

DEMANDS AND CHALLENGES OF INTERNATIONALIZATION IN THE SWEDISH HUMANITIES IN THE ERA OF ACADEMIC CAPITALISM

Magnus Öhlander*
Katarzyna Wolanik Boström**
Helena Pettersson***

Abstract

This article analyzes strategies and practices among Swedish Humanities scholars in relation to the demands of “internationalization” and in a framework of academic capitalism. The article is based on 30 qualitative interviews with scholars in philosophy, Romance languages and history. There are signs of cognitive dissonance, with conflicting set of norms. Benefits for the academic CV, along with a discipline’s ideals, traditions and its perceived role in society are the main context in which internationalization is understood, implemented and contested, with individual variations in international practices as e.g. international mobility, networking or publishing strategies.

Keywords: *Humanities, Sweden, internationalization, international practices, academic capitalism*

* Magnus Öhlander, Dept. of Ethnology, History of Religions and Gender Studies, Stockholm University, Sweden; e-mail: magnus.ohlander@ethnologi.su.se | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0712-0123>

** Katarzyna Wolanik Boström, Dept. of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University, Sweden; e-mail: katarzyna.wolanik.bostrom@umu.se | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8152-2086>

*** Helena Pettersson, Dept. of Culture and Media Studies, Umeå University, Sweden; e-mail: helena.pettersson@umu.se | ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6803-7238>

Introduction

This article focuses on internationalization and knowledge production within the Humanities in the Swedish academic context. In national investigations, official governmental reports, and public debate, internationalization has been regarded as an imperative to secure Sweden's success in research. Moreover, all areas of research – from the natural sciences to the Humanities – have been expected to implement internationalization in the same way and be judged by similar criteria, which was met with some resistance from the Humanities scholars, claiming that e.g. writing books and not only articles, and publishing in Swedish, was still of great scientific importance (Bohlin 2017; Tunlid 2008).

The imperative of internationalization can be understood through the lens of the concept “academic capitalism,” a framework developed by Slaughter and Leslie (1997) and Slaughter and Rhoades (2004). While these publications focus on the forces, re-organization and connections of the academy with a larger market, we in this article consider it useful to think with the concept of academic capitalism, to understand how the Humanities as a field is formed, governed and defended in relation to such an activity as internationalization, which can be understood as one of several transformative and external demands that create pressure within certain parts of the field, while being integrated into others.

In the following, we discuss Humanities scholars' different ways of responding to and managing the growing expectations of becoming more internationalized. How do the Humanities scholars understand and meet expectations to become more internationally oriented? What different meanings of internationalization emerge in the interviews?

We use a broad understanding of the term internationalization among scholars and prefer to talk about *international practices*, which we define as a wide range of activities contributing to different kinds and degrees of internationalization. International practices might be

physical mobility in the form of short-term and long-term stays, conferences, or project meetings, and it might be mediated co-operations as online meetings, networking, writing projects and publishing strategies.

Method of data collection and analysis

The article is based on 30 extensive interviews with Humanities scholars who gained their PhD in the Swedish Humanities and at Swedish universities, working at Swedish universities with a separate faculty of Humanities. The scholars were at the time of the interviews active as researchers and teachers in one of the following disciplines: 1. Philosophy, 2. Romance languages and 3. History. Additional data were official documents (e.g. from the government and funding agencies), articles, books etc. published in media debates about the Humanities, policy documents and secondary research results, all of which describe relevant contexts on different levels.

The empirical focus has been designed to facilitate analysis of the heterogeneous conditions for internationalization in relation to working place cultures, disciplinary traditions and negotiations of symbolic capital. The three disciplines were strategically chosen to cover a range of academic cultures, concerning e.g. motifs and traditions of internationalization, in order to problematize the idea of the Humanities as a homogenous academic field of knowledge, and to discuss if and how internationalization may come on different terms for different academic disciplines with demands and strategies of internationalization. The chosen groups comprise thus different disciplinary traditions of and incentives for international mobility, co-operations and publication strategies.

