

## CV and merits

### Birgit Karlsson

#### Professor in economic history

##### Scientific merits

After having worked as a teacher for ten years, I decided to finish my doctoral studies in 1987. The problem I focused on in my dissertation was the interaction between foreign policy and economic policy as it became apparent in the problems surrounding east-west trade in Sweden after the Second World War. It was obvious that the liberal confession that the direction of foreign trade should be decided by economic factors only was not valid. Foreign policy considerations were important and the implications of the Swedish policy of neutrality were re-interpreted. In this work, sources from Swedish companies were crucial to reach an understanding of how the actions from company management shaped and were shaped by foreign policy consideration. A theoretical framework for understanding Swedish neutrality was thus established; economics should be separated from politics, form should be separated from content and Swedish adaptation to the West should be expressed as unilateral decisions.

These experiences were crucial for my post-doctoral studies on Sweden's relations to the attempts to form the European integration. Here I was able to relate to the theoretical framework of my previous study and develop this with material related to business organizations. My conclusions after having studied the period 1948-72 was that the reasons for Sweden's inability to become part of the EU was not any attempts to uphold a different national economic policy. Foreign policy standpoints were far more important.

I was appointed as Associate professor in economic history in 2003. During this period I also became part of a large research project on Sweden's relations to Nazism and Nazi Germany, undertaken by Swedish Research Council. Initially, I took part in writing an overview over research on the economic relations that so far had been undertaken. Later I became leader of the research project *Trade and moral. Swedish economic relations to Nazi Germany 1933-1945*. There I pursued a study of Swedish forest industries, since export from these industries quantitatively was the major part of the export to Germany. I had the possibility to use archives from the Swedish forest industries' organizations and also archives from the private company SCA, which also contributed to finance the printing of the research report. Together with my colleagues in the project, I tried to contribute to the discussion on moral issues related to trading with Nazi Germany, in the publication *En (o)moralisk handel*, which was printed by The Living History Forum. I also published an article in *Historisk tidskrift* 2016 with the title *Handel, moral och demokrati. Svensk handel med kommunistiska och nazistiska diktaturer*.

During the period 2004-2006, I was intensely occupied with writing a monograph over the Swedish multinational company SKF, which in 2007 could celebrate its 100-years

anniversary. I undertook the task of writing the history of the period 1970-2007. The company archives were not very informative which meant that I had to work in a different way than I was used to, largely relying on interviews. It was a real challenge to try to understand the functions of an international company and at the same time relating its development to general issues.

The experiences from my study of the forest industry were of use for the research I did after the SKF-project, which dealt with Swedish trade relations with the Soviet Union. It was a project which focused on the image of the Soviet Union, as it was manifested in Swedish business circles during the inter-war period.

During my studies of the forest industry in the inter-war period I came to realize that cartels were a significant feature of economic life. This insight led to the formulation of a research project on cartelization in Sweden. I received funding for this project, both from Swedish Research council and from Handelsbankens forskningsstiftelser, which has made it possible to develop a research group within this area on the department. In 2016, I was appointed Professor in economic history at the University of Gothenburg.

### **Pedagogical merits**

The main part of my academic activity has been as lecturer. This is not unexpected, since I had ten years of teaching experience before I started my doctoral studies. I have two teacher exams which means that I am qualified for teaching pupils from 7-19 years of age. My teaching on university level has mainly taken place on the Department of Economic History, but I have also been active in cross-scientific courses on the School of Business, Economics and Law as well as on the faculty of Social Sciences. I have developed, sometimes alone, sometimes together with colleagues, courses in ethics and economics, gender and history, history of banks and business, financial history, environmental history, history around World War II, family history and methodological courses. I became responsible for Erasmus-courses almost directly after my dissertation, which means that I have quite a lot of experience in lecturing in English. I have supervised a number of students in their writing of theses, both on Candidate Level and on Masters Level and I am one of the main examiners on Masters theses in European studies. I have been the main supervisor for two doctoral students and I am still supervising a third.

It is regarded as an axiom in the academic world that research experience is crucial for upholding quality in teaching. I would argue that the opposite can also be claimed – teaching can be of great value to research. Teaching forces you to focus on the most important causal relations in history and time after time it is revealed that unless you do not fully understand complicated processes it is impossible to explain them for students in a way that they understand. Simplifying requires knowledge and makes you see weak points which need further research. Teaching is also a social activity. It is important, even for academic teachers, to focus on the students, not on yourself. This means that it is not enough to be a good lecturer. It is even more important to follow up lectures by seminars, discussions, feedback on tasks availability for discussions on examinations and so on. This pedagogical

approach implies a certain suspiciousness for pedagogical distinctions. Nevertheless I must mention that I was awarded a price for Best lecturer at the School of Business, Economics and Law in 2002. I must also add that I am one of the authors in the book *En samtidigt världshistoria* which is an attempt to write a “new” world history with focus on social and economic development. The book is edited by Maria Sjöberg and is used as a textbook on many university courses.

