

ACSIS – Annual Report 2017



General Information

The Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) is an open platform for cultural researchers in Sweden. It is a coordinating and dynamic resource for Swedish cultural researchers, serving as a bridge-builder between institutions, disciplines and perspectives and linking to the transnational field of cultural studies. The activities of ACSIS are continually structured by the director, the research coordinator, the national board and the researchers, lecturers and doctoral students taking part in courses, seminars, conferences or other events.

ACSIS fulfils its aim by a biannual conference, courses for graduate students, network activities and co-ownership of Culture Unbound Journal for Cultural Research. The activities support interdisciplinary and socially relevant research that is consistent with a changing world in which media, art forms and forms of expression are increasingly encroaching upon one another, with new interplays between cultural, social, political, economic and technical factors, and in which different social groups interact and create both communities and differences that link up to or run counter to traditional structures.

ACSIS was established early in 2002 as an independent unit within Linköping University. The centre is administratively connected to the Department for Studies of Social Change and Culture (ISAK). The national character of ACSIS is guaranteed by a board with members chosen by all Swedish universities, and a chair appointed by the Vice-Chancellor of Linköping University.

Board, administration and staff

ACSIS board is elected for a three-year period, the current board is elected for 2016-2018 ACSIS board convened twice in 2016, and have the following members:

- *Chair*: Professor emeritus Orvar Löfgren (2013–).
- *Göteborg University*: Professor Lena Martinsson (2013–), Deputy member: Mikela Lundhal 2017
- *Karlstad University*: Professor André Jansson (2009–). Deputy member professor Magnus Ullén (2016-)
- *Linköping University*: Professor Anna Sparrman (2013–). Deputy member Stefan Jonsson (2013).
- *Lund University*: Docent Robert Willim (2016-). Deputy member Professor Tom O'Dell (2009–).
- *Mid Sweden University*: Docent Anders Olsson (2006–). Deputy member Anders Johansson English literature (2016-).
- *Stockholm University*: Associate professor Anna Dahlgren (2014–). Deputy member Thomas Götselius Department of Literature and History of Ideas (2016-).
- *Umeå University*: Professor Pelle Snickars (2016–).
- *Uppsala University*: Professor Birgitta Meurling (2006–). Deputy Member Orsi Husz (2016-).
- *Linnaeus University*: Professor Cornelius Holtorf (2013–). Johan Höglund Ursula Geiser (2016-)-
Örebro University: Henrik Bagerius (2016-). Deputy member Jenny Bonnevier 2016-).
- *Additional member*: Professor Lotten Gustafsson Reinius Nordiska Museet (2009-). Ulrika Thorell Nordiska museet (2016–).

Associate professor Bodil Axelsson was acting director of ACSIS, employed by ACSIS on 10 % January – June. Mattis Karlsson was employed 50% February – June as conference organizer. Johanna Dahlin and Kristin Wagrell shared a position of 40% as editor for *Culture Unbound*.

Finances

For 2014 the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Linköping University contributed an annual amount of 243 000 SEK to ACSIS and 100 000 to *Culture Unbound*.

ACISIS received a grant from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond on 150 000 SEK for the network “The Everyday Life of Research in the Mediatization Era”.

Thanks to accumulation of previous funds, ACSIS did not apply for conference funding.

Symposium 19-20 June

Every other year since 2005 ACSIS has organized a broad-based cultural studies conference. 2017’s conference was turned into the symposium Mobilising Cultural Studies June 19-20. The symposium had around 50 participants from Sweden, Australia, Hong Kong, Norway and the UK. The low amount of participants, in comparison to ACSIS, previous conferences made it to an appreciated intimate event with 15 productive panels and sessions. Keynote speakers were:

Dr. Elisabetta Costa, anthropologist specialized in the study of media and digital media. She presented discoveries and insights from **the WhyWePost project** a global study on the consequences and impact of social media on people’s everyday life around the world.

Nicholas de Genova, independent scholar of migration, borders, citizenship, race, and labor. The title of his presentation was Mobilising Critique: Anthropology and Cultural Studies Confronting the ‘crisis of Human Mobility’.

Dr. Astrida Neimanis, lecturer in Gender and Cultural Studies at the University of Sydney (Australia). The keynote – Queer Times and Chemical Weapons in the Gotland Deep – was delivered on video. Professor Cecilia Åsberg, Linköping University, hosted the keynote and led the Skype conversation after the film.

Network activities: The Everyday Life of Research in the Mediatization Era

In 2015 ACSIS received a three year network grant from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond’s sector committee Mediatization of Everyday Life. This network aims to develop interdisciplinary and geographical perspectives on the mediatization of research through a series of workshops with junior and senior researchers over a three-year period. It involves ACSIS and Tema Q at Linköping University, the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and the Sydney-based Institute for Culture and Society (ICS). Sydney, Amsterdam and Norrköping will take it in turns to conduct the network’s activities.