Each interview took approximately 2-3 hours. The same main questionnaire list was used for all groups, but a few questions were added to capture each discipline's specific conditions. Questions were open-

ended and organized in themes (i.e. Mishler 1991; Patton 2002) about the educational background and professional career; long-term or short-term work abroad, international co-operations and publications, the experience of different research cultures and working-place cultures, family circumstances and private life in relation to work and international practices. Other important themes were insights and knowledge gained by different international practices and experiences of recognition of these practices and negotiations in the Swedish workplace.

The interviews were digitally recorded and stored. We used a transcription technique that applied just minor editing to the spoken language and made comparisons between the interviews in different groups to increase interpretation reliability. Thematic narrative analysis was applied to the transcripts (c.f. Czarniawska 2004; Riessman 2007; Gray 2002; Öhlander 2011) on the levels of an individual interview, the group/discipline and the Humanities field. Evaluations, argumentations, justifications and disclaimers were considered.

Survey of the field

The Humanities as a field of knowledge include a heterogeneous group of disciplines, like languages, historical subfields, philosophy, literature and field disciplines like archeology and ethnology. Yet, the Swedish Humanities are in the public discourse often defined as a single homogeneous unit and described in negative terms as not international enough, thus less adapted to contemporary academic competition, compared to other academic fields. The academic world of the Humanities is in a phase of transition due to the obligation to become more international oriented (e.g. Holm, Jarrick, Scott 2015), yet very little is known about actual international practices and strategies of the Humanities' scholars, about factors promoting and hindering international mobility and co-operations, or the kind of knowledge that is gained and shared in different international contexts. Even though the internationalization

of the Humanities in Sweden is less studied than other faculties, insights and analytical tools may be found in the research field on highly skilled transnational mobility and knowledge transfer. Policy researchers have shown that formal regulations and immigration rules affect scientists' mobility, depending on gender and family status. Several studies depart from extensive surveys to investigate innovation aspects or structural implications of a globalized labor market for highly educated (Cantwell 2011; Ackers, Gill 2008; Gill 2005; Delicado 2009).

These studies do not provide insights into the decision processes of the mobile academics in Humanities, their different strategies for international mobility, nor do they explain the everyday lived-life experiences in existing contexts (scholarly, social, work-culture, economic, political). Current and previous research has highlighted that in many disciplines, international mobility is an important point of passage to be respected in a research community (Kirpitchenko 2015; Edqvist 2009; Felt, Stöckelová 2009; Knorr Cetina 1999; cf. Wagner 2011). These studies show the necessity to analyze the micro-level of everyday work experience to find norms, ideas and mechanisms guiding activities in the international arena.

The everyday work as a scholar in the Humanities should be understood in the context of what has been called "academic capitalism." Slaughter and Leslie (1997, also e.g. Münch 2014) coined the concept of academic capitalism to describe how knowledge and knowledge production become products on the market. Research on academic capitalism has shown and analyzed the consequences of the marketization of research in combination with external control and governance in the form of New Public Management. In the Swedish context, this has been described by, for instance, *Det hotade universitetet* (2016), Hasselberg (2012; 2013), *Transformations in Research, Higher Education and the Academic Market* (2013), Engwall (2020).

In her book *Vetenskap som arbete (Science as work)* Ylva Hasselberg (2012) used interviews to analyze the everyday work life of natural

scientists at two different departments in relation to academic capitalism. Put simply, with a focus on the commodification of knowledge, she concluded that academic capitalism was visible in the researchers' narratives about their professional life, but it structured the everyday work of the researchers only to a limited extent. Hasselbergs study highlights the importance of analyzing the relation and interaction between everyday work life as a researcher and academic capitalism. Hasselbergs focused on "science as work," which is an inspiration when we turn our analytical focus to the Humanities and the everyday work life as a historian, philosopher, and researcher in Romance languages.

Academic capitalism and internationalization of the Humanities

As mentioned above, theories of academic capitalism describe the structural conditions for the everyday work life of scholars in the Humanities. Hasselberg *et al.* (2013: 3) summarizes academic capitalism as "characterized by the marketization, privatization, propertization, and managementization of knowledge, a reification and commodification of the activities of research, scholarship, and teaching within the university as an institution."

