



Swedish Anthropology: Past and Present

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I have been in Swedish anthropology, and what went before it, for well over half a century now. What follows is an assemblage of recollections, opinions and attempted overview.¹

It was the early 1960s. I was nineteen, an undergraduate newcomer at Stockholm University, and without definite plans for how I would spend my life. But I had become interested in Africa – a “wind of change” was blowing through the continent, as one British prime minister commented when he witnessed a large part of the Empire turning independent. What could I do at the university to satisfy my curiosity? Not much, it seemed. In the early 1960s, the human sciences at Swedish universities were mostly complacently inward-turning, occasionally concerning themselves with European themes, casting a glance toward North America mostly as it related to Swedish emigration as a topic in history, but certainly not paying much attention to the rest of the world.

So I decided to spend a term taking the introductory course, and whatever else might be on offer, in the discipline known as General and Comparative Ethnography. (The term “anthropology” was at the time officially connected only to “physical anthropology,” a quaint one-man enterprise in a back alley of Swedish academic life, engaging in skull measurements and self-publishing text books.) I believe there were twelve of us taking the course. Beyond a sort of academic legitimation, however, this did not offer much of a response to my kind of African interests either. The minimal department was really an appendix to the rather sleepy state ethnographic museum, where elderly curators lectured on their specialties and showed the collections.

Yet on our first reading lists were items like Ruth Benedict’s *Patterns of Culture* (1934) and Robert Lowie’s *The History of Ethnological Theory* (1937). As I was finishing my undergraduate work, it was thus clear to me that there was more anthropology to be had on the other side of the Atlantic. I found my way to a one-year exchange scholarship at Indiana University, where I would be hosted by the rather new African Studies program. Returning from there to Stockholm, it was my turn to teach that introductory course, and do what I could with it. But soon, through the mediation of one of my Indiana mentors, I was offered a position as project anthropologist on a sociolinguistic-cum-educationalist Urban Language Study in Washington, DC. That meant two years of field research in a Black American low-income neighbourhood. It also set me on a longer term of involvement with the emergent subdiscipline of urban anthropology (Hannerz 1969, 1980).

The 1960s: years of transition

After returning again to Sweden, I found the conditions of the discipline changing.

Belatedly, long after I had already committed myself more firmly to the discipline, and browsing in old volumes of the *American Anthropologist*, I had come across a brief account

of Swedish ethnography as it was in the late 1950s (that is, just before I came to it), by the then head of the Ethnographic Museum in Gothenburg, Karl-Gustav Izikowitz.² He offered a bleak view: there were altogether seven scholarly jobs at the two museums, and his conclusion was that in Sweden, “a professional anthropologist has few opportunities for making a living.”

Soon thereafter, the first entirely university-based position had been added at Uppsala University, although on the whole the discipline was still museum-based. It was the perhaps half-serious opinion of the museum research staff that their Uppsala colleague suffered from a scholarly handicap as he knew the artefacts only from the front – having seen them only in pictures..

In the later years of the 1960s, however, Sweden was opening up to the world, and this was reflected in the growing number of students who came to anthropology, sometimes staying on for a lasting engagement. Some had returned from periods as volunteers, in Africa or Latin America. Others were early global backpackers. More of them were simply young people who followed the news, which had Ho Chi-minh, Che Guevara and Julius Nyerere as major figures. (Nelson Mandela was at the time more remote – imprisoned on Robben Island.)

This generation of students sought an anthropology speaking to their interests. Yet these were also times of turbulence, not only in a small academic discipline in Sweden, but as it seemed, in universities everywhere. Columbia University in New York and Nanterre in a sordid Paris suburb earned renown as early sites of student protest; at Stockholm University students contributed a size S version by occupying their own union building (prompting the Minister of Education, Olof Palme, to go there to debate them).

Such circumstances could to a degree complicate things. The attempt to give the discipline a more up-to-date scholarly profile, and an improved place in the wider academic environment, may have had its feet on the ground more securely, and at the same time sounded a bit less important than changing the world more generally. Some participants and some observers had a certain difficulty in disentangling scholarly, ideological and personal differences. On the whole, in any case, there was a transition led mostly from below, by junior faculty and graduate students, (An inspiring nearby model was the new department of social anthropology at the University of Bergen, Norway, under the leadership of Fredrik Barth.) If there was some resistance to this makeover from the senior generation and from neighbouring disciplines, it was half-hearted in some places, and a little more strong-willed in others.³ A rather ill-informed attempt from the top of the national university system to rethink by committee what this discipline should be about figured in the end mostly as a parenthetical distraction. A “wind of change” here, too.