The activities will evolve around one topic of focus every year: 2015 – ‘Mobility: The Travelling Researcher’; 2016 – ‘Methods Undergoing Change’; 2017 – ‘Publishing and Mediatization’. The network’s activities are designed so that each activity deals with issues of general importance to researchers affiliated to the national centre ACSIS and Tema Q. An important partner in this context is the now well-established journal *Culture Unbound*, yet another resource for participating partners. The activities of the network will result in a thematic issue of *Culture Unbound* to be published in the end of the three-year project. Here we will utilise the opportunity afforded by

electronic publishing and make the thematic issue a cumulative collection of articles and reports, which together form an expanding and changing roadmap of the project's development.

In connection with ACSIS symposium in June the workshop Publishing and Mediatization was organised in collaboration with Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) Western Sydney University. The workshop explored changing forms of mediatization and how new technologies redefine the conditions not only for presenting but also for conducting research, as well as how a changing publishing landscape affects power and dependencies in academia.

The workshop started with a public event on Arbetets Museum with the following talks:

Gary Hall, *Masked Media*, Centre for Disruptive Media, Coventry University;

David Rowe, *The Uses of Academic Knowledge Revisited*, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University;

Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, *Another Openness: Patents as Publication*, Department for Culture Studies, Linköping University.

James Arvanitakis, *The Pirate Methodology Manifesto*, Institute for Culture and Society, Western Sydney University;

Jesper Olsson, *Media Labs and the Infrastructures of Knowledge*, Department for Culture and Communication, Linköping University.

In the afternoon Bodil Axelsson and Martin Fredriksson moderated a discussion after an introduction by James Meese, Lecturer at University of Technology Sydney and Associate Editor of *Culture Unbound*. The aim of the afternoon session was to pick up on the most important questions from the morning session and use them as a starting point to discuss:

- The publication of a special issue of *Culture Unbound* based on the network project
- The implications and possibilities mediatization and changes in academia might have for the future development of *Culture Unbound*
- The implications and possibilities mediatization and changes in academia might have for the future development of ACSIS
- What issues we would like to explore further in future projects and collaborations.

[The journal Culture Unbound](#)

2017 has been an exciting year for *Culture Unbound*. Three original thematic issues have been published and in early December *Culture Unbound* received financial support from Vetenskapsrådet (VR) and *samarbetsnämnden för humanistisk och samhällsvetenskaplig forskning* (NOS-HS). Earlier discussions regarding more experimental forms of publishing were also realised this year through the inclusion of both a podcast and a recorded key-note lecture in the third issue of 2017. This issue, entitled *Mediatization, Mobility and Methods of Knowledge Production* stems from the network *The Everyday life of research in the medialisatation era*, of which *Culture Unbound* has been a part for the past two years. This network held its final workshop 'Publishing and mediatization' in Norrköping on June 21 2017, in conjunction with the ACSIS conference.

Discovering Spotify, the second issue of 2017, offered a collection of articles, which emanated out of a cross-disciplinary research project based at the National Library of Sweden and the Digital

Humanities Lab (Humlab) at Umeå University. The articles in this issue offer a substantive account of emerging streaming cultures by analysing the music streaming service Spotify through an innovative methodological approach. The project reverse engineered Spotify's algorithms, aggregation procedures, metadata, and valuation strategies. *Discovering Spotify* provides a new perspective on Spotify as a platform and therefore stands as a major contribution to digital methods research. However, because of this, the issue was delayed due to complaints from Spotify that the methods used constituted intrusive and thus, unethical, research practices. After consulting a number of relevant institutions regarding this complaint, the editors were strengthened in their initial judgement that the issue was within the bounds of ethical research practices and *Discovering Spotify* was published in October 2017. It was received with curiosity and interest by researchers in the field and software and programming professionals alike.

The first issue published in 2017, *Theorizing copies*, departed from the notion of copying as a fundamental part of being human. Copying refers to cornucopia, the horn of plenty, and thereby alludes to notions of abundance, fertility and life. On the other hand copies and copying also refer to the lack of originality and authenticity, to dishonesty, forgery and fakeness. The issue was supposed to be the second issue for 2017, but due to the delays incurred by Spotify, *Theorizing Copies* and *Discovering Spotify* had to trade places making the former the first issue of 2017.

During 2017 the editorial team also expanded through the addition of the editorial assistant Kristin Wagrell. In September Johanna Dahlin went on parental leave and thus temporarily left the executive editorship to Kristin. Eva Hemmungs Wirtén remains as editor in chief and was joined by James Meese as associate editor.

[Doctoral student course](#)

Since the autumn of 2003, ACSIS has been organizing a programme for individual doctoral courses in partnership with other departments at Linköping University. These courses are open to doctoral students from across Sweden specializing in interdisciplinary cultural studies.

In 2017 ACSIS organized *Critical and reflexive approaches to methods and representations, 15 hp*. This course had five participants from four Universities and it problematized the consequences of method in producing knowledge. The aim of the course was to develop critical-reflexive approach to the diversity of cultural scientific methods used in cultural research on contemporary and historical material. The course exam included a course paper, continuous reflections and a Pecha Cucha presentation at ACSIS symposium. Teachers were: Professor Steve Woolgar, Professor Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, Dr. Patricia Lorenzoni, Professor Johanna Sköld, Dr. Johanna Dahlin, Associate Professor Jesper Olsson, Dr. Björn Hammarfeldt, Professor Anna Sparrman, and Docent Anders Olsson.