

Session 4: Saturday 9.00-11.00

Sweden's Contraceptive Market 1910-1938: A contribution to the Economic History of Sexuality and Informal Entrepreneurship

Anna Bergman, Umeå University, anna.bergman@umu.se

Commentator: Mathias Krusell

This thesis concerns the history of the Swedish contraceptive market, sexuality and entrepreneurship, and covers a period during which the contraceptive market was restricted by regulations. The aim is to examine the growth of the commercial contraceptive market and changes in sexuality norms, by studying the divergence between entrepreneurs [contraceptive vendors] and law enforcement. In order to understand the market, the thesis focuses on the production, import, sale, marketing and consumption of contraceptives in three general periods based on the three laws that controlled the market (1910-1938, 1939-1959, 1960-1970). Inspired by a rising research interest in the business behind contraceptives (Borge, 2020; Tone, 2001) this thesis intends to contribute with a business and market perspective on the issue of contraceptives in Sweden before birth control pills changed the landscape for sexual relations. The thesis observes the market from an institutional perspective, examining the institutional asymmetry between formal and informal rules – viewing the market as a space where authorities, entrepreneurs and consumers, competed over how contraceptives and sexuality was interrelated. The thesis asks questions about how the contraceptive market managed to grow when it was restrained by law and how entrepreneurs became vital actors in a resistance to the same law.

Learning Antibiotics Research from History

Carl Björvang, Uppsala University, carl.bjorvang@ekhist.uu.se

Commentator: Anna Bergman

The last few decades have seen a substantial absence of major advances in the fight against bacterial pathogens. While it is important to look towards the future in finding ways to address this lack of advancement, one way to do so is by looking at the past, to learn from the times when advances were more common. This paper looks at the discoveries of early antibiotic substances, from Arsphenamine to Streptomycin, to identify key aspects that made their discoveries possible and reflects on the lessons that can be drawn from these in regards to future antibacterial research.

The Development of Corporate Bureaucracy in Sweden from 1970 to 2000

Mathias Krusell, Göteborg University, mathias.krusell@gu.se

Commentator: Carl Björvang

This thesis aim to examine the changes and development of capitalism in connection to the business office and the development of so called corporate bureaucracy in Sweden between 1970 and 2000. In relation to the field of business history this entwines important changes in organisational and technological knowledge with changes in the culture and character of administrative businesswork. During the time period of 1970 to 2000 the ideas and work connected to office work went through a dramatic transformation with layoffs of middle managers, a growing importance of management consultant firms and an intensification of business management literature proclaiming offerings to the

corporate culture of management and governance. The thesis will contribute to a more coherent historical insight into both the production and implementation of new managerial knowledge as well as the effect of larger structural changes on the actual administrative office work in businesses. Through examinations of occupational structure and changes in the composition between managerial and clerical office work, this research will give insight into structural changes of managerial capitalism. It will also look into one or two case studies of early managerial consultancy firms as well as administrative change in industrial and service business.

A moderately cutthroat competition, please!

Carin Sjölin, Stockholm School of Economics, carin.sjolin@phdstudent.hhs.se

Commentator: Happy Kondwani Ngoma

The focus of my dissertation project is the Swedish food retail market from after the end of WWII until the entry of Sweden into the European Union. It will cover the well-known areas of restriction of competition, sector concentration and non-market activities. For the period and the sector, the non-market activities should not be regarded as non-market activities because they were a criteria for remaining in the market. Following the Swedish law regarding city planning, the municipals' planning and building committee decided who got to build and where. It made sense for these three private actors, albeit one being a cooperative with strong linkages to the Social Democrats, to engage themselves politically. I intend to show that the "non-market activities" contributed to shaping the market and allowed the actors to influence the change. I will thereby show that political action in a market is at least as necessary as having an offering that is well-adapted to your customer. I will seek to prove that the concentration of the Swedish food retail sector during this time, which the debate labelled as problematic, was accepted and supported by the Swedish state and the large food retailers.

Session 5: Saturday 13.30-15.30

The State and Business Development During Decolonisation: A Study on Business Strategies and Political Risk Management in Mining in Zambia and the Congo, 1950 to 1982

Kondwani Happy Ngoma, Göteborg University, kondwani.ngoma@gu.se

Commentator: Carin Sjölin

My research project will present and analyse state and business relations in the mining sector in Northern Rhodesia – present day Zambia – and the Congo. The project seeks to contribute to the literature on economic and institutional development using the business diplomacy and political risk analysis framework. The mining sector was one with the most significant investment from the West in the 20th century and it played a predominant role in shaping and determining economic and political outcomes. The decolonisation process provided a stern test to this influence and entailed strategic engagement at a host and home country level. By focusing on MNCs in Zambia and the Congo, in both a colonial and post-colonial setting, I aim to illustrate how firms, operating in economically and geographically linked regions, but with distinct political structures, dealt with the decolonisation process. Key to understanding this will be an examination of corporate structures. To this end, the project will look at two mining groups: Rhodesian Selection Trust Group (RST) and the Tanks Group. The two had a unifying strand of British interests - British ownership or territorial jurisdiction - which enables a comparative analysis on how firms and states perceived risks from decolonisation.

