Democratic Governmentality

National Imaginations, Popular Movements and Governing the Citizen

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> The spread of democracy, far from eradicating nationalism, consolidates its banal, but not necessarily benign, forms. The very conditions of democracy, as envisaged in the twentieth century, are those which are based upon the nation-state, and which routinely embody a mysticism of place and people.
>
> Michael Billig (1995: 94)

Among both decision makers and researchers, there is currently strong support for the idea that active participation in various types of associations and organisations enables people to acquire many of the capabilities and qualities that are required for a well-functioning democracy (cf. Putnam 1992). This idea of the significance of the activities of various associations for democracy, and their role as schools of democracy is deeply rooted in the Scandinavian countries. Not least among them, Sweden has a long tradition of vigorous, well-organised *popular movements*, which have also played a prominent role in the corporatist "Swedish model" that emerged during the post-war period (Micheletti 1995). In both politics and research, there has emerged over time a consensus which views the vigour of the work of popular movements as something of a hallmark of Swedish democracy.

The current article examines the view of the powerful popular movements as the hallmark of Swedish democracy, critically analysing ideas about Swedish popular movements as bearers of both democracy and the national project. The focus of the article is, firstly, how these ideas have been addressed by central figures in the discussion about Swedish popular movements and, secondly, the ways in which these ideas are still being addressed in the ongoing project of including "immigrants" in an imagined "Swedish democratic community". One important issue raised is the discursive construction of the national/democratic Self in relation to Others, *outside* as well as *inside* of the borders of the nation-state – other "peoples" (outside) and "immigrants" (inside). By analysing two movements that have long set the tone of Swedish socio-political life – the trade union movement and the adult education movement – it is shown that the inclusion of "immigrants" is based not only on the idea that popular movements are bearers of the "national heritage" but also on a conception of democracy as synonymous with "Swedish traditions". This way of imagining Self and Others obviously has a number of far-reaching consequences in terms of inclusion/exclusion. In order for "immigrants" to be included in Swedish democracy, there is a requirement that "they become more Swedish".

The article starts by examining the idea of popular movements as arenas for "schooling in democracy" that has become so deeply rooted in Sweden. After that we take a closer look at the popular movements in present day Sweden, and at how "immigrants" are "schooled into

democracy" in various ways in the trade union and adult education movements. Finally, some of the consequences of the democratic schooling within Swedish popular movements in terms of inclusion/exclusion are discussed. To begin with, however, I will present a brief outline of the theoretical framework that provides the basis for the subsequent analysis.

Democratic citizenship as governmentality

This article proceeds from the theoretical work on *governmentality* that has developed in the wake of the work by Michel Foucault (Cruikshank 1999; Rose 1999), but first and foremost from the applications of this work to the issues of citizenship and nation(alism), migration and the inclusion/exclusion of migrants (Dillon 1995; Lui 2004; Dillon & Neal 2008). Conceptually, the term itself, in combining the two words *govern* and *mentality*, captures more complex forms of governing than those usually referred to in a conventional understanding of "government" (Rose 1999). One crucial difference in relation to a conventional understanding is found in the way that those who constitute the "objects" of governing – citizens, peoples, city districts or regions – are *not* viewed as "passive" targets. Instead, governing in itself is rather said to *form* the very "objects" or "targets" of governing.

Thus, the concept of governmentality captures the "mentality of government", i.e. how different *regimes of truth* are related to political procedures and governmental techniques of various kinds. According to Foucault, the exercise of power can be understood in terms of certain "political rationalities", which always "have a *moral* form, in so far as they concern such issues as the proper distribution of tasks between different authorities and the ideals or principles to which government should be addressed" (Rose 1996: 40). In order to study the exercise of power, according to this line of thought, it is necessary to critically analyze the particular mentalities of rule – "the ways in which we think about governing" (Dean 2007: 50) – underpinning them. In that way, governmentality is not *only* about studying discourse, in terms of ideas and talk. It is rather about analyzing the numerous ways in which our conduct is being *governed* (by governments, but also by ourselves and by others) as well as *made governable*. For Foucault (1991), then, governing does not originate from the state apparatus, as some kind of natural centre of power. Governing is rather comprised of a broad repertoire of technologies that operate across the *entire* social field, crossing boundaries between Public and Private, state, market and civil society. Civil society, including among other things popular movements, informal networks, voluntary organisations and self-help groups, is one of the important sites where people's conduct is being governed (Rose 1999). "The domain of effects" in these processes of governing, however, "cannot be read off the programmes of gov-

ernment themselves", Mitchell Dean (2007: 83) notes, emphasizing the need to "reveal the immanent disjunction and dissonance between the 'programmer's view' and the logic of practices, their real effects".

On the basis of a governmentality framework, Barbara Cruikshank (1999: 5) maintains that: "Citizens are not born; they are made". She argues that "discourses about democratic citizenship tend to foreclose the ways in which it is possible to be a citizen" (p. 24), which means that categories of "democratic citizen" and "democratic citizenship" should be viewed not as given as such but rather as the results of governmental techniques forming "ideal citizens". And in liberal democratic societies of today, the "ideal citizen" is portrayed as a self-governing (responsible and autonomous) individual, *motivated, willing* and *capable* of carving out his/her life-course on the basis of his/her *own* ideals, circumstances and ambitions (Rose 1999). Citizenship ideals, however, always have their opposites – today these are represented by the dependent, non-responsible and passive citizens, which need to be "empowered" (Cruikshank 1999).

Historically, the apparatus of democratic government emerged in a political order based on the nation-state, in which it became self-evident over time that democratic citizenship presupposes a national community. The international system, as it appears today, is comprised of political entities that are sovereign in relation to one another – *nation-states*. It is precisely this historically specific system of sovereign states that makes it possible to rule and govern the world population. The system is characterised by its territoriality, i.e. on the basis of territory, the political world is divided into *inside* and *outside*. Citizens are distinguished from non-citizens. Citizenship has been "nationalized" (Dillon 1995; Lui 2004). This division, however, is neither naturally given nor unproblematic. The latter part of the 19th Century was the era of nation building (Hobsbawm 1990). From this point onwards, the organisational principle of nationalism – one territory, one nation, one language, one culture – became the dominant societal ideal (Hardt & Negri 2000). It became almost impossible to think about community *outside* or *beyond* the increasingly tightly woven organisational principles of sovereignty, territory, nation, unitary culture (Billig 1995; Dillon & Neal 2008).