## **Other merits**

During the period 2008-2010 I was a member of the Swedish Research Council’s evaluation panel for historical disciplines. This was a very interesting experience and gave me a lot of experience when it comes to assessment of applications for funding. In 2017 I was once again asked to be a member of the Swedish Research Council’s evaluation panel, this time for economic disciplines.

I have been the Head of Department for Economic History since 2011. Between 2012 and 2016 I was also Head of Department for Economy and Society. I have also experience from administrative work as a leader of scientific projects, mentioned above and as responsible for the organization and pedagogical coherence of many courses, where not least cross-scientific courses demands administrative and communicative competence. When it comes to investigatory work, my most interesting experience was the participation in the Commission for investigation of Swedish governmental actions related to the fate of Raoul Wallenberg.

## **Oppositions**

Appelqvist, Örjan, Stockholms Universitet 1997, (licentiate); "Världsintressets advokat" : Gunnar Myrdal och den svenska efterkrigsplaneringen 1944-1945

Gussarsson, Maria, Stockholms Universitet 2001; En socialdemokratisk Europapolitik : den svenska socialdemokratins hållning

Hedberg, Peter, Uppsala Universitet 2003; Handeln och betalningarna mellan Sverige och Tyskland 1934-1945 : den svensk-tyska clearingepoken ur ett kontraktsekonomiskt perspektiv

Magnusson Erik, Uppsala Universitet 2004 (licentiate); Sverige och den europeiska integrationen 1961-1971

Sonne Lasse, Helsingfors Universitet 2007; NORDEK : a plan for increased Nordic economic co-operation and integration 1968-1970

Wegerman Leif, Stockholms Universitet 2008; Försörjd av sin hustru : genus, folklig praktik och medborgarskap i arbetslöshetshjälpen 1921-1939

## Examining committees

Gjirjas, Matilda, *Efficiency and Productivity in Swedish Banking*, Department of Economics, Gothenburg, 2004

Kahn, Martin, *Measuring Stalin's Strength during Total War. U.S. and British Intelligence on the Economic and Military Potential of the Soviet Union during the Second World War, 1939–45*, Department of Economic History, Gothenburg 2004

Lane, Linda, *Trying to make a living; studies in the economic life of women in interwar Sweden*, Department of Economic History, Gothenburg 2004

Karlsdottir, Hrefna, *Fishing on common grounds. The consequences of unregulated fisheries of North Sea herring in the postwar period* Department of Economic History, Gothenburg 2005.

Bohlin, Henrik, *Att välja energisystem: processer, aktörer och samverkan i Gävle och Helsingborg 1945–1983*, University of Linköping 2005.

Lundh Nilsson, Fay, *Lönande lärande - Teknologisk förändring, yrkesskicklighet och lön i svensk verkstadsindustri omkring 1900* Department of Economic History, Lund 2007

Fredriksson, Magnus. *Företags ansvar marknadens retorik : en analys av företags strategiska kommunikationsarbete* Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, Gothenburg 2008

Belu, Constantin, *Essays on Efficiency Measurement and Corporate Social Responsibility*, Department of Economics, Gothenburg, 2009

Teives Henriques, Sofia, *Energy Transitions, Economic Growth and Structural Change: Portugal in a Long-run Comparative Perspective*, Department of Economic history Lund 2011

Karlsson, Lars *The Incentive to Abate The Swedish Pulp and Paper Industry and the 1969 Environment Protection Act*, Department of Economic history Uppsala 2012

Orth, Matilda *Entry, competition and productivity in retail*, Department of Economics Gothenburg 2012

## **Research projects**

Project leader for research project ; Trade and moral. An economic-historical perspective on the relations between Sweden and Germany 1933-1945. The project was funded by the Swedish Research Council and embraced 3 125 550 SEK. The project resulted in a number of publications.

Leader of the project Soviet Union – an economic experiment doomed to failure or to learn lessons from, financed by the Research foundation of Handelsbanken. This project embraced a grant of 500.000 SEK.