Field studies: away

By the early 1970s, the transformative period was basically over, signified by a change in labels from “ethnography” to “anthropology.” (And so from then on, at least within the academic community, and in line with international usage, the term “ethnography” became the name of a broad methodological approach rather than of a discipline.) Departments at Stockholm and Gothenburg Universities, with new, younger department heads, had severed their formal links of dependency to museums, and the senior position at Uppsala had been upgraded to a full professorship. Research now became based more in the university

departments, less in the museums. A little later, social anthropology was introduced at the University of Lund under the large umbrella of a sociology department. The first larger cohort of graduate students could move on toward field studies and degrees without much organizational uncertainty, and participate in the further consolidation of their discipline.

When the time then came for field work, where did that early set of young anthropologists go?⁴ In those old centres of the discipline (Great Britain, France, the Netherlands) which first had anthropologies because they had empires, it seems that even later generations have been somewhat inclined to head for their respective ex-colonies. In contrast, continuing into the present, Swedish anthropologists have mostly not been guided by any such underlying territorial orientations, but have spread in the global terrain largely on the basis of personal preferences, finding their sites just about anywhere where field research has been practically feasible.

However, in that period between the 1960s, with movements toward independence not least in Africa, and the late 1980s, when the Cold War came to an end, the overall world situation certainly influenced choices. Sweden, officially not aligned with either of the world's two major power blocs, was inclined toward relatively freewheeling international policies, and toward sympathy with the emerging states. Public imagination was attracted by the new nations, “developing countries” – and new linkages were formed for purposes of political support and development assistance.

In anthropology, this has resulted, for one thing, in an enduring involvement with African studies. It has been most consistent at Uppsala University, to some degree stimulated by the 1960s creation of an interdisciplinary Nordic Institute of African Studies, collaboratively supported by the governments of the five Nordic countries while located in that city. Anita Jacobson-Widding, who took over the professorial chair in what would become the Department of Cultural Anthropology at Uppsala University, may be seen as a transitional figure. Retaining an existing African focus, her own work tended toward area overviews (e.g. on bridewealth, and on systems of colour classification [Jacobson-Widding 1967, 1979]), but she drew on new sources of theoretical inspiration, and was strongly supportive of a new generation of field workers spreading over much of the continent. A later departmental program on African conflict and post-conflict field studies also made important contributions to the discipline. Sverker Finnström's (2008) monograph on the upheavals in Northern Uganda is one example. At Stockholm University, Karl Eric Knutsson, the first to hold the chair in social anthropology, did not remain in it very long, moving on to a distinguished international career with UNICEF. The fact that he had already been engaged in practical development work in Ethiopia, however, was reflected for a period in a departmental East African emphasis, with a number of field studies (in large part for doctoral theses), even as these were not so often directly in the nature of applied anthropology.⁵

I, too, could belatedly become the Africanist I had planned to be when I went into anthropology; in the 1970s and 1980s, I had several periods of field work in a Nigerian town which had developed, in colonial times, around a railway junction in the centre of the country. This was also a further experiment in urban anthropology – although eventually it took me in the direction of thinking about emerging global interconnections, and the cultural creativity they involved (Hannerz 1996).

As time passed, it may have been in part a cohort of students with international backpacker experiences who chose to return to South Asia for field studies. Most of them

did their work in India (although Nepal also got a share); here were studies reporting on a low-caste group in a declining North Indian industrial city, on the local and transnational organization of the Dalit, on a local women's anti-liquor movement, on a contemporary South Indian hunter-gatherer community, as well as on ideas of cultural identity among young middle-class men in New Delhi. In Southeast Asia, one long-term involvement has been with Javanese religion and politics; Buddhism in the social order of contemporary Laos has also received attention; one study focused on working-class ethnic Chinese in Penang, Malaysia; and a study of farming and environmentalism in northeastern Thailand signalled one growing thematic interest. East Asia has not stood out as a region of very much Swedish anthropological activity, although there have been studies for example of commercial horticulture in the New Territories of Hong Kong (by Göran Aijmer, also an important figure of the 1960s transition, and later professor at Gothenburg) as well as of a Japanese theme park.