In the Swedish context, Widmalm (2013; 2016) has shown that the governmental research bills have gone from an emphasis on the importance of science for democracy, education, people enlightenment (*Bildung*) and culture in the early 1980s to – from the 2010s onwards – stressing mainly that research should be managed by competition for external funds, in an effort to contribute to economic growth. Eckhardt Larsen & Wiklund (2012) point out that values such as "education to citizenship," "democratic participation," and "lifelong learning" have been disregarded in favor of the ideal that education's only and primary function is to make people employable.

Furthermore, they argue that research is threatened by an "epistemic drift" (Elzinga 1985), that is, the relevance of research is no longer

motivated by researchers themselves, but externally by political ideas and research funders, some of which are private. This has resulted in a practice that the value of research is increasingly assessed based on its economic value. When knowledge is measured by its economic value and contribution to economic growth, scholars in the Humanities stand short in the competition for recognition and research funds. Even though the Humanities could contribute to, for example, the tourist industry, their knowledge production mainly contributes to insights valuable for public debate, culture, democracy, and cultural heritage (Münch 2014).

Another area where scholars in the Humanities struggle with the conditions of academic capitalism is the form and language of publications. To some researchers in the Humanities, a book (monograph) is the most outstanding and most suitable form of publication. But in academic capitalism, quantity is of major importance. To do well under these conditions, one should write short texts, preferably in peer-review journals, and publish and be quoted as much as possible. Publications have become a commodity that can be capitalized and invested (*Transformations in Research, Higher Education and the Academic Market* 2013; Hasselberg 2013). Successful research is measured by the number of publications, quotations, and the ability to attract economic resources. Publications can be turned in to economic capital needed to allocate resources to expand on the market. Münch (2014: 10) argues that “the struggle for recognition is predominantly conducted as a struggle for accumulating capital: money, personnel, networks, reputed people, and positions of legitimate power.”

The politically dominant idea that research primarily should contribute to economic growth is related to a narrative about an ongoing crisis in the Humanities, a crisis described by several researchers (Benneworth, Gulbrandsen, Hazelkorn 2016; Bohlin 2017; Jay 2014, Tunlid 2008). Overall, the Humanities’ distinctive character and its role in society have been discussed in the Swedish newspapers and the more

specialized papers for the academic audience, regularly during the last decades. There is recurrent mourning that the politicians do not fully understand the forms and condition of research, and a returning image is that the Humanities are unrecognized, underestimated and in crisis (Bohlin 2017; Jay 2014; Niskanen, 2020; Tunlid 2008).

The debate about the crises of the Humanities also includes internationalization or a supposed lack of it. In the public discourse of internationalization – as it is articulated in official reports of the Swedish government and research policy bills (e.g., Government report 2018, Swedish National Roadmap for the International Research Area 2019-2020), research and education are closely connected to innovation, economic growth and development, and are a way to ascertain Swedish success in the international area. Most typically, the research practices of medicine, technology and science are framed as a model for all research, including the social sciences and the Humanities, and internationalization is regarded as an important factor for success. The way towards internationalization is presented as increased co-operations with researchers in other (implicitly, mostly Western) countries and publishing in other languages than Swedish (in practice, mainly in English) in peer-reviewed journals. From a political and policy-making perspective, international mobility is regarded as a guarantee for the quality of research (Ackers 2010; Holm, Jarrick, Scott 2015; Government report 2018) and perhaps as a consequence, the degree of internationalization has together with bibliometrics become a way to measure the quality of research (Nilsson 2012).

In the Swedish debate, no one claims that internationalization as such is wrong. Some voices point out that researchers in the Humanities are already internationally active. What provokes the debaters is the requirement to publish to a much larger extent in English in peer-review journals and that these publications are given greater value in terms of merit than publications in Swedish. For example, there are several problems pointed out that international publications do not reach the

broader Swedish audience and thus do not fulfill the obligation of the Humanities to contribute knowledge as a basis for learning (*Bildung*) and the public democratic dialog.

Another argument is that qualitative research needs more space than allowed in articles to come to its right; especially as good analysis in qualitative research is dependent on fluent language and writing skills (Bohlin 2017; Holm, Jarrick & Scott 2015; Jay 2014; Tunlid 2008).