Project leader for Organized co-operation. Cartelization in Sweden 1890-1950, embracing a grant of 978000 SEK from Research foundation of Handelsbanken May 2009 and from Swedish Research Council 2 700 000 kr

## **Supervision of doctoral students**

Malin Dahlström dissertation 2015

John Lapidus, dissertation 2015

Knut-Ola Naastad-Ström, ongoing

## **Contract research**

Together with Martin Fritz. Compilation of source material for illustrating the export of ballbearings from 1943-45 resulting in the publication *SKF i stormaktspolitikens kraftfält : kullagerexporten 1943-1945* Gothenburg, 1998

Writing the 100-year long history of AB SKF, together with Martin Fritz, resulting in the book *SKF – världsföretaget (SKF – a global story)* 2007

## **Expert commissions**

Expert on position as Senior lecturer in International relations, placed on Department of Economic History at University of Stockholm 2003

Expert on position as First research assistant at Historisk institutt at the University of Bergen 2004

Expert on position as university assistant master (post-doctoral fellow) in history since the beginning of the 19th century, University of Copenhagen 2007

Expert on position as associate lecturer in economic history, University of Lund 2009

Expert on position as lecturer in economic history, University of Stockholm 2010

Expert on position as lecturer in international relations, University of Stockholm 2010

Expert on position as lecturer in history, specifically Baltic and East European history, Södertörn 2010

Expert on application for position as Associate professor, Örjan Simonsson, Södertörns högskola 2012

Expert on positions as lecturers in history (5 positions), University of Uppsala 2014

### **Assessment commissions**

Commentator to manuscript from the project Dansk handelspolitik gent emot Sovjetunionen och Östeuropa 1945-1960 in Aalborg 070928.

Commentator to manuscript on Measurement of timber in Swedish history by Ronny Pettersson, Kungl. Skogs- och Lantbruksakademien

Member of the Evaluation panel for Historical Sciences of the Swedish Research Council 2009 -2011

Member of the Evaluation panel for Economic Sciences of the Swedish Research Council 2017 -

### **Conference organisation**

Organizer, together with Ingela Karlsson, of conference on the Swedish Research Council's common project on Sweden's relation to Nazism and Nazi Germany 1933-1945, March 4-5 2004

Organizer of pedagogical session on Swedish economic-history meeting in Umeå 2005

Organizer of double-session on the theme Environment, economy and history on Swedish economic-history meeting in Uppsala 2009

Organizer of two workshops on the theme Environment economy and history in Göteborg 2008 and 2009, funded by Swedish Research Council and the Foundation for Economic research in West Sweden

## **Paper presentations**

Small States in World Markets - Fifteen Years Later Gothenburg, 27-29 September 2001

World economic history congress August Buenos Aires 2002

Swedish historical meeting in Uppsala April 21-24 2005. Account of results from the project  
Trade and moral

World economic history congress, Helsinki August 21-25 2006

Swedish historical meeting in Lund April 24-26 2008

Labouring Feminism and Feminist Working-Class History in Europe and Beyond,  
International Conference August 28-31 2008 in Stockholm

Conferences Swedish Network for European studies in Economics and Business (SNEE) in  
Mölle 2000, 2002 and 2006 and 2011

## **Invitations**

Workshop on economic cooperation pre and after World War II in Paris Fondation Maison  
des Sciences de l'Homme 27- 29 May 2010

VIII World Congress of the International Council Central and East European Studies in  
Stockholm 26-31 July 2010

Cold War Business History Conference 11 March 2016, Stockholm School of Economics

## Publication list

### Monographies

1. *Handelspolitik eller politisk handling : Sveriges handel med öststaterna 1946-1952 = [Trade policy or political action] : [Sweden's trade with Eastern Europe 1946-1952]* Ekonomisk-historiska institutionen, Göteborg 1992
2. Fritz, Martin & Karlsson Birgit *SKF i stormaktspolitikens kraftfält : kullagerexporten 1943-1945 : några samtida dokument* (Göteborg 1998)
3. *Att handla neutralt : Sverige och den ekonomiska integrationen i Västeuropa 1948-1972* Ekonomisk-historiska institutionen, Göteborg 2001
4. *SKF - a global story : 1907-2007* Martin Fritz & Birgit Karlsson ; Informationsförlaget, Stockholm 2006
5. *Egenintresse eller samhällsintresse : Nazityskland och svensk skogsindustri 1933-1945* Sekel, Lund 2007
6. Karlsson, Birgit (red) *Organiserad samverkan Svenska karteller under 1900-talet*, Gidlunds, Möklinta 2014
7. *Svensk försvarsindustri 1945-1992* Printfabriken, Karlskrona 2016

### Peer-reviewed articles

1. Rysskrediterna 1946 – en ödesfråga för nationen. Article in *Historisk tidskrift* 1988
2. Neutrality and Economy: The Redefining of Swedish Neutrality, 1946-52, *Journal of Peace Research* vol 32 no 1 Feb 1995 pp 37-48
3. Sweden and the OEEC, 1947-50 : walking the tightrope in *Scandinavian economic history review*, 1996 (44), s. 222-243
4. Neutrality and free trade : Sweden and trade liberalisation, 1948-1958 in: *Scandinavian economic history review*. 2004(52):2/3, s. 39-61
5. Liberalism as state non-interference. The development of Swedish cartel legislation 1911-1953 in *Revue économique*, November 2013
6. Karteller och samhällsnytta. Svensk stålindustri 1910-1970 *Med hammare och fackla* 2014
7. From price to presence, SKF strategies 1970-2007, *French economic history review* 2015:3
8. Cartels and norms in the Swedish steel industry 1923–1953, *Business history* 2016



