

ACSIS – Annual Report 2015



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 supports 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). Its linking, driving and quality raising tasks are realized through seminars, conferences, publications, PhD courses and various forms of networking. 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.

ACSIS concentrates its activities around yearly themes decided upon by the board. The theme for 2015 was mediatization, realized in ACSIS biennial conference 2015, a doctoral course and the initiation of the network project “The Everyday Life of Research in the Mediatization Era” involving the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) and Tema Q at Linköping University, the Amsterdam School of Cultural Analysis (ASCA) and the Institute for Culture and Society (ICS) at Western Sydney University.

Board, administration and staff

ACSIS board is elected for a three-year period, the current board is elected for 2013-2015 ACSIS board convened twice in 2015, and have the following members:

- *Chair*: Professor emeritus Orvar Löfgren (2013–).
- *Göteborg University*: Professor of Gender Studies Lena Martinsson (2013–).
- *Karlstad University*: Professor of Media and Communication Studies André Jansson (2009–).
- *Linköping University*: Professor of Child Studies Anna Sparrman (2013–). Deputy member professor of Ethnicity and migration studies Stefan Jonsson (2013–).
- *Lund University*: Professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences Tom O’Dell (2009–).
- *Mid Sweden University*: Professor of English Anders Olsson (2006–).
- *Stockholm University*: Associate professor in Art history Anna Dahlgren (2014–).
- *Umeå University*: Professor of Literature Anders Öhman (2006–).
- *Uppsala University*: Professor of Ethnology Birgitta Meurling (2006–).
- *Linnaeus University*: Professor of Archaeology Cornelius Holtorf (2013–).

- *Örebro University*: Professor of History Björn Horgby (2013–).
- *Additional member*: Associate Professor Lotten Gustafsson Reinius from the museum of Ethnography (2009–).

Bodil Axelsson was acting director of ACSIS, employed by ACSIS on 15 %. In 2014 Martin Fredriksson was on leave from his position as coordinator on ACSIS, he was substituted by Johanna Dahlin on 50 % employment. Martin Fredriksson upheld his responsibilities as editor for *Culture Unbound* on 20 % throughout the first six months. Johanna Dahlin then replaced Fredriksson as editor for *Culture Unbound*. From August Johanna Sjöberg was employed at 30% as ACSIS research coordinator.

Finances

For 2014 the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Linköping University contributed an annual amount of 602 000 SEK to ACSIS, this also included the editorial work for the journal *Culture Unbound*. In addition, four universities represented in ACSIS board contributed with the total amount of 200 000 SEK (Linnaeus University 50 000; Lund University 50 000; Karlstad University 50 000; and Uppsala University 50 000).

ACISIS received a grant from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond on 250 000 SEK to organize the conference *In the Flow: People, Media and Materialities* in June 2015 and 150 000 SEK for the network “The Everyday Life of Research in the Mediatization Era”.

Conference

Every other year since 2005 ACSIS has organized a broad-based cultural studies conference. Under the title “IN THE FLOW; People, Media, Materialities” ACSIS held its sixth biennial cultural studies conference in at the Louis De Geer facilities in central Norrköping the 15th-17th of June 2015. The conference theme emphasized spatial, cultural and social flows with a focus on mediatization and how new and old media interact with bodies, institutions and various industries to produce social, cultural and material effects.

ACISIS were especially proud to welcome our the keynote speakers, Anna Reading, Professor of Culture and Creative Industries at Kings College, London, and Mike Crang, Professor of Geography at Durham University, as well as the participants in a plenary panel led by André Jansson, Professor of Media and Communication Studies at Karlstad University. We were also very pleased to present a series of spotlight sessions. Here we invited researchers to discuss time, media history, heritage institutions, the impact of digital media on fan and celebrity cultures, and feminist culture studies. Thanks to an initiative from the master’s students on the Linköping University Programme for Culture, Society and Media Production, the conference had a spotlight session on education and research. The themes under discussion on the conference’s parallel sessions organized by cultural researchers from many different countries, ranged from body monitoring to translation, touching on issues such as heritage, search practices and remembering.

Call for papers was distributed in Sweden as well as internationally. About 200 researchers from Sweden and internationally participated in the conference. All universities in Sweden were represented and so were many of the university colleges. The conference was supported by Riksbankens Jubileumsfond. Working languages were English and Swedish.

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 controversial term 'mediatization' focuses on how mediation and media practices more thoroughly permeate culture and society (Couldry 2012; Hepp 2012; Hjarvard 2013). The term gives cultural researchers theoretical contexts for studies of new empirical phenomena in the interplay between people, technology, social institutions and aesthetic practices. Whilst an ever-increasing number of cultural researchers are studying the mediatization of everyday life, researchers and the research itself are becoming involved in mediatization processes (Fornäs 2011), in reading, writing and searching for information, as well as in their contact with colleagues. Particularly the new publishing strategies emerging in the wake of digitalisation, open access and impact requirements can be understood in mediatization terms.