Some of the work in the Arab world may now stand out as valuable not least as ethnographic documentation of local life from periods before recent dramatic upheavals. There was early work in a mountain town in Yemen, in a period when the country was just opening up to field workers from abroad, and in the Spanish North African enclave of Ceuta before it earned its reputation as an embattled entry point for African migration streams toward Europe. With previous research experience in Raqqa (the Syrian city later known as the capital of a new Islamic caliphate), Annika Rabo (2005) has carried out a detailed study of small-scale business life in the *souq* in Aleppo, now largely destroyed in a civil war.

In Latin America there have been studies of Amazonian tribal populations, gold diggers likewise in Amazonia, Afro-Brazilian NGOs, Venezuelan peasants, Mayan citizenship struggles in southern Mexico, women in a Colombian barrio, the response to recurrent flooding disasters in an Argentinean town, the work of a Swedish Pentecostal mission in Bolivia, and Brazilian *telenovelas*, to mention some of the variety of topics. In the Caribbean, one dissertation analysed changes in Haitian vodoun religion; and remarkably, Mona Rosendahl was one of few anthropologists from outside the country to be able to study everyday local life in Socialist Cuba in the 1980s and 1990s, reporting on this in *Inside the Revolution* (1997).⁶

It is sometimes noted that the United States has not attracted very many non-American anthropologist field workers. This has not been quite true in the Swedish case. Over the last fifty years or so, there have at least been one ethnography of an African-American neighborhood in Washington, DC (my own); one of a Swedish-American community in California; one of a Native American reservation in South Dakota; and one of political conservatism in an Ohio town. Reaching into the Pacific, an ethnography of the politics of the U.S. territory of Guam, with a major military base, may also be counted here.

And then Europe offered numerous research sites. As Russia and East and Central Europe opened up to scholars from the outside, there were intriguing new opportunities. One example is Tova Högdestrand's (2009) study of homeless people in St. Petersburg. Other doctoral dissertations dealt with the lesbian community in Moscow, and the postsocialist period of transition among Romanian journalists. But the rest of the continent was not forgotten. For one thing, there was a multi-site study of the Armenian Diaspora in Paris, Istanbul and elsewhere. A German village was the location for a study of family ideology and childrearing. And with a point of departure in the colossal success of the Riverdance group

in one annual Eurovision Song Contest, Helena Wulff (2007) could explore the varieties of Irish dance.

A diversity of themes

With regard to topics, there has been much diversity in Swedish anthropology, shifting over time. To begin with, we might note the versatile work of Kaj Århem (e.g. 2000), one of the veterans of Swedish anthropology, who has carried out field studies in Amazonia, East Africa and Southeast Asia, and has taken a prominent interest in areas of kinship and marriage, and symbolism and ritual – classic fields of international anthropological expertise.

Such fields of study, then, continue to be represented. Yet being a relatively late starter, the Swedish version of the discipline may have carried less of a burden of traditional assumptions about what anthropologists could do. Again, given the typical Swedish perspectives toward “new nations” at the time, it is not surprising that development anthropology quickly became one important concern. Efforts here included applied work in a range of countries, as well as the conceptual and theoretical scrutiny of “development” and related concepts (e.g. Dahl and Hjort 1985). While development anthropology may with time have become proportionately a rather smaller subfield within the discipline, partly reflecting shifts in international cooperation policies generally, it remains significant. Work in this area is exemplified in a volume edited by Sten Hagberg and Charlotta Widmark (2009), including contributions by a number of practitioners.

The anthropology of women became another quickly growing specialty, resulting not least in a number of doctoral dissertations in the 1980s and 1990s, based on field work in different parts of the world. With time, it became increasingly integrated into the interdisciplinary field of gender studies, which has tended to find its own institutional forms at Swedish universities. More recently, a number of later studies have been inspired by queer theory, for example Mark Graham’s *Anthropological Explorations in Queer Theory* (2014).

