

Past and Present in European Ethnology: a Swedish Perspective

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The article examines change and continuity in European Ethnology, with particular reference to the Swedish experience. European nations with a colonial tradition tended to create a global kind of anthropology, those without, turned to discover “their primitives within” in the form of general cultural anthropology of the nation. This tradition today is labeled “European Ethnology”, and it is no longer kept together by a given empirical field but rather by a certain mode of doing research. Behind the changing faces of European Ethnology there also remains some stable features, such as the use of a historical perspective, a focus the ethnography of everyday life as well as a bricolage tradition of combining different methods and materials, sometimes using back doors to big issues.

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Finding space for a new discipline

To outsiders European ethnology sometimes seems like a discipline continuously reinventing itself, always in search of new topics, perspectives and theories. It is a discipline which no longer is kept together by a given empirical field but rather by a specific habitus, the elusive “ethnological perspective” – a certain mode of doing research. My argument is that behind this image of flux and flexibility there also remains some stable features. I will start by looking at some of the transformations of the discipline during the 20th century and then discuss the problems of change and continuity, using the Swedish experience as my material.

We are sometimes misled into believing that there is a grand system behind the division of labor among the various disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Yet most of these disciplines were created by chance conditions and political and cultural interests in the past. The making of European Ethnology is a striking example of these processes. If we look at a map of Europe we will find a most uneven distribution of the discipline, and where it has been established it also has highly varying positions in the field of cultural studies and cultural history. With a grand simplification one can argue that European nations with strong colonial traditions tended to create

a global kind of anthropology, whereas late or small colonial nations turned to discover "their primitives within", either in the form of folklore studies or as a more general cultural anthropology of the nation. It is this latter tradition which today is labeled "European Ethnology". Folklore studies came to be integrated in this tradition or developed as a special discipline with an international and comparative orientation, but my focus in the following will be on the making and remaking of a Europeanist ethnological tradition. The emergence or non-emergence of this tradition in Europe also had to do with highly varying politics of nationalism. Seen in this light it is hardly surprising that a country like the Netherlands came to have more anthropologists per square meter than any other European nation, but hardly any institutionalized academic tradition of either "European Ethnology" or "folklore studies". On the other hand a country like Finland came during the same period to have more folklorists per square meter than any other nation, but a rather late development of social anthropology as a formal academic discipline. Here the making of a folklore national heritage profoundly shaped the academic landscape, whereas in Denmark archeology early on took the position as "the national science". In countries like Sweden and Germany a more general ethnological study of the national heritage produced departments of European ethnology.

As in most of disciplines, which were born out of the project of national universities, like history, literature, art history and geography, ethnology was a very national science with the task of discovering, collecting, presenting and analyzing a national folk culture. History largely became national history, while students of literature focused not only on those authors writing in Swedish but also on those who happened to live inside the present borders of the nation. The national project meant a territorialization of research in much of the humanities, as well as a strong ideological framing of research: the production of a suitable national heritage.

In ethnology, the diffusionists interests often forced scholars outside the national borders, but on the whole the national became a natural and unquestioned frame of research. The national borders were seen as representing a rather unproblematic division of labor. On the other side of the borders there were Danish, Baltic, Finnish and Norwegian ethnologists waiting, ready to do their national part of the job in order to create a full European picture of folk cultures.

There was a strong ambivalence in this task. Ethnologists could demonstrate that national borders often had little relevance for traditional folk culture, but on the other hand the main *raison d'être* for the discipline was its national task.

Reinventing European Ethnology

The grand project of mapping out a Swedish folk culture kept the discipline on a steady course for decades. All ethnologists from old professors to the young students were united in this common task. In the end, however, it turned into routine. Rarely the question was asked: is this massive input of work really producing results worth the effort? In a way the atlas project had turned into a great ocean liner, which kept moving forward even when the engines were burned out.

