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Experience and the learning public

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Processes of change within a community can concern shifting identities, ideologies, politics and internal hierarchies. But change can also entail shifts in the rhetorical habits and faculties of a community, where practical forms of knowledge (*techne*; *phronesis*) applied by a public in deliberation change over time. In this project I analyse how collective practical experience plays a part in the development of public judgment (Hauser 1999, 98f) and reasoning. The reflexive application of experience is a part of the cyclical process of forming habits of problem solving (Levine 2019, 13f), and on a communal level processes of collective inquiry can work as public learning that shapes rhetorical practices.

I analyse how the Swedish radical left discussed and made sense of the major events of the collapse of communism during the eighties and nineties. I aim to show how the rhetorical habits of this public changed by tracing commonalities between the public debates on the different events. Metadiscourse about deliberative practices – reflection-on-action – is of particular interest to the project, as well as the interaction between different fractions. In my paper to IRW, I will discuss theoretical and methodological points of departure, and preliminary findings.

Hauser, G. A. (1999). *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres*. Columbia: The University of South Carolina Press.

Levine, S. (2019). *Pragmatism, Objectivity, and Experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.