Liberal democracies were established in the course of the process of modernization, in which several different processes developed in parallel and in symbiosis with one another, including amongst others the emergence of the capitalist mode of production, a centralised state apparatus and nation building. In liberal democracies, as in context of other regimes, the idea of the nation as "imagined community" has *excluded* at the same time as it has *included*. Through their very existence, for example, ethnic minorities and immigrants have always

constituted something of an anomaly in this *national order of things* (Malkki 1997). The principle of national sovereignty is embodied in the doctrine of citizens who share one territory and one culture, which involves having the right to exclude and punish "aliens" and outsiders. On the basis of distinct discursive regimes of ordering and classification focused on race/ethnicity/nation, a broad repertoire of control, surveillance and border protection technologies are maintained – all with the objective of keeping the "Enemies" (both over there and here at home) "in their place" (Lui 2004; Dillon & Neal 2008). Ethnicity and nation has thereby gradually become central to the way democracy itself works, in parallel with the establishment of practices of inclusion/exclusion, which were carried in by the process of nation building, as increasingly self-evident techniques within the apparatus of democratic government. Democratic government(ality) was naturally assumed, in line with a nationalist *regime of truth*, to imply a national popular collective and a culturally homogeneous population. Here it became more or less impossible even to imagine democratic forms of governing outside of a national or nation-state framework (Billig 1995).

In this context, Cruikshank (1999: 2) has noted that theories of democracy "are best understood as constitutive discourses that contribute to solidifying what is possible to think, say, do, and be democratically". As we will see in the current article, referring particularly to researchers within the field of popular movements, researchers have played – and continue to play – a very important role in the establishment, legitimisation and normalisation of the cartography and the ideal of nationalism (Dillon 1995; Dahlstedt 2005). Researchers in the field of popular movements – as well as elsewhere – have tended to take *borders* and *space* (between nation-states as well as public/private, state/market/civil society/family), *identities* and *categories* (based for example on race/ethnicity/nation/culture) for granted, as if they were unproblematic and self-evident "facts" (cf. Dillon 1995; Nordvall 2005). In this article, the concept of governmentality is used in trying to move beyond this kind of "methodological nationalism" (Wimmer & Schiller 2003), problematizing the ways in which citizenship is *governed* and *made governable* by means of categorisations and imaginations based on amongst other things race/ethnicity/nation/culture.[1] Before looking more closely at the ways in which belonging – and not belonging – to the nation is staged through the "democratic schooling" within the trade union and adult education movements, however, we will first return to the Sweden of the 1940s, '50s and '60s in order to see how the idea of the popular movements as arenas for "schooling in democracy" took shape.

The popular movement as "school of democracy"

During the 1950s and 1960s, everyone who turned 21 years of age – thus coming of age as citizens – received the gift of a special book from their home municipality, *The Citizenship Book* [*Medborgarboken*]. The book was published by the Swedish Federation of Rural Municipalities, with financial support from the Swedish Cooperative Union, the Swedish Insurance Association and the Swedish Savings Banks' Association. The first edition was published in 1949, the seventh and final in 1966. In the foreword to the 1957 edition, the chairman of the Swedish Federation of Rural Municipalities describes the objective of the book as being that of "deepening and strengthening the spirit of citizenship in our country" (Anderberg 1957). The book was comprised of a collection of informative texts on different themes of more or less central importance to the problematic about *what it means to be a citizen*, identifying the qualities and values, abilities and characteristics of a "good citizen". The texts were written by a series of authorities in the various areas covered, such as "Our democratic heritage", "What it means to have come of age" and "Setting up home". *The Citizenship Book* is in many respects a document typical of its time. In all, it presents a Swedish ideal of citizenship from the 1950s and 1960s, the golden age of the "Swedish model".

In the 1949 edition, a special section was devoted to "The citizen and the popular movements". The text is written by Torvald Karlbom, who has written several books describing the history of the Swedish trade union movement. "It is in the unions that broad sections of the population have been given the opportunity to air their own and common interests", writes Karlbom (1949: 63), "to consider, on a group basis and together with other groups, problems and issues that must be resolved in order to be able to live together with as little friction as possible". He argues that the togetherness experienced by the active members of associations step by step creates a "solidarity and feeling for the collective" that gradually forms these members into responsible democratic citizens, capable of rising above conflicts and narrow group interests. "From group and class solidarity, societal solidarity has sprouted forth and in this way, through the work of associations, democracy has consolidated its place in people's consciousness". In this light, democratic citizenship may be understood as a specific morality, mentality or way of life, which by various means is to be conveyed to, and moulded in, individual citizens. For Karlbom this democratic consciousness or mentality appears to constitute a condition for a well-functioning democratic social order. "These values cannot be measured in figures and graphs but they nonetheless exist. And they are at least as important for the defence of democracy as bastions built of steel and concrete".

Karlbom is far from being alone in his way of looking at popular movements, democracy and citizenship. Similar ideas were a common occurrence in post-war Sweden. In later editions of *The Citizenship Book* Karlbom's text was replaced by a piece on "Youth and the popular movements" written by the popular movement researcher Hilding Johansson (1957). Johansson is another of those who emphasised the intrinsic democratic value of the popular movements at this time. In the book *The Popular Movements* (1954), for example, he notes that the popular movements in Sweden play a crucial role as "schools of citizenship". "In general", he argues, they have "a democratic form of governance, and their mentality is also... democratic" (p. 201). But how does he think these members are concretely schooled into a democratic mentality? According to Johansson, the practical application of the "democratic technique of government", whereby the members learn the art of discussion and compromise, constitutes an important part of the popular movements' schooling in democracy.