When I started to read ethnology in the 1960's the ocean liner was still there – but stranded. We never had a chance to experience the enthusiasm and the exhilarating feeling which went with the idea of a common project uniting the discipline. For us much of the earlier knowledge was dead. We needed to develop a new utopian project, but in what directions should we look? There was not much inspiration to get locally from either history or sociology; instead an anthropologization of the discipline took place. The new utopian project was "Discover Sweden", and the rallying cry was "back to fieldwork", and in those days field work mainly meant community studies. We who received our education during the 1960's learned to see Sweden in terms of local communities. If we look at the choice of student essay and dissertation topics in this period, we see the emergence of views of which communities were more community-like than others do. This created a new selection principle, which was influenced in large measure by contemporary anthropological theory, both the functionalist and the interactionist variety. This interest focused on the periphery of society rather than the mainstream. It is in this light that we should see the great interest in for example fishing hamlets; for many of us they represented the perfect cultural form of the little community: isolated, homogeneous, well-integrated, self-sufficient, and so on. (On closer examination, these coastal communities revealed a different reality.) The disproportional number of studies of such marginal settings was a quest for communities that were as "exotic" or "anthropological" as possible. With this search profile, for instance, the study of working-class settings was chiefly concentrated to small factory towns, and metropolitan studies focused on "urban villages", like traditional, close-knit neighborhoods.

There was a paradox in this development, in many ways it felt like a liberating period of internationalization. We were all busy reading international anthropological theory, but on the other hand research became intensively Swedish. We all went out to look for local communities. Compared to the perspective of diffusionist and culture area studies of earlier generations our geographical space was narrowed down. The prefix "European" of the discipline became more of a rhetorical statement, very few Swedish ethnologists of my generation did their research outside Sweden in the 60's and 70's.

Looking for subcultures

The interest in local communities was to dominate ethnological research during the 1960's and part of the 1970's, but by the end of the 1970's it had lost its leading position to the concept of subculture. Interactionist theory had already directed interest towards cultural scenes and social interplay; for the fieldworking ethnologist this was "where the action was". This approach also brought forward the concept of cultural communication as a crucial selection principle. Certain phenomena and relations were found more "communicative" than others, and thus more interesting research topics. The search for subcultures grew out of this interest in interaction and communication, but also from a wish to break down stereotypes of Sweden as a homogeneous society (or local communities as well-integrated). The new concept was used to capture other social units and cultural systems than the local study, but here too the result was that some groups and milieu were considered "more subcultural" than others: teenagers, children, women, workers, immigrants. (Middle-aged, middle-class men were consequently the least subcultural category that could be imagined.)

The study of subculture began in an interactionist tradition but went on to follow a semiotic path: from roles and scenes to codes and messages. It began to focus more on the expressive: style, taste, codes, identity markers, and the like.

A central concept in the study of subcultural identities and boundaries was the concept of culture building: the analysis of how different groups continually constructed and transformed a collective image and life style. Here the study of classformation and culture building became a strong tradition.

The linking of class and subcultural studies mainly took the form of two rather different genres: the study of bourgeois culture as a hegemonic process and "the making of Swedish working class cultures".

There were striking differences in how these studies were framed and delineated. Working class culture was mainly studied in the form of community studies, whereas bourgeois culture was analyzed through a bricolage of materials on a national level (see the discussion in Löfgren 1988). Another effect of this research strategy was that working class culture much more often was studied through oral history, whereas bourgeois culture was analyzed through memoirs, etiquette books, diaries, and mass media material, creating a bricolage approach.

Just as the study of peasant culture earlier had drifted into a devolutionary search for "a golden age" or classic forms, working class studies tended to focus on the heroic age of early class formation – often seen as a "purer" form of class culture than, for example the periods after the Second World War.

The studies of culture and class also came to problematize ideas about the typically Swedish and to look at the ways in which mainstream culture was produced and contested.

For decades “the national” had been a non-issue in Sweden, a problem of the past. Now with increased immigration it returned as a contested terrain in identity politics. The battles over what constituted “Swedish culture” helped to develop a new approach to the study of national identity and culture, an interest rather in the deconstruction of notions of “Swedishness”: to see the national as a cultural arena where different groups and generations battled for their version of “true Swedishness” to be naturalized into ideas of normality or modernity (cf. Ehn, Frykman & Löfgren 1993, Frykman 1995 and Löfgren 1993, Löfgren 2000).

Ethnological virtues

But what about the questions of continuity in this history of a changing discipline? In discussing the directions in which European Ethnology is moving, the topics we select or decide (consciously or unconsciously) to ignore, forget or marginalize, we need to discuss what the specific contributions of the European Ethnology perspective are. Let me mention five ethnological virtues and then exemplify how they can be applied to emerging fields of research. The five virtues I am thinking of could be summarized as follows:

- A historical perspective and a comparative approach
- An interest in everyday life and its materiality
- The ethnographic approach and the moving searchlight
- The focus on culture in context (the importance of contextualizing)
- The role of the bricoleur in search of theory and methods

I think it is important to see the historical perspective in European Ethnology not as a virtue or something self-evident but as an analytical possibility. Historical knowledge and research has a value in itself, but to me it is striking how ethnologists have developed a rather reflexive use of historical perspectives as conscious research strategies. How will a historical perspective help me understand certain cultural phenomena and processes?

