

Class, space, and marginalization: Inequality in Sweden in the era of welfare state retrenchment 1980-2020

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This paper is the first draft prior to the initial plan seminar for my doctoral thesis. The thesis addresses the growing economic inequality in Sweden during the last four decades from a spatio-temporal perspective. The thesis aims to look at the development through an analysis of the class structure from both a spatial and temporal aspect, and, further, analyze how class patterns interrelates with inequality and marginalization on a spatio-temporal, structural level. Previous research in this field has to a large extent overlooked the spatial, geographic aspects in relation to class, inequality and marginalization.

Growing inequalities will be analyzed in conjunction with welfare state retrenchment, focusing on the distributive impact of welfare state measures, and how these have changed during the period. In addition, the analysis will be situated in relation to important changes in the social structure, not least, changes in demographic composition, e.g. due to migration and regional depopulation, and the rise of persistent unemployment.

Theoretically, the thesis will depart from a Marxist perspective, centering its analysis on class relations within a capitalist mode of production, and the concept of a “relative surplus population”. The thesis will primarily rely on quantitative, register data as its empirical material, and use quantitative methods in its the analysis of class, inequality and marginalization.