9. Handel, moral och demokrati. Svensk handel med kommunistiska och nazistiska diktaturer , *Historisk tidskrift* 2016

### **Book chapters**

1. Handelsavtalen med Sovjetunionen och Polen 1946-47 in *Forskning om Europafrågor* vid samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten, Göteborgs universitet 1993
2. Sweden and European Economic co-operation in the 1950:s in *Forskning om Europafrågor* vid samhällsvetenskapliga fakulteten, Göteborgs universitet 1999
3. Fritz, Martin & Karlsson, Birgit, Dependence and national supply : Sweden's economic relations to Nazi-Germany in: *Sweden's relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust : a survey of research*. Vetenskapsrådet 2003
4. Ekonomiska aspekter på Raoul Wallenberg-fallet. Appendix 3 to *Ett diplomatiskt misslyckande: fallet Raoul Wallenberg och den svenska utrikesledningen / Kommissionen om den svenska utrikesledningens agerande i fallet Raoul Wallenberg* (Stockholm 2003)
5. Globalisation and regionalism. Sweden and Europe 1957-1972 in Perron, Régine (ed) *The Stability of Europe; The Common Market: Towards European Integration of Industrial and Financial Markets?* Presse de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne (Paris 2004)
6. Nazityskland och svensk skogsindustri and Avslutande diskussion in *En (o)moralisk handel? : Sveriges ekonomiska relationer med Nazityskland*. Stockholm 2006
7. Sweden and the Marshall plan in *The Marshall Plan at 60* Erixon Fredrik (ed) (Stockholm 2008)
8. Das nationalsozialistische Deutschland und die Schwedische Forstindustrie. *Im Spannungsfeld, Affinitäten, Abgrenzungen und Arrangements in den deutsch-schwedischen Beziehungen des Zwanzigsten Jahrhunderts. Publikationen des Lehrstuhls für Nordische Geschichte, Bd.9*, (Greifswald 2008).
9. *Ett enat Europa under tysk ledning i Sverige och Europa* in *Forskning om Europafrågor*, Centrum för Europaforskning, Göteborgs Universitet 2010

10. Cartels in the Swedish and Finnish forest industries in the interwar period in *Managing Crises and De-globalisation. Nordic foreign trade and exchange 1919-39*, Routledge 2010
11. Neutrality and Trade - Swedish Trade Policy During War and Peace in Lundtofte, Jensen and Just, *War and Society in Scandinavia. 1914-1950*, Odense, University Press of Southern Denmark 2009.
12. Introduction, summary and chapter ” Sverige, diktaturerna och ekonomin” in *Fruktan och förundran. Svenska föreställningar om Sovjetunionen på Lenins och Stalins tid*, Sekel, Lund 2011
13. SKF i Sydafrika - Apartheid, politik och företagande in *Business history in Sweden*, Gidlunds 2011
14. La libre concurrence et l'utilité sociale. *La régulation dans l'industrie sidérurgique des années 1950*, Colloque de Luxembourg, Centre d'études et de recherches européennes  
Robert Schuman 2013

## Reviews

1. Review of dissertation by Peter Hedberg: Handeln och betalningarna mellan Sverige och Tyskland 1934-1945 in *Scandinavian Economic History Review*; 2003 (51):3
2. Socialdemokratisk Europapolitik. Review of dissertation by Maria Gussarsson. *Historisk tidskrift* 2003 (123):4
3. Den ståndaktiga nationalstaten. Review of dissertation by Mikael af Malmberg. *Historisk tidskrift* 1997 (117)
4. Nordek; A plan for increased Nordic economic co-operation and integration 1968-1970. Review of dissertation by Lasse Sonne in *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 2009 (57):1
5. Kön och försörjning: gifta kvinnors handlingsutrymme i mellankrigstidens Sverige, Review of dissertation by Leif Wegerman in *Historisk tidskrift* 2009:4
6. A Small Nation in the Turmoil of the Second World War. Money, Finance and Occupation. Belgium, its Enemies, its Friends, 1939–1945, review of book by Herman van der Wee and Monique Verbreyt in *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 59:2  
2011

7. Review of Sven-Olof Olsson, Sverige i det handelspolitiska maktspelet 1919– 1939, and Ingemar Ottosson; Handel under protest in *Historisk tidskrift* 2012:3
  
8. Review of Vadim Azbel, Leonid Borodkin, Helene Carlbäck, Marina Chichuga, Anna Dmitrieva, Antonina Dolganova, Reinhard Frost, Mikhail Shkarovsky & Martin Kragh (red.): Swedish Business History in Russia 1850–1917 in *Nordisk Östforum* 2015:1