In this sense the historical perspective is often used as a contrasting tool, which destabilizes and questions the present. In the same manner the return of comparative European perspectives and a less local/national framework of research has been important. After the old days of diffusionist and culture area studies, Swedish ethnology became very national in its research framework during the 1960's and 70's, as I mentioned earlier. Now a wider geographical perspective has returned and it is often used as a contrasting tool to put local and national experiences in perspective.

It is striking that it is often the methods of European ethnology that attract other disciplines. A key role is played by the ethnographic approach in which very different materials and research techniques are combined and often used together with the strategy of the moving searchlight. Ethnologists have acquired a reputation for looking into corners or topics, which others overlook and this is a skill, which constantly needs to be improved. Everytime we direct an investigating spotlight towards a research landscape, we have to ask ourselves what may be hidden in the shadows and what happens if we move the searchlight.

Since the 1970's European ethnology has defined itself as the study of everyday life, a positive concept often linked to taking the perspective of the underdog and looking at the everyday as a site of cultural resistance and creativity – as an alternative approach to all those disciplines which do not take the everyday serious. There are both advantages and disadvantages in this perspective. Some activities and people easily come to be seen as more everyday than others. Another danger of this perspective is that everyday life is too easily seen as something “down there”, in a way that seldom reflects over the problem of what the opposite of the everyday is supposed to be. It is forgotten that everyday life exists not only in retirement homes or on the streets but also in the corridors of power, that there are everyday practices not only in immigrant suburbs but also in scholarly research projects. Researchers who sometimes say that they want to “get out into everyday reality” miss the point that what is interesting about the everyday is that it is ever-present.

Taking such ambiguities and possible ideological overtones into account, research interest in the study of the everyday has on the whole been important both in revitalizing and redirecting scholarly attention to the role of the seemingly trivial activities and ideas embedded in the commonplace, it has also produced a new interest in the materialities of everyday life, a renewed interest in the thingishness of things. The study of the everyday has also been a strategy to avoid paved road in research and develop back-door entrances to major issues.

In terms of theory and methods we are still bricoleurs, some would say too eclectic in the ways in which we combine theories, methods, materials and perspectives. Do we produce our own theories, or are we just poachers and borrowers, or is it just that we cannot see our own specific mode of theorizing?

Maybe it is this flexibility which accounts for the adaptability of European Ethnology, on the other hand we should not be too self-congratulatory. Virtues can rapidly change into vices, flexibility can become an end in itself. The virtues I have listed may also produce a false security, they constantly need to be questioned and challenged. One way of doing this is to take them into the debates on “postmodern cultures”.

Living in transit?

In a classic book the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (1995) makes a fascinating but problematic historical analysis of the ways in which the politics of identity and belonging have been transformed over the centuries. He looks at the ways in which identity evolves in modernity as a pilgrimage and a quest for the true self, and then goes on to discuss the ways in which contemporary identities are constructed: their fragmentation, their fluidity and lack of grounding. In his attempt to outline the profile of Postmodern Man, he chooses four (and very male) metaphorical roles: the flaneur, the vagabond, the tourist and the gambler.

There are many parallel statements about Postmodern Man. Much of the present debate deals with *loss*, the loss of grounding, of belonging. Identities today are described in terms of de-territorialization, de-localization, de-centering, and de-stabilization. Identities no longer take place, territories are less important. Rootlessness and homelessness are other important ways of describing these processes. People are seen as living in transit, or in an age of hypermobility. There is a celebration of borderlands, of borderzones, a new kind of poetics of hybridity and bricolage.

This “now” is often polarized against a “then”, when identities were clearly delineated, stable over time and firmly located in space. In the old days people knew their place, so to say. Space or rather place is no longer the dimension around which we organize our lives and construct our identities.