> People learn to handle the chairman's gavel, to write minutes, to vote in line with customary parliamentary rules and so forth. Many also learn to contribute to discussions and give speeches. […] Not the least important is that people learn to compromise. […] And a democratic form of government requires an ability both to conduct an objective debate and to compromise (p. 196f).

Another important aspect of the popular movement as a school of democracy, argues Johansson, is found in its intrinsic ability to educate the members into becoming responsible citizens, by forcing them to assume responsibility for the decisions they are involved in taking.

> In the same way, it is important to this end that citizens have learned to govern with responsibility. The popular movements have taught many of their members not only to apply the technique of democratic government but also to assume responsibility for their decisions. The members are namely forced to bear the consequences of their decisions (p. 197).

Just after the Second World War and through the early years of the 1950s, there were a large number of researchers, debaters and politicians who, in the wake of the increasingly strong position that the popular movements had attained in Swedish society, spoke of the emergence of a *new kind of human being*. Johansson, one of them, declares that "The popular movements have created a certain way of life". "The lives of the active members are to a large degree devoted to meetings, assemblies and exercises, and these determine the character of their leisure time. In this context popular-movement man emerges as a new human type" (p.

170). How then can this "new human type" be characterised? Johansson provides the following description.

> In her conduct an element of self-consciousness may be discerned… She argues for her views, and she often does so very knowledgeably. Even if her many tasks have prevented her from acquiring an extensive amount of knowledge, she nonetheless knows a good deal, and she is generally also energetic and purposeful. (p. 171)

Johansson repeatedly emphasises *self-confidence* and *self-consciousness* specifically as two of "popular-movement man's" most conspicuous characteristics. Within the popular movement it also became possible for what Johansson refers to as the "simple man" to "advance to positions of leadership" (Johansson 1952: 77), which manifestly led to an increased self-confidence within the lower strata of society. Thus people from the lower classes also appear in the role of competent and independent citizens. According to Johansson, the question of *belonging to the movement* is also linked to the issue of citizens' self-confidence/self-consciousness. Through active involvement in the work of popular movements, he wrote, the individual member became "conscious of being a part of a large and powerful movement. Behind him stood a multitude of people" (*ibid*.). This in itself has contributed to an improvement in self-confidence, not least among the lower classes. "When he spoke in their name, he was no longer the simple man" (*ibid*.). The members' increased awareness of themselves and of belonging to a larger social collective (*the movement*) strengthens their self-confidence, which by extension strengthens democracy as a whole.

> This heightened self-consciousness meant a good deal for democratisation. It gave birth to demands to be given a place "at the masters' table". But first and foremost, it laid a spiritual foundation for democracy. In a society where the members of the lower classes lack independence and self-consciousness it is unlikely that a democratic form of government can emerge, and even less endure. There the rule of the few is tolerated. Besides a high level of public education, self-consciousness within the lower social classes is probably the most important spiritual condition necessary for democracy (p. 77f).

Self-awareness is emphasised as one of the fundamental conditions or "spiritual foundations" for democracy. Commitment, awareness, self-confidence, independence, the ability to debate and assume responsibility, they are all elements that characterise the *democratic (gov-ern)mentality* that largely defines the citizenship ideal of the 1940s and 1950s. Besides the institution of the school system, involvement in the activities of various associations is viewed

as the primary arena in which this way of life can be formed. Becoming a really "good democrat" means first freeing oneself from the yoke of dependency and becoming an independent individual who is conscious of himself, of his capacities and of his responsibility, who is self-confident, with this self-confidence being fortified not least through the sense of being part of something bigger (*the movement*).

Popular movements and national imaginations

Even if the strong popular movements have with time become a kind of symbol for Sweden and "Swedish democracy", the most dominant among these movements had their roots far beyond the country's borders. "The Swedish popular movements appear… to be 'imported products'", notes Hilding Johansson (1954: 80) for example. "During their early years, the movements often spoke a language that was quite unfamiliar". Despite the fact that many of the popular movements thus had overseas origins, they appear to have very quickly become "nationalized". After only a couple of decades they had been adapted to Swedish conditions. Step by step, the popular movements became in some sense bearers or stewards of what are viewed as specifically "Swedish" values, ideals and traditions. The author Ernst Herman Thörnberg devoted a great deal of his work to describing the Swedish history of the popular movements. He is one of those who place a powerful emphasis on the movements' roots in the "Swedish nation". In the book *Folkrörelser och samhällsliv i Sverige* [*Popular Movements and Social Life in Sweden*], a standard work on the history of Swedish popular movements, Thörnberg emphasises that in order to understand the growth and development of the popular movements, we need a deeper insight into the specific "distinguishing characteristics" of the Swedish people.

> It is incontestable that there are distinctive features discernible in Sweden's population that denote a Swedish national character, and the investigation and description of which may be said to lie within the field of population psychology. And when we look at our popular movements, study their origins, progress and extent, we should attempt to develop an understanding of these distinctive characteristics, as they have emerged during the evolution of the nation, in its institutions and culture (Thörnberg 1943: 109f).

Thörnberg is far from being alone in emphasising the links between popular movements and nation. Similar ideas were at this time deeply rooted in both popular movements and the research community (cf. Edquist 2001; Linderborg 2001; Nordvall 2005). In one of the opening sections of *The Citizenship Book* we find a very clear example of how popular movements

were framed in a specifically Swedish/national setting, where a passage from Jalmar Furuskog's essay entitled *The Swedish Cultural Heritage* is cited under the heading "Our democratic heritage". The following is a passage from the Furuskog quotation included in *The Citizenship Book*.