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. Our ambition is that the creation of the network will result in a thematic issue of *Culture Unbound* to be published continuously during 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.

Doctoral student course

Contemporary Expressions of Mediatization, 7,5 hp

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 autumn 2015, ACSIS organized a course on Contemporary Mediatization Processes designed and led by PhD Anne Kaun (Culture and Communication, Södertörn University) and PhD Karin Fast (Media and Communication Studies, Karlstad University). The course applied interdisciplinary perspectives on the concept of mediatization focusing on how media, in particular digital media, affects people's everyday lives, as well as how everyday life in turn transforms the media. The objective of the course was to broaden the understanding of theories and methodologies for studying mediatization. The course was oriented towards contemporary phenomena while linking emerging tendencies to the long history of mediatization. Consequently, it linked mediatization of everyday life and culture to large-scale social changes as well as relations of power. To do so, the course relied not only on research in media and communication studies but also drew from other disciplines within social sciences and humanities.

Twelve PhD students from the universities in Stockholm, Linköping, Uppsala and Karlstad; Mittuniversitetet och Malmö Högskola participated. The course included participation in ACSIS

biannual conference in June and five additional course sessions (three at Karlstad University and two virtual). Participants were encouraged to adapt theories, methodologies and methods on their own projects and to present and discuss their ideas in the final course paper. The course thus enabled students to explore the potential advantages and challenge the concept of mediatization has for their respective projects.

Exchange of higher degree research students

The exchange program for higher degree research students between the Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden (ACSIS) at Linköping University, and the Institute of Culture and Society (ICS) at Western Sydney University, that was initiated 2004 has been renewed 2015.

In June two graduate scholars, Cecilia Hilder and Alejandro Miranda Nieto from ICS visited ACSIS to take part in the conference and the first course sessions of the postgraduate course on mediatization. They also presented their work at a Tema Q seminar June 10.

In November three doctoral students from Linköping University visited ICS to participate in the workshop 'Mobility: The Travelling Researcher', as part of the network programme. The visiting research students were Tintin Hodén (Tema Q), Måns Wadensjö (Tema Q) and Helga Sadowski (Tema Genus).

Seminars

During 2015 ACSIS arranged a range of seminars in Norrköping/Linköping and one workshop in Sydney. Two seminars were arranged within "Interfaces", ACSIS seminar series designated to explore connections between explorative cultural studies, museum-based research and exhibition practices, and the arts.

[Interfaces III: Becoming by Recalling, ACSIS c/o Passagen Konsthall](#)
Seminar, 25 May, Passagen Konsthall, Linköping.

ACSIS were invited by curator Susanne Everlöf to discuss exhibiting practices dealing with national identity and heritage in the arts in connection to the exhibition "Becoming by Recalling". What possibilities are there for artistic interventions in these domains? How can the arts open up alternative communities and critique?

Invited participants and speakers: Mykola Ridnyi (UKR), Ana Londono (This is Sweden), Johanna Dahlin (LiU), Bodil Axelsson (LiU)

[Interfaces IV - How to represent the unrepresented?, ACSIS c/o Museet för glömska på Norrköpings konstmuseum](#)

Seminar, 29 September, Norrköping Art museum, Norrköping
The seminar was a collaboration between ACSIS, The Museum of Forgetting, and Norrköping Art Museum. The seminar was curated by Erik Berggren.

Art about migration and refugees confronts us with the problem of how to represent the politically unrepresented, and how to exhibit an ongoing and man-made catastrophe. It forces us to ask whether this is the time for art. The question is triggered by the gravity of Europe's current refugee crisis and questions about the usefulness and ethics of art reflecting the pain of others. The problems of the limitation of the artistic action, victimization and anesthetization, as well as false

empowerment and the irony of imaginary *utopian* gestures in relation to people who look for any *topos* (place) that would let them in. These are some of the issues discussed.

Introducers and invited speakers: Bodil Axelsson (AC SIS), Helena Persson (Director Norrköping Art Museum), Kimbal Quist Bumstead (artist UK), Klitsa Antoniou (artist Cyprus), Erik Berggren (The Museum of Forgetting), Stefan Jonsson (REMESO).

Introduction of ACSIS, Culture Unbound and the network "Cultural Research in the era of Mediatization"

10 June, Norrköping, Tema Q seminar series

Special guests: Celia Hilder and Alejandro Miranda Nieto (Western Sydney University)

Creative work in the era of new capitalism

Seminar, 8 October 2015, Campus Norrköping

Invited speakers: George Morgan (University of Western Sydney), David Redmalm (Uppsala University).

This seminar critically approaches the conditions of creative work by bring together scholars from Sweden and Australia. David Redmalm's presentation deals with the Hungarian IT company Prezi that blurs boundaries between work and fun so as to produce a work environment characterized by "openness" to social issues and innovative ideas. George Morgan's paper takes a theoretical approach in order to zoom in on how independent creativity is harnessed by the new economy to generate wealth in processes of commodification of art and intellectual work.