Strategies to make a living in old age in Sweden 1900–1960

Dennis Fahlgren, Umeå University, dennis.fahlgren@umu.se

Commentator: Li Andersson

How to make a living in old age is a problem that has been faced by most individuals throughout history. Before the welfare state, strategies were mainly handled through the family, mostly by handing over the family farm in exchange for subsistence, or through co-residence. The rising number of elders without property and the migration during the 19th century however complicated this practice. The first pension reform of 1913 can be seen as a solution to the altering circumstances. However, it was not until the 1946 pension reform that the pension in theory was sufficient to be able to live on without other means, which implies that traditional ways of making a living were still important during the early 20th century. The aim of my thesis is to study the strategies for old age in Sweden between 1900 and 1960. I will look at how aspects as labour force participation, family support and social security affected these strategies. I will study this longitudinally by using the POPLINK-database. Other sources may consist of tax records and government investigations.

Trade unions and international trade: the formation, evolvement and negotiation of LO's trade policy positions 1889-2019

Li Andersson, Stockholm University, li.andersson@ekohist.su.se

Commentator: Maija Absetz

The economic history of international trade, in terms of causes, forms and consequences, can hardly be separated neither from the political realm of trade policy, nor from the production of tradable goods and services. Positioned at the intersection between politics and production, trade unions and their trade interests, as well as how those interests translate into different positions vis-à-vis international trade, thus arguably constitutes important objects of study. At the same time there is a tendency among much previous research in this area to overlook the significance of both ideas and internal political struggle within those processes. For example, the variety of meanings ascribed to concepts such as “free trade” and its connection to changes in the practices and politics of international trade arguably deserves more thorough consideration. Against this background, the aim of this dissertation project is to deepen the knowledge of the Swedish trade union movement's historical approach to international trade. More specifically, it aims to analyze the construction of trade union trade policy interests – how they have been articulated, negotiated and changed over time – through the Swedish Trade Union Confederation's public positionings and internal debates on trade issues over the last 130 years.

The Challenge of Neoliberalism to Trade Union Movement – Attitudes of the Central Organisations of Finnish and Swedish Trade Unions Towards Unemployment Between 1970–1990

Maija Absetz, Helsinki University, maija.absetz@helsinki.fi

Commentator: Dennis Fahlgren

In my doctoral thesis I will explore and analyse how ideas around economy and unemployment were intertwined in the political thinking and rhetoric of central organisations of Finnish and Swedish trade unions. My main questions are, what was the role of unemployment in their economic and political thinking, and how and why the attitudes towards unemployment have changed between 1970 and 1990. How these changes are connected to views on economic theories and especially what similarities and differences they have with neoliberal ideals of the time? This qualitative research in the field of intellectual history adds to the body of knowledge around neoliberalism and how it was perceived and applied in Northern countries. Estimating the level of neoliberalism inside the trade union movement in the Northern welfare states gives deeper understanding how this now ubiquitous ideology insinuated its way through different layers of society. Were trade unions the last posts of defence against neoliberalism or institutions that strengthened the popularity of these economic ideals?

Session 6: Saturday 16.00-18.00

Conceptualizing the Idea of Economic Growth from the late 19th Century to the 1960s in Finland and Sweden

Heikki Mikkonen, Tampere University, heikki.mikkonen@tuni.fi

Commentator: Vinzent Ostermeyer

This ongoing dissertation project studies the idea of economic growth in Finland and Sweden from the late 19th Century to the 1960s. Economic growth, and its most common indicator the GDP, were not part of economic or political vocabulary until after the Second World War. There were, however, earlier conceptualizations of economic progress and development that were used in similar – but not entirely similar – contexts. In order to avoid the pitfalls of anachronism, and to analytically assess continuities and change from the late 19th Century ideas of economic progress to 1960s perceptions of economic growth, this dissertation uses conceptual history and history of concepts as the analytical framework. This dissertation studies conceptual development of economic growth particularly in the context of Finnish and Swedish economic associations and their publications. In late 19th and early 20th Centuries, economic associations were not arenas of debate exclusively for academically trained economists. Instead, most members of the associations were politicians, public servants and delegates of business and industry. Consequently, these associations provide an interesting platform to analyze, how economic growth was perceived and conceptualized in different historical and political contexts.

Industrial Growth and Beyond: The Contribution of Industrial Multiplier Effects to the Growth of Services in the USA, Great Britain, and Sweden in the Late 19th-Century

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Commentator: Heikki Mikkonen

A large and fast-growing service sector emerged next to industry during the 19th-century. Its drivers are little known. One potential channel are multiplier effects. I leverage detailed census data from the United States, Great Britain, and Sweden to estimate local employment multipliers. Each job created in the tradable sector leads to about one additional job in the local service sector. This job creation is entirely driven by the high-skilled tradable sector with each additional job leading to the

creation of about two service sector jobs. Differences in mobility, social security, and preferences explain the evolution of the multiplier until today.