> It is distinctive of the Swedish culture that it is not the state that has forced collective action upon the citizens, but rather that they have themselves voluntarily united, voluntarily adopted rules and programmes for their activities, voluntarily submitted to the restrictions of their personal freedom that must be required by the organisation. We Swedes feel that a voluntary collective of this kind is more valuable than a state-ordered, controlled collaboration.
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> Something even more typical for the cultural understanding of the Swedish popular movements is that they in no way view collectivism as an end in itself. Cooperation is essential in order to carry out certain practical tasks, but the goals of social development are people themselves, however, people as free, creative personalities. High above the pretensions of collectivism to coordination and organization, rises in all Swedish popular movements the conception of the *value of individualism*, and this view has strong, indestructible roots in Swedish philosophy and Swedish literature throughout the ages (Furuskog 1941: 16, emphasis in original).

In the quote above, Furuskog speaks of "we Swedes", as if it was completely self-evident who is included, who belongs – and who does *not* belong in this category. The "Swedish culture" is for Furuskog homogeneous and labelled in the singular. It has a specific "distinctiveness". On the whole, Sweden is presented as the model of a democratic country. The superordinate democratic principle of the individual's freedom is claimed to have "strong, indestructible roots in Swedish philosophy and Swedish literature". Democracy is presented as being particularly deeply rooted just here in Sweden. Sweden is said to rest on a voluntary *social contract*, in much the same way as political philosophers of an earlier period in the history of ideas (such as Hobbes and Locke) imagined citizens voluntarily coming together to delegate the exercise of power to the sovereign state or the ruler.

Furuskog develops his ideas about Swedish national "distinctiveness" in several books, including the popular geography text book *Vårt land* [*Our Country*] (1943). There he describes Sweden's homogeneous population as one of the nation's most distinctive features. "Outside our national borders there are no linguistic minorities who claim to be united with us. Nor are there any ethnic groups within the country that are dissatisfied with being Swedes. These auspicious circumstances have contributed to the creation of a sense of national unity" (p. 18). Furuskog illustrates here something that can be labelled *the doctrine of national unity*, which

proceeds from the principle of one territory, one language, one culture. In this doctrine there is no place for either Romanies, Lapps or Finns, who have in fact been part of the Swedish national heritage for centuries (Catomeris 2004). They rather constitute anomalies who quite simply do not fit into the self-image of national unity (Pred 2000).

Whilst Furuskog's cartography does indeed mention both Finns and Lapps, they are generally described as rather "exotic" elements in the landscape of Sweden. They are presented as imperfect Swedes, to a greater or lesser degree – and everyone is at bottom satisfied with this image. "There is nothing noteworthy in the mind of the Lapps", notes Furuskog (1943: 348) for example, "and for the rest of us it is a delight to know that the representatives of the Lappish race in our country feel themselves to be free, respected Swedish citizens". No mention at all is made in the otherwise extensive general work *Our Country* of the broad repertoire of disciplinary "Swedification campaigns" initiated across the entire social field that these groups have been subjected to for centuries – forced immobility and relocation, arrest and expulsion, sterilization and criminalizing the use of minority languages, exclusion from decision-making processes and social rights, just to mention a few of the disciplinary techniques initiated (cf. Skutnabb-Kangas 1981; Broberg & Tydén 1991; Svensson 1993; Lundmark 2008).

In line with the ongoing construction of the Social Democratic society, the People's home [*folkhemmet*], from the end of the 1920s, the nature of the creation of the national community changes. The self-image of Swedish nationalism gradually tones down expressly *ethnically Swedish* principles in favour of principles such as *humanism* and *modernity*.

> The Home of the people is based on a conception of collective progress, a unified nation that marched with determination into a common future. […] The new Sweden needed different stories and different heroes than those created by Swedish punch patriotism. It became important to transform the writing of history into a story about the triumph of modern democracy. […] It was now the democratic temperament of the common people that was emphasised, rather than their love of the monarchy (Löfgren 1993: 54f.).

With the People's home it becomes increasingly important to define the specifically Swedish in terms of democratic maturity or mentality. Furuskog's reflections on "the Swedish cultural heritage" and the claimed deep historical roots of democracy in the Swedish philosophical tradition constitute a highly illuminating example in this context. In what way? According to Furuskog, "the Swedish people" is characterised as special and fundamentally democratic.

Not on ethnic grounds, however, but by reference to deeply rooted traditions that are claimed to have emerged specifically in Sweden.

In this discourse, people, nation and democracy melt together into an apparently self-evident trinity. The popular movement is portrayed as the bearer of both the *democratic* and the *national* project. The popular movement is regarded as fostering not only "good democrats", but "good Swedish democrats". Democracy is here a marker that distinguishes "Swedes" from "other people". It appears as though Swedishness is synonymous with democracy – and vice versa (Dahlstedt 2005). The Swede is somehow the very model of the democratic citizen. This discourse about Swedish democracy and the ways in which popular movements contribute to the ongoing process of fostering democratic Swedish citizens, developed by Furuskog, among others, have been important in making popular movements *governable*, i.e. defining them as crucial sites for the formation of citizens of a certain kind – and thereby legitimating certain techniques of government (cf. Dean 2007). A number of studies also indicate that similar ideas and imaginations have been developed as part of the self-image of various popular movements in Sweden (Ehn *et al*. 1993), such as the trade union (Sjölander 2005), temperance (Edquist 2001), missionary (Sarja 2002), agrarian (Mohlin 1989) and adult education movement (Nordvall 2005) – as well as the Labour movement at large (Linderborg 2001; Blomqvist 2006). As we will see later on, these ideas are still part of the self-image of popular movements – not least in relation to "immigrants".