This kind of postmodern scenario also looks at a world where old hierarchies and classes are said to disintegrate and new power structures emerge. The losers are traditional institutions like the nation-state and the groups and organizational forms which have depended upon this arena. New transnational economic and intellectual elites emerge – cosmopolitans who are at home in the world and have fewer loyalties to their old nation or home ground. They travel business class through life. Against this new elite we find an increasingly marginalized working-class, trying to defend themselves against globalization by becoming even more national, regional or home-loving, they opt for the seemingly safeness of place and ritual belonging and in this nostalgia they become both more inward looking and more xenophobic. The main point in this scenario is that the world is become de-territorialized. Old regions, borders, places lose their meaning, fade away or disappear and new forms of allegiances, networks and groups emerge: from neo-tribes to proto-communities.

Scenarios like these may depict some current trends, but they have to be handled with care – they contain elements of utopia and dystopia. Above all they are too sweeping and evolutionary, positioning a complex present against a far too simple image of the past.

The first question must be, when, where, how and for who is this development a reality? Is it a unilateral development or a more complex process of movements in different directions? We should avoid universalizing statements about the present condition of the world. There is no general Postmodern Man, no unilinear development towards displacement, homelessness or deterritorialization. Rather than trying to generalize the present in terms of devolutionary or evolutionary scenarios, we should scrutinize the different and sometimes contradictory movements occurring at the same time, in the same way we have begun to analyze the many different national and local paths to modernity, hidden under earlier, generalized ideas of Western modernity.

Secondly we need to look at the ways in which our lives, our activities and our ideas are changed by different kinds of mobility. Increased mobility does not have to mean increased rootlessness. Mobility can sometimes be a strategy to produce stability and prevent change.

Who are actually living in transit? How does the fluidity of the present look from different social perspectives and positions: for the fugitive, who just has thrown his passport away and is waiting to be interrogated by the border police, for the trained cosmopolitan who feels the security of his Visa-card in all transit halls of the world, the teenager doing his first summer of inter rail or the old age pensioner on his first charter trip abroad? For some living in transit is an adventure, for others an enforced ordeal.

Thirdly we have to analyze the ways in which current statements about the end of modernity get trapped in a traditional, devolutionary genre. There are some clear parallels to the fin-de-siecle debate we are having now and which we had a century ago. Then people loved to talk about the disintegration of the home, the nation and the sense of belonging.

But it is far too easy a rhetorical device to reduce this debate to the recycling of an old genre. The discussions of postmodernity has, in a fruitful way, challenged many of our earlier often rather simplistic notions of cultural identities as being well-bounded, neat and well-integrated, securely rooted in time and space. Our use of concepts like identity, culture and place will never be the same. Furthermore the postmodern debate on identity formations has been extremely important and creative in historicizing modernity, in creating a critical and reflexive distance, in fighting the home-blindness of modernity.

Instead of getting trapped in the rather fruitless debate if we live in a modern, late-modern, hyper-modern or postmodern age, we should explore the ways in which the cultural processes sometimes labeled postmodern co-exist with those called "modern". Some of the new theoretical perspectives can even be used to problematize our notions of "premodern" configurations: what are the postmodern elements in premodern lives?

Research strategies

We need to reflect over what kinds of contributions European ethnologists can make to the heated interdisciplinary debate on identities and territories. Ethnologists have devoted a lot of attention to the ways in which new cultural forms emerge over time, and become institutionalized or naturalized parts of the social landscape. In the current debate there is too much focus on disintegration, too much talk about “post”: postnationell, postmodern, postlocal, too much “de-focused, de-centered, de-territorialized, de-localized”, and also too much “trans”, as in transit, transnational, trans-local, transcultural. We must balance our use of post, de, trans with a greater focus on pre-, re, and in-

In what ways can a de-territorialization be part of a reterritorialization, or transgression be followed by integration, the defocused become refocused – in new forms and combinations? A longer historical perspective may help us to remember that the other side of dissolution and disintegration is remaking, reanchoring and routinization. Are we really facing a future of intense deterritorialization or are we simply not observing the different ways in which people and identities take place on new arenas and in novel forms?

The current debate on homelessness and the post-national needs to be confronted with the ethnological research on how the new ideas of home and nation became such a strong emotional force and locus of identity during the 19th century. Here we have two good examples of the cultural and social organization of “taking place”: the processes through which abstract ideas or images are turned into lived experience. Both these concepts developed as very abstract, ideological constructs only to become concretized and materialized – grounded in routines of everyday life during the 20th century. What does it mean to have a home, to belong to a nation or a locality 1850, 1930, and 1995? The experience of homelessness can only exist in cultures obsessed with the necessities of home, and the debate of the post-national above all illustrates the ways in which the nation has become such a powerful reality.

