

ing fully dependent of foreign capital and having one of the least generous welfare states in Europe. These developments beg the question of how sustainable are the two neoliberal regimes and what political responses are likely to emerge in response to moves towards disembedding markets. Recent political changes in Central and Eastern Europe point towards some possible answers. Third, the extent to which international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) shifted towards more moderate policy positions remains an open question. Recent empirical evidence [Kentikelenis et al. 2016] shows that although the rhetoric of the IMF has changed, its policy advice has not.

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#### *References*

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**Carly Elizabeth Schall: *The Rise and Fall of the Miraculous Welfare Machine: Immigration and Social Democracy in Twentieth-Century Sweden***

Ithaca, NY, 2016: Cornell University Press, 245 pp.

This book is a timely contribution to the current discussion about the condition of social democracy and the welfare state. It provides a theoretically well-argued historical exposé of the evolving national boundaries of Sweden, renowned for both its welfare system and its transformation from one of the most ethnically homogenous nations in Europe to one of the most heteroge-

neous. The book covers the interplay between ethnicity and Swedish social democracy from the rise to power of Sweden's Social Democratic Party in the inter-war period to the party's—or perhaps rather the movement's—crowning moment in the form of a fully established People's Home in the post-war period, to the end of social-democratic hegemony in the early 1990s.

The rise and fall of the welfare home Swedish social democracy built is currently an almost conventional narrative set-up in political punditry as well as historical and social scientific research literature. Schall also covers the advent of the 'end of the People's Home' discourse of the early 1990s in the later chapters of the book. Schall, however, approaches the question of rise-and-fall from an innovative angle that has only been addressed in piecemeal fashion in the academic literature on the subject: the ethnification of the People's Home project and the challenges faced by Swedish social democracy when 'non-Swedes' began knocking on the door of the model welfare state and moving in.

The introduction places the book in the middle of one the major theoretical topics in current and historical welfare-state research: what is the relationship between ethnic homogeneity and welfare regimes? Schall convincingly argues that the case of the United States is exceptional and therefore cannot readily be transposed to other cases such as Sweden. The theoretical insights on the intersection of ethnicity and welfare gleaned from the American case can, however, be used to explore the way in which the Swedish welfare state was ethnically constituted and responded to increased heterogeneity.

The book's two aptly named parts, 'Homogeneity in the People's Home' and 'Heterogeneity in the People's Home,' include two and three chapters, respectively, as well as two short 'interludes'. The interludes sum up and discuss the analysis of preceding chapters, and then bridge the

text in a pedagogical manner. They also allow for a superficial reading of the book's empirical analysis if one is more interested in the theoretical discussion on welfare and ethnic homogeneity put forward in the introduction and the dovetailing of this theorisation in the concluding remarks on the case of 'belonging' in the Swedish welfare state.

Taking a constructivist theoretical approach on nationalism with reference to Rogers Brubaker, Claire Sutherland, and Michael Billing, Schall methodologically grounds her work in the concept of closure as developed by Andreas Wimmer. Schall is particularly interested in closure in times of crises, i.e. when national closure is (perceived to be) contested and how political elites act when faced with a crisis of closure: restrict, expand, or select access to only a specific set of new arrivals? Following the focus on the political elite and the historically bounded nature of politics, Schall argues that the kind of closure chosen in a given time of crises is a question of elite politicking constrained by an ever changing historical context, which at the same time is shaped by the decisions of a nation's elite. Schall has identified five periods of such crises, 1928–1932, 1945–1950, 1968–1975, 1991–1995, and 2006–2014. In the case of Swedish national closure, Schall emphasises the hegemony (Gramsci) of the Social Democratic Party and the importance of analysing the connection between the construction and reproduction of this hegemony to Sweden's closure. I hope that Schall will return to the Swedish case in future, as Sweden is currently in the middle of multiple highly politicised crises of closure and the political field is in constant flux.