"Into the gloom they strode" – movements inwards and outwards

Several of the more dominant popular movements in Sweden have focused their "voluntary social work" on the most "outcast" and "disadvantaged" members of society. The objective has often been to "elevate" these groups to a "higher level", culturally, morally, spiritually or as regards their degree of civilisation. This is not least true of the adult education, temperance and revivalist movements (Villadsen 2004). The idea that certain segments of "the people" need to be "elevated" to a "higher level" in one way or another was more or less generally accepted within these movements during the phase in which they became established. The idea has also had a major impact on those, both academics and others, who came to describe the history of the popular movements for subsequent generations. "It is quite clear that the movements have made a major contribution towards the cultural elevation of the lower social classes", notes Hilding Johansson (1954: 182), for example, who during the 1940s and 1950s was one of those responsible for establishing the idea of the popular movement's intrinsic *democratic value*. In doing this he also contributed in some sense towards reinforcing the self-

image of the popular movements themselves, as the hub of the machinery of democracy. "The social inequalities continue to create cultural divides, though these are smaller now than they used to be", Johansson continues. "Activities to educate the public therefore continue to be an instrument for the lower classes in their efforts to lift themselves to a higher cultural level".

The idea of "cultural elevation" has a long history and appears in a series of different versions in the context of the Swedish popular movements. As already noted, it has had a major impact within the adult education movement. "The society of the future cannot be based exclusively on an economic system that has been developed to a high level of technical perfection. It must also be based around most highly cultivated people", argues Rickard Sandler (1937a/1907: 10), for example, social democrat and founder of the Workers' Educational Association. "Raising the spiritual level of the average person is of utterly essential significance to the realisation of our social ideal". Corresponding ideas are also to be found in other movements, however, not least the religious ones.

Over time, a large number of movements have become bearers of Sweden's "national heritage". This does not however mean that they restrict their activities to "elevating people" *within* the borders of the nation-state. Many movements also focus a substantial amount of their work on people who are located *outside* these borders. The clearest examples of this transnational pattern of movement are found within the religious popular movements, among them the Salvation Army. In 1890, William Booth, the British founder of the "Army", wrote the exhortative book *In Darkest England and the Way Out*, which achieved a massive circulation within a short period of time, not only in England but also in several other countries, among them Sweden. General Booth completely rejects the borders drawn by nation-states. His mission of spreading "the light" to the "dark regions" of society takes no account of borders. It is a global undertaking. Inspired by the many expeditions of discovery made to Africa – the "dark continent" – during the late 19th Century, Booth draws a parallel between the jungles of Africa and the slum areas emerging in Britain's large cities. He argues that the poverty in this "darkest England" is to a large extent a result of the patterns of life of the slum population themselves. "Drunkenness and all manner of uncleanness, moral and physical, abound" (Booth 1890: 14).

As in the United Kingdom, the Swedish Salvation Army focused its efforts on the "darkest" areas of society, not only in the "wildernesses" of the major cities and rural areas in Sweden, but also in the farthest corners of the world. The Swedish Salvation Army in general reached out "to those who had sunk deepest", notes Thörnberg (1939: 61). "It drew attention to their human dignity. This constituted a singular and powerful democratic declaration".

Once again the democratic *essence* of the popular movement takes centre stage. For Thörnberg, it is a question of including those who had "sunk deepest" in a broad democratic collective, of "elevating" their moral and social standard, leading them onto the right path. "Generally speaking, the Salvation Army prevented the moral and social degradation of a multitude of people" (p. 54f), he concludes, in a tone that is strongly reminiscent of the movement's own figureheads. In the same captivating style as General Booth himself, Thörnberg describes the journey of the noble missionaries out into the "darkness" of the world.

> These missionaries have travelled to the East and also the West Indies, to China, Korea, Japan, South Africa, South America and the islands of the Pacific. They have directed their message to hordes of people whose religions may be characterised as primitive and polytheist. […] They have had to acquaint themselves with very different types of culture, mythologies and dogmas. People of extremely varied ethnic character, with all kinds of racial components have been the object of their zeal. […] Into this confusion they strode, into the gloom (p. 93).

The description strikes an emotional tone that is to some degree reminiscent of the century's imperialist doctrine of *the white man's burden*. The doctrine involved "bring[ing] light to the dark places and peoples of this world by acts of will and deployments of power" (Said 1993: 33), all in the name of enlightenment, humanism and salvation. One part of this was that it was the "white man's" *own* ideals, judgements and pattern of life that constituted the moral standard against which light and darkness, good and evil, quite simply the rest of humanity were measured. The "mission" that the Salvation Army, among others, involved themselves in may in this sense be viewed as a project of colonial(ist) education, on a global scale. In this context the "educated" and the "uneducated" constitute the direct opposites of one another. In order to be able to "elevate themselves" to the "level" of the former, the latter had quite simply to undergo a radical transformation, to become other people, writes Stefan Jonsson (2007: 209).

> For the white European male, education involves him developing his identity through organic growth. For The Others education involves them freeing themselves of an identity that was viewed as a burden, and for them education was therefore tied to a conception of rapid mutation, a metamorphosis or conversion: to become educated one must *become white...*

In the following passage, Thörnberg illustrates in the clearest possible way that a colonial(ist) educational ideal has not only characterised thinking in those countries that were located in the front line of the exercise of colonial power. Similar ideals have also had a major impact in countries that worked more towards the outskirts of the colonial project, Sweden among them.

> [T]hese Swedish Salvationists have occasionally provided admirable examples of a capacity to adapt, of enterprise, perseverance, of psychological clarity, intellectual fertility. Words that they have spoken, actions they have performed, have brought white, yellow, black and every possible type of mixture leadership, relief, light. […] Their enthusiasm and spirit of self-sacrifice have time and again transformed the impoverished five loaves and two fishes of knowledge into religious-moral nourishment, physical and mental comfort, hygienically-civilising wisdom for a thousand, and perhaps even five thousand confused, crawling, suffering, bleeding human beings far off in the orient or south of the equator (Thörnberg 1939: 93f).

In Thörnberg's work, as in that of several others of those who have written on the history of the popular movements, it is possible to discern something of the grandiose ideas of nationalist-romanticism that were strong towards the end of the 19th Century and the beginning of the 20th, whereby Swedes were viewed as being a little more noble, benevolent, enlightened and heroic than all other "peoples" (Ehn *et al.* 1993). The heroic figureheads of the Swedish popular movements, the description of whose good deeds the movement's historians have devoted a good deal of effort to describing and emphasising, appear somehow to embody all of the good qualities and abilities that are said to characterise "us Swedes".