Global environmental issues – in large part under the transdisciplinary rubrics of human ecology and political ecology – have become another field of major concern in Swedish anthropology. This is a large field, and it includes a wide range of approaches. Alf Hornborg (e.g. 2001) takes a macro-oriented view, drawing on perspectives from world-system thought, with a strong historical dimension, toward the interrelations between culture, economy and power. More inclined to present-day ethnography, Bengt G. Karlsson’s work has in large part focused on the politics of ethnicity and environment in India. His monograph *Unruly Hills* (2011) deals particularly with perceptions of nature and the struggle over forests and natural resources in a region of north-eastern India.

Swedish anthropology could also develop quickly, however, in areas such as urban anthropology, media anthropology and global and transnational anthropology. Apart from my own early preoccupation with “urbanism as such,” it can perhaps be said that the urban anthropology has mostly been anthropology *in* the city rather than *of* the city, as research on quite diverse topics has involved urban field sites. A study by Johan Lindquist (2009) of the industrial boomtown of Batam, in Indonesia, but across the Straits from Singapore (and in a free trade zone with it), vividly portrays the human consequences of Southeast Asian economic growth, not least with regard to migration. Among several studies of occupational communities, one could exemplify the very local: it involved participant observation among shunters, focusing on the build-up of their technical know-how, in a

railway yard on the outskirts of Stockholm. But often the occupational ethnographies were linked to the engagement with transnational social forms. Several drew on multi-site field studies.⁷ A study of consultants/trainers in the intercultural communication business offers one example; and coming from previous research on multi-ethnic youth culture in London, but moving on to another specialty in the anthropology of communication and aesthetics, Helena Wulff took on one occupation which has a strikingly long transnational history, in her ethnography of *Ballet across Borders* (1998), with field studies of ballet companies in Stockholm, New York, London and Frankfurt am Main.

My own study of news media foreign correspondents (Hannerz 2004) was another multi-site occupational study – an example of “studying sideways,” in the sense that there are parallels between the work of this group and that of anthropologists, in reporting and interpreting between cultures – and at the same time an instance of media anthropology. In this genre there are examples from the production as well as the consumption side of things: doctoral dissertations have reported for example on the everyday working life of journalists on a Hindi-language newspaper in an Indian city, and on Muslim women on the Swahili Coast of Kenya watching – in *purdah*, on cassettes – the products of the Indian (Bollywood) popular film industry. After a pioneering effort in the anthropology of the Internet in her doctoral work, including field studies in Malaysia and Laos, Paula Uimonen continued research on the forms and uses of new media in *Digital Drama* (2012), an ethnography of a national arts college in Tanzania; this is also an innovative publication in that it has its own accompanying web site.

From the study of occupations it is not a very long step to an interest in exploring a wider variety of modern organizations. Having done her doctoral research in a multi-site study of the transnational organization of Apple, the computer corporation, Christina Garsten turned to work on think tanks and policy intellectuals. Organizational anthropology also found new fields for instance in the growth of new bureaucracies within the European Union framework, in Brussels and elsewhere. Some of the research in question is exemplified in the volume *Organisational Anthropology*, edited by Christina Garsten and Anette Nyqvist (2013). The book demonstrates that this is a field of lively international contacts; at the same time it is one where disciplinary borders tend to be easily crossed.

Clifford Geertz (1973: 19) once noted that writing is one major activity of anthropologists – although at the time, it had yet drawn little scrutiny. That changed, not least with the volume *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986), one of the discipline’s contemporary classics. Drawing on one of the annual Stockholm Anthropology Roundtables, Helena Wulff has more recently assembled a team of Swedish and international contributors for a volume on *The Anthropologist as Writer* (2016). If *Writing Culture* was somewhat esoteric, this book is rather more hands-on, dealing with the variety of ways scholars now have to put words together. (A decade or so earlier, there had been another book in Swedish, discussing the relationship between anthropology and journalism, at a point when it turned out that a cohort of younger scholars had some background in newspaper and radio journalism.)

It has become increasingly clear, however, that anthropologists communicate not only through writing. Swedish anthropologists have produced several ethnographic films which have received some international attention. This development obviously shows some affinity with the interest in media anthropology.

Anthropology at home

That old discipline of “General and Comparative Ethnography” had been defined to a great extent by its focus on the non-Western world. With its transformation into social and cultural anthropology went, as elsewhere in the international scholarly community, an opening up toward “anthropology at home” (routinely understood as in one’s own country, but mostly not auto-ethnography), or for that matter studies elsewhere in Europe, or North America.⁸ One consequence of this on the Swedish academic scene was a less clear division of labor between anthropology and one other academic discipline.

