

Med dubbla syften

Forum för kvinnliga forskare, aktivism och statsfeminism
1975–1995

*fil. Mag. Jakob Winther Forsbäck
Institutionen för historiska studier*

Akademisk avhandling för avläggande av filosofie doktorsexamen i historia vid Göteborgs universitet, som med tillstånd av humanistiska fakultetens dekanus, kommer att offentligt försvaras fredagen den 2 juni 2017 kl. 13, gamla hovrätten, Olof Wijksgatan 6, sal T302



GÖTEBORGS
UNIVERSITET

Abstract

Ph.D. dissertation, University of Gothenburg, Sweden 2017

Title: *Med dubbla syften: Forum för kvinnliga forskare, aktivism och statsfeminism 1975–1995*

English title: *With a Dual Purpose: Forum for Women Scholars, Activism, and State Feminism, 1975–1995*

Author: Jakob Winther Forsbäck, **Language:** Swedish, with an English summary

Department: Department of Historical Studies, University of Gothenburg, Box 200, SE-405 30 Göteborg

ISBN 978-91-629-0107-3 (Print)

ISBN 978-91-629-0108-0 (PDF)

This thesis explores the activism surrounding the establishment of women's studies in Sweden from 1975–1995, through an analysis of the organization the Forum for Women Scholars and Women's Studies. The main purpose of the thesis is to analyze how the Forum balanced their two objectives of promoting gender equality in academia and establishing and supporting women's studies and women's perspectives.

By examining the Forum's archive material, this thesis analyzes the organization's struggle for academic gender equality and women's studies, highlighting the dilemmas, consequences and paradoxes inherent in this dual mission by asking: Could the Forum separate the arguments for women's studies on the one hand, and gender equality on the other? What kind of impact did the Forum's activism have, from a so called state feminist perspective? What were the consequences of having multiple agendas and areas of conflict in the intersection between academic research and politics?

Historically, marginalized groups have had to combine different strategies in the struggle for, as Nancy Fraser would put it, redistribution and recognition. For women, the demand for recognition required that women define the differences between women and men. For this purpose, Gayatri Spivak's notion of strategic essentialism is used to highlight the strategic reasoning behind the Forum's demands for the recognition of gendered perspectives and experiences.

As other scholars have noted, the government reinforced stereotypical notions of female scholars and was also unable to separate women's studies from gender equality work. However, with its emphasis on specific aspects of state feminism, i.e. the interaction between feminist activists and the government, this thesis shows that the Forum played an important role in the reproduction of "the female scholar" as well as ideas about gendered perspectives and their value within an academic environment dominated by men. The Forum reproduced, sometimes for strategic reasons, notions of gender difference, in order to navigate ostensibly meritocratic ideas about academic quality. In many ways, this strategic approach was a result of the feminist ambition that undergirded the Forum's very existence: the goal of combating gendered power structures and inequalities. Feminism's normative objectives required an instrumental approach with its focus on a future that should, and could be, more equal.

Keywords: women's studies, gender studies, feminism in academia, feminism, activism, state feminism, history of the academy, history of feminism, gender equality, historiography, Forum for Women Scholars and Women's Studies