It is difficult today to believe that we would have agreed with such narrow-minded national(ist) imaginations (Billig 1995). The fact is, however, that similar lines of thought are still echoed today and exist in the form of a highly vibrant ideological heritage within popular movements of various kinds. In the following, we will see that the well-intentioned ambition to include and "elevate", as well as the intimate relationship between people, democracy and nation, continue to be of crucial importance to the "democratic schooling" of various popular movements, particularly in relation to "immigrants".

Schooling as an evolutionary process

The work of popular movements within the country's borders may be exemplified by reference to the meeting with "immigrants", since over recent decades "immigrants" have largely come to represent that which is deemed to be in acute need of "elevation" to a "higher

level" in society, mentally, culturally and socially (Ålund & Schierup 1991; de los Reyes *et al*. 2002; Dahlstedt 2009). In relation to the involvement of "immigrants" in popular movements, too, the movements are assumed to serve a fundamental educational function with regard to issues of citizenship and democracy. The popular movements do not however appear to comprise arenas for true *mutual* democratic schooling, whereby "immigrants" and "Swedes" exchange experiences and learn from one another on *equal* terms. The exchange of experience goes in one – and only one – direction. It is *we* who educate *them*, and not vice versa.

Many of those who are labelled "immigrants" have similar experiences of the meeting with Swedish popular movements. A number of studies have identified similar patterns within the trade union movement, for example (Mulinari & Neergaard 2004), and the adult education movement (Eriksson & Osman 2003; Osman 2005), but also within the political parties (Dahlstedt 2005). These research findings indicate that democratic schooling via the work of popular movements is based on the premise that democracy is somehow synonymous with Sweden and specifically with "Swedish traditions". In this context, the popular movements are discursively constructed as bearers of the "Swedish national heritage", despite the fact that the population is today more ethnically heterogeneous than it has ever been. For "immigrants" to be included in the Swedish community and schooled into good democrats within popular movements, there is a requirement that "they" in some sense "become more like us". The fact is that "we" view ourselves as the stewards of democratic traditions.

According to the national self-image that became established during the "home of the people" epoch, "Swedes" are viewed as standing at the forefront of the "modern" (Ehn *et al*. 1993). According to this self-image, it is largely this that is argued to constitute the "Swedes'" individualism, which distinguishes them from other "peoples". We also saw above how Jalmar Furuskog, for example, emphasised the "perception of the value of individualism" as constituting the *real essence* of Swedishness. In relation to this individualistic, modern Swedishness, many "immigrants" from other parts of the world are today regarded as more or less "pre-modern" or "backwards" (de los Reyes *et al*. 2002). What unites "us" is our *dissimilarity* (as individuals), while what unites "them" is their *similarity* (as a collective). "Immigrants" whose origins lie in countries outside the rich, western world in particular tend, in the meeting with the popular movements, as in a large number of other contexts, to be defined and treated on the basis of their "different culture"; that is to say not on the basis of their individuality, but rather of their affiliation with a collective. You could say that "they" *are*, in some sense, their culture. "The Swede", by contrast, is an individual. Irrespective of what

"they" do, "their" actions are always interpreted in terms of "culture", either in a positive or a negative sense.

Within the popular movements, "immigrants' culture" is most often viewed as nothing other than an "obstacle to cooperation", something essentially problematic, a barrier that needs to be dealt with or passed in order for "immigrants" to be able to actively participate and be included in the life of Swedish popular movements and Swedish society (Ålund & Schierup 1991). Democratic schooling by active participation in popular movements thereby appears to constitute a kind of *evolutionary process*, in which "immigrants" are transferred to a different stage of development. The process involves "us", on the one side, sharing "our" historical experiences and conveying "our" democratic heritage, while "they", on the other side, step by step abandon their pre-modern, collectivist loyalties and become transformed into modern individuals, i.e. mature, democratic citizens.

"They've mastered us with their meeting techniques" – on the periphery of the trade unions

The trade union movement provides us with a good example of how these processes may operate. The study *Den nya svenska arbetarklassen* [*The New Swedish Working Class*] by Diana Mulinari and Anders Neergaard (2004) is a thought provoking example of research into the experience of "immigrants" in the Swedish trade union movement. One the basis of interviews with individuals who are active in the Swedish Trade Union Federation network TUAI [the Trade Union of Active Immigrants], Mulinari and Neergaard conclude that "being an immigrant, i.e. non-Swedish, does not constitute marketable capital within the Swedish trade union movement" (p. 249). They show that a strongly nationally oriented self-image has become established in the Swedish trade union movement. In relation to this self-image, the "immigrant" often constitutes an anomaly, an "alien". Given the strong position held by the trade unions in the context of Sweden's corporatist social order, the *movement* in some sense became one with the national project. "In the epic of the home of the people, the organised, responsible and experienced 'union men' play a heroic part" (p. 233).

Within the Swedish Trade Union Federation, it is common according to Mulinari and Neergaard, that the causes of various difficulties and problems that arise in the meeting with "immigrants" are assigned to the "immigrants" themselves. According to the dominant trade union discourse, it is "they" that constitute the problem. "They" lack the necessary elementary knowledge about what trade unions do, how Swedish society functions – and not least of the Swedish language. The image of "immigrants" is based on the idea of "cultural distance".

"Immigrants" from certain parts of the world are viewed as "bearers of 'collectivistic' cultures in which the lines drawn between individual/family/society are diffuse or completely non-existent" (p. 240). Mulinari and Neergaard show how this discourse has a number of consequences for the work conducted within the Swedish Trade Union Federation.