Few Swedish researchers can write as well as their British, American, Australian etc. colleagues who are native speakers of English. As qualitative analysis requires an outstanding language ability, then research will deteriorate, or the results will be oversimplified if presented in English. Yet another objection is that applying bibliometrics as an assessment tool results in articles outcompeting monographs. The one-sided focus on articles threatens the important tradition of writing monographs in Swedish. A monograph is regarded as allowing for more nuanced and complicated reasoning, and if written in Swedish, it is even more accessible to the broad educated public. “The signals are clear: Swedish Humanities researchers should not write thoughtful, nuanced texts about Swedish material in their mother tongue” (Steiner 2016).

In short, academic capitalism has implications for everyday work life as a scholar of the Humanities and makes a context in which the obligation to become more “internationalized” should be understood. In the following, we will discuss how a number of scholars articulate the meaning of and the practice of internationalization in their daily work as researchers and university teachers.

International practices of scholars in the Humanities

Case 1. Scholars and teachers in philosophy

Philosophy is by tradition an internationalized field, both historically and in the contemporary academic context. Philosophers are not bound

to fieldwork or laboratories, but language and text and internationalization is defined as “necessary” by all the interviewees. But what are their incentives, obstacles and learning in the process? Among the 11 philosophy interviewees, there are similar agreements that internationalization is rather naturalized as practice. Internationalization in terms of mobility is not questioned, nor is international publications or conference participation. “I can’t even think of anyone who has not been abroad for a longer time, either as a Ph.D. student or as a post-doc or guest researcher,” said Anders, full professor at one of the Swedish research universities. He described internationalization as “something you just do,” it is the norm, and no one really pushes internationalization as practice; a taken for granted activity. No one has ever opposed internationalization as mobility practice, nor publication strategy, or conference participation.

He admitted, though, that it might be tricky, especially regarding organizing a family life. Several of the interviewed philosophers have a partner who is also an academic. On the one hand, life can get more complicated since you have one other career to consider, said one of the philosophers. On the other hand, he admitted, it also makes things easier, especially if that partner has external research grants. It makes it easier to plan ahead for a longer stay abroad.

The interviewees also described a year abroad and a postdoc as a necessary career step. “You need to go abroad to learn something new,” said Carl. Several others use variants to verbalize the same ideal. One described the experience of participating in the seminar as central. During the seminar in philosophy, he said, that ideas and new perspectives are discussed, dissected and questioned. To be a part of a seminar abroad and learn and go more in-depth not only in new research areas or research questions but also in ways of discussing during seminars, how to lead a seminar, and how to verbally tackle research problems is something you learn. One of the interviewees, Eve, a professor, is one of the few who did not go abroad for a longer period, neither as a Ph.D. student,

post-doc or senior researcher. Bad health was the very reason, while internationalization and mobility were still the ideal. The interviewee emphasized that it was necessary for her to find a strategy to compete due to the absence of the long-term international experience.

“I needed to develop a very active seminar,” she said. The lack of being a long-term visitor in a foreign research environment was solved by organizing a research seminar with many international and domestic researchers. Internationalization was instead practiced “at home.” One way of organizing internationalization and developing her international network was also to organize international workshops at her home department. She said it took a lot of time but was very rewarding and very useful for the Ph.D. student and junior faculty.

Another crucial practice for internationalization is the publication context. Also, in this case, the philosophers considered domestic publications in Swedish to be rather an exception. To have a book published at a foreign university press was considered to be very competitive. “That’s how I made my breakthrough,” said Eve.

Otherwise, peer-reviewed articles in international journals were considered to be a standard procedure. Chapters in international readers are considered to be fine, and also special issues. “But you get suspicious if someone only has publications in special issues. If that person only published together with friends or what?” said Carl. The international competition and the review practice in peer-review journals are considered to be a good way to organize a collegial review for better research quality.