What had been “Folk Life Research,” created in Sweden (as in many Central and Eastern European countries – in German, *Volkskunde*) in the nineteenth century as a scholarly wing of cultural nationalism, with the prime purpose of documenting what was regarded as vanishing peasant traditions, reinvented itself especially from the 1970s on. Renamed as European Ethnology, it engaged rather more with the ethnography of everyday life under modernity – with some impulses borrowed from international anthropology, and others from what was developing especially in Anglophone countries as “Cultural studies.”⁹

If this meant that the boundary between what in Swedish parlance became “anthropology” and “ethnology” might have become intellectually rather blurred, however, it has remained organizationally fairly distinct.¹⁰ It should be said, too, that even as research in Sweden became entirely legitimate, anthropology continued to be relatively more inclined toward research abroad than other disciplines in the social sciences and humanities in Swedish universities. It became a study of human diversity on a global basis, and to a degree that would tend to influence its handling of Swedish materials as well.

The range of topics for local ethnographic research has predictably turned out to be quite wide. However, a few fields may deserve some special commentary.

In some parts of the world (such as in North America and Australia), it has been not so much the hold on overseas empires as the presence of ethnic minorities of the kind which have been termed “indigenous,” or “Fourth World,” or more lately “First People” that have been a major part of the historical *raison d’être* of the anthropological discipline. On the whole, not so in Sweden, although in a minimal sense, at least parts of Sweden have been “settler country,” with its Saami minority in the North. I became particularly aware of the relative weakness of this field of study when in the late 1970s, to add a little Nordic flavor to the journal, I edited an issue of the journal *Ethnos* on current anthropological studies of the Saami. The contributors included a couple of British colleagues, two Americans, one Canadian, one Norwegian, and one Swede – who had most of his graduate work in Sweden, but who had later moved to Norway for the remainder of his career.¹¹ Later on, it was a naturalized American expatriate in Sweden, Hugh Beach (e.g. 1993), who really became a committed Saami specialist, and who as holder of the chair in Cultural Anthropology in Uppsala built an ambitious, internationally connected research program in Circumpolar studies.

Another field which has at least intermittently drawn ethnographic interest has been that of northern Swedish rural society – in large part as a study of the causes and consequences of decline. Urbanization and industrialization, mostly in the more southerly regions of the country, drew migrants from the North, especially from the 1960s onwards, leading to the shrinking of rural communities. The national government did little to hinder this; rather, administrative changes tended to accelerate things, by merging municipalities

and centralizing services in larger communities. Yet the debate over regional policy, with an anthropological and social science input, would seem to have been weaker in Sweden than it was in Norway.¹² It could be argued, too, that Swedish anthropologists have made no consistent effort to institutionalize the discipline in the more or less new academic settings in northern Sweden.

What really did affect “anthropology at home,” however, as the discipline entered its 1970s period of stable growth, was the way Swedish society also shifted in the direction of greater ethnic and cultural diversity. Transnational labor migration had increased, largely from Finland and from Mediterranean countries: Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece, and Turkey. Then especially from the later years of the decade onwards, there were also streams of refugees from different regions of the world – again partly from Mediterranean countries, but also from the Middle East, parts of Africa and Latin America, and later from Central Asia and the Balkans.

There was a certain demand, also from government offices of different kinds and at different levels, for knowledge about the newcomers, and some sense that anthropologists, with their understandings of cultural differences and their ethnographic methods, could be well equipped to develop such knowledge. From the later 1970s on, a number of projects on immigration and minority affairs were initiated. Swedish officials might at first have envisaged research focusing on just the cultural peculiarities of immigrant groups. It was more in line with the anthropological perspective, however, to problematize not the characteristics of the immigrant groups in themselves, but rather the encounter between the newcomers and Swedish institutions, such as those of health care and education. (Swedish doctors, surprisingly to their new patients, did not behave like Turkish doctors.) A number of doctoral theses, for one thing, resulted from these studies, at times with policy implications. This was also a field of particularly close interdisciplinary contacts, with political scientists, linguists, educationists and others. In retrospect, it may seem particularly noteworthy that one result of the engagement with immigration issues was a volume where two Swedish social anthropologists drew together an international set of contributors to cast light on *The New Islamic Presence in Western Europe* (Gerholm and Lithman 1988).