Within the trade unions, for example, a strong conviction has become established over time as to who "owns" the organisation. This discourse about the "right of ownership" is not least accentuated when emphasizing the movement's "historical heritage". In this way the "national affiliation" becomes a crucial issue. "Many informants felt that elected Swedish representatives perceive themselves to have a natural precedence in relation to the history of the Swedish workers' movement" (p. 250). Since "immigrants" within the trade unions are discursively constructed as not part of this "historical heritage", but rather find themselves in the position of bystanders, they do not have the same access to the organisation as "native Swedes". "Immigrants" cannot make the same legitimate claims to the "history of the movement". "Immigrants" are somehow excluded in advance. Constructive criticism that is expressed by "immigrants", Mulinari and Neergaard conclude, is often seen as illegitimate since it is interpreted as criticism either of the organisation itself, or of "Swedishness".

> Both through a selective reading of the history of the Swedish trade union movement and through kinship, the trade union leadership monopolises the right to define the nature of the trade unions – "this is the way we've done things in Sweden". This means that racialized groups are excluded from the opportunity of belonging to the nation and the Swedish trade union movement, while all criticism of trade union practice is neutralised by means of a nationalist defence (p. 274).

Thus, for "immigrants" to be able to establish themselves within the trade union requires that they adapt to "the Swedish way of working" and the "right" understanding of "Swedish trade union history". One issue related to the working methods of the trade union movement is that which is often referred to as the "Swedish meeting culture". I have previously noted how a predominant discourse has emerged in Sweden that the popular movements educate their members in the "application of the techniques of democratic government", as Hilding Johansson (1954: 197) puts it. In their study of the TUAI, Mulinari and Neergaard (2004) show how the discourse about specific "rules of the game" can in itself function as a mechanism of exclusion in relation to those who do not have the right to define what is right and reasonable, legitimate and relevant. Many of those who are active in TUAI also have a strong sense that the prevailing conventions relating to the technicalities of meetings systematically

work to their disadvantage. "They've mastered us with their meeting techniques" (p. 260), as one of the active trade unionists puts it. You mustn't flare up. You have to keep to the agenda, wait your turn, etc. Deviations from these conventions are as a rule interpreted as a manifestation of "cultural differences". Democracy presupposes the right kind of socio-cultural competence.

"They've given Sweden a bit of colour" – in the centre of adult education

We find a similar discourses about Self and Others, "Swedish democracy" and "national heritage", in the adult education movement. As are other movements, the adult education movement is also characterised by the historical development of a specifically "Swedish" national self-image, in the context of which the movement is understood as being "typically Swedish" (Nordvall 2005). "Workers' education grows like all living education out of a *national* culture", notes Sandler (1937b/1927: 151), for example, the grounder of the Workers' Educational Association. The popular movement scholar Petros Gougoulakis (2006: 126) also expresses this kind of national self-conception when he describes the movement in the following way: "The adult education movement constitutes an essential part of Sweden's identity-creating cultural heritage, with deep roots in the western humanist tradition of human emancipation and empowerment". The characterisation resounds like an echo from the beginning of the 20th Century. At the same time it captures lines of thought that are more typical of our own time. "As an educational environment, the study circle constitutes a typically Swedish model for what is today labelled life-long learning" (p. 72). According to Gougoulakis, the social interplay that occurs in the context of adult education is regulated by a series of "internalised codes of interaction that have evolved in Sweden under the influence of common experiences in the past". Even today, he emphasises, the educational environment of the study circle contributes to "the transmission of this relational code to new generations of Swedes" (p. 125).

Ali Osman is one of the researchers who have further analyzed adult education in Sweden as a democratic arena and a meeting place for people with different ethnic backgrounds (cf. Eriksson & Osman 2003; Osman 2005). Among many of those who are important actors in the field of adult education, he argues, there is a basic assumption about the existence of a more or less fundamental difference between "Swedes" and "immigrants" as regards the their view of society, not least in relation to the question of democracy. Within the adult education movement, it is precisely these differences that are largely viewed as being the reason that

"immigrants" find it difficult to establish themselves in Swedish society. These differences are not uncommonly interpreted in terms of "culture".

As bearers of the Swedish "national heritage" the actors involved in adult education view themselves as shouldering a great responsibility as regards to the transmission of the democratic traditions that have evolved over time in Sweden to new generations, irrespective of ethnic background. To the extent that "immigrants" lack knowledge of how democracy is conducted in Sweden, for example, what to do when you go to vote, how to contact authorities, how decision-making processes are organised, which areas of responsibility are associated with which specific bodies, this is primarily understood as a consequence of "immigrants" belonging to "another culture", which lacks experience of what is perceived as "democratically Swedish".

Here too we see the same kind of evolutionary governmentality as that which characterises the Swedish trade union movement. Today's "immigrants" are imagined to be at the same stage of historical development as the "Swedish working class" was around the turn of the last century, in the "infancy of the labour movement". Despite the fact that the meeting between "Swedes" and "immigrants" which takes place within the Swedish adult education movement is described on the basis of the metaphor of mutual learning, where all those involved learn from and about one another, irrespective of their backgrounds, Osman (2005) describes a meeting that is more like a one-way communication from "us" to "them", than a free and open dialogue between equals. In the dominant discourse, "immigrants" are in some sense assigned to another point in history. "They" need to learn from "our" experiences and to "become more like us".

However, the dominant discourse about "immigrants as bearers of culture" in the context of Swedish popular movements and in society at large is not unequivocal. "Immigrant culture" is occasionally presented as something very positive, as a vital and dynamic force that is of great value for the work of Swedish associations as a whole. Discourses of this kind not uncommonly include a powerful element of *exotism*, in which "the Others" are viewed as being more natural and genuine. "They" still retain the primitive, elementary human characteristics that "we" have somehow lost in the process of modernisation. Precisely this type of tone can be discerned in an interview with the former Social Democratic Prime Minister, Ingvar Carlsson, published in the journal *Invandrare & Minoriteter* [*Immigrants and Minorities*]. In answer to the question: "What does your multi-cultural Sweden actually look like?" Carlsson answers: "When I go out to a popular-movement day today, there are always, and I mean always, immigrants involved. They play, they sing and they present their culture. This is some-

thing that is good for all of us. They've given Sweden a bit of colour" (Schwarz 1993: 13). What Carlsson does, with the best of intentions, is to distinguish "us" from "them". At the same time as he describes "immigrants" as *bearers* of "their culture", he transfers the question of "cultural diversity" to "them". It is "they" who represent the "multi-cultural". "Cultural diversity" is not viewed as a problem. "Immigrants" are instead rather described as constituting an "exotic" feature of Swedish society.

