

kelgrisar, där klassutjämningen inte längre gjorde det möjligt att bemöta människor olika" (s. 336). Men var folkhemmet en realitet, ett ideal, eller en kultur som alla skrev under på? Varför använda ett sådant laddat politiskt begrepp utan klar innebörd som ett epokbegrepp? Min uppfattning är att begreppet folkhem mer blir en mystifikation än analytiskt klagörande i denna studie. Ny forskning av Nils Edling visar på att folkhemmet kanske inte var ett så grundläggande politiskt begrepp under 1930-talet och framåt som tidigare framhållits. Vidare är det oklart varför dessa spelfilmer skulle vilja föra samtal om eller inordna sig i ett specifikt politiskt projekt.

Med detta nämnt skall sägas att *Hembiträdet och spelfilmen* är en stimulerande bok som visar hur nya analyser av visuellt material kan genomföras på ett kreativt och innovativt sätt. Jag hoppas att den manar till fler undersökningar av den här sorten.

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CARL-FILIP SMEDBERG

Lena Lennerhed, *Kvinnotrubbet: Abort i Sverige 1938–1974* (Möklinta: Gidlunds förlag, 2017). 208 s.

Historian Lena Lennerhed begins her examination of 20<sup>th</sup> century Swedish abortion history with women's stories, culled from letters sent in response to the television station TV2's request in 1970 for opinions about abortion. These voices will not appear again until the end of Lennerhed's narrative, their absence a product of the historical source base, crowded as it is with male medical voices.

The source base for Lennerhed's analysis is textual, comprised of published articles, academic studies, books and government-commissioned investigations. The study is organized both chronologically and thematically, proceeding from the legalization of abortion in 1938 through what Lennerhed – borrowing from Foucault – refers to as the "psychiatrization" of both the abortion debate (p. 15) and abortion review practices, before ending with the initiation of free abortion in 1974 after the rise of the modern women's movement. Lennerhed states that the crux of the book's narrative is the dip in abortion rates in the 1950s, a decline that occurred despite a liberalization of abortion law in 1946, itself partially a product of rising abortion rates. The question of what caused this dip structures the book.

The early chapters highlight the flexible application of seemingly clear and thorough medical grounds for a legal abortion. Lennerhed reproduces the text of the laws governing abortion as well as describing in detail the

structure and wording of the forms used to articulate the grounds for allowing or denying a medical abortion. These texts are highly rational, scientific checklists that parse diagnoses according to various symptoms that legitimate similarly precise grounds for abortion approval.

In contrast, medical professional's procedures and decision-making processes were variable over time, even as the textual basis for decision-making stood still. Through the period covered, law and medical practice were grounded in an assumption that reducing both the illegal and legal rates of abortion was both beneficial to and a reflection of a functioning society. Getting approved for an abortion in the 1930s and early 1940s required the demonstration of a physical deficiency, be it exhaustion or inherited physical defect. With the rise of psychiatry, shifts in the process of abortion approval and the legalization of abortion in the case of social difficulty in 1946, abortion approval increasingly rested on the demonstration of mental and emotional imbalance.

This shift was highly contested within the medical community, particularly by gynecologists. Lennerhed's approach highlights the discussions and disagreements both within and between three main groups: psychiatrists, doctors, and welfare agents. The book convincingly demonstrates that the history of psychiatry and the ever-shifting, power-laden dynamics between different fields of health care is critical to understanding the abortion debate. Indeed, abortion is an excellent case study for an examination of how the medical community's hierarchies were built and policed.

Yet throughout this period, the consistent goal of abortion rate reduction united branches of the medical community and, as *Kvinnotrubbel* emphasizes, contributed to a tendency for numbers to supercede individual, varied experiences in political and medical debates over abortion. Women themselves were seen not as agents of their own individual reproductive destinies but as members of a broader community in the process of perfecting itself. High numbers of abortions, legal or not, indicated that society was not living up to its ideals. Medical and political debates about abortion in the late 1940s and 1950s thus centered on the gap between the goals of the People's Home and the state's ability to produce women capable of being the ideal woman – a good mother. It is this gap that, according to Lennerhed, drove the sharp decline in the abortion rate in the 1950s.

These debates were conducted almost exclusively amongst experts. The medical community's conversation only extended to the public in the 1960s with movements for sexual liberalization and women's rights. The shift in tone and sources here is striking. One could, in fact, argue that the 1960s is the true crux of this narrative, as Swedish citizens were drawn into an international debate about abortion rights, opening up space for individual

women to describe the impossible choices created by abortion approval systems. This democratization and internationalization of the abortion debate made the medical community's monopoly on abortion decisions impossible to legitimate, paving the way for the 1975 liberalization of the abortion law, which facilitated free abortion in practice.

The book combines an analysis of rhetoric, practice and organization. These three foci allow Lennerhed to illustrate how medical abortion discourse, popular conceptions of womanhood, abortion practice and the legal and institutional frameworks for this practice constantly reacted to and shaped one another over time. This is a complicated story for one small book (151 pages of the 208-page book are text); indeed, the book is designed to show that the Swedish history of abortion is multiple rather than singular.

As a consequence, the text points towards several areas for further study within the area of family politics. There are also a few historical turning points that could have been examined more closely. Especially fruitful might be a transnational comparative investigation of the Cold War's effects on Sweden's reproductive politics, given the timing and nature of Sweden's debate over abortion rights. Regardless, *Kvinnotrubbel* is necessary background reading for any Swedish history of family or sexuality politics.

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RACHEL PIERCE

Rolf Hugoson, *Umeå stads historia: 1950–2010* (Umeå: Kommunfullmäktige 2016). 603 s.

Umeås historia har tidigare undersökts av Birger Steckzén i *Umeå stads historia 1588–1888* (1922) och av Sven Ingemar Olofsson i *Umeå stads historia 1888–1972* (1972), men en större studie om stadens samtidshistoria har saknats. Detta är i och för sig ingenting unikt då det råder en generell brist på kunskap om de svenska städernas utveckling och liv under det senaste halvsekle. Just därför är det så mycket mer glädjande att Umeå kommun valt att finansiera en uppföljande monografi om perioden mellan 1950 och 2010, ett minst sagt dynamiskt skeende i stadens historia.

Statsvetaren Rolf Hugoson, som är författare till boken, tar som sin utgångspunkt att "studera staden betraktad från stadshuset". En fördel med denna ansats är att den ger studien en tydlig avgränsning. En nackdel är att stadshistoriskt intressanta fenomen som stadens kulturella liv, dess näringsliv och dess sociala rörelser endast uppmärksammas i den mån något av kommunens verksamhetsområden griper in i dem.