Case 2. Scholars and teachers in Romance languages

According to the ten interviewed scholars and teachers in Romance languages, the work expectations included visits to the cultural and linguistic context the scholars specialize in, as “genuine learning” of both language and culture was expected to happen in a native setting. But this

could be achieved in different ways even before the academic career started, e.g. by having lived some time in another country, going on longer student – or Ph.D. exchange programs that gave excellent fluency in the studied language, or simply having the relevant language as mother tongue. To collect non-digitized data in local archives, to co-operate with other scholars in the specific field, or to teach abroad were seen as natural ways of becoming a better scholar and staying in touch with a broader research network. Especially short-term travels for data collection and co-operations were expected as a part of a professional development and career. However, international co-operations could also be achieved with scholars who visited Sweden, or by going to conferences to take in the field's development and engage in networking IRL, or by interactions and networking with the help of social media.

An interesting aspect recurrent in the interviews concerns the lower status of publications in Romance languages compared to English. Even though Romance languages, like Spanish, French or Portuguese, are native languages in many countries worldwide and thus in a profound way “international,” publishing in those languages is not always highly valued in Swedish faculties' and universities' rankings.

Alice, a scholar in Spanish, said that publications within the Humanities could not be directly compared to those in natural sciences:

It is unfair that in natural sciences they publish in English and it is very simple and instrumental, the demands on language are small [...] while in the Humanities it is nothing like that. There are totally different demands on the level of language, it is supposed to be like a native language.

Alice said that people working with modern foreign languages and literature regarded themselves as “internationalized” by definition, but to her amazement, publishing in Spanish was not recognized or rewarded according to the demands of “international” publications; it got fewer or no “credits” on different merit lists (e.g. the Norwegian list), which she regarded as deeply unfair and discriminating. “These structures

that we have, to count points and whatnot, they too favor publishing in English. [...] It does not matter what the *content* is.” However, in Alice’s scholarly praxis, Spanish was far more useful for reaching the most relevant scholars in her field and spreading the research results. In light of that, she published preferably in Spanish, but made allowances to the “structures,” as she named it, and was successful in publishing also in English and Swedish peer-review journals. She remarked that the native English speakers seldom understood the amount of work it took for non-native scholars to reach the level suitable for publication.

According to Camilla, a scholar in French who after her Swedish Ph.D. had worked for a longer time in a prestigious university in France, her stay abroad was very exciting and rewarding, but the focus on international stays was too dominant and made the current view on “internationalization” very narrow:

Well, I think it is a rather problematic concept. And I have often thought during the last years that it is a pity that our university, and maybe Swedish universities in general, interpret [internationalization] as if one is supposed to *travel* abroad, or having guests from other countries. While in my opinion, maybe because I deal with languages, internationalization is something you can do at home: you can take in international perspectives in your teaching and research and try to zoom out and remember that not everything is the same as where we are now! So, I think [internationalization] might be many things. It can also mean having a project or a course and taking in people and voices from different countries. And maybe, if it is possible, from more places than just the West.

Implied in the quote is a Western hierarchy of places and universities abroad: in the “geographical imagination” (cf. Riaño *et al.* 2015; Åkerlund, Sandberg 2015) of modern academia not all places and research circumstances count as equally “fine” and favorable for a career.

Also, other scholars who e.g. for family reasons could not go abroad for a longer period, or who did not feel that they would benefit enough to make the practicalities of the move worthwhile, presented other

strategies for internationalization. Alice, who had young children and did not want to “drag” them abroad, preferred shorter trips to collect material in the archives or to international conferences. She was especially enthusiastic about the learning and networking possibilities at IRL conferences:

My aim with going to conferences is to learn, and I do learn a lot, you get a kind of panorama view over a field. And it is especially interesting to reach outside your comfort zone and to see something else. [...] And I never miss the conference dinner and the social events and such. [...] The coffee breaks are important, and handing out your business cards is very important. [...] It is difficult to do it as a web presentation, then you cannot hang in the bar. And these things are rewarding.

Another scholar, Klara, had lived abroad previously and thought it gave her invaluable perspectives. She considered that it was “unbelievably important” that everybody should live abroad for at least a year. “For all the Swedes, to get a perspective on what is good and bad. I am talking both about the country and the university system.” However, since she started a family, things got more complicated and the complexity of long-time stays dawn on her in quite a new way. The recognition that different periods in family life might be more or less suitable for taking the family abroad, was presented as a self-evident knowledge shared among her academic colleagues:

But being away for a year is not so easy anymore, if you have a partner and he or she has their job as well. [...] I know that people [go abroad] and I want to do it as well, but my children are so young that the state of affairs is just *not* to do it. I have, like, a three-year-old at home! You know, it is not the most productive period in your research life when you have young kids at home. You just have to accept it, at least if you want to be around. You know there will be a couple of years. And it does not feel as something of biggest importance right now.