If in the 1970s the Swedish stance toward newcomers was largely quite welcoming, it is also true that the relationship between Sweden and diversity has not remained entirely happy.

Anti-immigrant sentiments, even incidents of violent xenophobia have shown up. By now the Swedish parliament includes a party of the type which European anthropologists usually refer to as “neo-nationalist.”¹³ The public demand for anthropological insights into migration, minority life and cultural diversity seems also to have declined somewhat. Minority group spokespersons make their own points – without necessarily coming to agreement.

With the times of growing diversity in Swedish society, there were new faces in department student bodies too. Not least for some young refugees, universities may have allowed more personal freedom of manoeuvre than most Swedish settings, and anthropology departments could well offer more open environments than most. One Brazilian undergraduate would return home and eventually become a presidential candidate for the Green Party. Some remained to finish an anthropological training in Sweden and then made their way to new postings in Africa, Latin America or elsewhere in Europe – thus becoming a new Diaspora of Swedish anthropology, still connected to their old departments.

But others stayed on. In American anthropology, in the late twentieth century, we may remember, there was a noted rising presence of what one representative of the category described, semi-seriously perhaps, as the “halfies”: “people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage” (Abu-Lughod 1991: 137).¹⁴ Swedish anthropology assembled its halfies too. Bawa Yamba (1995), for example, reported on West African Muslims on their overland pilgrimage toward Mecca, on which they made it only half-way; and Shahram Khosravi (2010), could offer a memoir of his own escape, across the Central Asian mountains and by air, from a war-torn Iran (where a young man of his age risked becoming cannon fodder) to Sweden. But not all newcomers came from quite so far away. Ivana Macek (2009) had left her old home country Yugoslavia as it was falling apart; later she was well-equipped for an urban ethnography of Sarajevo during war time. For halfies, in any case, “anthropology at home” would not necessarily mean what it did to native Swedes.

One more research field possibly of some special interest in Sweden: the decades of immigration may have stimulated new curiosity about parts of the national institutional habitat which could perhaps otherwise be taken for granted. When newcomers confront them, and try to make their way into them, or around them, old-time citizens/anthropologists may also begin to think about them. How do we get health care? What plans do we make for retirement? Why are we quite good about paying taxes? The “Nordic Model” for a welfare state draws a fair amount of international attention, and finally local anthropologists are finding topics of ethnography here. (A relatively free access to the backstage settings may be helpful.) Lotta Björklund Larsen’s (2017) inside study of the Swedish tax agency is an example.

Challenges, 2020: Public anthropology for Swedes

By now, the main Swedish universities are clearly very different places from what they were a half-century ago: more open to the world, but also places with anthropology finding its place in a more open academic landscape, with more interactions between disciplines. With an academic career reform changing from a limited number of professorial chairs to promotion based on personal scholarly merit, the number of full professors of anthropology has grown considerably. Moreover, anthropologists have also recently held professorships in a number of interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary fields, such as gender studies, human ecology, rural development, peace and conflict studies, and Latin American studies.

So much, in brief, for the good news. Now for some words of warning.

Very recently, there has been some public debate over the cluster of state institutions known as “museums of world culture,” of which the remaining ethnographic museum, that in Stockholm, is one. There are rather odd financial circumstances (such as fictive governmental land rents) involved, and political meddling in museum affairs has not been helpful either, but the point is also made that the museums have turned into playgrounds for varied family amusements: like contests over who can create the funniest hat. Such activities do not seem to have anything much to do with exhibiting museum collections, or informing about these, or in other ways telling visitors about other ways of life, as one might have thought that these museums should.

There is a paradox here: in Karl-Gustav Izikowitz’ account of Swedish anthropology, as it was in the late 1950s, he noted that the seven anthropologists in regular positions in Sweden were all in museums. Some sixty years later, there seems to be only one Swedish

anthropologist steadily employed in an ethnographic museum. That is some 14 percent of what it used to be, before that era in which the discipline has otherwise grown greatly.