Transmissions from the Liberated Zones

Seminar and Film Screening, 21 October, Cnema, Norrköping

The seminar was co-arranged by: REMESO, the Institute for research on migration, ethnicity and society; Tema Q (Culture and society); ACSIS (Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden) and KSM (Culture, Society and Media production).

Invited speaker: Filipa César.

Since 2008 Filipa César has worked with the post-colonial history of Portugal and the liberation movement in Guinea-Bissau. Her research is particularly focused on the position moving images hold in Guinea-Bissau and on how film has been used in propaganda and visual nation building, in part through collaboration with other filmmakers to restore and make available the national film archive and its history. César's new work, "Transmissions From the Liberated Zones", is part of an ongoing investigation of contemporary art's relation to international solidarity movements and of the meaning of the notion of solidarity today.

Mobile Research / Researching Mobility

Workshop, November 25, 2015, University of Western Sydney (WSU)

Today's cultural researchers are becoming more and more mobile as the funders of research are increasingly investing in internationalisation. Individual researchers are given opportunities – or must meet expectations – to work outside their home country, and contribute to an ever-growing number of projects conducted in partnership with researchers in different countries. While many aspects of mobility are fairly well researched, we as academics rarely subject our own mobility to the same kind of attention. We think it is important to reflect on how mobility affects the research process and the production of knowledge. How do mobile researchers communicate across academic and geographical boundaries? How are research results achieved in interaction between

researchers when data is shared and meetings held digitally? How do ideas, concepts, knowledge and people travel and how is this endorsed and enforces by academic institutions but also inhibited by formal and informal borders? What new methodological challenges does this present us with? And not the least – how do the aspiration and/or expectations to constantly be on the road affect us as scholars and individuals?

This workshop explores the mobility of research through four panels. The first two panels directly address questions of mobility within academia, while the second two focus on specific research project and how they in different ways deal with or are affected by mobility. The self-reflective perspective is thus present in the afternoon sessions as well where the discussions will focus on how establishing a dialogue between Swedish and Australian researchers.

Speakers and commentators: Alejandro Miranda Nieto (WSU), Cecilia Hilder (WSU), David Rowe (WSU), Gay Hawkins (WSU), Helga Sadowski (LiU), Johanna Dahlin (LiU), Louise Crabtree (WSU), Måns Wadensjö (LiU), Martin Fredriksson (LiU), Ned Rossiter (WSU), Deborah Stevenson (WSU) Tintin Hodén (LiU), Kristina Jerne (Århus University).

Information and Publications

Linköping University is reorganizing its website. This means that ACSIS's webpage also must be adapted to the new system. This is a process that has started during 2015. Until the new website is launched the previous website is managed as usual. To inform about ACSIS work the webpage is complemented with Facebook and Twitter. At Facebook ACSIS has 355 followers and at Twitter 141 followers. ACSIS homepage directs the attention to ACSIS mailing list Kulturstudier, which currently have 453 members and serves as an important forum for a great variety of upcoming events in Sweden and beyond, and the journal *Culture Unbound*.

The journal *Culture Unbound*

In 2015 Johanna Dahlin took over the post as executive editor of the journal *Culture Unbound*, published by ACSIS and Tema Q, from Martin Fredriksson. The journal nevertheless maintained its ordinary publication rate, releasing four issues over the year. In 2015 the journal has published a total of 31 articles, encompassing around 700 pages. The high level of interest in CU:s webpage was sustained with 6500 visits per month. The most downloaded thematic sections were 'City of Signs/Signs of the City' (from 2009, 7790 downloads), followed by 'Changing Orders of Knowledge', from 2014 with 3000 downloads, and 'Capitalism: Current Crisis and Cultural Critique' (from 2014, 1743 downloads). The fact that the second thematic section *Culture Unbound* released in 2009 – 'City of Signs/Signs of the City' – remains among the most read confirms that while *Culture Unbound* constantly attracts new readers, old publications have a long life span, which contributes to a steady and long-term growth. Most visitors in 2015 came from China, USA, Sweden, Germany and UK.

Culture Unbound's annual volume for 2015 consisted of four thematic issues: 'Circulating Stuff through Second-hand, Vintage and Retro markets' edited by Staffan Appelgren and Anna Bohlin; 'Motion and Emotion' by Ann Werner; 'Cultures of Disaster' by Anders Ekström and Kyrre Kverndokk, and 'Publishing for Public Knowledge' by Martin Fredriksson, Eva Hemmungs Wirtén, and Naomi Stead.

In 2015 *Culture Unbound* received financial support from Vetenskapsrådet (VR), Nordiska Samarbetsnämnden för humanistisk och samhällsvetenskaplig forskning (NOS-HS) and the faculty of Arts and Sciences at Linköping University.