At the same time as "immigrant culture" tends to be viewed as an "obstacle to cooperation", "Swedes" are assumed to have something to learn from "the immigrants", not least their spontaneity and their often lively involvement in various organisations and associations, "characteristics" that in some way remind us of "our past". The trend witnessed over recent decades, in Sweden as well as in many other countries, towards an increased distrust of, and a gradually diminishing level of participation in the large popular movements, that over the long term is said to constitute a serious threat to the most Swedish of all things Swedish – democracy (Dahlstedt 2009). By learning from "them", "we" may somehow "rediscover ourselves" and "become more like we used to be". Even if the "schooling" is in this sense bi-directional, it is still essentially "we" who define the frameworks and rules of the game that "they" have to adapt to. At the same time it is "we" who determine what "we" might have to learn from "them".

Concluding reflections

Over time, the popular movements have become a self-evident part of the "Swedish trademark". They are today an important element in the Swedish self-image. This self-image is not only conveyed *within* the country's borders, by means of the stories about "where we come from", "who we are" and "what we stand for", constantly retold by the one generation to the next, but also *externally*, to the surrounding world. By comparison with other countries, Sweden often appears – according to this self-image – to be something of a model of democracy. Powerful popular movements, as we have seen in this article, constitute one of the factors that are said to make Sweden unique. Over the past century, the popular movements have been looked upon as bearers of the "national project". They have had the important task of creating a *Swedish democratic citizenship*.

By means of active participation in popular movements, there is an idea that citizens have taken part in the formation of a specific "spirit of citizenship", which is both Swedish *and* democratic. Citizens are said to have "evolved" the capacities and virtues, the fundamental sense of responsibility and community that is felt to be required for democratic government.

At the same time as they have been "fostered into Swedishness". This national self-conception is particularly clearly discernible specifically in relation to the meeting with "immigrants". In this meeting, assumptions and ideals are made relevant and become manifest that have otherwise simply become submerged in the repertoire of collective givens. In other words, "banal nationalism", to borrow a term from Michael Billig (1995), becomes somewhat less "banal". It is important to consistently and critically examine such discourses about national belonging and not take them for granted as naturally given elements in the socio-political landscape. Even if there are strong tendencies towards the normalisation of "Swedishness", whereby democracy is more or less directly linked to "the Swedish nation", within both the trade union and the adult education movements, we need nonetheless to remember that these are not closed systems characterised by total unanimity. The movements are rather domains characterised by a continuous struggle over agenda-setting and the space available, in which not least "immigrants" themselves are actively involved. The case of the network within the trade union movement known as Trade Union of Active Immigrants clearly shows, for example, how even those who are subordinated and disciplined in a variety of ways can intervene in order to manage dominant discourses and techniques of government. Even if the power relations involved are unequal, the outcome of the struggle is not given in advance (Isin 2002).

At the same time, several leading popular movements – ever since their beginnings – have been involved in *transnational* relations of various kinds. In this context, it is worth remembering that several of the movements were of a transnational character from the point of their inception. Their movement patterns were originally quite at odds with national and nation-state borders. To some extent this is still true today. This is visible not least in the "democratic schooling" that the Swedish adult education and trade union movements are currently involved in. In several instances, this work is located *outside* Sweden's borders in the form of various types of solidarity and developmental work in various "developing countries" around the world (cf. Sjölander 2005; Dahlstedt & Nordvall 2009). In some sense, these transnational contacts manifest a constant, ongoing, global educational project with striking historical parallels to the global mission of the Salvation Army during the last century. As was the case around the turn of the 20th Century, great hopes are today still being placed on what has been referred to as the *global civil society*.

In the same way that civil society within the framework of the nation-state has been viewed as making citizens more "democratically minded", transnational non-profit organisations of various kinds are today assumed to have an inherent power that can in time "civilise"

the world's population and – possibly – encourage a spirit of global democratic citizenship. As in the case of William Booth and his imperial crusade against the spreading "jungles" of the world, it is possible in the blissful references to the "global civil society" and the final triumph of western liberal democracy to discern an ever-present, nagging fear. If vigorous efforts are not soon made to strengthen civil society, so that the "uncontrolled mass" of people out on the periphery of the world can be led and moulded in specific directions, there is a risk that the "powers of darkness" will eventually take over. In this connection certain solutions lay claim to being universally applicable, as if they were valid for the entire human race. As was the case around the turn of the last century, the threats, like the blessings, appear to be boundless – they are more or less everywhere, including right here in our midst (Hardt & Negri 2000). The fear is particularly projected towards specific places, however, and not least focused on the dark peripheries of the metropolitan areas, that through their very existence appear to constitute nurseries for terrorism and other types of non-democratic ideological currents (Dahlstedt 2009).

Popular movements – both those with a national and a global orientation – continue to constitute central arenas for governmental techniques of various kinds. As in other social arenas, civil society plays host to a continuous ongoing struggle to define both the present and the future. In relation to the threats posed by the "jungle" and the "uncontrolled mass" there is room here to articulate alternative ways of becoming a citizen, of organising towards a citizenship *beyond* hierarchies and unequivocal distinctions (Isin 2002; Hardt & Negri 2000). At the same time civil society is an important element in the repertoire of (neo)liberal governmentalities (Rose 1999). The outcome of this struggle, as has been noted, is anything other than given in advance.

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Notes

1 When the categories "immigrants" and "Swedes" are used in this article, they are consistently placed in quotation marks in order to draw attention to the problems associated with dividing the population into fixed categories. The categories in themselves have no independent analytical value, but rather refer to an everyday societal division into "immigrant" and "Swede" that has a series of consequences for those people who are assigned to each category.

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