As I write this, it is said that the appointment of more curators is about to take place, but one may be worried that for some time, the museum anthropologists had not persuasively demonstrated their indispensability to public culture. Indeed, international debates over the changing fates of anthropological museums suggest that this trend is not entirely unique.¹⁵ It seems the ethnographic museum needs to be rethought, in an era of global experiences through media and travel. (The tourism industry now takes large numbers of Swedish vacationers to resorts on the Indian Ocean and the Caribbean.)

But this is only one, conspicuous, case of a more general challenge. It seems to me that in the period when the youngish discipline was more anxious to establish its foothold on the academic scene, it also made some conscious effort to be publicly visible. Later generations, arriving in Academia to find anthropology already there, may have taken its place for granted, therefore not bothering so much about public entrepreneurship, and turning inward toward the discipline. This may have its purely intellectual attractions. It may also be a matter of career concerns. For advancement in a highly competitive field, one needs to demonstrate research accomplishments. To a degree, one risks becoming exposed to those dysfunctional aspects of regimentation and evaluation which have spread widely in recent times, with watch words like New Public Management, ranking lists, and, in Marilyn Strathern's (2000) term, "audit culture."¹⁶ I am in just a bit of two minds about the latter. With its bibliometrics of writings and citations, it could provide some insight (also for the wider university leadership and management) into who, out there on the knowledge factory floor, are actually contributing scholarly work, and gaining recognition for that, rather than merely excelling in the in-house rhetoric of committees, corridors and coffee rooms. But in anthropology, it is at worst a clumsy and misleading complex of assessment, importing from elsewhere methodological and evaluation criteria which are poorly attuned to the special qualities of ethnographic work and to anthropology's forms of transnational collaboration.

Recognizing all that, I still see a need for more public anthropology.¹⁷ To begin with, it is a matter of good citizenship: offering knowledge and insights which people outside anthropology, and outside Academia, may find valuable. For one thing, as the world (Sweden included) looks at present, I would think the challenges in questions of migration, cultural diversity and social integration are almost infinite. In large or small ways, anthropology has some special expertise here. But there is certainly a wider range of phenomena where anthropological knowledge can again be usefully complementary to people's own experiences of new and not-so-new media, and travel, in "the global village" (to retrieve another notion which also made its debut about a half-century ago).

There is, however, also a more down-to-earth reason for doing more public anthropology: not doing it is living dangerously. We may miss the public support we need in academic organizational upheavals, when new principles are thought up for the distribution of funding, and when new disciplines are invented and old ones may be assigned to the dustbin. If we do not tell the wider public what we do, it will not know, or (perhaps even worse) mistakenly believe it knows what we do – like still studying mostly "primitives."

Language is an issue here. We need to think about writing and publishing in Swedish. It is natural and basically necessary to do academic writing in an international language, now mostly English – particularly in a globally oriented discipline, the readers are in large part in the wider community of scholars. That also goes with audit culture. But to reach

into Swedish public culture, we must be aware that most members of the public do not habitually read any other language than Swedish.

This involves some engagement with the media. Getting a foot in at the door to the rather narrow corridors of opinion of parts of the national media may not be easy. Perhaps we sometimes get annoyed with editorial staff or contributors who are less well-informed than they think they are, and whose battles with one another are too often transformed into intellectual celebrity gossip. It may be that local or regional newspapers in or close to university towns are a little more aware of what goes on, and who is who, in their academic neighbourhoods. Yet there are also newsmagazines and journals of more specialized coverage which may offer openings, and which have readerships that matter.

And then we can write books in Swedish, collaboratively or individually. In Kaj Århem's *Den antropologiska erfarenheten* (1994), "The Anthropological Experience," a number of Swedish scholars have discussed their work. Fanny Ambjörnsson's (2004) study of teenage girls and Anna Gavano's (2016) of elderly Swedes retiring in Spain have both drawn considerable attention. Generally, I would assume that the texts most likely to succeed as public anthropology are those which do not focus on the discipline as such, but are about topics where some part of the wider public takes an interest, without necessarily having been aware of anthropological expertise. Within that wide range, there is room for much variation, and much experimentation – perhaps leaning toward cultural critique in some cases, and resembling investigative journalism in others? I would point out, too, that several of those Swedish museum anthropologists of the first half of the twentieth century actually did do travel writing.¹⁸ Later in the century, that genre as a whole may have gone into decline – not only in Sweden but more generally (with some exceptions) – but perhaps it can be reinvented. Note that even inside the discipline, Claude Lévi-Strauss may now be more remembered for *Tristes Tropiques* than for his work on the elementary structures of kinship.