Schall preforms her analysis over time in the form of a conventional historical narrative, primarily using newspaper data. The selection of data sources (i.e. newspapers) shows a firm grasp of Swedish newspaper history and the political positions of

the major Swedish newspapers over time. The selection method of data is also systematic, at least by historiographical standards. The qualitative reading of the press data is accompanied by a selected reading of parliamentary records (debates) to confirm that the discourses identified in the newspaper material were in line with what was discussed in parliament and thus 'nationally'. The narrative is supplemented with literature on the time period and the questions at hand, a purposeful set-up for most historians.

The spotlight on elite hegemony and the constructions of national boundaries in understanding Swedish responses to immigration-induced crises of closure is a novel addition to the scholarship on nationalism and migration in modern Swedish history. I essentially concur with the notion of what is, for a democratic state at least, an exceptionally powerful party on top of an extremely party-politicised state and civil sector. But Schall's elite-centred and discourse-oriented research design disregards activism from below and interest politics in the Swedish corporative system. The strength of the research design lies in the impressive time-span of the analysis and the exposure of the significance of path-dependent choices in framing and policies at critical junctures in the history of the bounded Swedish welfare state. As such, the book works as a concise primer on the enmeshed history of Swedish social democracy and the welfare state and on the history of immigration to Sweden, particularly on the public framing of immigration. In precisely 200 pages refreshingly free of social scientific jargon, Schall provides both scholars and others interested in the past and future of the world's most famous welfare state with an account of the changing notions of 'Swedishness' at the core of the now derelict People's Home.

As for the outlook of the sputtering Swedish welfare machine, Schall hopes it

can be bright if Swedish social democracy rediscovers its fighting spirit and forges an inclusive coalition that includes both the progressive red/green and feminist left and the new immigrant population. Unfortunately, this seems unlikely as Sweden is now fast approaching an American ethnification or racialisation of politics—the Swedish ethnic genie is out of the bottle owing to the exceptional levels of immigration to Sweden in the last decades. The elite cannot control discourse as it once did, mainly because of the internet, and the Social Democrats sound more and more like the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats in the run up to the September 2018 parliamentary elections. Alternatively, perhaps the Social Democrats sound more and more as they did back in 1928 when the national People's Home was introduced to the then ethnically homogeneous Swedish electorate?

Of course, the scope of the book in combination with its length limits the analytical detail of the narrative, which Schall also acknowledges. There are missteps in some of the historical information and points that are included, most of which are minor and inconsequential to the argument presented. One major shortcoming, which hopefully will not live on as an alternative fact, must, however, be addressed in detail due to the importance given to it by Schall and because it reflects the tendency of Swedish scholarship on migration and multiculturalism to ignore or misanalyse the largest post-war immigrant group in Sweden, the Finns. On p. 116, Schall claims that the ethnic activists of the late 1960s claimed that schools that taught Finnish immigrant children Finnish 'had been set-up'. I cannot find the articles she refers to in the digital archives of *Dagens Nyheter* (full-page scans of the historical editions). Schall nonetheless repeats this unsubstantiated statement as a fact on p. 190 when discussing the closure strategy of selecting in the conclusions: 'Finns, meanwhile, were sin-

gled out for special treatment, evidenced in their ability to form Finnish-language schools in the 1960s'. A cursory reading of some of the literature on the political history of Finnish labour immigration to Sweden in the post-war period, either in Swedish [Lainio 1996] or English [Wickström 2015], would have been enough to inform Schall that the Social Democrats vehemently opposed the introduction of Finnish schools in fear that it would lead to the fragmentation of the comprehensive school system, a pivotal cornerstone of the People's Home. After years of struggle, the first Finnish-language school in Sweden was granted permission to open its doors in 1990, at the end of social-democratic hegemony.

On a more technical note, the print quality of the book is very poor. Cornell University Press should perhaps improve quality control. These caveats aside, *The Rise and Fall of the Miraculous Welfare Machine* is an excellent addition to the literature on the relationship between nationalism and the universal welfare state in general and on modern Swedish history, in particular.

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