‘MALMÖ’S HISTORY AFTER 1850’
CO-CREATING URBAN HISTORY

A brief history of Malmö: Sweden's third city with about 320 000 inhabitants (2016). During the late 1800s the city grew quickly and by 1910 Malmö was regarded as one of the nation's three leading industrial cities. Malmö's early industrial economy was dominated by the textile companies and engineering works. Kockums, which eventually turned into a world-leading shipyard, was founded in 1840 and vital to the development of Malmö's early industrial economy. The years between 1950 and 1970 are often described as the 'record years' of expansion. By 1960, Kockums was the ninth largest shipyard in the world.

After the 'record years', the city was severely hit by de-industrialization and almost all larger factories were closed. By 1995, the number of people employed in manufacturing and construction were half compared to 1960, and Malmö had the highest unemployment rate in Sweden. Since the construction of the Öresund bridge, connecting Malmö and Copenhagen, and a number of initiatives in sustainable urban development and the knowledge economy, the narrative is once again optimistic: In 2013 Forbes magazine ranked Malmö as the World's fourth most inventive city; and Travel + Leisure ranked Malmö as Scandinavia’s “hippest destination” in 2015.

In 2014, we translated parts of Stadens Historia II (The History of the City), has been given more than twenty times and a follow-up course, ‘Stadens Historia’ (The History of the City), has been given more than twenty times and a follow-up course, ‘Stadens Historia II’, on several occasions. The structure of these courses were similar to the current course, including a lecture series and also student projects, including an excursion to the city district in focus for the student projects as examination. In collaboration with the City Library of Malmö, the student projects were made accessible to the public, included in the library catalogue and made available in the special ‘Malmö Collection’.

The students that took part in these courses represent great diversity in age as well as academic background. Journalists, staff from museums and public archives and teachers are just some examples. Several were retired. Because of the diversity and first hand experiences within the group of students, discussions ranged from micro- to macro level and generalized statements were often contested.

‘Malmö’s history after 1850’ intends to build on the positive results of the previous courses in Malmö’s history, especially when it comes to methodology and outreach, but also to take a step further, including contemporary research perspectives in urban history, and thereby challenging existing narratives as well as stimulate students to ask new challenging historical questions.

The Institute for Studies in Malmö’s history (IMH) was established in the fall of 2009 as a collaborative initiative between Malmö University and the City of Malmö. The institute initiates research into Malmö’s history, and facilitates discussions on different perspectives of urban history. The purpose is to widen and deepen the conversation between researchers and residents, and to make it more inclusive. The institute’s work is based on Malmö University’s vision of interdisciplinary research and cross-faculty collaboration, as well as participative activities with the local community. Even though Malmö’s history is at the core of activities, these perspectives are also related to other Swedish as well as international experiences in urban history, through seminars, workshops, conferences and collaborative research projects.

In 2014, we translated parts of Stadens Historia II: Twelve walking tours for discovering Malmö, a book with historical city walks, into Arabic and trained 20 native-arabic speaking guides to perform historical city walks.

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