The same comparative approach may be used to look at the processes of uprooting and relocation among migrants, cosmopolitans and people in transit in urban settings of the 1890's and the 1990's. In both settings we find the same worries about disintegration but what are the similarities and differences between these two contexts? In retrospect we can study how the homeless and uprooted in the cities of the 1890's claimed new spaces and made new places for themselves. It is also important to remember that the great era of hypermobility occurred during the latter part of the 19th century and up to the First World War. The waves of migration and displacement taking place then were on a much greater scale than the one we are experiencing today. Somehow this historical experiences and the processes of uprooting and re-rooting occurring then seem strangely absent from the current debate on dis-

placement and mobility. The fact that urban migrants in 1890's lived in social settings, which may have seemed fluid, chaotic and disorganized, does not have to mean that their identities were transient, fragmented or disintegrated. How did, for example, the peasants who turned into urbanites learn to cope, to look and overlook, to select and ignore. How were new identities crafted on this seemingly chaotic urban scene? Similar learning processes of coping and crafting are found among today's migrants.

There might be a historical lesson here for our current discussion of identity constructs. Instead of talking about bricolage or fleetingness, we can ask what kind of cultural competencies are needed to handle all the alternatives and possibilities of the present: how do we learn to cope with complex or fragmented settings.

Comparative discussions of identity and rootedness tend to get trapped into measurements of how much, in terms of losses and gains of identity, but there is no cross-cultural or timeless quota of human need for identity. We should be wary of thinking in terms of compensatory identities: the loss of local identity being compensated by emerging national ones, the loss of neighborhood roots compensated by sub-cultural identities etc.

Instead of asking if place and identity meant more or less before, we should start by asking more basic questions, like: what does place mean in different historical and cultural settings? Were identities really stable, secure and integrated before, or is this example of our own cultural projections of nostalgia for identity lost?

Comparative approaches like these also underline the need for good ethnographies and close readings. It is quite plausible that many people today organize their lives, their anchorages and ideas in new ways, but we need more detailed ethnographies of this: looking at the complexities and patterns in habituation, in routines and rhythms, as well as the processes of "learning to belong".

We should scrutinize the microphysics of movement and of taking place. The experience of place is a very complex thing and there is a pedagogy of space that is very powerful. What does it mean that you are actually there, not only fantasizing about being there? The concept "placelessness" must be used rather restrictively. What is the difference of living in a media-scope and in a social landscape: different forms of presence, how does culture take place, take up place, how are experiences and fantasies materialized, made concrete, tangible, multi-sensual etc. There is an elaboration, massivity and redundancy in actually being there. On the other hand we should be aware of the fact that identity and place are never linked in a simple way. We are always travelling in a constant dialogue between mindscapes and landscapes, which for example makes the underdeveloped ethnography of day-dreaming an important topic: the art of being in several places at the same time.

The postmodern debate provokes us to find new strategies both for comparison and ethnography, experimenting with new combinations of approaches and materials. This calls for a strategy of research constantly linking theorizing and ethnography, choosing back doors to big issues sometimes. Again, I think that the tradition of doing fieldwork in the archives as well as in the present have given ethnologists a certain knack for finding surprising combinations of materials, methods and perspectives. The bricolage tradition is important here.

This competence should be furthered in studies of the ways in which the local, the national and the global interact, constitute each other, blend, mix or are kept apart.

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Europos etnologijos praeitis ir nūdiena žvelgiant iš Švedijos perspektyvos

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Summary

Pažiūrėjus atgal į XX a. matyti, kad etnologijos mokslas nuolat kito ieškodamas naujų temų, požiūrių ir teorijų, tačiau jame kai kas liko stabilu. Mano tikslas tai ir parodyti per Švedijos patirtį.

Kaipgi buvo kuriama Europos etnologijos disciplina? Pažvelgę į žemėlapių pamatytume, kad įvairiose šalyse ji skeidėsi labai nevienodai, atsidurdama kultūros studijų, kultūros istorijos tyrinėjimų lauke. Gerokai supaprastinus galima pasakyti, kad kolonijinės Europos tautos kūrė pasaulį apimančias antropologijas, o vėliau susikūrusios bei mažosios valstybės bandė ieškoti „savųjų pirmųjų“ žmonių savajame krašte, plėtodamos folkloristiką arba tiesiog bendrą savo valstybės kultūrinę antropologiją. Būtent pastaroji tendencija šiaandien vadinama *Europos etnologija*.