Nowadays, Klara said, she preferred to co-operate with the help of social media:

I especially use Facebook as a working tool. Then you can get in touch with them and know what they are doing and can exchange projects and ideas and such, and it all multiplies. When you are in full contact with one person, you get contact with others. Even Twitter is great as a working tool.

Case 3. Scholars and teachers in history

In the material, there are examples of historians working solely on the national arena and publishing almost exclusively in Swedish. There are also examples of historians with what could be called a semi-international approach, which means that they write both in Swedish and English and participate in conferences internationally but have no experiences of longer research visits abroad. A third group consist of persons representing mainly a younger academic generation, who do one or more research visits abroad. They usually stay abroad for shorter periods, from a few weeks to six months. The main pattern is that they meet fellow researchers on their stays abroad and participate in activities such as seminars, but otherwise, they work alone with their research. This could be compared to, e.g. researchers in the medical field or life sciences, who usually work in research teams.

Historians in Sweden have traditionally been researching Swedish culture and society and writing monographs or articles in Swedish. The interviewed scholars and teachers are thus a part of a discipline with a long tradition of Swedish focus, including strategies of publications in Swedish. The discipline has been undergoing a (sometimes reluctant) transformation, from the focus on the nation-state, to meeting the demands to relate to international debates and publishing behavior in international journals (writing in English, research visits abroad, international social networks, and so on).

The interviewees were well aware of internationalization discourse, but they were not unconditionally positive to the demand that the discipline gets more internationalized. They explained why the departments of history in Sweden were not more internationally oriented and how this is on its way to change. This quote from Edvin is an example of a historian reflecting on the term “internationalization”:

I think that this word has been a part of the discourse for a very long time and I have always had trouble with it, because I think we have not made any effort at all. History is, well, a national project. I have been around for so long that I may speak with some accuracy, actually. It is still a national project.

This person defined history as a national project, especially when the focus was political history and social history; gender history or cultural history were, according to the interviewee, more easily transferred to the international arena.

Another scholar, Rita, pointed out that internationalization was a matter of differences between (academic) generations. The ones that now are professors had not needed international practices or publications on their CVs, but the younger ones competing for positions felt the pressure of publishing internationally, building international networks and undertaking research visits abroad.

I would say that there are quite many senior scholars who, at least as far as I know, do not go abroad. And I know, because I have checked it on some occasion, that there are those around sixty years of age that have not published much internationally, not in the least. In history as a discipline, there has not really been the real push to do it, you could be a professor anyway, so to say. Without, or with very little publication in English. Thus, the little younger generation might feel that we live with, well, totally different expectations concerning the CV, that you should, preferably, have large quantities of production, in a way that was not really there before.

There are of course exceptions to this in the material, i.e. more senior historians who published in English and worked in the international arena, but the point is that the demands have a greater impact on the younger generation's career possibilities. But in general, among the interviewees appeared a clear-cut line between generations when it came to the attitude to internationalization and feeling the pressure to publish in English or work in the international arena.

Writing and publishing internationally usually means using English as the main language. For a discipline that is mainly working with qualitative methods and for which the ability to create empirically based narratives/descriptions of complex historical processes, mastering writing and language skills are crucial. In some cases, this can become a predicament for internationalization, which is a theme in several of the interviews. It could be more challenging and more time-consuming to write in a foreign language; you need more than just language skills, as Edvin points out:

The problem is of course that if you write a thesis in international history, you need a deep knowledge of the language. So, you need to be culturally competent and not only just how-do-you-do competent. And that is basically the problem.

