelkopf make a similar observation and state that globalisation and the transformation towards a competition state result in a decline of state sovereignty.[76] International trade treaties and the constant risk that mobile capital leaves the country makes it hard for governments to pursue protectionist or decommodification politics. Something similar is of course true of mobile students, researchers and skilled professionals, who will eventually leave if education or the job market is not what they expected, or better prerequisites for research can be found elsewhere.

The development of internationalisation as a policy area is how the Swedish state has handled this political situation and the risks connected to it. Although the creation of Swedish internationalisation policies from the 1970s and onwards have been concerned with different areas and have had different motives, the overarching aim has always been to enhance internationalisation. There is therefore no opposition or antagonism between the collaborative and competitive aspects of internationalisation policy mentioned above. Both are ways to expose the national system of higher education and research to international influences.

In a competition state, internationalisation of higher education and research—be it collaborative or competitive—can therefore be understood as an important way in which the new relation between the national and the global is both formulated and realised. It is worth returning to the following quote from Philip G. Cerny:

74 Cerny (1997), 251.

75 Enders 2004, 369.

76 Genschel and Seelkopf (2015), 240.

> [T]he state still has a major national role to play, but that role is increasingly to expose the domestic to the transnational, to prise open the nation-state to a globalizing world, in the interest of ensuring that citizens keep up with the multiple pressures and demands of that increasingly integrated and interdependent political, economical and social ecosystem. The foreign or external is no longer external or 'outside'. It is internalized in the very way the state operates and people interact politically, economically and socially from the local to the global levels.[77]

Internationalisation policy and measures are therefore really a way to ensure that the national system of higher education and research gets exposed to the transnational. It makes it possible for citizens, both domestic and foreign, to keep up with the demands of an increasingly globally interdependent economy and society. And above all internationalised curricula, collaboration schemes or in- and outgoing mobility of persons, are definitely a way to internalise the foreign or external on a national level, both keeping education and research open to international influences while at the same time trying to regulate this openness in order to fare well in an international environment, primarily understood as competitive.

77 Cerny (2010), 6.

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