Notes

1. I have discussed Swedish anthropology twice before, at different points in time (Hannerz 1982, forthcoming). The present article draws to an extent on the latter of these.
2. Izikowitz' statement was part of a survey article co-authored by an ethnographer, an archaeologist and a folk life scholar, the combination presumably reflecting the fact that *American Anthropologist* was a journal of four-field anthropology (Izikowitz, Moberg and Eskeröd 1959: 669).
3. If someone really wanted to engage with the detailed history of this period, it might be worthwhile looking into the lobbying activities of an entity called "Nordiska Rådet för Antropologisk Forskning" (the Nordic Council for Anthropological Research), a relatively short-lived and self-recruiting body of professors in ethnography, folk life research, archaeology and comparative religion, and a mostly conservative grouping. As a later generation of professors did not join it, it faded away.
4. As this essay is not intended as a bibliographic exercise, precise citations are largely limited to books more or less readily internationally available, from university presses or commercial publishers. A major publication form in Swedish academic life, however, has been a variety of in-house departmental and university series, especially of monographs. A very large proportion of these are doctoral dissertations. Since very far back in time, the dissertations are printed before they are publicly defended. These series tend not to be very effectively marketed, and the publications in them therefore tend to be less known internationally. Lists of them can now usually be sought out, however, on the respective university and/or departmental web sites. With

- recent shifts in publishing technology, more of them are now also becoming available online. (A consequence of having dissertations printed before degrees are awarded is that the phase, fairly widespread elsewhere, in which junior scholars spend time on a post-doc polishing their theses for eventual publication, has been largely absent in this country.)
5. Karl Eric Knutsson was clearly the pioneer of Swedish development anthropology. He wrote a brief volume on “technical assistance in traditional societies” (1965), and during his stay in Stockholm he initiated a collaboration with the Swedish international development agency resulting in a section for development studies linked to the university department, through which development activities were organized for a number of years.
 6. Before I got back to my West African commitment, I also did a brief study of politics in the Cayman Islands (before that British colony became a global tax haven).
 7. A little later, what was evidently the first book on multi-site field work was published in Swedish, drawing on the experience of Swedish researchers, and to be used as a textbook in methods courses. I have also commented on these studies in an article on the characteristics of multi-site studies (Hannerz 2003).
 8. As it happens, the term “anthropology at home” was placed in circulation by a scholar who had been long in Sweden, and had a Gothenburg Ph.D. (Jackson 1987)
 9. While this discipline aimed in large part at local audiences, some of the work coming out of European Ethnology as practiced in Sweden has also appeared in English; see for instance Löfgren (2002) and Löfgren and Ehn (2010).
 10. It mattered here that in most universities, social anthropology and European ethnology have been in different faculties, and therefore not under much administrative pressure to merge or otherwise get closer. For a comment on the anthropology-ethnology relationship, see Frykman (2012).
 11. This early exception was Tom G. Svensson, who moved to Oslo to continue his Saami interests from there.
 12. In Norway, a dominant figure in this debate was the interdisciplinarily inclined economist-sociologist Ottar Brox, who was based in the anthropology department at Bergen. His central book on the topic was published also in Swedish translation (Brox 1970).
 13. In a concluding comment in a volume overviewing varieties of neo-nationalism, I optimistically suggested that Sweden, after the failure of one particularly inept party formation, could already be in a “post-neonationalist” phase (Hannerz 2006). This was unfortunately mistaken.
 14. In a note, Abu-Lughod acknowledges that she got the term in a personal communication from Kirin Narayan, another member of the category.
 15. For a well-informed view of the current situation of museums, see Levitt (2015), who also discusses those in Sweden.
 16. For my earlier reflections on changes of this sort in university life, see Hannerz (2007).
 17. The discipline of European ethnology has maintained a rather stronger public appeal – a handful of its leading representatives appear frequently in newspaper and radio commentary. Their topics, of course, are often Swedish habits and traditions, and thus of self-evident interest to home audiences.
 18. Erland Nordenskiöld, Gerhard Lindblom and Karl-Gustav Izikowitz were among them.

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