Discussion: International practices as obligation, necessity and burden

The Humanities provides an example of an academic sector in an ongoing and not always smooth transition towards several characteristics of academic capitalism, as depicted e.g. by *Transformations in Research, Higher Education and the Academic Market* (2013), Hasselberg (2012; 2013), Holm, Jarrick, Scott (2015). In this article, we regard the growing demands of internationalization, especially in relation to publishing, as part of this trend. Internationalization is defined and supported by Swedish funding agencies and is at a governmental level considered

central for Sweden's development in global knowledge competition and research advancement.

To understand how scholars give different meanings to the demands of internationalization and meet the expectations to become more internationally oriented, one needs to look at each discipline's special characteristics. Internationalization in the forms of mobility or publishing in English could be motivated by the disciplines' specific research area and ideals for the discipline's role in society. For some disciplines of the Humanities, as history, internationalization means a shift from mainly Swedish focus to a more international, regarding research topics, research cooperation, English as a communication language and mobility through postdoctoral fellowships, scholar sabbaticals, conferences and teachers' exchange programs. As we have seen, the historians' approaches vary and are explained e.g. as generational differences, when the established scholars can maintain their national focus, while the younger scholars need to streamline their CVs according to the latest demands, to compete for academic positions.

Furthermore, the disciplinary affiliation and working place culture impact what kind of internationalization strategies are preferred – e.g., if physical mobility and international networking is a part of the discipline's traditions, as for the philosophers and Romance languages scholars. Regarding their discipline as fundamentally international, the Romance language scholars seem to fully embrace the intellectual benefits of mobility – unless their family obligations make it problematic – but are rather perplexed and irritated about the present demands on publishing in English. This can mean a double burden of achieving publications widely read by their Spanish or French colleagues and thus really matter in their field, and publications in English that count in rankings.

Demands of internationalization may certainly be conceptualized in terms of life-long professional learning (cf. Jensen, Lahn, Nerland

2012; Smeby 2012; Pettersson, Wolanik Boström, Öhlander 2015; Wolanik Boström 2018; Öhlander, Wolanik Boström, Pettersson 2020). In a global world, an openness to international contacts and dialogues sounds very reasonable from this perspective. However, the focus on English as a communication language seems to restrict the global perspective and as the scholars conclude, not all contacts and publications are equally valued by funding agencies and different ranking systems.

Some types of knowledge, mainly tacit knowledge (e.g. Williams 2006) – for example, fluency in a foreign language, writing academic texts, participating in seminars in another country, co-operating in projects etc. – are inseparable from the individual's embodied experience and may be enriched by international contacts or mobility. Such knowledge is, however, not automatically recognized or valued in all workplace cultures. Internationalization may be a good way of enhancing one's CV and establishing symbolic capital in the global academic community, but it may be tricky if the local community is not ready to fully acknowledge e.g. international stays or publications in English, or if writing in English is perceived as a threat to research quality or an educational obligation to a broad Swedish public

There are reasons to problematize the expected academic mobility as a part of scholars' everyday work life, as it might mean a temporal loss of connectivity to a place, including the local department, or to other individuals as family, friends and colleagues (cf. Ackers 1998). A longer stay abroad may be a great opportunity for professional learning, but it may also mean a lot of extra work, logistics and distress, not always paying off in the symbolic capital in the local academic community (Pettersson 2011; *Vägar till vetenskapen* 2013; Öhlander, Wolanik Boström & Pettersson 2020). Our interviewees expressed especially the importance of family and other social bonds as a hindering factor.

Seen as a practice of everyday work life, our data suggest that scholars within the Humanities use different strategies to handle “interna-

tionalization” as a part of academic capitalism, depending on disciplinary background. Here, there are signs of cognitive dissonance, with two sets of norms for understanding the relevance of and the motivations for getting more internationalized as a scholar in the Humanities. Bennich-Björkman (2013: 134) points out that “persons working within a system start to believe in its governing principles and successively, without many noticing it actively, there has been a shift from one set of norms to another. The mental processes sustaining such institutional changes have become known in social psychology as the ‘slippery slope’ syndrome, a gradual, incremental slide into a state or a situation which once was believed to be detestable or highly disliked”. Whether this process will lead to a gradual acceptance of academic capitalism's principles and norms, or if the Humanities will strengthen its resistance towards it, is a matter for future studies.

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