Why Erving Goffman Never Made it into the Swedish Textbooks (abstract)

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2011

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Abstract. This paper investigates to what extent and how the sociological perspective of Erving Goffman is represented in Swedish sociology-textbooks and why it is represented the way it is. The investigation has been restricted to central Swedish textbooks during the period 1970-2000 and consequently it does not give a complete picture, but since the choice of textbooks reflects central currents and persons in Swedish sociology during the period, the picture is with high probability valid. The study shows a very marginal position for the sociological perspective of Goffman in the textbooks studied and probably one can therefore also conclude that Swedish sociology has been only marginally influenced by that perspective. In only one of the investigated textbooks is the sociology of Goffman given a space larger than a brief reference and in that textbook Goffman is framed as a kind of critical welfare sociologist. Why is he framed like that and how is it done? In the nineties the perspective of Goffman grows more popular in undergraduate education and in Swedish textbooks published after 2000 by younger, but established Swedish sociologists, the Goffman perspective is given a larger space. It seems as if Goffman, 30 years after his death, is making it into the Swedish sociology-textbooks – and probably also into Swedish sociology.