Europos etnologijos tradicijos formavimasis neatsiejamas nuo itin įvairios nacionalizmo politikos Europoje, todėl nestebina, kad, pvz., visos Europos mastu Olandijoje yra santykinai daugiausia antropologų, o nei Europos etnologija, nei folkloristika neišplėtotos. Tuo tarpu Suomijoje yra atvirkščiai.

Švedijoje etnologija atsirado kaip grynai tautinis mokslas, ėmėsis ieškoti, rinkti, eksponuoti ir analizuoti tautinę liaudies kultūrą. Būtent toks nacionalinis projektas buvo visų pirma humanitarinių mokslų (ir etnologijos) ne tik teritorializavimas, bet ir ideologizavimas, t. y. *tinkamas* nacionalinio/tautinio paveldo reprezentavimas. Pirmas didingas etnologijos projektas buvo švedų liaudies kultūros kartografavimas, trukęs ištisus dešimtmečius.

Kai šio straipsnio autorius pradėjo studijuoti etnologiją, XX a. 7-ajame dešimtmetyje, ji patyrė antropologijos įtaką. Tuomet atsirado naujas „utopinis“ projektas „atrask Švediją“ ir kartu raginimas – „atgal į lauko tyrimus“. Tada lauko tyrimai reiškė lokaliųjų bendruomenių tyrimus. Taip buvo dėl tuo metu antropologijoje vyravusio funkcionalizmo ir interakcionalizmo. Dėmesys buvo nukreiptas į visuomenės periferines zonas ir, pvz., žvejų kaimelius, kurie atrodė puikūs mažų, izoliuotų, homogeniškų, gerai integruotų, natūriškai pagrįstų sociokultūrinių formų pavyzdžiai. Panašiai ieškota kuo „egzotiškesnių“ ar „antropologiškesnių“ bendruomenių ir miestuose. Imta tyrinėti pramoninius miestelius arba „miestietiškus kaimus“, nelyginant tradicines kaimynines bendruomenes.

XX a. 8-ojo dešimtmečio pabaigoje etnologijoje įsivyravo subkultūros paradigma ir dėmesys komunikacijos bei interakcionizmo teorijoms. Tai buvo *homogeniškos* Švedijos visuomenės ir *gerai integruotos* bendruomenės stereotipų nuvainikavimas.

Kai kurios grupės, pvz., paaugliai, moterys, imigrantai, darbininkai, buvo palaikyti „subkultūriškesnėmis“ nei kitos. Subkultūrinių identitetų studijose svarbiausia tapo „kultūros darymo“ (culture building) paradigma, t. y. analitinė perspektyva, siekiant analizuoti, kaip įvairios sociokultūrinės grupės, klasės besiformuodamos ir sąveikaudamos kuria ir keičia bendro – kolektyvinio gyvenimo būdą. Peržvelgus socialinių klasių ir subkultūrų studijas, matyti, kad labai jau skirtingai žiūrėta į darbininkų klases ir buržuazinės kultūros procesus. Lygiai kaip seniau į valstiečių kultūrą žiūrėta kaip į užsikonservavusią „aukso amžių“ arba joje ieškota klasikinių kultūros formų. Taip XX a.

9-ajame dešimtmetyje tyrinėjant Švedijos darbininkiją imta ieškoti joje ankstyvojo klasių formavimosi etapo heroizmo, dažnai palaikant ją „gryna“ klasine kultūra, ypač tuoj po Antrojo pasaulinio karo. Tuo tarpu buržua kultūra analizuota per kultūrinės formas kaip nacionalinė kultūra.

XX a. 10-ojo dešimtmečio etnologijoje iškilo „tipiško švediškumo“ problema. Dešimtmečiais „tautiškumas“ Švedijoje laikytas praeities problema, tačiau XX a. pabaigoje, didėjant imigracijai, vėl tapo identiteto politikos aktualija. Šiai problemai spręsti labai pravertė minėtoji *culture building* paradigma, padėjusi suformuoti naują požiūrį į nacionalinio identiteto, „švediškumo“ studijas. Dekonstruojant „švediškumą“ į tautiškumą žiūrėta kaip į kultūrinę areną, kur įvairios grupės ir kartos „kaunasi“ dėl savųjų „tikro švediškumo“ versijų tik jas laikydamos „normaliomis“ arba „moderniomis“.

Stebint etnologijos raidą vis dėlto reikėtų pabrėžti, kas pastovu Europos etnologijoje, kokie jos kaip mokslo privalumai. Tai būtų:

- istorinė perspektyva ir komparatyvizmas;
- kasdienybės ir jos materialių formų studijos;
- etnografija;
- kultūrinis ir apskritai kontekstualumas;
- kūrybiška teorijų bei metodų kombinacija.

Istorinė perspektyva yra ne tik analitiškai perspektyvi. Etnologai ją yra išstobulinę kaip refleksyvaus tyrinėjimo strategiją, kvestionuojančią dabartį. XX a. 8-ajame dešimtmetyje Europos etnologijoje įsitvirtino kasdienybės studijos, laikančios kasdienybę kultūrinių rezistencijų bei kūrybiškumo zona. Kasdienybės studijos – tai: strategijos, įgalinančios vengti „išgrįsto kelio“ ir sugebančios naudotis „užpakalinėmis durimis“; dėmesys veikloms, kurios tik atrodo trivialios, bei idėjoms, įkūnijamoms viešo bendravimo vietose; nuolat atnaujinamas dėmesys kasdienybės daiktiškumui.

Pasitenkinti vien mokslo privalumais būtų tolygu susikurti tariamą saugumo imunitetą. Etnologijos principai turi būti nuolat ir įvairiapusiškai kvestionuojami. Vienas iš būdų – ištraukti į šiandien aktualius debatus apie „postmodernias kultūras“. Pirmiausia, ką etnologija pareikštų, tai kvestionuotų universalistinius teiginius, tokius, pvz., kaip „postmodernus žmogus“. Juk nėra vienakrypčio išvietinimo, benamiškumo ar deteritorializacijos. Užuoat bandžius dabartį apibūdinti per evoliucijos ar devoliucijos schemas, vertėtų nagrinėti vienalaikius, tačiau labai skirtingus, net prieštarigus procesus, tai darant išbandytais būdais ir priemonėmis, kaip kad daryta analizuojant daugybę įvairiausių nacionalinių/tautinių ir lokalinių modernizacijos kelių, slypinčių po universaliomis Vakarų modernybės idėjomis.

Kita vertus, vertėtų tyrinėti, kaip veikia besiplėtojantis įvairiausių rūšių mobilumas, iš anksto to nelaikant tiesiog bešakniškumo didėjimu. Juk mobilumas kartais gali būti stabilumą kurianti ir kaitą ribojanti/stabdanti strategija.

Trečia, šiuolaikinė diskusija apie benamiškumą ir postnacionalumą reikalauja etnologų įsikišimo su savo tyrinėjimais apie tai, kaip *namų* ir *tautiškumo* idėjos įgijo toki stiprų emocinį krūvį ir reikšmę XIX a. identitetuose. Šios abi idėjos tapo ideologemomis ir buvo labai įvairiai konkretizuotos ir materializuotos XX a. kasdienybėje. Juk nėra tas pat turėti *namus*, priklausyti *tautai* 1850 m., 1930 m. ir 1995 m. Tokį patį komparatyvistinį požiūrį galime sėkmingai taikyti tirdami bešakniškumą, išvietinimą, pvz., lygindami 1890 ir 1990 m. migrantus. Juk skiriasi jų įsivietinimo, identifikacijos naujose vietose ir buvimo kartu būdai. Galiausiai mes turime išsąmoninti, kad identitetas ir vieta niekada nėra susiję tiesiog paprastu būdu. Mes nuolat keliaujame tiek judėdami kraštovaizdyje, tiek ir mąstydami, kas, pvz., daro tokią visiškai neišplėtotą etnografijos rūšį kaip svajonių tyrinėjimo etnografija svarbia, galinčia tirti buvimą įvairiose vietose tuo pačiu metu.

Apskritai postmodernios diskusijos ne tik skatina etnologiją ieškoti naujų etnografijų, bet ir verčia imtis tokios tyrinėjimo strategijos, kuri pastoviai sietų teorizavimą ir etnografiją, kartais pasirenkant „užpakalines duris“ didelėms problemoms spręsti.

Gauta 2001 m. rugpjūčio mėn.